

DEFENDING THE MILITARY MISSION

AT FORT IRWIN NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER

June 2017

Fact Sheet 5 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

The Fort Irwin National Training Center is located in the Mojave Desert in northern San Bernardino County, California, and is one of the preeminent institutions of its kind in the world. Its mission is to provide arms training, assist commanders in developing trained leaders and soldiers, and identify unit training deficiencies. According to the report prepared by the RAND Corporation about the Army's local economic effects, Fort Irwin, California, has a baseline population of 4,658 permanent soldiers, and 881 army civilians. (pg. 14)

Key Findings and Recommendations

An analysis of Fort Irwin NTC 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 indirect encroachments (pg. 23)

1. Incremental and persistent urban development occurring in the surrounding communities increases competition for water and other resources in the region. This could affect the sustainability of Fort Irwin NTC and result in indirect encroachment

Recommendation:

Engage in a regional dialogue with other land use agencies on the long-term sustainability of water resources in the area. This includes conservation of water in agricultural operations and development activities.

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

2. Renewable energy projects could be permitted in nearby Development Focus Areas, resulting in long-term impacts to water resources. As such, this issue remains a concern for indirect encroachment.

Recommendation:

- Continued evaluation of new renewable energy projects to prevent encroachment pressures from occurring.



Electrical transmission is expected to result in indirect encroachment (pg. 42)

3. The addition of new transmission infrastructure near Fort Irwin NTC presents a possibility for additional encroachment concerns to ongoing military operations.
4. Development within West-wide Energy Corridors (WWECs) could contribute to fragmentation and isolation of Mojave Desert habitat.

Recommendations:

- Fort Irwin NTC and other affected facilities in the California Desert should be aware of the impact of a concentration of additional electrical transmission lines that could be placed within WWECs in the area.
- Support regional transmission planning efforts to focus development in areas of least impact to natural resources and biological connectivity. A concentration of transmission lines should be avoided in mapped wildlife corridors.

Mining is expected to result in direct encroachment (pg. 52)

5. Nearby existing iron ore mining activity presents a direct encroachment concern due to trucking

operations, blasting, lighting, noise, dust, electromagnetic interference, and/or other impairment to military operations.

6. To the north, west and south of Fort Irwin NTC, the concentration of mining activity, as evidenced by mining claims, presents a barrier to successful biological connectivity corridors.

Recommendation:

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

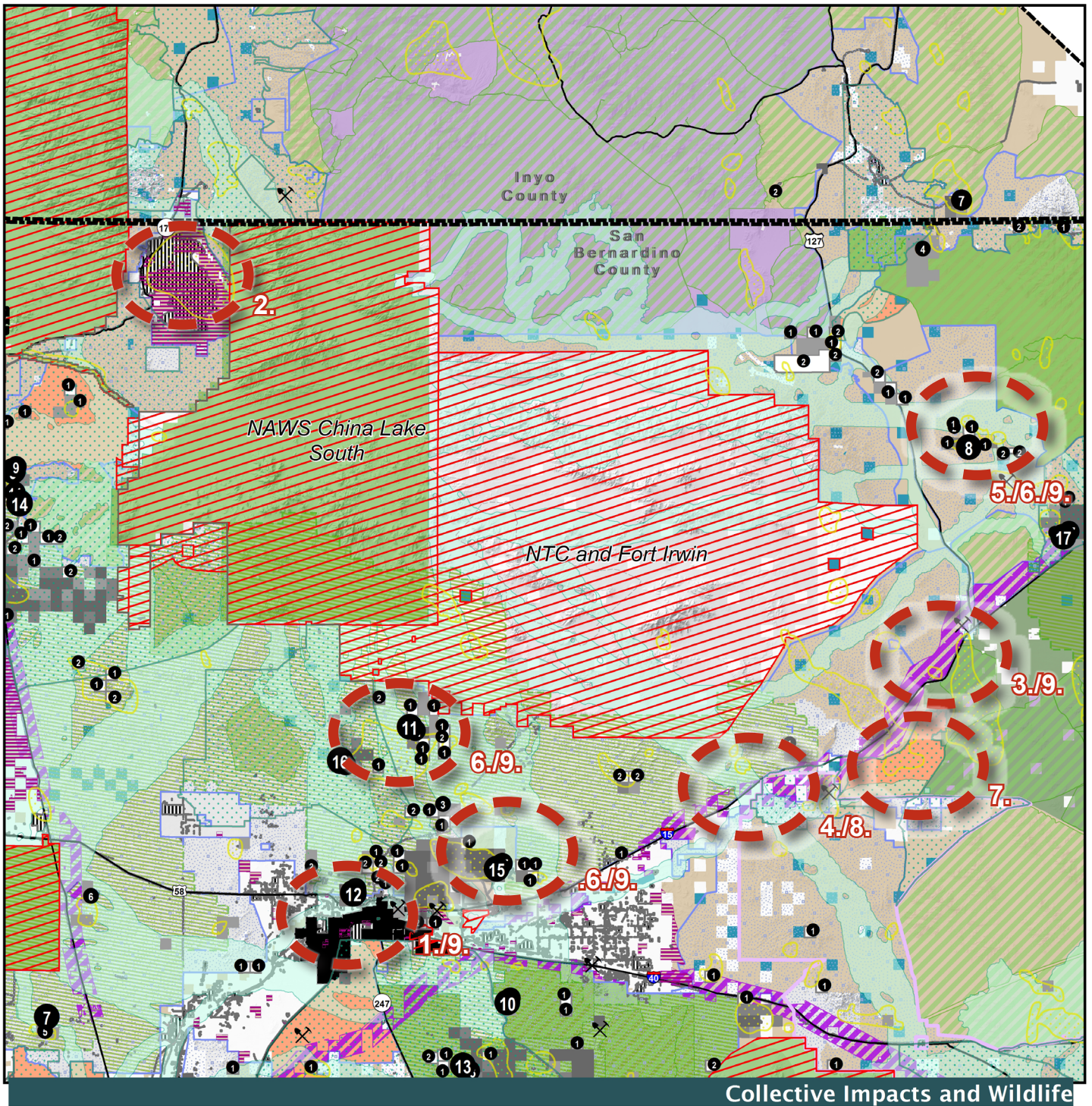
Recreation activity is expected to result in direct encroachment (pg. 61)






























7. The BLM OHV area south of Fort Irwin NTC is close to the installation and can increase the likelihood of trespassing and other direct encroachment concerns.

Recommendations:

- Continue to work closely with the BLM and the County of San Bernardino to ensure that recreation activities respect the boundaries of the military installation.
- Manage wildlife corridors around Fort Irwin NTC to reduce the impact of recreational activities.





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



Natural resource management is expected to result in indirect encroachment (pg. 71)

8. Development and management actions may contribute both direct and indirect pressures to ongoing military activities and challenge the military mission that rely on this landscape.
9. Transmission line development and mining activities may also contribute additional fragmentation of habitat in region.

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 participation in planning and activities that serve to protect threatened and endangered species such as the Mojave Desert tortoise and the Mohave ground squirrel.
- Take a proactive role to preserve habitat connectivity for flora and fauna in the broader region, as it may be that current management policies are insufficient to achieve this goal.
- 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:

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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.

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.

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