

1 **4.4 UTILITIES**

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3 The environmental impacts to water supply, wastewater treatment, solid-waste disposal, energy and
4 communications are discussed below, in relation to the alternatives described in Chapter 2.

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6 **4.4.1 Alternative 1**

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8 Under this alternative, the construction and operation phases of several actions being considered and the
9 possibility of mobilization requirements will potentially increase demands for all services. The possible
10 actions include the paving of more than 20 miles of dirt and gravel roads on McGregor Range, a rail spur
11 to McGregor Range Camp, a helicopter training complex, and a geothermal power generation and
12 desalination plant. Any of these actions would increase demands for utilities on McGregor Range on both
13 a temporary and permanent basis. Increases in personnel using the McGregor Range infrastructure under
14 a mobilization scenario would also increase demands for utilities. It is likely that a greater number of
15 military units and personnel will spend time at McGregor Range in wartime, which will require increased
16 support staff and facilities. Mobilization personnel requirements have been estimated at up to 27,500 or
17 slightly more than the strength of the installation in 1990. However, it is not possible at this time to
18 definitively predict utility demand at McGregor Range by the potential number of additional personnel or
19 the length of their stay.

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21 Increased water and power demand could result in increased purchases from El Paso to approximate the
22 1990 levels and probably would require installation of additional lines to new locations. Expansion of
23 existing wastewater treatment systems and installation of new systems in other areas of McGregor Range
24 would be required. The USAF selected the Otero Mesa site on McGregor Range for its tactical target
25 complex. There would be a significant increase in the amount of inert/subscale munitions expended on
26 McGregor Range. Maintenance of the complex would result in a 30 percent increase (approximately
27 150,000 pounds per year) in the generation of nonhazardous scrap metal for the HAFB DRMO (USAF,
28 1998). This scrap metal increase would be significant for the HAFB DRMO, but would not pose an
29 environmental threat or create additional environmental impacts on the Fort Bliss Training Complex or at
30 HAFB. Increased solid waste disposal from possible future activities would require additional deliveries to
31 the landfill near the Main Cantonment Area.

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33 **4.4.2 Alternative 2**

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35 Under this alternative, most current mission activities as well as most of the future increases in activities
36 and construction as described in Section 2.1.1 would not be affected. Consequently, increased demands on
37 utilities would be similar or slightly less than under Alternative 1.

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39 **4.4.3 Alternative 3**

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41 Under this alternative, current mission activities that use the Sacramento Mountains and Otero Mesa
42 would be constrained or reduced, and some of the future increases in activities and construction as
43 described in Section 2.1.1 would not be supportable under this alternative. Consequently, increased
44 demands on utilities would be similar or slightly less than under Alternative 1.

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46 **4.4.4 Alternative 4**

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48 Under this alternative, current mission activities that use the area north of New Mexico Highway 506 and
49 Otero Mesa would be constrained or reduced. Many future increases in activities and construction as
50 described in Section 2.1.1 would not be supportable under this alternative, probably resulting in a small
51 decrease in utility requirements.

1 **4.4.5 Alternative 5 – No Action**

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3 Under this alternative, installation facilities on McGregor Range would be closed, with the exception of the
4 McGregor Range Camp, McGregor ASP, and Meyer Range. Utility use for military purposes would be
5 reduced.

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7 **4.4.6 Alternative 6**

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9 Under this alternative, impacts to utilities would be the same as under Alternative 3, 4, or 5, depending on
10 the portion of the range that will continue to be withdrawn beyond 2001.

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12 **4.4.7 Cumulative Impacts**

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14 There are no cumulative impacts relating to utilities on McGregor Range, other than those relating to water
15 supply. The El Paso/Fort Bliss regional water supply is affected by the cumulative effects of groundwater
16 pumpage, mostly by El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Pumpage from the Hueco Bolson
17 aquifer exceeds recharge, which means that the aquifer is in overdraft condition and is experiencing
18 accelerated rates of water-level decline (see Section 4.7). The lowering of water levels in the aquifer has
19 permitted the infiltration of salt water into the fresh-water zones. It is estimated that the aquifer will be
20 exhausted of recoverable fresh water between 2013 and 2025, which could result in a water-supply
21 shortage in the area. Although municipal water will continue to be available from other sources, a short
22 supply could increase costs to customers, including Fort Bliss. All water used for military purposes on
23 McGregor Range is purchased by Fort Bliss from El Paso. No other utility is expected to experience
24 noticeable cumulative effects.

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26 **4.4.8 Mitigation**

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28 In the absence of significantly adverse effects, mitigation will not be required for utilities, with the
29 exception of water supply. The impact on water supply is primarily a water resource problem. Mitigation
30 of water resources is discussed in Section 4.7.8.

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32 **4.4.9 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources**

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34 No irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources would occur.
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