

**DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
INTEGRATED CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN
FORT IRWIN, CA**

The United States Army Garrison Fort Irwin and the National Training Center (NTC) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to identify and evaluate potential environmental effects of implementing an Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan (ICRMP) at Fort Irwin, CA. The EA was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and implementing regulations specified in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1500 through Part 1508, and Environmental Analysis of Army Actions 32 CFR Part 651.

Proposed Action and Alternatives Considered

Fort Irwin, proposes to implement the 2016-2020 ICRMP. Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 4715.16 Cultural Resources Management, and Army Regulation 200-1, Environmental Enhancement and Protection, require development of an ICRMP. The ICRMP establishes explicit responsibilities, standard operating procedures, and long-range goals for managing cultural resources at Fort Irwin, in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, while ensuring the safety and efficiency of Fort Irwin's mission objectives.

In preparation of the EA, it was determined that no alternatives other than the Proposed Action would satisfy the purpose and need of the proposed project. Two alternatives, the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative were evaluated for their potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects on the human environment. The Proposed Action would involve the full implementation of the 2016-2020 ICRMP, as required by law. The No Action Alternative is the continuation of management activities currently being conducted under the 2011-2015 ICRMP. If the No Action Alternative were to be selected, the updated ICRMP would not be implemented and Fort Irwin would not be in compliance with Army regulations. Because implementation of the ICRMP is a regulatory requirement, Fort Irwin did not consider additional alternatives.

Environmental Analysis

Based on information gathered and presented in the EA, it has been determined that implementation of the Proposed Action would have no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative adverse effects on the environment. Some minor impacts to certain resource areas would be expected, but these impacts would be less than significant. Implementation of the Proposed Action would also have minor, beneficial effects to the local economy and would have long-term, beneficial effects to water, soil and cultural and paleontological resources as a result of many of the cultural resources management activities in the ICRMP. Consequently, the overall environmental effect of implementing the Proposed Action is anticipated to be less than significant.

Summary of Potential Effects and Minimization Measures

Resource Area	Level of Anticipated Effect			Summary of Potential Effects and Minimization Measures
	Significant	Less than Significant	No Impact	
Land Use Planning and Aesthetics			√	<p>No significant effects to land use planning and aesthetics are anticipated as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Action. Projects proposed in the ICRMP and associated cultural resources management activities would not result in any inconsistencies with applicable land use laws or designations, loss of access to public and private lands, or degradation of the aesthetic character.</p> <p>No mitigation measures are required for land use or aesthetics.</p>
Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources		√		<p>No effects to geology or minerals are expected. No significant effects to soils are anticipated. Minor short-term effects to soils would result from cultural resources management activities that involve ground disturbance.</p> <p>Site specific BMPs such as the preparation of a SWPPP, would be implemented to minimize soil disturbance and erosion. Soil resources are protected in areas that are off limits and individual cultural resources management activities would be reviewed under the INRMP to avoid effects to soil resources.</p>
Biological Resources		√		<p>No significant effects to biological resources are anticipated as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Action. Minor short-term effects to biological resources may result from cultural resources management activities that involve ground disturbance.</p> <p>However, under the INRMP, cultural resources management activities would be reviewed to evaluate potential biological effects prior to the start of individual projects, site specific BMPs would be implemented to minimize potential biological resource disturbance, and biological resources are protected in areas that are off limits.</p>
Water Resources		√		<p>No significant effects to water resources are expected as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Action.</p>

Resource Area	Level of Anticipated Effect			Summary of Potential Effects and Minimization Measures
	Significant	Less than Significant	No Impact	
				<p>Projects proposed in the ICRMP and associated cultural resources management activities would be evaluated for potential effects. No effects to groundwater or water quality are expected.</p> <p>Site-specific plans would be developed and a SWPPP will be obtained, if necessary, to minimize the potential for nonpoint source pollutants affecting water resources. Water resources are protected in the areas where springs and playas are off limits to all training. Fort Irwin educates field personnel about the off limits nature of spring locations as part of major briefings prior to each military exercise in order to to avoid impacts by military equipment and personnel. Fort Irwin erects fencing and metal crossbars at springs likely to be approached by wheeled and tracked vehicles in an effort to reduce accidental intrusion into and subsequent damage to these resources.</p>
Air Quality		√		<p>No significant effects to air quality are expected. Potential effects would be expected during certain cultural resources management activities. Most activities' emissions would be fugitive dust and vehicle and equipment exhaust. Overall, effects would be less than significant and would not contribute significant emissions to local or regional air quality.</p> <p>Standard management practices and site specific BMPs would be implemented to minimize potential fugitive dust.</p>
Noise		√		<p>No significant effects would result from the noise generated by the Proposed Action. Noise associated with project vehicles and equipment would be consistent with noise already occurring at Fort Irwin.</p> <p>No mitigation measures are required for noise effects.</p>
Cultural Resources		√		<p>No significant effects to cultural resources are anticipated as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Action. Minor, indirect, and long-term positive effects to cultural resources are expected as a result of the implementation of</p>

Resource Area	Level of Anticipated Effect			Summary of Potential Effects and Minimization Measures
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				<p>the ICRMP. The objective of the ICRMP is to protect and preserve the cultural resources at Fort Irwin.</p> <p>The SOPs outlined in the ICRMP are based on applicable federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations, Army regulations, and formal agreements that are designed to help avoid adverse impacts to meet Fort Irwin’s cultural resources management goals. In addition to specific SOPs, the ICRMP also provides SOPs for routine activities that may have an effect on cultural resources. These SOPs are essentially BMPs such as fencing and restrictions, SHPO consultation, education and outreach, and developing Treatment Plans for the protection of cultural resources.</p>
Paleontological Resources		√		<p>No significant effects to paleontological resources are anticipated as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Action. Minor, indirect, and long-term positive effects to paleontological resources are expected as a result of the implementation of the ICRMP. Paleontological resources fall under the same protection considerations as outlined in the ICRMP SOPs.</p> <p>Various applicable federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations, Army regulations and formal agreements are designed to help avoid adverse effects to paleontological resources. The Army vigorously pursues the protection of paleontological resources from theft, destruction and other illegal or unauthorized uses. The same BMPs applied to cultural resources apply to paleontological resources as well as conducting paleontological inventories and briefings through education and outreach for the protection of paleontological resources.</p>
Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice		√		<p>No significant effects to socioeconomics are anticipated as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Action. Short-term, minor, beneficial effects to the local economy may result from increased sales volumes during the duration of some proposed activities. No effects would</p>

Resource Area	Level of Anticipated Effect			Summary of Potential Effects and Minimization Measures
	Significant	Less than Significant	No Impact	
				<p>result in environmental injustice or human health and safety issues.</p> <p>No mitigation measures are required for socioeconomic and environmental justice issues.</p>
Infrastructure			√	<p>No significant effects to infrastructure are anticipated as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Action.</p> <p>No mitigation measures are required for infrastructure.</p>

Notice of Availability

The EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) were available for public review and comment during a 30-day period commencing with the publication of a Notice of Availability in the Barstow Desert Dispatch and the Fort Irwin High Desert Warrior. Copies of the EA and FNSI were available at the Fort Irwin Post Library Building 331, 2nd Street Fort Irwin, California and the Barstow Library at 304 East Buena Vista Barstow, California and online at <http://www.irwin.army.mil/Pages/Community/EnvironmentNEPA.html>.

Interested parties were invited to submit written comments for consideration to Mr. Clarence Everly, Fort Irwin Natural and Cultural Resources Program Manager, Environmental Division, Building 602, PO Box 105085, Fort Irwin, CA 92310-5085 or via email to clarence.a.everly.civ@mail.mil.

Conclusion

Implementing the Proposed Action addressed in the EA would not be expected to significantly alter baseline environmental or socioeconomic conditions. Based on the analysis of potential impacts, the implementation of the updated ICRMP would not constitute a significant Federal action that would affect the quality of the human or natural environment as defined within Section 102(2)(c) of the NEPA of 1969, as amended. Therefore, a FNSI is issued for the Proposed Action and no Environmental Impact Statement is required.

Date

G. Scott Taylor
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Commanding