



United States Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service

Arizona Ecological Services Field Office
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In Reply Refer To:

AESO/SE
2-21-95-F-114

March 18, 1998

Colonel Craig J. Turner
U.S. Marine Corps Air Station
Yuma, Arizona 85369-5001

Re. Request for Amended Biological and Conference Opinion

Dear Colonel Turner:

This responds to your facsimile request dated March 13, 1998, for modification of the *Biological and Conference Opinion of Existing and Proposed Activities by Marine Corps Air Station - Yuma in the Arizona Portion of the Yuma Training Range Complex*, issued April 17, 1996. The project description in the biological and conference opinion was lacking in description of the use of the Stoval abandoned auxiliary airfield site for use in training operations in support of the semi-annual Weapons Tactics Instructor (WTI) course.

The following addition to the project description would apply to and become additional paragraphs to the paragraph under #8, Ground Support Areas, on page 7 of the biological opinion.

Military exercises in the vicinity of Stoval Field include deployments involving an average of 90-170 people, a variety of wheeled vehicles, communication systems, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), Helicopters and KC-130 aircraft. The field is accessed via an established road. Most training exercises take place within or in the immediate vicinity of the triangular airfield's perimeter, but units dispersed along the access road to the north as necessary. Training exercises consist of bringing personnel and vehicles, with or without towed equipment, into the area and establishing a camp or bivouac site using tents or other temporary shelters. These exercises may involve movement by foot or using vehicles and can include digging small trenches for inter-camp power lines and communications circuits for safety purposes. Helicopter and KC-130 operations occur on the field itself while UAV flights originate and terminate at

the VMU site located within the Stoval Field boundaries. The following list details the sites employed during WTI:

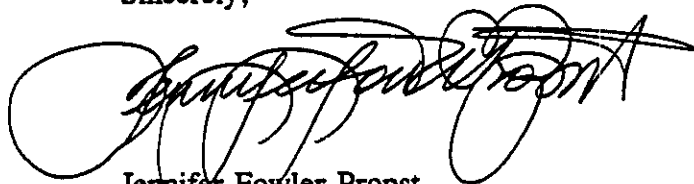
<u>SITE</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>PERSONNEL</u>	<u>DURATION</u>
A	MWCS	3	5 weeks
B or E	DASC	39	1 week
C	VMU	88	5 weeks
D	ATC	36	10 days
F	FARP	40	10-12 hours

The activities described above will be subject to the same environmental controls governing all land-based activities on the range to ensure minimal impacts and are consistent with the 41 other ground support areas.

Use of this area was evaluated by the Service in its Biological and Conference Opinion. The Service has determined that there are no additional effects not already anticipated in the Biological and Conference Opinion from this modification. Therefore, the Biological and Conference Opinion and the Incidental Take Statement remain unchanged and there is no need for reinitiation of formal consultation as none of the four conditions for reinitiation have been met. This letter should be kept with your administrative records for this consultation to ensure that this aspect of your actions is covered under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. The above statements are provided in accordance with the Endangered Species Act (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

We appreciate your conscientious efforts toward conservation of threatened and endangered species. If you have any questions, please contact Ted Cordery or Tom Gatz.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Fowler-Propst
Acting Field Supervisor

cc: Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, NM (ES)
Colonel David White, Luke Air Force Base, AZ

Director, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Phoenix, AZ