

NEVADA WILDERNESS PROPOSALS

MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS

ISSUE: Nevada's natural resources provide many opportunities to designate unique wilderness areas. Realistic training is critical to ensuring that the men and women of our armed forces are prepared when the nation calls them to action. Preparing these men and women for war requires they have access to training areas, both on Department of Defense and other federal lands. As the numbers of federal lands designated as wilderness increases, so does the risk of losing valuable training areas.

Nevada is also home to Department of Defense bases, military ranges and training areas that are unique assets, integral to the nation's military training and testing in support of military operations. Retaining mission flexibility on public lands is critical to maintaining military readiness. The military mission can be conducted in a manner with minimal impacts on existing and future wilderness areas.

BACKGROUND: The military utilizes public lands and associated air space for training and testing. These activities and associated military personnel support both our national security and assist state and local governments during major disasters and emergencies.

To meet these requirements, the military operates fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft above and around wilderness areas. Military Training Routes allow the low-level, high-speed flying required to prepare for combat. When practicing combat tactics and search and rescue maneuvers, helicopters fly at treetop level and practice touch-and-go landings to hone the pilot's skills.

The benefits of this training go beyond military operations. Fighting wild fires from the air is just one of the activities carried out by the military in support of civil authorities. Air lifting of disaster relief supplies, delivery of relief personnel, search and rescue, and emergency evacuation all benefit from military training.

The Clark County Conservation of Public Lands and Natural Resources Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-282), contained language allowing limited continued military use of the wilderness areas designated in that act. Certain necessary military uses could be impaired under a strict interpretation of the language in the 2002 Act, which did not address military ground-based operations. It is vital that wilderness legislation include language that clearly lays out the intent of Congress on the compatibility between wilderness and the military mission, including sufficient specifics on over-flights and ground-based activities.

REQUESTED ACTION: The military is committed to safeguarding our nation and its natural resources. Request any recommendations made by the Nevada legislature on Congressional wilderness legislation include specific language aimed at protecting current and future military operations on wilderness land and in airspace over wilderness.

REGIONAL POINTS OF CONTACT:

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EXHIBIT E Wilderness

Document consists of 1 page.

☒ Entire document provided.

☐ Due to size limitations, pages _____ provided. A copy of the complete document is available through the Research Library (775/684-6827) or e-mail library@lcb.state.nv.us.

Meeting Date: June 11, 2004