

**McGregor Range Land Withdrawal
Legislative Environmental Impact Statement**

COVER SHEET

a. Responsible Agency: U.S. Army, Fort Bliss

b. Proposals and Actions: McGregor Range, located in Otero County, New Mexico, has supported the military mission of the U.S. Army at Fort Bliss from the 1940s to the present. In 1986, the public lands comprising McGregor Range were withdrawn from the public domain for a period of 15 years through the *Military Lands Withdrawal Act* (Public Law 99-606). This withdrawal expires November 6, 2001. To continue the military use of these public lands, the U.S. Army must apply for continuation of the withdrawal in accordance with the *Engle Act of 1958*, which requires an Act of Congress for military withdrawals encompassing more than 5,000 acres. This *Legislative Environmental Impact Statement* has been prepared in support of an application by the U.S. Army to renew the withdrawal of McGregor Range for military use. The Army's application for renewal of the McGregor Range withdrawal is for the 50-year period 2001 through 2051. The Army considered six Alternatives. Under Alternative 1, the Army's proposed action, the boundaries of McGregor Range would be the same as the 1986 withdrawal where 608,385 acres of public land are withdrawn. Under Alternative 2, the Tularosa Basin and Otero Mesa portions of McGregor Range would be withdrawn for continued military use (568,385 acres). The Sacramento Mountains foothills portion of McGregor Range, including the Culp Canyon Wilderness Study Area, would return to the public domain. Under Alternative 3, the Tularosa Basin portion of McGregor Range would be withdrawn for military use (428,385 acres). The Otero Mesa and Sacramento Mountains foothills portions of the range would return to the public domain. Under Alternative 4, only the portion of the Tularosa Basin south of New Mexico Highway 506 would be withdrawn (364,385 acres). No portion of McGregor Range north of New Mexico Highway 506 and on Otero Mesa would be withdrawn for military use. Under Alternative 5, the No Action Alternative, the withdrawal of McGregor Range would not be renewed. Alternative 6 would require separate congressional action to establish a National Conservation Area on Otero Mesa and designate Culp Canyon as a wilderness area, in addition to the return of Otero Mesa and the Sacramento Mountains foothills portion of McGregor Range to the public domain.

c. Comments and Inquiries: Written comments regarding this document should be directed to:

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d. Designation: *Legislative Environmental Impact Statement*

e. Abstract: This *Legislative Environmental Impact Statement* has been prepared in accordance with the *National Environmental Policy Act*. The document includes analyses of the potential environmental consequences that the alternative actions may have on land use, airspace, transportation, utilities, earth resources, air quality, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, socioeconomics, environmental justice, noise, safety, and hazardous substances and waste. The findings indicate that potential environmental impacts from the proposed actions and the alternatives may include changes to land use, and some impacts to biological resources and cultural resources.

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