



# DEFENDING THE MILITARY MISSION

AT EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE

June 2017

## Fact Sheet 4 of 6

This fact sheet summarizes the information that is presented in more detail in the Sonoran Institute report titled Evaluating Encroachment Pressures on the Military Mission in the California Desert Region.

This document should be paired with Fact Sheet 1, which includes recommendations that apply broadly across the five studied military facilities in the California Desert region.

The report is available at <http://www.tiny.cc/CalDesertMilitary>

## The Military Mission and Environmental Health are Intertwined

Edwards AFB, California, located in the northwestern Mojave Desert, is both a benefit to the Air Force, and an irreplaceable national asset. The 412th Test Wing is the host wing for Edwards AFB, the second largest base in the Air Force. Edwards AFB had an estimated economic impact to the local area of \$1.61 billion in FY 2015. This valuation includes a payroll of about \$667 million, expenditures of \$373 million, and support for 10,580 indirect jobs at a value of \$570 million. (pg. 13)

## Key Findings and Recommendations

An analysis of Edwards AFB and the surrounding area identified the following concerns that may present a current or reasonably foreseeable encroachment threat. Each key finding is referenced by number in the map on page 3.

### Urban development is expected to result in direct encroachment (g. 21)

1. Some direct encroachment within military Special Use Airspace (SUA) and Military Training Routes (MTRs) is occurring around California City, Lancaster, and Victorville that should be carefully watched.
2. Directly to the west of the facility is some rural development that can lead to complaints from residents and challenges related to community support.
3. Water challenges in the region could lead to a long-term degradation of the popularity of the base, especially in a future where water is scarcer due to climate change.
4. Indirect encroachment is occurring through the fragmentation of the Mojave Desert landscape on the north, west, and south of the facility.

### Recommendations:

- Work with nearby communities through a Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) to promote compatible development within urbanizing areas like California City, Victorville, and Lancaster.
- Continue efforts to preserve habitat connectivity between Edwards AFB and the surrounding Mojave Desert ecoregion.





- Continue to proactively engage in ground water resource planning with the surrounding communities to promote sustainable urban planning and water use.

**Renewable energy is expected to result in indirect encroachment (pg. 31)**

5. Some encroachment concerns may still exist, including a series of Development Focus Areas (DFAs) near to the base and within Special Use Airspace.
6. Some DFAs are occurring within the important biological connectivity areas between Edwards AFB and the broader Mojave Desert ecoregion.

Recommendations:

- Ensure that each Renewable Energy project is evaluated to prevent encroachment pressures from occurring.
- Continue participation in the Desert Managers Group to foster more dialogue in efforts to study the importance of preserving connectivity of key regional species.
- Monitor renewable energy projects to prevent a concentration of them in wildlife corridors which could contribute to the long-term isolation of the facility.

**Electrical transmission is expected to result in indirect encroachment (pg. 39)**

7. The addition of numerous new transmission lines could hamper the movement of flora and fauna between the installation and the broader Mojave Desert ecoregion.

Recommendation: Bureau of Land Management regional transmission planning should occur that will focus development in areas of least impact to natural resources and biological connectivity.

**Mining is expected to result in indirect encroachment (pg. 49)**

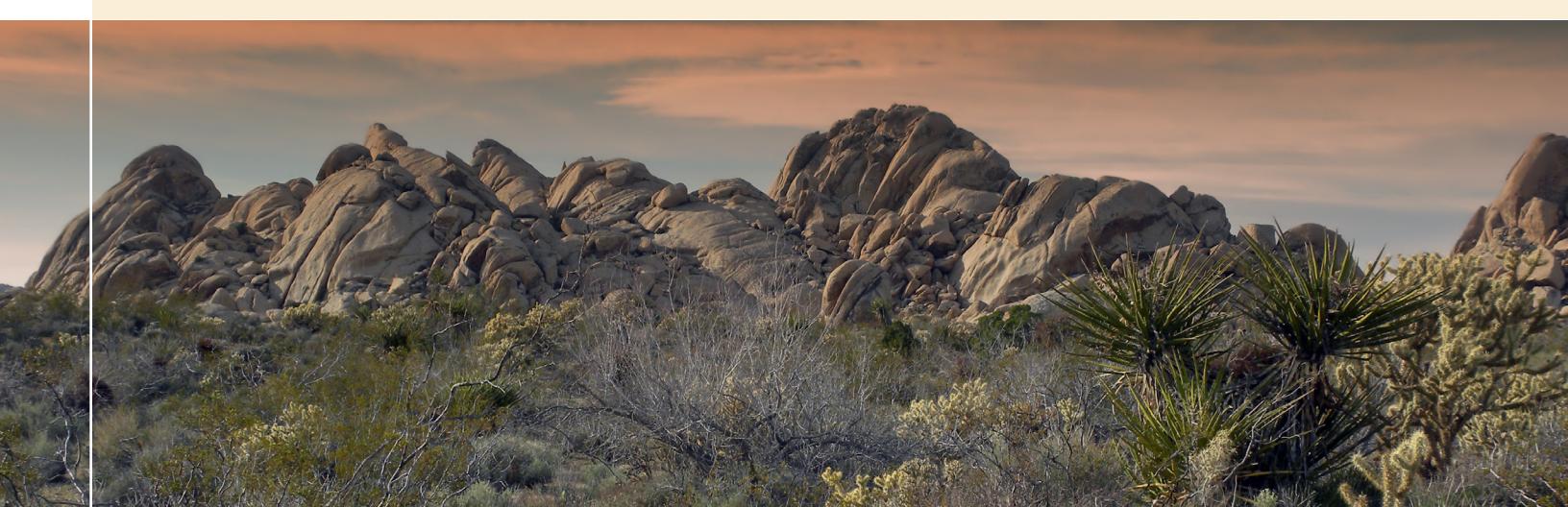
8. Any significant expansion of mining activity near the installation could contribute to further fragmentation of wildlife habitat.
9. Mining activity within habitat occupied by protected species can lead to degradation and can cause indirect and long-term impacts to the conservation success of species that live on military lands.

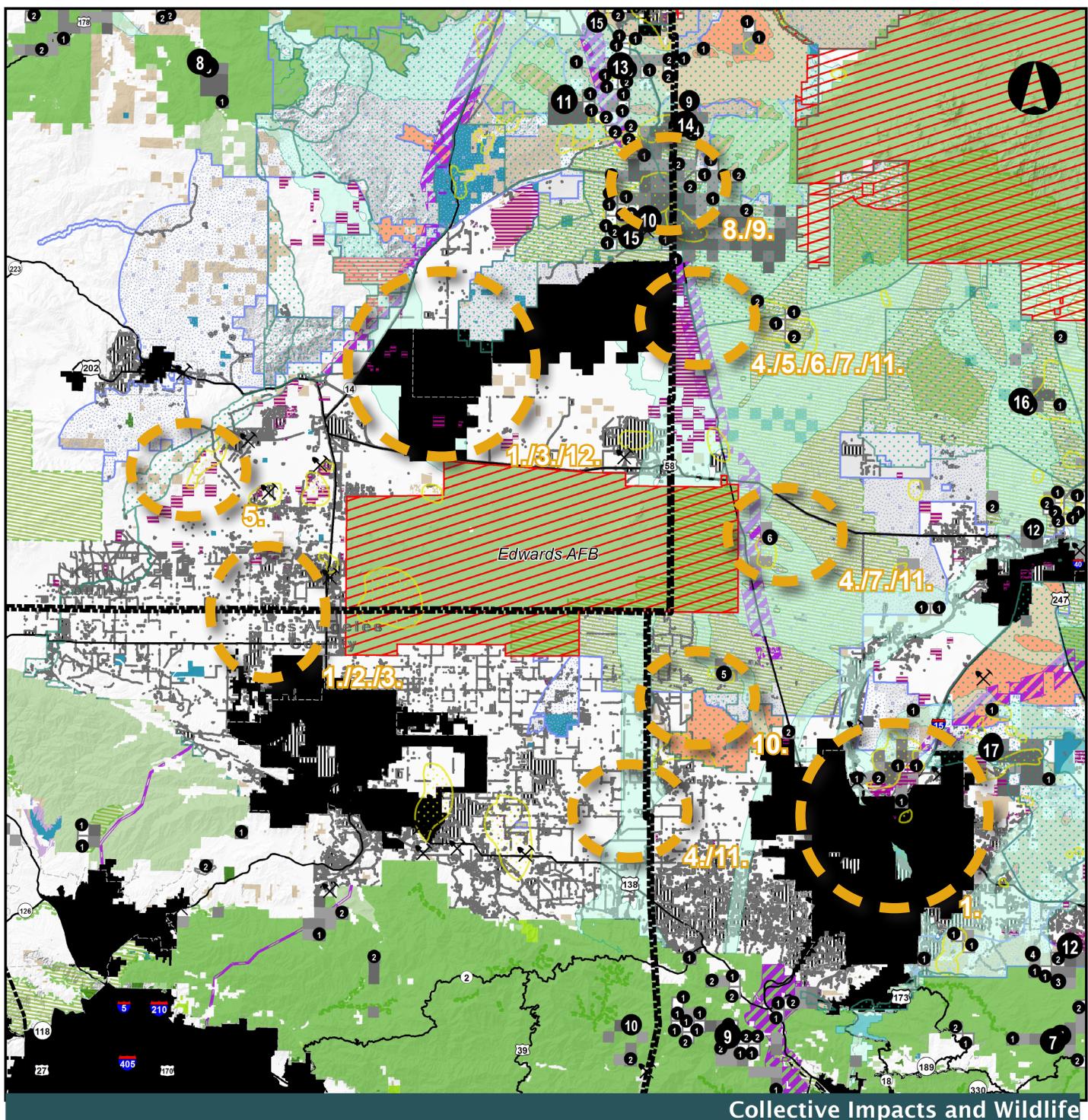
Recommendation: Advocate for expeditious action by the Bureau of Land Management to evaluate the withdrawal of appropriate public lands from new mining exploration.

**Recreation activity is expected to result in indirect encroachment (pg. 58)**

10. Off-road Highway Vehicle (OHV) areas and dispersed OHV use around Edwards AFB present an opportunity for a range of indirect encroachment concerns, including the fragmentation of the landscape.

Recommendation: The wildlife corridors around Edwards AFB should be managed to reduce the impact of recreational activities.





#### Legend

Cal Desert Counties	Open OHV Areas	Wildlife Linkage	County
Military Facility	West-wide Energy Corridor	Wilderness Area	Number of active mining claims
Major Roads	Development	Critical Habitat	1 - 2
City Limits 2010	Focus Area (All Technologies)	Wildland Blocks	3 - 6
Urban Areas	Variance	California Lands Association	7 - 17
Impervious Built-up Land	Process Lands	BLM	18 - 122
Recreation management areas	Area of Critical Environmental Concern	USFS	High Potential
		NPS	Mineral Locations
		State Private	Active Mines
		City	



1:750,000



### Natural resource management is expected to result in indirect encroachment (pg. 69)

11. Preserving natural resources around the installation while maintaining biological connectivity with the broader landscape is a challenge.
12. Despite recent adjudication that solidifies its Edward AFBs rights to a known amount of groundwater, changes in climate and the uncertainty of the actualized water distribution present an ongoing challenge.

#### Recommendations:

- Continue to monitor natural resource management activities and policies around the installation and keep the Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan (INRMP) up to date.
- Continue participating in planning and activities that serve to protect threatened and endangered species.
- Take a proactive role to preserve habitat connectivity for flora and fauna in the broader region.
- Continue participating in the Desert Managers Group to forward ongoing collaboration with regional military facilities and other interested parties around natural resource issues
- Monitor water resource issues in order to preserve water-reliant ecosystem function and the supplies needed to achieve military missions.

To learn more about our efforts to preserve military missions through environmental stewardship, visit our website or contact:

Ian Dowdy, AICP  
Director, Sun Corridor Program  
[idowdy@sonoraninstitute.org](mailto:idowdy@sonoraninstitute.org)

## Support the Sonoran Institute

Your support preserves the environment for future generations and makes a lasting impact in communities across Western North America. Learn more about how you can help at [SonoranInstitute.org/donate](http://SonoranInstitute.org/donate).

## The Mission of the Sonoran Institute

The Sonoran Institute's mission is to connect people and communities with the natural resources that nourish and sustain them. We work at the nexus of commerce, community, and conservation to help people in the North American West build the communities they want to live in while preserving the values which brought them here. We envision a West where civil dialogue and collaboration are hallmarks of decision making, where people and wildlife live in harmony, and where clean water, air, and energy are assured.

## Connect With Us

Go to [SonoranInstitute.org](http://SonoranInstitute.org) to learn about our programs, history, and recent news.

Or find us on Social Media:

- [facebook.com/sonoraninstitute](https://facebook.com/sonoraninstitute)
- [@sonoraninstitute](https://twitter.com/sonoraninstitute)
- [SonoranInstituteFlix](https://www.youtube.com/SonoranInstituteFlix)
- [@sonoraninstitute](https://instagram.com/sonoraninstitute)

