



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

For Immediate Release: September 14, 2010

CA-CDD-10-104

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BLM Seeks Comments on Proposed Marine Corps Withdrawal

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is seeking public comments on a proposal to withdraw for five years 332,000 acres of public land adjacent to the Marine Corps' Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms from settlement, sale, and location of mining claims to preserve the status quo while the Marines complete environmental studies on a long-term proposal to expand the base, which requires legislative approval.

BLM Barstow Field Manager Roxie Trost said the lands remain open to public access and recreation use while these studies are underway. She explained that the lands have been segregated or unavailable for settlement, sale, and location of mining claims since September 2008, when the Marines began the legislative withdrawal process to expand the base in San Bernardino County. Today's action provides more time for the preparation of an environmental impact statement on the base expansion proposal. A draft EIS is expected to be released in January 2011.

A 90-day comment period on the proposal closes December 13, 2010. Comments should be sent to Ms. Roxie Trost, BLM Barstow Office Field Manager, 2601 Barstow Road, Barstow, California 92311. A notice of the proposed withdrawal was published in today's Federal Register, and is available online at http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/info/fed_reg_archives.html

In 2008, the Department of the Navy filed an application requesting the Secretary of the Interior to process a proposed withdrawal of public lands for military training and exercises. Several thousand comments were received generally supporting military operations, but others expressing concerns about loss of public access into Johnson Valley, a popular off-highway vehicle recreation area. Those comments will be addressed in the draft EIS.

For more information, contact Ms. Roxie Trost, BLM Barstow Office Field Manager, 760-252-6000 or Mr. Rusty Lee, BLM Needles Office Field Manager, at 760-326-7000.

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