

Final

**Acquisition of Resort Property
Located in Indian Springs, Nevada
Environmental Assessment**



Prepared for

Nellis AFB, NV

December 2011

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACM	Asbestos-Containing Material	L	Liter
AFB	Air Force Base	LBP	Lead-Based Paint
AFRPA	Air Force Real Property Agency	MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
AFI	Air Force Instruction	mg/L	Milligrams per Liter
AFOSH	Air Force Occupational Safety and Health	mL	Milliliter
AFPD	Air Force Policy Directive	MSL	Mean Sea Level
APE	Area of Potential Effect	MUTCD	Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
AQI	Air Quality Index	NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
ASB01	Asbestos Abatement Form	NCSS	National Cooperative Soil Survey
AST	Aboveground Storage Tank	NDOT	Nevada Department of Transportation
AT/FP	Antiterrorism/Force Protection	NDOW	Nevada Department of Wildlife
CAA	Clean Air Act	NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
CCDCP	Clark County Department of Comprehensive Planning	NESHAP	National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality	NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act	NO ₂	Nitrogen Dioxide
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	NOA	Notice of Availability
CO	Carbon Monoxide	NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
CWA	Clean Water Act	NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
DAQEM	Department of Air Quality and Environmental Management	NTTR	Nevada Test and Training Range
dBa	Decibel	NV	Nevada
DoD	Department of Defense	O ₃	Ozone
DNL	Day-Night Average A-Weighted Sound Level	OCO	Overseas Contingency Operations
EA	Environmental Assessment	OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
EBS	Environmental Baseline Survey	Pb	Lead
EIAP	Environmental Impact Analysis Process	PCB	Polychlorinated Biphenyl
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement	PL	Public Law
EO	Executive Order	PM	Particulate Matter
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency	POL	Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricant
ERP	Environmental Restoration Program	ppb	Parts per Billion
ESA	Endangered Species Act	ppm	Parts per Million
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration	RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency	RFCD	Regional Flood Control District
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact	ROI	Region of Influence
IICEP	Interagency and Intergovernmental Coordination for Environmental Planning	SARA	Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act
		SO ₂	Sulfur Dioxide
		SSC	Species of Special Concern

UAS	Unmanned Aerial Systems
UFC	Unified Facilities Criteria
UNLV	University of Nevada, Las Vegas
URBEMIS	Urban Emissions Model
U.S.	United States
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USAF	United States Air Force
USC	United States Code
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
UST	Underground Storage Tank

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

1.0 NAME OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA) FOR ACQUISITION OF RESORT PROPERTY IN INDIAN SPRINGS, NEVADA

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action includes acquisition of approximately 16.9 acres of resort property in Indian Springs, Nevada. The activities associated with the acquisition would include the demolition of all existing privately owned buildings and structures, underground fuel tank abatement, land restoration, and construction of a new boundary fence along the perimeter of the proposed land to be acquired.

Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1, the USAF proposes to acquire 11.75 acres through a partial leasehold interest with a 175-foot stand-off. This alternative would include the demolition of all privately owned buildings and structures, underground fuel tank abatement, land restoration, and construction of a new boundary fence, which may be performed in whole or in part as determined through the lease terms and conditions. The remaining parcel of 5.15 acres, which includes the casino, hotel, and gas station, would not be demolished. Approximately 1.75 acres currently located west of the hotel could be reserved as a public access park, which would be available for use by the Indian Springs community.

Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, the USAF proposes to acquire a partial stand-off easement from the ownership of the property. This 3.2-acre easement extends 125 feet on the west and 65 feet on the north. The work associated with this alternative would include removal or demolition of the existing boundary fence, buildings, and improvements that are located in the easement area, as well as the construction of a new perimeter fence and the installation of landscaping on the proposed acquired land.

Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3, the 16.9 acres would not be acquired, and surveillance/monitoring of the area would continue. In addition, the existing perimeter fence would be renovated, or a new perimeter fence would be constructed. Due to the fact that this alternative would not increase the footprint of Creech AFB, it would not require the removal or demolition of any buildings on the property. However, since the USAF is not acquiring any land, this alternative would not accomplish the goal of increasing the security buffer on the south boundary of the base.

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, there would be a negative impact to the USAF due to Creech AFB's inability to comply with Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection guidelines. There would be no impact to the 16.9-acre property, as it would remain in its present condition.

3.0 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The EA provides an analysis of the potential environmental consequences resulting from implementing the Proposed Action and Alternative Actions. Nine resource categories were thoroughly analyzed to identify potential impacts. According to the analysis in this EA, implementation of the Proposed Action or Alternative Actions would not result in significant impacts to any resource category or significantly affect existing conditions at Creech AFB or Indian Springs, NV. The following summarizes and highlights the results of the analysis that initial evaluation indicated could be affected by the Proposed and Alternative Actions.

Land Use. Under the Proposed Action and Alternative 1, Creech AFB would benefit due to the increased security buffer provided by the change in land use; however, moderate negative impacts would occur to the town of Indian Springs because the project area comprises a considerable portion of the commercially zoned land in the town. Under Alternative 2, Creech AFB would minimally benefit from the small security buffer, and negative impacts to Indian Springs land use would be minimal since the majority of the land would still be available and used for commercial/residential purposes. Alternative 3 would create minimal change in land use for Creech AFB and Indian Springs. The No Action Alternative would create no changes in land use for both Creech AFB and Indian Springs.

Socioeconomics. Under the Proposed Action, there would be short-term positive effects on the town of Indian Springs due to the creation of jobs for demolition and construction. However, there would be moderate negative effects to employment and the local economy because the businesses currently occupying the land would be closed. Under Alternatives 1 and 2, short-term, positive effects would be similar to the proposed action, and since the businesses currently occupying the space would remain open, no long-term impacts would occur. No changes would occur to socioeconomics under Alternative 3 and the No Action Alternative.

Cultural Resources. Overall, there would be no adverse effects to cultural resources under the Proposed Action or any of the alternative actions. In the event that any cultural resources are found during demolition and construction, procedures will be in place to minimize any potential impacts.

Biological Resources. There would be no adverse impacts to vegetation, wildlife, wetlands, or special status species from implementation of the Proposed Action or any of the alternative actions. Disturbed vegetation would be kept to the minimum required to complete the project, and restoration would occur upon completion. Wildlife and wetlands would not be significantly affected since there is very little significant habitat available, and there are no wetlands near the project area. The site does not include known desert tortoise or burrowing owl habitat, and it is highly unlikely that either species would be present in the project area due to continued disturbance and activity in the area.

Water and Soil Resources. Water and soil resources would not be adversely affected under implementation of the Proposed Action or any of the alternative actions. The potential effects on water quality would be mitigated by using standard construction practices. Soil at the site would be temporarily disturbed, but no long-term effects would occur. Therefore, any effects to water and soil resources would be considered minimal.

Air Quality. Under the Proposed Action or any of the alternative actions, there would not be any significant effects to air quality. Both Indian Springs and Creech AFB are considered in attainment for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) criteria air pollutants. Since the estimated emissions during demolition and construction would be below NAAQS, effects to air quality are considered minimal.

Hazardous Materials and Waste. There is a possibility of short-term negative effects to hazardous materials and waste due to the presence of asbestos containing material

(ACM) and underground storage tanks (USTs) under the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2. Since ACM is present on site, an asbestos abatement professional should be on-site to ensure proper removal and disposal. In addition, the removal of the USTs should be performed by professionals to ensure the site is not contaminated by the contents. With careful action by professionals, any environmental effects due to hazardous materials would be minimal. No impacts would occur under Alternative 3 and the No Action Alternative.

Safety. Under the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, Alternative 2, and Alternative 3, there are potential short-term safety concerns during demolition and construction. However, by coordinating with the Creech AFB safety officer and following USAF and OSHA safety requirements, any effects to compromise safety would be minimal.

Noise. Noise levels would not be adversely affected by the implementation of the Proposed Action and the alternative actions. The demolition and construction activities would increase the noise levels; however, this increase would be short-term and would have a minimal effect on noise levels. In the long-term, noise levels at the project site would remain unchanged.

4.0 FINDINGS

Finding of No Significant Impact: Based on information and analysis presented in the EA, conducted in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act as amended, the Council on Environmental Quality regulations, and USAF implementing regulations set forth in 32 CFR 989, *Environmental Impact Analysis Process*, and review of the public and agency comments submitted during the 30-day public comment period, I conclude that implementation of the Proposed Action and any of the alternative actions would not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human or natural environment. For these reasons, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is warranted and preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for this action.



STEVEN D. GARLAND
Colonel, USAF
Commander

14 DEC 11

Date

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Environmental Assessment (EA) is to assess the potential environmental effects of the U.S. Air Force (USAF) acquiring land in Indian Springs, NV adjacent to Creech Air Force Base (AFB) in efforts to meet Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP) regulations. The subject property is the privately owned Indian Springs Casino Resort. This EA examines several Alternatives that would increase Force Protection at Creech AFB, including the No Action Alternative, and the impacts each alternative could have on the natural, social, and economic environments.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION

The purpose of this action is to acquire private property in Indian Springs, Nevada to secure the USAF mission at Creech AFB. Mission expansions in recent years have identified the need to increase the security buffer along the south boundary of Creech AFB. The Unified Facilities Criteria (UFC) 4-010-01 establishes minimum standards for buffer distances from building to boundary to protect USAF personnel and assets. Expanding the security buffer would ensure that the security of facilities and personnel is maintained in accordance with AT/FP guidelines.

PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action: Acquisition of the Entire Indian Springs Casino Resort Property

The Proposed Action includes the acquisition of approximately 16.9 acres of resort property in Indian Springs, Nevada. The activities associated with the acquisition would include the demolition of all existing privately owned buildings and structures (trailer park, casino, hotel, gas station and other buildings), underground fuel tank abatement, land restoration, and construction of a new boundary fence along the perimeter of the proposed land to be acquired.

Alternative 1: Partial Lease (11.75 acres)

Under Alternative 1, the USAF proposes to acquire 11.75 acres through a partial leasehold interest with a 175 foot stand-off. Through this lease action, the associated work (demolition of all existing privately owned buildings and structures [trailer park], underground fuel tank abatement, land restoration, and construction of a new boundary fence) may be performed in whole or in part as determined through the lease terms and conditions. The remainder parcel consisting of 5.15 acres, which includes the casino, hotel, and gas station, would not be demolished. Approximately 1.75 acres currently located immediately west of the hotel could be reserved as a public access park.

Alternative 2: Partial Stand-Off Easement

Under Alternative 2, the USAF proposes to acquire a partial stand-off easement from the ownership of the property. This 3.2-acre easement extends 125 feet on the west and 65 feet on the north from the existing installation perimeter. The work associated with this alternative would include removal or demolition of buildings and improvements that are located in the easement area, as well as the construction of a new perimeter fence and the installation of landscaping on the proposed acquired land.

Alternative 3: Continuation of Surveillance, Renovation of Existing Perimeter Fence or Construction of New Perimeter Fence

Under Alternative 3, the USAF proposes to continue the surveillance of the area, renovate the existing perimeter fence, or construct a new perimeter fence. This alternative would not increase the footprint of the facility.

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, the USAF would not acquire any of the resort property and would not modify or build a perimeter fence. This alternative would leave Creech AFB in non-compliance with AT/FP requirements and potentially jeopardize National Security by leaving base personnel, base resources, and the Creech AFB mission vulnerable to potential security threats.

MITIGATING MEASURES

In accordance with 32 CFR 989.22, the USAF must indicate if any mitigation measures would be needed to implement the Proposed Action. However, no mitigation measures would be needed to arrive at a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) if the Proposed Action or any of the alternatives were selected for implementation.

SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

This EA provides an analysis of the potential environmental consequences resulting from implementation of the Proposed Action or the Alternatives. Nine resource categories were analyzed to identify potential impacts: land use; socioeconomics; cultural resources; biological resources; water and soil resources; air quality; hazardous materials and waste; safety and occupational health; and noise. According to the analysis in this EA, implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives would result in no significant environmental impacts in any resource category. Implementing the proposed action would not significantly affect existing conditions at Creech AFB or Indian Springs, NV. The following Table ES-1 summarizes and highlights the results of the analysis by resource category.

Table ES-1
Summary of Potential Environmental Consequences

Resource Effects	Proposed Action and Alternatives
Land Use	<i>Proposed Action:</i> Beneficial long-term effects for Creech AFB due to the increased security buffer provided by the change in land use; moderate negative effects to Indian Springs land use because the project area makes up a considerable portion of the commercially zoned land in the town. <i>Alternative 1:</i> Beneficial long-term effects for Creech AFB due to the increased security buffer provided by the change in land use; minimal negative effects to land use would occur in Indian Springs since the acquired land would not reduce the utility of the remainder of the property for commercial purposes. <i>Alternative 2:</i> Minimal beneficial effects for Creech AFB because of the small portion of land acquired; minimal negative effects to Indian Springs land use since the majority of the land would still be used for commercial/residential purposes. <i>Alternative 3:</i> Long-term negative effects for Creech AFB due to the lack of a security buffer; negligible effects to land use would occur in Indian Springs since the land would still be used for commercial/ residential purposes. <i>No-Action Alternative:</i> No change from current conditions.
Socioeconomics	<i>Proposed Action:</i> Short-term, positive effects due to creation of jobs for demolition/construction; negative effects to employment and the local economy due to businesses in the project area being shut down, and loss of commercially zoned land; these effects would be short-term and are considered moderate. <i>Alternative 1:</i> Short-term, positive effects due to creation of jobs for demolition/construction; minimal negative effects since the main businesses that offer employment and add to the local economy would remain open. <i>Alternative 2:</i> Short-term, positive effects due to creation of jobs for demolition/construction; minimal negative effects to socioeconomics at the site since the majority of the businesses that offer employment and add to the local economy would remain open.

Resource Effects	Proposed Action and Alternatives
	<i>Alternative 3:</i> No significant effects to socioeconomics would occur. <i>No-Action Alternative:</i> No change from current conditions.
Cultural Resources	<i>Proposed Action:</i> Minimal effects to cultural resources given all proper procedures are followed prior to and during demolition/construction activities. <i>Alternative 1:</i> Minimal effects to cultural resources given all proper procedures are followed prior to and during demolition/construction activities. <i>Alternative 2:</i> Minimal effects to cultural resources given all proper procedures are followed prior to and during demolition/construction activities. <i>Alternative 3:</i> Minimal effects to cultural resources would occur due to lack of surface sites and the low potential to affect eligible properties. <i>No-Action Alternative:</i> No change from current conditions.
Biological Resources	<i>Proposed Action:</i> Short-term minimal effects to vegetation during demolition and construction activities. However, following demolition, restoration of the affected vegetation would occur. Possible, short-term minimal effect to wildlife species during demolition and construction activities; however, this effect would be of limited duration and is considered negligible. Negligible effects to threatened and endangered species due to the lack of critical habitat and the continued disturbance in the area. <i>Alternative 1:</i> Short-term minimal effects to vegetation during demolition and construction activities. However, restoration of the affected vegetation would occur. Possible, short-term minimal effect to wildlife species during demolition and construction could occur; however, this effect would be of limited duration and is considered negligible. Negligible effects to threatened and endangered species due to the lack of critical habitat and the continued disturbance in the area. <i>Alternative 2:</i> Possible short-term minimal effects to vegetation and wildlife during demolition and construction. However, the demolition would be of such small scale that effects are

Resource Effects	Proposed Action and Alternatives
	considered negligible. Effects to threatened and endangered species would also be negligible. <i>Alternative 3:</i> Possible short-term minimal effects to wildlife during perimeter fence renovation/construction. However, the duration would be short-term and the effects are considered negligible. Effects to threatened and endangered species would also be negligible. <i>No-Action Alternative:</i> No change from current conditions.
Water and Soil Resources	<i>Proposed Action:</i> Possible, short-term negative effects to water quality during demolition of the site from storm water runoff. However, effects related to demolition or construction-related runoff would be minimal. Short-term minimal effects to soils during demolition and construction activities, and during removal of the USTs. <i>Alternative 1:</i> Possible, short-term negative effects to water quality during demolition of the site from storm water runoff. However, the effects to surface and ground water would be minimal. Short-term minimal effects to soils during demolition and construction activities, and during removal of the USTs. <i>Alternative 2:</i> Possible, short-term effects to water quality and on-site soils during demolition and construction. However, the effects on these resources would be considered negligible. <i>Alternative 3:</i> Possible, short-term effects to water quality and on-site soils during renovation/construction. However, the effects on these resources would be considered negligible. <i>No-Action Alternative:</i> No change from current conditions.
Air Quality	<i>Proposed Action:</i> Potential for short-term, localized effects to air quality during construction and demolition from vehicle emissions and operation of machinery. However, the amount of emissions would be minimal and short term. <i>Alternative 1:</i> Potential for short-term, localized effects to air quality during demolition and construction from vehicle emissions and operation of machinery. However, the amount of emissions would be minimal and short term. <i>Alternative 2:</i> Potential for short-term, localized effects to air

Resource Effects	Proposed Action and Alternatives
	quality from vehicle emissions and operation of machinery during demolition and construction. However, the amount of emissions would be minimal and short term. <i>Alternative 3:</i> Potential for short-term, localized effects to air quality from vehicle emissions and operation of machinery during renovation/construction of the perimeter fence. However, the expected effects to air quality would be negligible. <i>No-Action Alternative:</i> No change from current conditions.
Hazardous Materials and Waste	<i>Proposed Action:</i> Possibility of short-term negative effects during demolition and UST extraction due to the presence of ACM and the possibility for spills when removing the USTs. However, these effects should be minimal with correct supervision and experienced demolition personnel. Removing the USTs would also have long-term beneficial effects, since hazardous materials would not be stored underground at the project area. <i>Alternative 1:</i> Possibility of short-term negative effects during demolition and UST extraction due to the presence of ACM and the possibility for spills when removing the USTs. However, these effects should be minimal with correct supervision and experienced demolition personnel. Removing the USTs would also have long-term beneficial effects, since hazardous materials would not be stored underground at the project area. <i>Alternative 2:</i> Possibility of short-term negative effects if demolition of structures with ACM is necessary. However, these effects should be minimal with proper monitoring and careful action during demolition. <i>Alternative 3:</i> Demolition and UST removal would not occur; as a result, there would be no effects to hazardous materials. <i>No-Action Alternative:</i> No change from current conditions.
Safety	<i>Proposed Action:</i> Short-term, minimal effects during demolition and construction activities. <i>Alternative 1:</i> Short-term, minimal effects during demolition and construction activities. <i>Alternative 2:</i> Short-term, minimal effects during demolition and

Resource Effects	Proposed Action and Alternatives
	construction activities. <i>Alternative 3:</i> Short-term, minimal effects during renovation/construction of the perimeter fence. <i>No-Action Alternative:</i> No change from current conditions.
Noise	<i>Proposed Action:</i> Short-term, minimal effects to noise levels during demolition and construction activities. <i>Alternative 1:</i> Short-term, minimal effects to noise level during demolition and construction activities. <i>Alternative 2:</i> Short-term, minimal effects to noise levels during demolition and construction activities. <i>Alternative 3:</i> Short-term, minimal effects to noise levels due to operation of machinery during renovation/construction of the perimeter fence. <i>No-Action Alternative:</i> No change from current conditions.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A – Public Comments and Nellis AFB Responses to Public Comments

CHAPTER 1
PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 United States Code [USC] 4321 et seq.), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1500-1508), and Air Force Instruction (AFI) 32-7061, The Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP), as codified in 32 CFR Part 989. This EA analyzes the potential environmental consequences of implementing the Proposed Action, three action alternatives, and the No Action alternative.

Section 1.1 provides background information on Indian Springs, NV. The purpose and need for the Proposed Action are described in Section 1.2. A detailed description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives is provided in Chapter 2.0. Chapter 3.0 describes the existing conditions of various environmental resources that could be affected by the Proposed Action and Alternatives. Effects of the Proposed Action and Alternatives on resources are addressed in Chapter 4.0. Chapter 5.0 addresses potential cumulative effects of the Proposed Action and Alternatives, in conjunction with other recent-past, current, and future actions that may be implemented in the region of influence (ROI).

1.2 BACKGROUND

Indian Springs is located in Clark County, approximately 45 miles northwest of Las Vegas, NV. The community was named for an American Indian ranch once located there. The latitude of Indian Springs is 36.569N, the longitude is -115.669W, and the elevation is 3,169 feet. Indian Springs is in the Pacific Standard time zone. The population is currently 991 (from 1,302 in 2000, a -23.9% decrease).

Figure 1.2-1 shows the location of Indian Springs within the state of Nevada and its surroundings.

Figure 1.2-2 shows the community of Indian Springs in relation to the location of Creech AFB. Creech AFB is separated from the community by US Highway 95.

Figure 1.2-3 is an aerial map showing the location of Indian Springs, the resort property, and Creech AFB.

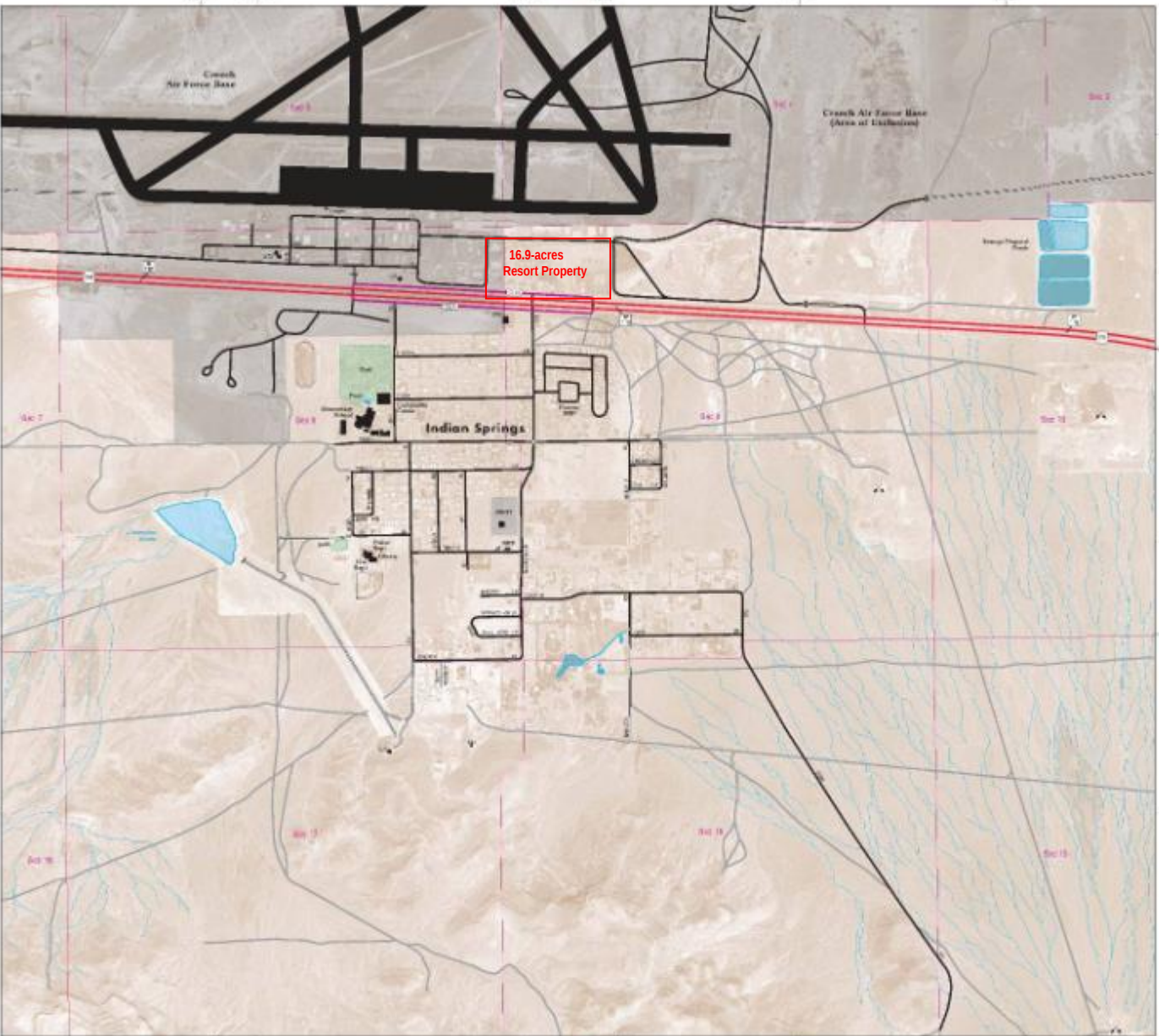
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Source: www.maps.com

Figure 1.2-1
Indian Springs Vicinity Map

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Source: Adapted Map from Nevada Department of Transportation, 2009, Indian Springs Area

Figure 1.2-2

Location of Indian Springs (Clark County), Nevada

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Source: Google Earth 2010

Figure 1.2-3
Indian Springs Aerial Map

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1.3 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

Purpose

The purpose of this action is to acquire private property in Indian Springs, Nevada to secure the USAF mission at Creech AFB by improving the security of base facilities and personnel in accordance with Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP) guidelines. The property is casino/resort acreage located on the north side of US 95 at the south boundary of Creech AFB, in Clark County, NV.

Need

Mission expansions in recent years have identified the need to increase the security buffer along the south boundary of Creech AFB. The Unified Facilities Criteria 4-010-01 establishes minimum standards for buffer distances from building to boundary to protect USAF personnel and assets. Expanding the security buffer would increase security and ensure compliance with AT/FP guidelines.

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CHAPTER 2
DESCRIPTION OF THE
PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

This chapter presents the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, Alternative 2, Alternative 3 and the No Action Alternative.

2.1 PROPOSED ACTION

Acquisition of the Entire Indian Springs Casino Resort Property Alternative

The Proposed Action includes the acquisition of the entire 16.9 acres of the Indian Springs Casino Resort Property (Figure 2.1-1). The USAF proposes to acquire the land from the owner through purchase or lease.

Detailed plans for the layout, design and specifications for the potential expansion area have not been completed. A subsequent EA for development of this property would be required.



Source: Nellis AFB, NV

Figure 2.1-1
Aerial Photograph of the Proposed Action-Full Acquisition
Note: Land to be acquired is located in the red polygon

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2.2 METHODOLOGY FOR IDENTIFYING PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The Proposed Action and Alternatives were identified through a process that examined the basic requirements for the action; the exclusionary criteria that eliminated actions from consideration; and the need for additional analyses. Actions in locations that were not compatible, violated environmental constraints (such as locations of threatened or endangered species), or have already been analyzed under NEPA, were not included within the Proposed Action and Alternatives.

2.2.1 Basic Requirements and Exclusionary Criteria

The basic requirements for the project are to comply with Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP) guidelines by removing any potential security threats to Creech AFB facilities and personnel.

Exclusionary criteria are:

- Unacceptable impacts to the local environment;
- Unacceptable impacts to sensitive habitats and species; and
- Unacceptable impacts to Indian Springs' residents and operations at Creech AFB.

2.2.2 Evaluation Criteria

In selecting the alternatives, the following evaluative criteria were considered:

- Minimize risks to Creech AFBs mission, personnel, and facilities;
- Minimize disruptions to Creech AFB and residents;
- Ensure compliance with AT/FP guidelines;
- Minimize the socioeconomic impacts to Indian Springs residents; and
- Minimize the costs associated with obtaining a security buffer.

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2.3 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

2.3.1 Alternative 1: Partial Lease (11.75 acres) Alternative

As an alternative to acquiring the entire 16.9 acre resort property, the USAF is also considering acquiring 11.75 acres of the resort property with a 175 foot stand-off (Figure 2.3.1-1). This alternative would include the demolition of all privately owned buildings and structures, underground fuel tank abatement, land restoration, and construction of a new boundary fence, which may be performed in whole or in part as determined through the lease terms and conditions. The remaining parcel of 5.15 acres, which includes the casino, hotel, and gas station, would not be demolished. Approximately 1.75 acres currently located west of the hotel could be reserved as a public access park, which would be available for use by the Indian Springs community.



Source: Nellis AFB, NV

Figure 2.3.1-1
Aerial Photograph of Alternative 1- Leasehold Interest of 11.75 Acres
Note: Land to be acquired is located within the yellow polygon.

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2.3.2 Alternative 2: Partial Stand-Off Easement Alternative

As an alternative, a partial stand-off easement could be acquired from the ownership of the property (Figure 2.3.2-1). This 3.2-acre easement extends 125 feet on the west and 65 feet on the north. This would limit the landowner's future use and development of the property and would not require the demolition of all buildings. Only those buildings or improvements that lie within the easement area would be subject to removal or demolition. In addition, construction of a new perimeter fence and the installation of landscaping would take place on the proposed acquired land. However, the USAF would not have full control of the entire property.



Source: Nellis AFB, NV

Figure 2.3.2-1
Aerial Photograph of Alternative 2- Partial Stand-Off Easement
Note: Land to be acquired is located in the green polygon

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2.3.3 Alternative 3: Continuation of Surveillance, Renovation of Existing Perimeter Fence, or Construction of New Perimeter Fence Alternative

As an alternative, the 16.9 acres would not be acquired, and surveillance/monitoring of the area would continue (Figure 2.3.3-1). In addition, the existing perimeter fence would be renovated, or a new perimeter fence would be constructed. Because this alternative would not increase the footprint of Creech AFB, it would not require the removal or demolition of any buildings (the casino, hotel, gas station, mobile home park, and other buildings). However, since the USAF is not acquiring any interests in the land, this alternative would not accomplish the goal of increasing the security buffer on the south boundary of the base.



Source: Nellis AFB, NV

Figure 2.3.3-1
Aerial Photograph of Alternative 3- Continue Surveillance, Reinforce/Construct New Perimeter Fence

Note: The location of the perimeter fence is denoted by the red lines.

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2.4 NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Section 1502.14(d) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires an EA to include a No-Action Alternative. Analysis of the No-Action Alternative provides a benchmark against which decision-makers can compare the magnitude of the environmental effects from the Proposed Action. Under the No-Action Alternative for this EA, the USAF would not purchase the 16.9 acre resort property.

Under the No-Action Alternative, there would be a negative impact to the USAF due to Creech AFB's inability to comply with Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection guidelines. There would be no impact to the 16.9-acre property, as it would remain in its present condition. (Figure 2.4-1).



Source: Nellis AFB, NV

Figure 2.4-1
Aerial Photograph of the No-Action Alternative-Maintain Current Conditions

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2.4.1 Creech AFB

Under the No Action Alternative, the USAF would not acquire any of the resort property and Creech AFB would continue to operate without the necessary protection provided by a security buffer. This alternative would leave Creech AFB in non-compliance with AT/FP guidelines and exposed to potential security vulnerabilities, jeopardizing, personnel, resources, and the mission of Creech AFB.

2.4.2 Indian Springs

Under the No Action Alternative, the USAF would not acquire any of the resort property located in Indian Springs. Therefore, under this alternative, there would be no impacts to Indian Springs or its residents and there would be no change from its current condition.

2.5 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD

Other combinations of the project elements were considered during the project scoping and planning process. Because the impacts of other combinations of the proposed acquisition have the same impacts as either the whole project described under the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, Alternative 2, Alternative 3, or the No Action Alternative, the impacts analysis for other variations were not evaluated separately.

2.6 REGULATORY COMPLIANCE AND PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

2.6.1 Regulatory Compliance

This EA has been prepared to satisfy the requirements of NEPA (Public Law [PL] 91-190, 42 USC 4321, et seq.) as amended in 1975 by PL 94-52 and PL 94-83. The intent of NEPA is to protect, restore, and enhance the environment through well-informed federal decisions. In addition, this document was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the NEPA (42 USC 4321-4347), CEQ Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR § 1500-1508), and 32 CFR Part 989, et seq., *Environmental Impact Analysis Process* (formerly promulgated as AFI 32-7061).

This EA has been prepared in compliance with NEPA, other federal statutes, such as the Clean Air Act (CAA), the Clean Water Act (CWA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), the National Historic Preservation Act, Executive Orders, and other applicable statutes and regulations.

2.6.2 Permits

The following permits would be required should the Proposed Action be implemented.

Asbestos Removal and Disposal: Should the Proposed Action be implemented, the USAF may need to update existing permits or obtain new ones. These permits would apply to the removal and disposal of asbestos as a result of demolition of the existing buildings (mobile home park outbuildings, travel lodge, gas station, and casino). Updating of existing permits would be under the Clean Air Act.

Prior to demolition of all buildings, asbestos surveys are required by USAF regulation. For the removal of asbestos, a notification process with Clark County, the State health board, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the base hazardous waste coordinator is required. Removal would be contracted to State-certified and licensed contractors and removed and managed in accordance with the Asbestos Management and Operations Plan. Contractors would obtain the necessary permits for the removal, handling, and transportation of asbestos. Contractors must have access to a permitted landfill for asbestos disposal.

Demolition: An air quality dust permit would be obtained from Clark County if the demolition activities cause 0.25 acre or more of topsoil disturbance. The Clark County Surface Disturbance Permit would be applied for by Nellis AFB prior to the demolition activities. In addition, a Demolition Form is to be completed and submitted before a building or structure is to be demolished. If the building or structure contains friable asbestos-containing materials, the NESHAP Notification of Asbestos Abatement Form (ASB01) must be completed and submitted to Clark County, Department of Air Quality & Environmental Management (DAQEM). This form would not be accepted for reporting the removal or encapsulation of friable asbestos-containing materials from buildings or structures scheduled for demolition. This form is to be received by the DAQEM no less than 10 working days before the demolition project is scheduled.

Storm water: National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Storm water Discharge Permit from the Nevada Department of Environmental Protection may be required.

CHAPTER 3
DESCRIPTION OF THE
AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

NEPA requires focused analysis of the areas and resources potentially affected by an action or alternative. It also provides that an EA should consider, but not analyze in detail, those areas or resources not potentially affected by the proposal. Therefore, the USAF must provide sufficient detail and depth of both description and analysis in this EA to allow decision-makers and the public to differentiate among the alternatives.

This EA focuses on those resources that would be affected by the proposed acquisition of resort property in Indian Springs, Nevada. The analysis considers the current conditions of the affected environment at Creech AFB and Indian Springs and compares those to conditions that might occur with implementation of projects that have not been addressed in previous NEPA documents.

3.1.1 Affected Environment

Creech AFB and Indian Springs each include developed and undeveloped lands. Main categories of developed land uses for Creech AFB include airfield; industrial support areas; and services areas. Undeveloped lands are commonly called open space in planning documents and may include natural or cultural resources preservation sites, safety buffers, or other similar land uses. Main categories of developed land uses for Indian Springs include residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and recreational areas. Undeveloped land is also present in Indian Springs. The affected environments include Creech AFB and the community of Indian Springs.

3.1.2 Resources Analyzed

Based on the components of the proposed action, the USAF defined the environment potentially affected at Creech AFB and Indian Springs. This definition focused on specific resource categories. As a result of this review, nine resource categories are evaluated: land use; socioeconomics; cultural resources; physical resources; hazardous materials, hazardous/solid waste; biological resources; air quality; noise; and safety and occupational health.

3.1.3 Resources Eliminated

The USAF assessed numerous resources for potential to be affected by the Proposed Action or Alternatives. In accordance with CEQ regulations, this evaluation

determined that environmental justice did not warrant further examination in the EA.

Environmental Justice. Environmental justice addresses the disproportionate effect a federal action may have on low-income or minority populations. EO 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* ensures the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

The existence of disproportionately high and adverse impacts depends on the nature and magnitude of the effects identified for each of the individual resources. The affected area includes Creech AFB and the community of Indian Springs. Local emissions from construction activities would not approach any state or federal thresholds for the protection of human health and safety (see Section 3.7, Air Quality). In summary, since there would not be a disproportionately high or adverse impact to minority or low-income groups, further analysis of environmental justice as a resource was eliminated from further analysis (USAF EA 2008).

3.2 LAND USE

The term “land use” refers to real property classifications that indicate either natural conditions or the types of human activity on a parcel. Properties of land can be categorized as residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, institutional, recreational, etc. The following are the various kinds of land use in this region:

- Grassland – private, 13%; Federal, 65%
- Forest – Federal, 2%
- Urban development – private, 2%; Federal, 2%
- Water – private, 1%; Federal, 2%
- Other – private, 5%; Federal 8%

About four-fifths of this area is federally owned. Much of the remainder is owned by local governments.

3.2.1 Creech AFB

Creech AFB contains both developed and undeveloped lands. Main categories of developed land uses include airfield; industrial support areas; administrative services areas; and housing, recreation, and services areas. Undeveloped lands are

commonly called open space in planning documents and may include natural or cultural resources preservation sites, safety buffers, or other similar land uses. Figure 3.2.2-1 shows the land use at Creech AFB (USAF EA 2009).

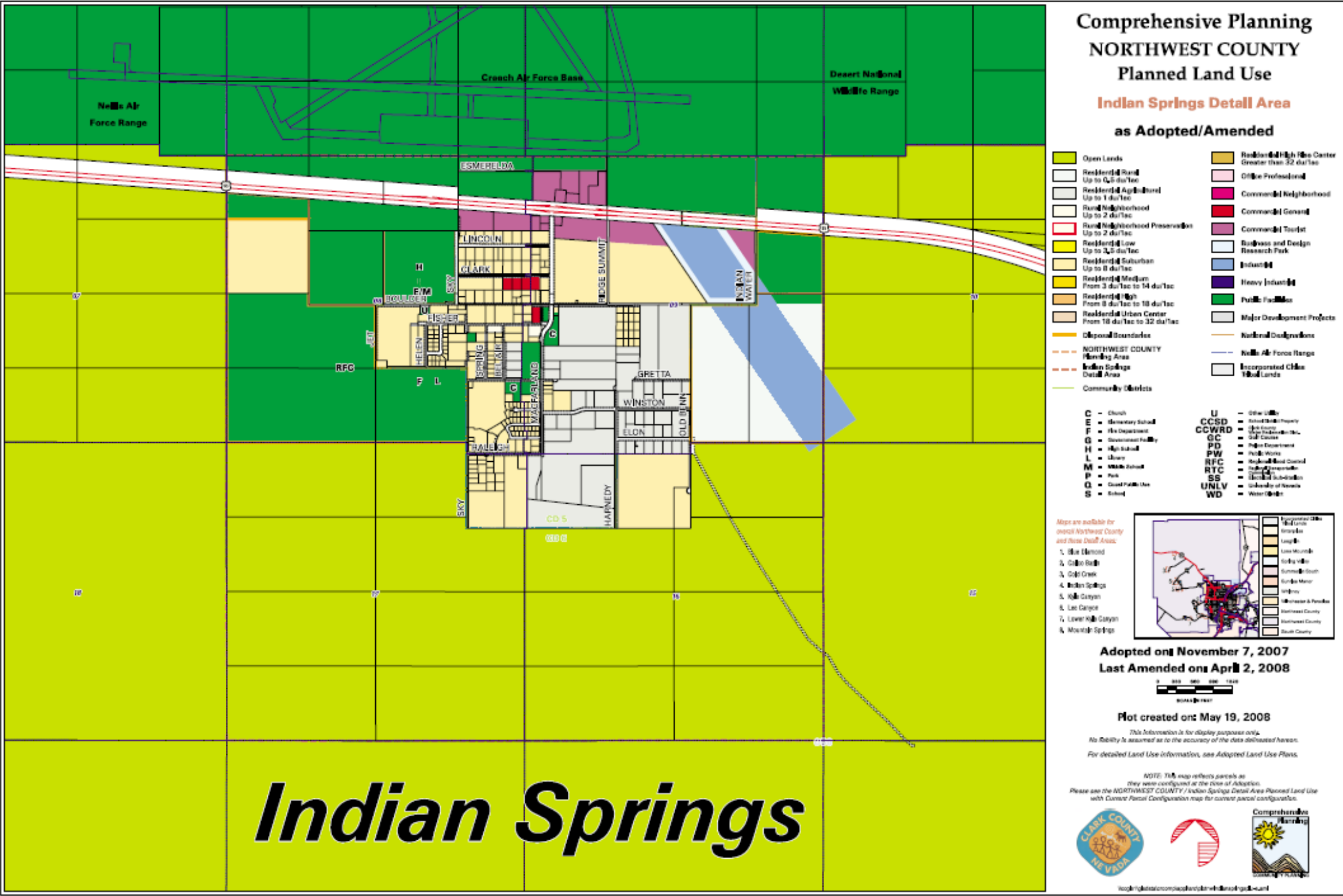
Creech AFB started as an auxiliary airfield and in 2005 was designated as an Air Force Base after gaining the Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) mission. This mission is likely to expand, and base build out depends upon this growing mission and other possible missions. Development and facilities expansion need to accommodate likely changes, as well as anticipate unforeseen changes. Likely changes include the establishment of a headquarters area and some community support facilities (USAF EA 2009).

3.2.2 Indian Springs

Land uses in the community of Indian Springs include residential, commercial and public facility uses. The land use of the immediate area (16.9 acres) is commercial (gas station, hotel, and casino) mixed with residential (mobile trailer park). Figure 3.2.2-1 is a Clark County land use map for Indian Springs and Figure 3.2.2-2 shows the airport environs map for Indian Springs.

There are several housing types tracked in Clark County, which include Single Family Detached, Manufactured Homes, Apartments, and Condominiums. According to the Clark County 2010 Comprehensive Planning Demographics, there are 631 housing units in the community of Indian Springs; 85 are single family units and 546 are manufactured homes.

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Source: Clark County Comprehensive Planning, <http://gisgate.co.clark.nv.us/gismo/cpmapprod.htm>

Figure 3.2.2-1 Land Use Map, Indian Springs

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3.3 SOCIOECONOMICS

Socioeconomics is defined as the study of the relationships between economic activity and social life. Economic activity encompasses the economically active population, including persons that furnish the supply of labor for the production of economic goods and services. The production of economic goods and services includes all production and processing of primary products whether for their market, for their barter, or for their own consumption. Economic activity affects employment, personal income, and industrial or commercial growth. When these areas are affected, other components are often affected, including housing availability and the provision of public services. Socioeconomic data is available at the county, state, and national levels.

Demographics are statistical data that describes the makeup of a given area and includes information such as age range, gender, education levels, and average household income. Demographic data is important when evaluating a Preferred Alternative. The socioeconomic data shown in this chapter is present at the county and state level. The data was collected from previously published documents issued by federal, state, and local agencies and from state and national databases.

3.3.1 Creech AFB

The affected environment for socioeconomics is the town of Indian Springs. The primary economic influences in the area are Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Energy (DOE) operations in the region. In 2011, Creech AFB had over 2,200 military assigned personnel. The Southern Desert Correctional Center (SDCC) and Three Lakes Conservation Camp and Boot Camp, located approximately 7-8 miles southeast of the community of Indian Springs and Creech AFB, provide additional influence on the local economy through employees and inmate visitors.

3.3.2 Indian Springs

The 2010 Census reported that the population of Indian Springs ("Census Designated Place") was 991. Of this amount, 786 individuals (79.3 percent) were reported to be Caucasian. The 2010 Census reported that the population for Clark County was 1,951,269. In 2009, 16.7 percent of Indian Springs' residents and 12.4 percent of Clark County residents were reported to be living below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau).

The community of Indian Springs has few employment opportunities. Opportunities for employment in Indian Springs for people living in Indian Springs include Creech AFB; businesses located on the property proposed for acquisition, a small restaurant on Clark Lane, elementary/middle/high schools, the county

branch library, highway services, Parks and Recreation, Metropolitan Police Department, Nevada Highway Patrol and the Nevada Department of Forestry. Outside the community, opportunities exist at the Nevada National Security Site, the correctional facilities and Las Vegas. While the population of Indian Springs in 2000 was 1,302, in 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that the population of Indian Springs was 991, which is a 23.9 percent decrease.

Table 3.2.2-1
Indian Springs and Clark County Populations

Indian Springs Population	Clark County Population
991	1,951,269

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010

Compared to the rest of the country, Indian Springs's cost of living is 18.50% lower than the U.S. average. The unemployment rate in Indian Springs is 13.00 percent (U.S. avg. is 10.20%). Recent job growth is negative as jobs in Indian Springs have decreased by 5.90 percent. (SBP 2010)

Major employment fields within Indian Springs are:

- Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (37%);
- Construction (20%);
- Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services (13%);
- 9% are employed in the Education, Health and Social Services fields;
- 3% of the population is employed by the Armed Forces.

The three largest economic activities in the town are the Service Industry (including hotels and gaming), Management, and Construction.

3.4 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources are typically divided into three major categories: archaeological resources (prehistoric or historic), architectural resources, and traditional cultural properties.

- *Archaeological resources* consist of the physical remains of past human activity. The scientific study of these remains is essential to the understanding and appreciation of prehistoric and historic cultural development. Prehistoric refers to any time or object that predates recorded history, while historic refers to any time or object of the past after written record;
- *Architectural resources* are those standing structures that are usually over 50 years of age and are of significant historic or aesthetic importance to be considered for inclusion in the National Register for Historic Places (NRHP); and
- *Traditional cultural properties* are properties or places that are eligible for inclusion on the NRHP because of their association with cultural practices or beliefs that are (1) rooted in the history of a community, and (2) are important to maintaining the continuity of that community's traditional beliefs and practices.

3.4.1 Creech AFB

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (*NHPA*) of 1966 requires that Federal agencies take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties. Past cultural resource studies and inventories have been accomplished for various proposed projects, including the Upgrade of the Indian Springs Collection Treatment System. Information from these studies is provided in the following paragraphs.

On 21 December 2007, 31 July 2009 and 31 July 2009, archaeologists from Knight & Leavitt conducted a field inventory, which included Creech AFB in Indian Springs. The field survey included pedestrian transects of the intended project area to record any potential cultural resources that may be within or adjacent to project site boundaries. During the inventory for the project, no cultural resources were encountered. The right-of-way of the old Las Vegas and Tonopah Railroad was located at the very south end of the project area. All that remains of the historic railroad is a linear depression. This railroad was previously surveyed and recorded (USAF EA, 2009). In 2010, Nellis Air Force Base (NAFB) achieved a determination from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on the railroad grade that the wooden culverts were significant. However, this grade is not present in the 16.9 acres proposed for acquisition.

3.4.2 Indian Springs

Cultural and Historical Setting

Indian Springs is named for the artesian spring that provides the area with water. Over the years the spring has been used by Native American Indians, the railroad and later as an artist colony.

Since the 1940s when the United States Army Air Forces established a training facility in Indian Springs, it has been home for many military groups. Prior to being renamed as Creech Air Force Base in 2005, the field was known as Indian Springs Air Force Auxiliary Air Field (ISAF AF).

Regional Setting

Human use of the Great Basin dates back to approximately 12,000 years ago. During the earlier periods, Native Americans relied heavily on hunting large game for subsistence. As the region became increasingly more arid, they broadened their resource base and began to exploit more plants and other kinds of game. By about 9,000 years ago, Native Americans began to cluster around permanent water sources. The main tribe in southern Nevada was the Southern Paiute, whose territory encompassed the Las Vegas and Pahrump valleys and extended into part of Amargosa Valley. Primarily foragers, with varying degrees of dependence on horticulture, the Paiutes would congregate near bodies of water at different times of the year to collect pine nuts and agave and to hunt mountain sheep, deer, and small game. Few records exist of these nomadic peoples, most likely due to violent interactions with neighboring tribes and territorial loss from invasive Spanish and Mexican settlers who established territories in the area in the 16th century (USAF, 2008).

During the mid-1800s, southern Nevada became home to Mormon settlers intent on expanding their religious territory and bringing their doctrine to the local native populations (Roberts, et al. 2007). Expansion of settlers to the area brought the formation of the Old Spanish Trail, which served as a popular trading route between Santa Fe and Los Angeles. By the late 1850s, the small Las Vegas Valley community focused on ranching and farming to supply regional mining interests. In the Las Vegas, Moapa, and Virgin Valleys, farming communities continued to develop from the 1850s until the early 1900s. Mining ventures in southern Nevada were typically short-lived, and most of the areas survived as transportation hubs or ranching centers (USAF 2008).

Railroad development began in the Las Vegas Valley in the early 1900s. Tent towns sporting saloons, stores, and boarding houses, were developed to entertain and accommodate men working on the railroads. The Los Angeles, San Pedro, and Salt

Lake railroad were completed in 1905, all later engrossed by the Union Pacific Railroad (USAF, 2008).

Historic, Prehistoric, Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Resources

Sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 require Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties. A large cultural resources inventory was conducted within the entirety of Indian Springs Air Force Auxiliary Field (Dames and Moore, Inc. 1996), currently Creech AFB, with consultation with the State completed on 5 Jul. 1996. There is no record of a survey in or surrounding the Area of Potential Effect (APE).

The APE is distinctive in the region. Much of the region is characterized by the remains of aboriginal uses. Five separate prehistoric and historic cultural phases were in physical associations with the APE. An Air Force research document on the History of the Casino Property discusses the prehistoric and historic phases (Myhrer 2011).

Surrounding Indian Springs, the town and the water source, is the vast Great Basin desert. In such an environment, water sources are rare and highly valued. For thousands of years, Native Americans depended on the springs and the associated edible foods. By the end of the 19th century, Anglo settlers had confiscated the regional springs and a ranching operation was built at Indian Springs. In 1905, the Las Vegas and Tonopah Railroad (LV&T) constructed a railroad siding at Indian Springs. The railroad franchise, though, coincided with the dissolution of the great mines and towns that had been part of the mining boom initiated by Tonopah and continued by Goldfield. The railroad was reported to have made a profit during only one of its 14 years in service. In 1919, the LV&T right-of-way was sold to the State and S.R. 95 consumed most of the alignment, including the APE.

In 1923, the Harnedy family showed faith that a profitable business was possible at a location directly north of the new highway. In 1942, Harnedy sold land on the north side of his establishment to the U.S. Army for use as a new airfield, the Indian Springs Army Air Field. The Casino Property and APE location is on the north side of SR 95 but retains historic imprints, although subtle and modest, of Harnedy's motel, gas station, and restaurant. The land has been continuously and intensively used by vehicles and humans beginning around 1923.

Adding the Casino Property to USAF ownership creates obligations to assess the potential for eligibility under the NRHP. On receipt, Creech AFB would be expected to prepare a plan to assess the potential and or nature of subsurface deposits. This plan could propose a random subsurface testing exercise, including GPS and excavation. The proposal would require review by historic organizations and the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office. Location of an eligible feature could

result in costly protection or mitigation under a proposal reviewed by regional historic organizations and the State.

Table 3.4.2-1 depicts estimations of the potential of finding artifacts and eligible sites from each historic phase. The potential to find artifacts ranges from 1% to 60% depending on the phase of use. The assessed potential of recording eligible sites is minor from the gas station phase, very low or negligible from others. In summary, a proposal to assess the potential of subsurface artifacts and features, and to present methods for recordation, should be developed prior to the initiation of a contract to purchase the APE.

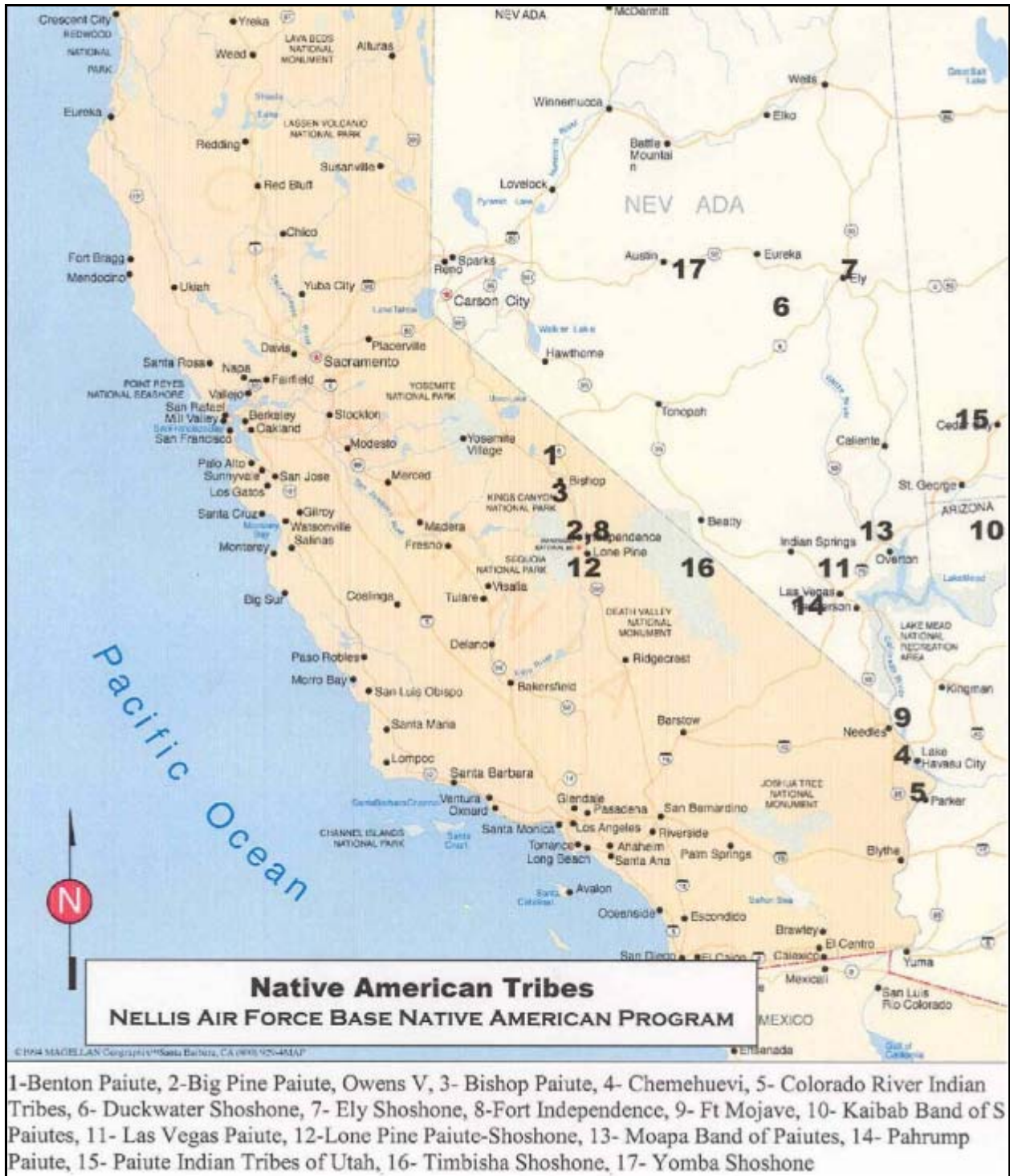
Table 3.4.2-1
Assessed Potential for Eligibility of Artifacts by Phases of Use at the APE or Casino Property

Phase of Use	Potential to find artifacts or features	Assessed potential for eligibility
Native American prehistoric	10%	1%
Early Ranching/Ethno historic	10%	5%
Railroad (1906-1919)	5%	1%
Highway construction	10%	1%
Highway use (1919-1960)	35%	5%
Motel and gas station	60%	20%
Military-ISAFAF	20%	1%
Recent	100%	N/A

Source: Nellis AFB, NV

Traditional Cultural Resources

Native American consultation is conducted as part of the NHRP process. Since 1996, Nellis AFB has been in consultation with members and chairpersons of 17 tribes from Nevada, Arizona, Utah, and California, shown in Figure 3.4.2-1. It is likely that three Paiute tribes, Las Vegas, Moapa, and Pahrump, would have cultural claims to the springs and then an association with the APE. Nevertheless, Nellis AFB has an obligation to contact and offer consultation to the other 14 tribes. It is also unlikely that the physical APE property would be considered by the tribes as having negligible potential to research and reflect evidence of their long-term culture. They



Source: Nellis Air Force Base, NV

Figure 3.4.2-1
Native American Tribes with Ancestral Ties to Nellis Air Force Base Lands

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would likely argue that a form of mitigation be conducted, which could include conducting anthropological interviews with members at Indian Springs. At the least, contact should be made with the tribes prior to initiating a contract to purchase the APE and a plan devised to ensure positive participation through the process.

3.5 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Biological resources include plants, animals, and the habitats in which they live, such as wetlands, forests, and grasslands. Certain plant and animal species are protected or considered sensitive species because they are experiencing a generalized or localized population decline. A protected or sensitive species can be classified as a federally or state threatened or endangered species, a candidate species for federal listing, a species of special concern (SSC), or a species that is managed under a particular management plan. Under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), critical habitat is defined when specific areas within a geographic area are occupied by a federally listed species on which physical and biological features are essential to the conservation of that species.

An endangered species is an organism that is at risk of becoming extinct because it is few in numbers or is threatened by changing environmental or predation parameters. A threatened species is a species that is vulnerable to extinction in the near future. A candidate species is a species being considered for listing under the ESA as an endangered or threatened species but is not yet the subject of a proposed rule. A species of special concern is a species, subspecies, or distinct population that is not federally or state listed but is (a) declining at a rate that could result in listing, or (b) historically occurred in low numbers and is known to have threats pertinent to its persistence.

All migratory birds are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). The MBTA was implemented in 1918 as a result of a convention between Great Britain and the U.S. (USFWS 2009). The original purpose was to protect and regulate migratory bird populations from over harvesting.

The MBTA prohibits the pursuit, hunt, take, kill, capture, possession, sale, or transport of any migratory bird, bird part, nest, or egg except as specifically permitted under the act (16 USC 703-713). In 2007, the U.S. Congress passed a revision providing an avenue for the Armed Forces to apply for take permits. A take permit can be issued for the “incidental take of migratory birds during military readiness activities.” The proponent of a permit must confer and cooperate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) “to develop appropriate and reasonable conservation measures to minimize or mitigate identifiable significant adverse effects” (Department of Interior; Federal Regulation. 72:39, 28 Feb. 2007). “Military readiness does not include (a) the routine operation of installations operating

support functions, such as “administrative offices, military exchanges; commissaries; water treatment facilities; storage facilities; schools; housing; motor pools; laundries; morale, welfare, recreation activities; shops; and mess halls, (b) the operation of industrial activities, or (c) the construction or demolition of facilities listed above.”

A wetland is an area of land whose soil is saturated with moisture either permanently or seasonally. These areas can be covered partially or completely by shallow pools of water. Wetlands include swamps, marshes, bogs, etc. Wetlands are extremely biologically diverse and can support a wide variety of plant and animal life. Wetlands are beneficial in that they improve water quality, store floodwater, provide fish and wildlife habitat, are aesthetically pleasing, and are biologically productive. Section 404 of the CWA establishes a program to regulate the discharge of dredged or fill waters of the U.S., including wetlands. Activities in waters of the U.S. regulated under this program include fill for development, water resource projects, infrastructure development, and mini projects. Section 404 requires a permit before dredged or fill material may be discharged into water of the U.S.

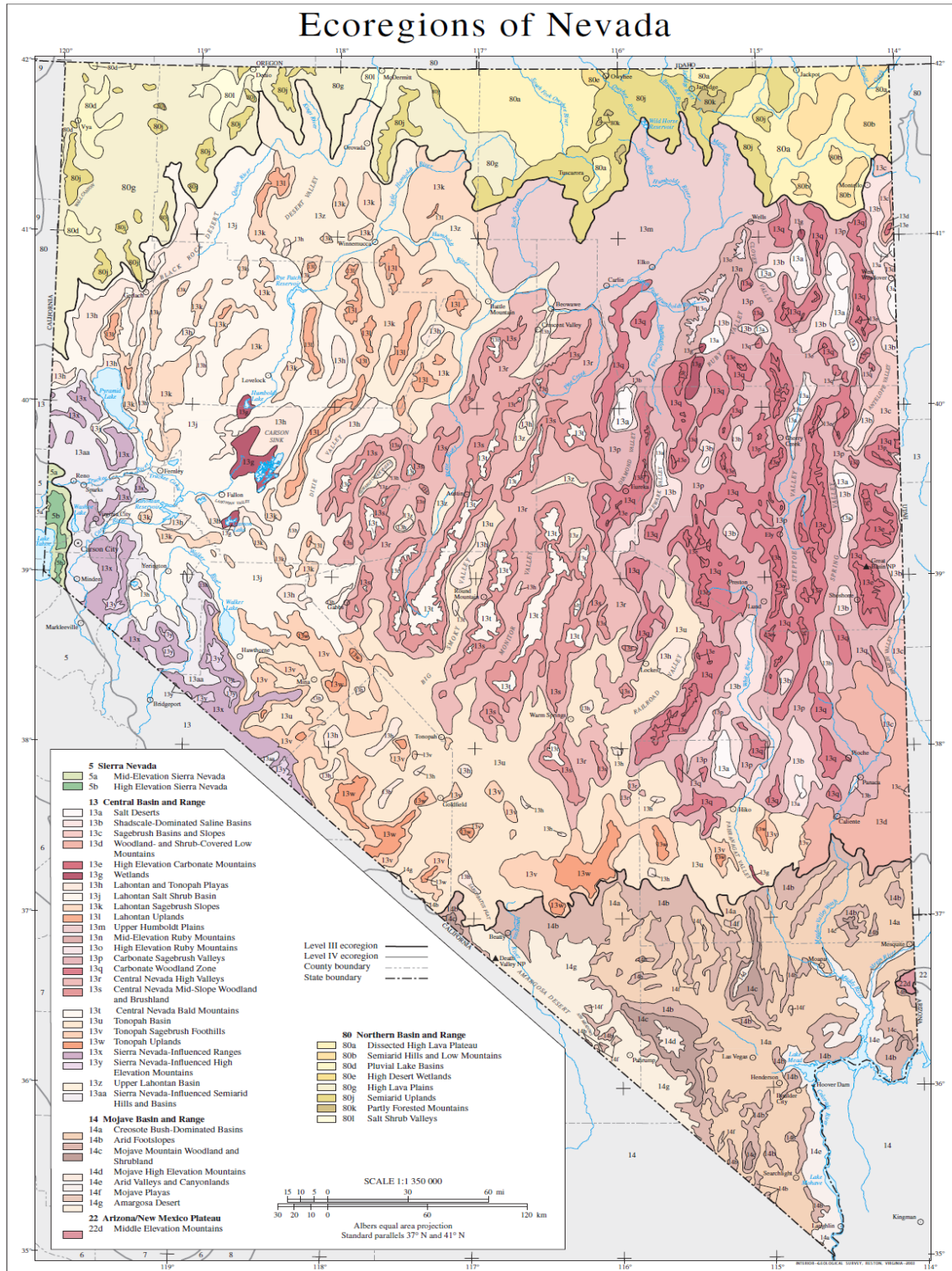
3.5.1 Natural Setting

The project area is located in the Mojave Basin and Range, which contains scattered mountains, which are generally lower than those of the Central Basin and Range. The Mojave Basin and Range is in California (59 percent), Nevada (28 percent), Arizona (12 percent), and Utah (1 percent). It makes up about 43,750 square miles/113,370 square kilometers (USDA NRCS 2006).

This ecoregion contains scattered mountains, which are generally lower than those of the Central Basin and Range. Most of this region is federally owned and there is relatively little grazing activity because of the lack of water and forage for livestock. Heavy use of off-road vehicles and motorcycles in some areas has caused severe wind and water erosion problems.

Numerous military reservations are located in the area, including Edwards AFB, Fort Irwin, China Lake Naval Weapons Center, Goldstone Communications Complex, Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Corps Base in California, Nevada Test and Training Range, and Nellis AFB and Creech AFB in Nevada.

The ecological boundary of the Mojave Basin and Range (Figure 3.5.1-1) is more readily distinguished by fairly sharp vegetation changes along its western and eastern edges, with abrupt transitions into high-plateau and montane environments. The transitions in plant communities are less abrupt along the southern borders of the Mojave Basin and Range, as warm desert transitions into an abundance of succulents across the Sonoran Desert. The northern transition into the



Source: NDOT, 2010

Figure 3.5.1-1
Ecoregions of Nevada

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Central Basin and Range is also more subtle, as salt desert scrub, blackbrush, and sagebrush vegetation dominates much of that transition (USDA NRCS 2006).

3.5.2 General Project Area

Vegetation

Creech AFB is located in the northeastern portion of the Mojave Desert. The surrounding landscape is typical of the Mojave Desert, with low lying enclosed basins surrounded by low mountains and bajadas formed of coalescing alluvial fans. On the bajadas and mountain slopes, the vegetation is typically dominated by creosote bush where white bursage is commonly codominant. On valley bottoms and dry lake beds (playas) at lower elevations where soils are relatively fine, alkaline and clayey, saltbush, shadscale (*A. confertifolia*), and allscale (*A. polycarpa*) dominate. Matchweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*), buckwheat (*Eriogonum* spp.), and cheesebush (*Hymenoclea salsola*) also occur in saltbush scrub (NAFB 1996).

Vegetation surrounding Creech AFB was systematically evaluated and mapped by Nellis AFB. Mixed scrub vegetation typical of the Mojave Desert occurs on lands surrounding Creech AFB, where several associations including creosote bush, bursage, and different species of saltbush can be distinguished (Nellis AFB 1996). Within the fenced area of the airfield, the vegetation is very sparse due to disturbance and is dominated by non-native Russian thistle. Surrounding vegetation and wildlife habitat outside of the fence consists of creosote bush scrub and saltbush scrub. Two different associations of creosote bush scrub are recognized: one dominated by creosote bush and white bursage, occurring to the southwest to southeast and to the south surrounding Indian Springs; and another including a mixed scrub association of creosote bush, fourwing saltbush, and shadscale, throughout the area north of Creech AFB. The saltbush scrub occurs on the northeast side of the airfield.

Wetlands and Jurisdictional Waters of the United States

There are no wetlands within the affected areas for the proposed action in Indian Springs or at Creech AFB. However, there may be jurisdictional waters of the U.S. present as defined under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Appropriate documentation would be submitted and consultation conducted with the USACE to determine if jurisdictional waters of the U.S. are present for any project with the potential of affecting jurisdictional waters.

Wildlife

Wildlife that typically occur in creosote bush scrub and saltbush scrub habitats, have been observed on Creech AFB, primarily outside of the fenced area. Mammals include black-tailed jackrabbits (*Lepus californicus*), desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida*), kangaroo rats (*Dipodomys* spp.), coyote, and desert kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis arsipus*).

Several species of bats may occur in the general area, attracted by water and associated insects at the municipal sewage ponds and the springs in Indian Springs Valley (Nellis AFB 1997). Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus hesperus*) and California myotis (*Myotis californicus*) were documented in surveys at Indian Springs (Nellis AFB 1997).

A diverse herpetofauna is present that includes desert iguana (*Dipsosaurus dorsalis*), zebra-tailed lizard (*Callosaurus draconoides*), side-blotched lizard, horned lizards (*Phrynosoma* spp.), western whiptail (*Cnemidophorus tigris*), and the desert tortoise. Several snakes may also be present, including kingsnake (*Lampropeltus getulus*), rosy boa (*Lichanura trivirgata*), gopher snake (*Pituophis melanoleucus*), and Mojave rattlesnake (*Crotalus scutulatus*).

Bird species that include a variety of ground-dwelling seed or insect eaters such as jays, wrens, shrikes, towhees, sparrows, Gambel's quail, sage thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) and mourning dove; the omnivorous raven (*Corvus corax*); greater roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*), which feeds on snakes and lizards; and several species of raptors, including golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), redtailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*), and northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*). Burrowing owls occur at the northern end of the runways at Creech AFB (Nellis AFB 1996).

Migratory Birds and Raptors

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act protects all migratory birds, including nesting birds, during the breeding season. More specifically, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Executive Order No. 13186, Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds, January 10, 2001 direct the USAF to avoid or minimize negative impacts on migratory birds and takes steps to protect birds and restore or enhance their habitat whenever possible. These actions include preventing or evading pollution or detrimental alteration of the environment as practicable within the constraints of the military mission. Raptors or birds of prey are not only protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, but also by the Eagle Protection Act. Again, these two acts require the USAF to minimize or avoid impacts to migratory birds and/or raptors (USAF INRMP 2010).

Many species of ducks, geese, and water birds are seasonal migrants in the planning areas and may inhabit playas during wet years. On Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR), most surface waters are ephemeral and only attract waterfowl during short time periods following storm events. Small populations may inhabit permanent bodies of water located around seeps and springs. In general, the number of waterfowl found in these areas is small and transient (USAF INRMP 2010).

Bird species typically found in sagebrush communities at lower altitudes include the sage thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*), sage sparrow (*Amphispiza belli*), and horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris*). Less frequently observed species include the green-tailed towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*), mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), greater roadrunner, common nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*), western meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*), and common raven (*Corvus corax*). Brewer's Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*) is also found in sagebrush communities and is state protected and further classified as sensitive (USAF INRMP 2010).

Chukars (*Alectoris chukar*) are listed as state upland game birds and have been introduced into the area and typically inhabit rocky habitat and desert scrub near springs and other freshwater sources (USAF INRMP 2010).

Special-Status Species

The desert tortoise and burrowing owl are the only special-status plant or animal species known, or likely to occur in the areas subject to ground disturbance in the Indian Springs area and at Creech AFB. The desert tortoise was listed by the USFWS as threatened on April 2, 1990. It is the largest reptile in the arid southwestern U.S. Tortoises spend much of their lives in underground burrows that they excavate to escape the harsh summer and winter desert conditions. They usually emerge in late winter or early spring and again in the fall to feed and mate, although they may be active during summer when temperatures are moderate. Desert tortoises are herbivorous, eating a wide variety of herbaceous vegetation, especially flowers of annual plants (USAF EA 2009).

Historically the tortoise occupied a variety of desert communities in southeastern California, southern Nevada, western and southern Arizona, southwestern Utah, and through Sonora and northern Sinaloa, Mexico. Today it can still be found in these areas, although the populations are fragmented and declining over most of its former range. Desert tortoise can occur in the Indian Springs area and the 16.9 acres proposed for acquisition, however, it is unlikely given the level of continued disturbance and activity in that area by tourists and those residing in the trailer park (USAF EA 2009).

Western burrowing owl is a species native to southern Nevada that adapts well to urban environments. The species prefer flat, previously disturbed areas where loose soil allows for excavation of burrows. Burrowing owls have been observed in burrows in the disturbed soil at the north end of the runway at Creech AFB. Burrowing owls could be located in the project area, but it is unlikely because of the level of disturbance and activity in that area. However, prior to the initiation of any project construction, surveys coordinated through the Nellis AFB Natural Resources Manager would be conducted to determine the presence of burrowing owls or special status plant and wildlife species. In addition, the Gila Monster, which is

protected by state law, could potentially be found on Creech AFB and the Indian Springs area. NDOW protocols would be implemented if Gila Monsters are encountered during demolition or construction (USAF EA 2009).

3.6 WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

Water Resources

Water resources are sources of water that are useful or potentially useful to humans. For example, groundwater and surface water are water resources.

Groundwater is located beneath the surface of the earth, within soil pore spaces, and in the fractures of lithologic formations. The water table is the level at which groundwater pressure is equal to atmospheric pressure. This occurs at the depth in which the soil pore spaces or fractures become completely saturated with water. Groundwater is naturally replenished by precipitation, streams, and rivers. Groundwater is often used for agricultural, municipal, and industrial uses through the construction of wells.

Surface water is any water that has collected on the ground or is in a stream, river, lake, wetland, or ocean. Surface water is also replenished through precipitation and is naturally lost through evaporation and subsurface seepage into the groundwater.

Stormwater is a form of surface water that occurs when water originates during precipitation events. Any stormwater that does not soak into the ground becomes surface runoff. Stormwater is of important concern because of flood control and water pollution. When stormwater falls on impervious surfaces (parking lots, roads, buildings, compacted soils, etc.) it cannot soak into the ground, thus creating runoff. Runoff can cause many problems, including the erosion of watercourses and flooding. In addition, daily human activities result in the deposition of pollutants on roads, lawns, roofs, farm fields, etc. Therefore, when stormwater results in runoff, pollutants have the potential to be introduced into the surface water.

The Clean Water Act (CWA) (USC 33 1251 et seq) establishes the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the U.S. by regulating quality standards for surface waters. The CWA makes it unlawful to discharge any pollutant from a point source into navigable waters, unless a permit is obtained. EPA's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) controls discharges. NPDES regulates the discharge of point (pipe, manufactured ditch, etc.) and nonpoint (stormwater) sources of water pollution.

Nevada law (Nevada Revised Statutes, Chapters 532 through 538) states that any "person" may appropriate water for beneficial use. A "person" may be an individual, group of individuals, organization, corporation, government agency, etc. Water

rights in Nevada are considered real property and are protected as such. As a result, a water right can be conveyed or transferred. Water rights, however, are appurtenant to the land and are conveyed by deed with the land unless the seller specifically reserves the water right in the deed. When transferring ownership of a water right, a Report of Conveyance must be filed with the State Engineer. As such, during a land transaction, the seller can retain the water rights to the land even if the land is sold to another party. This however must be agreed upon and written in the contract for sale of the land (BLM 2001).

Soil Resources

Soil refers to unconsolidated earthen materials overlying bedrock or other parent material. Soil structure, elasticity, strength, shrink-swell potential, and erodibility all determine the ability for the ground to support structures and facilities. Relative to development, soils typically are described in terms of their type, slope, physical characteristics, and relative compatibility or limitations with regard to particular construction activities and types of land use (USAF EA 2008).

Affected Environment

General water and soils information pertain to Creech AFB and Indian Springs, NV where the proposed land acquisition would occur. Water and soil resources pose no constraints to development at either base.

3.6.1 General Project Area

Surface Water

Natural surface water is scarce on and around Indian Springs. Average annual precipitation is approximately 4 inches. Surface flow is primarily towards the two local playas, located north of the airfield where it collects and evaporates. Playas are not substantial recharge zones due to low infiltration and high evaporation rates. Evaporation rates in the area are very high and have been estimated at approximately 58 to 69 inches per year. Other than constructed ponds and structures, no permanent surface water occurs on or in the vicinity of Indian Springs. As shown in Figure 3.6.1-1, surface water in the vicinity of Indian Springs flows through braided, ephemeral streams, which usually flow for brief periods immediately following precipitation events (USAF EA 2009).

Groundwater

Indian Springs is located within the carbonate-rock province of the Great Basin (Figure 3.6.1-2). This province extends across much of eastern and southern Nevada and western Utah and, because of the permeability of carbonate rocks, supports an extensive, regional groundwater flow system. Groundwater within the carbonate-rock province has been conceptualized as occurring within two interconnected aquifer systems: a regional system that is largely within deeply buried carbonate

bedrock, and additional shallow alluvial aquifer systems which are more local in extent and which reside in individual basins or watersheds. Recharge to these aquifer systems comes mainly from the infiltration of winter precipitation that falls on the mountains within the province. Groundwater discharge occurs primarily through evapotranspiration from the valley floors and from spring discharge at large springs.

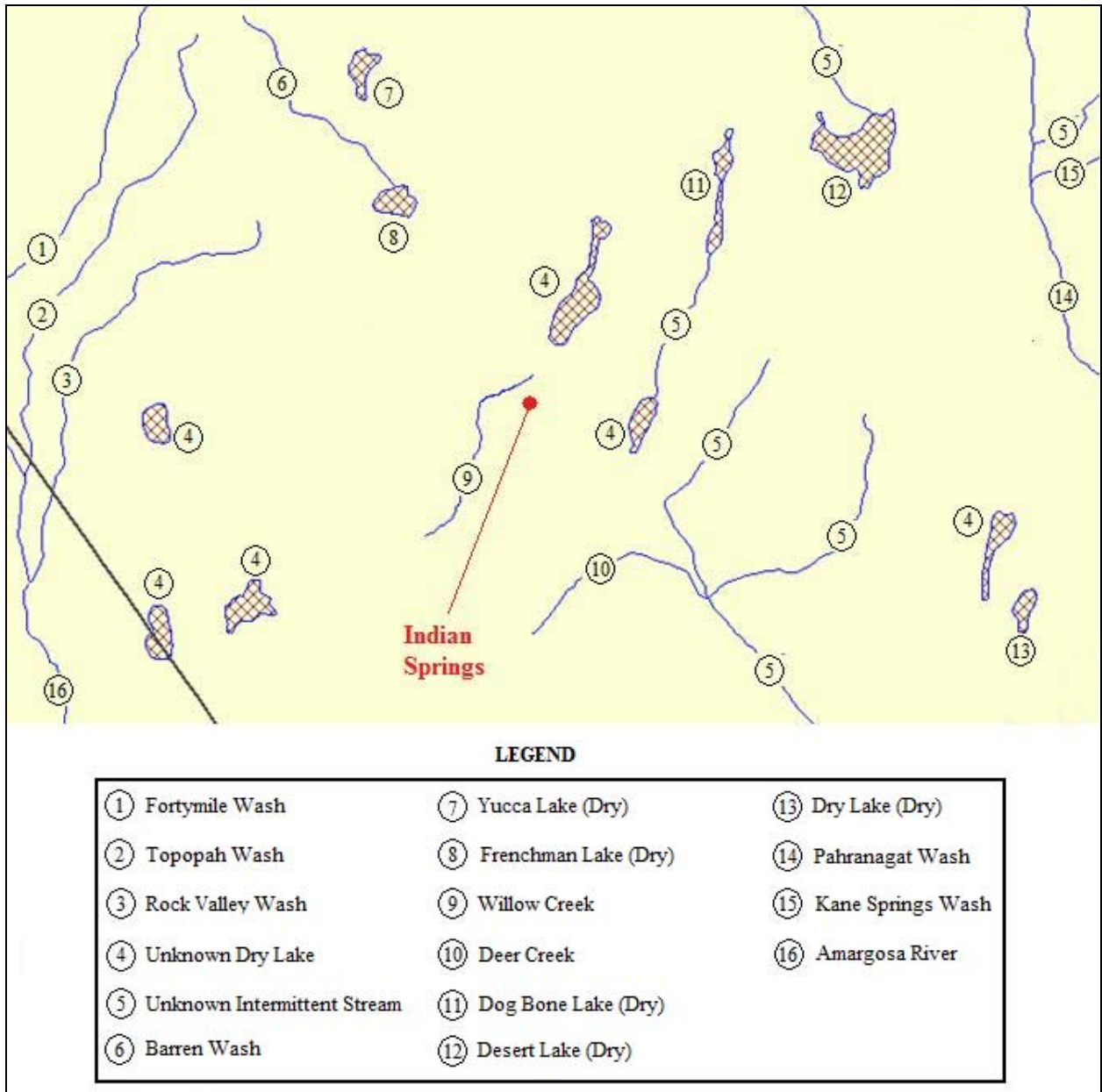
Much of the measurable groundwater flow within the carbonate rock is relatively shallow and is confined to individual mountain-valley watersheds. Flows in the local aquifer systems are believed to follow surface drainages in most cases. Groundwater is therefore expected to move from the surrounding highlands toward the topographic low point within an individual valley or basin. Groundwater in the region is high in total dissolved solids at levels of 500-1,000 mg/L and rich in calcium and magnesium bicarbonate; however, the groundwater is well within the EPA standards for drinking water quality (USAF INRMP 2010).

Soils

Creech AFB and Indian Springs are located in the southern opening of the Indian Springs Valley. The valley is bound by the Spotted Range and Buried Hills to the west and the Pintwater Range to the east. The valley areas are dominated by Quaternary alluvial deposits with patches of Quaternary playa and marsh deposits north of Creech AFB. The local mountains (southern Pintwater Range and Spotted Range) are primarily Paleozoic limestone, dolomite, shale, and quartzite. Due to western winds, the west sides of the mountains in the area are commonly flanked by dunes on top of deep alluvial fans (USAF 1999c).

Soils in the vicinity have not been mapped in detail. Soil information for the area is based on general descriptions from various resource surveys, geologic studies in adjacent areas, and general observations. Soils in the area are aridisols developed in carbonate parent material from local mountains. Aridisols are sandy, loose, and prone to erosion in areas not protected by desert pavement. Soils can form anywhere that sediments accumulate; however, soils develop very slowly in desert environments and are easily disturbed.

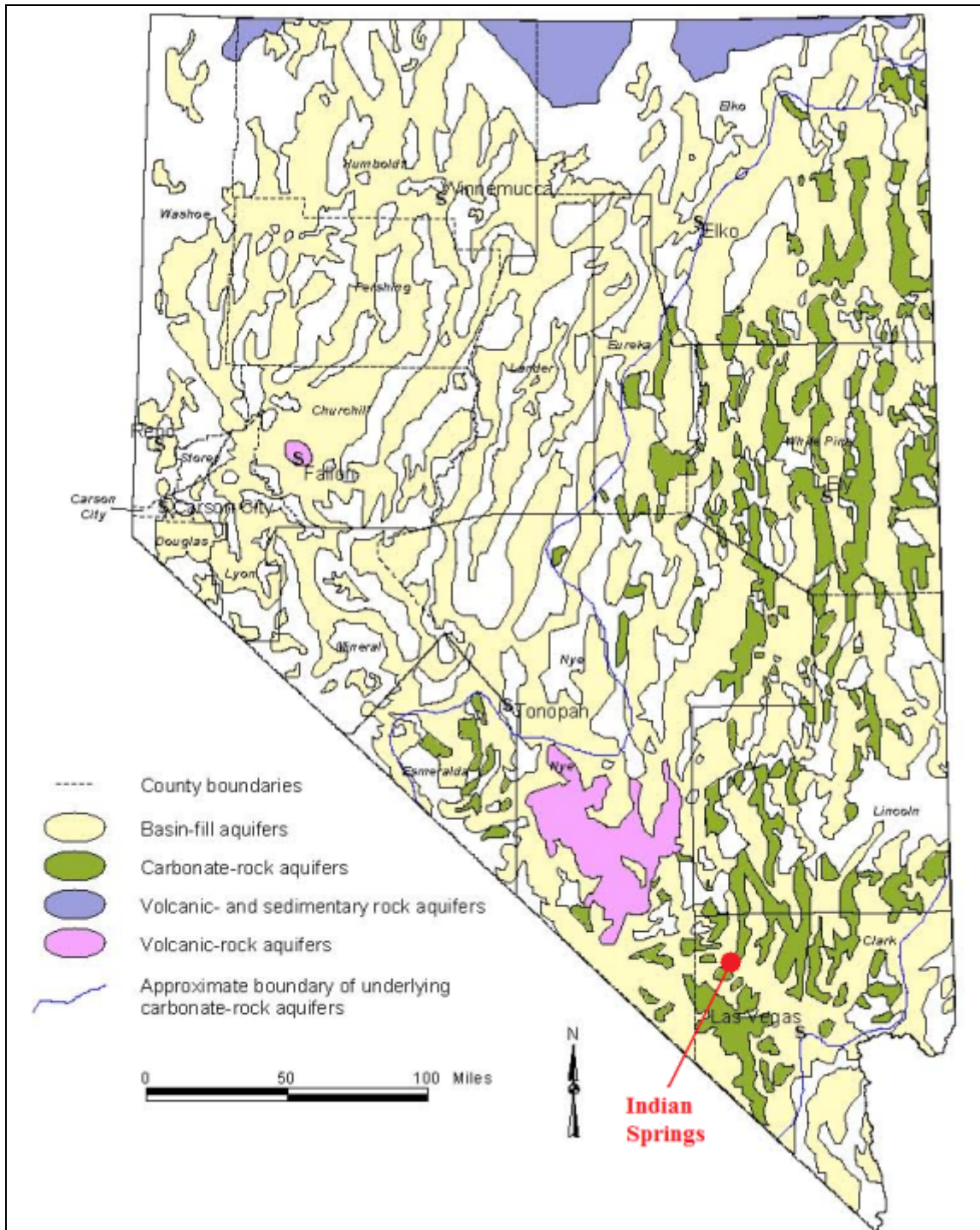
Much of the area has a surface crust known as desert pavement, which is an armored surface crust of packed angular to sub-rounded rock fragments covering the soils surface. Desert pavement is common to arid environments and acts as a shell to softer, more vulnerable soils below.



Source: Adapted from National Atlas (2011)

Figure 3.6.1-1
Water Bodies Near the Indian Springs Project Area

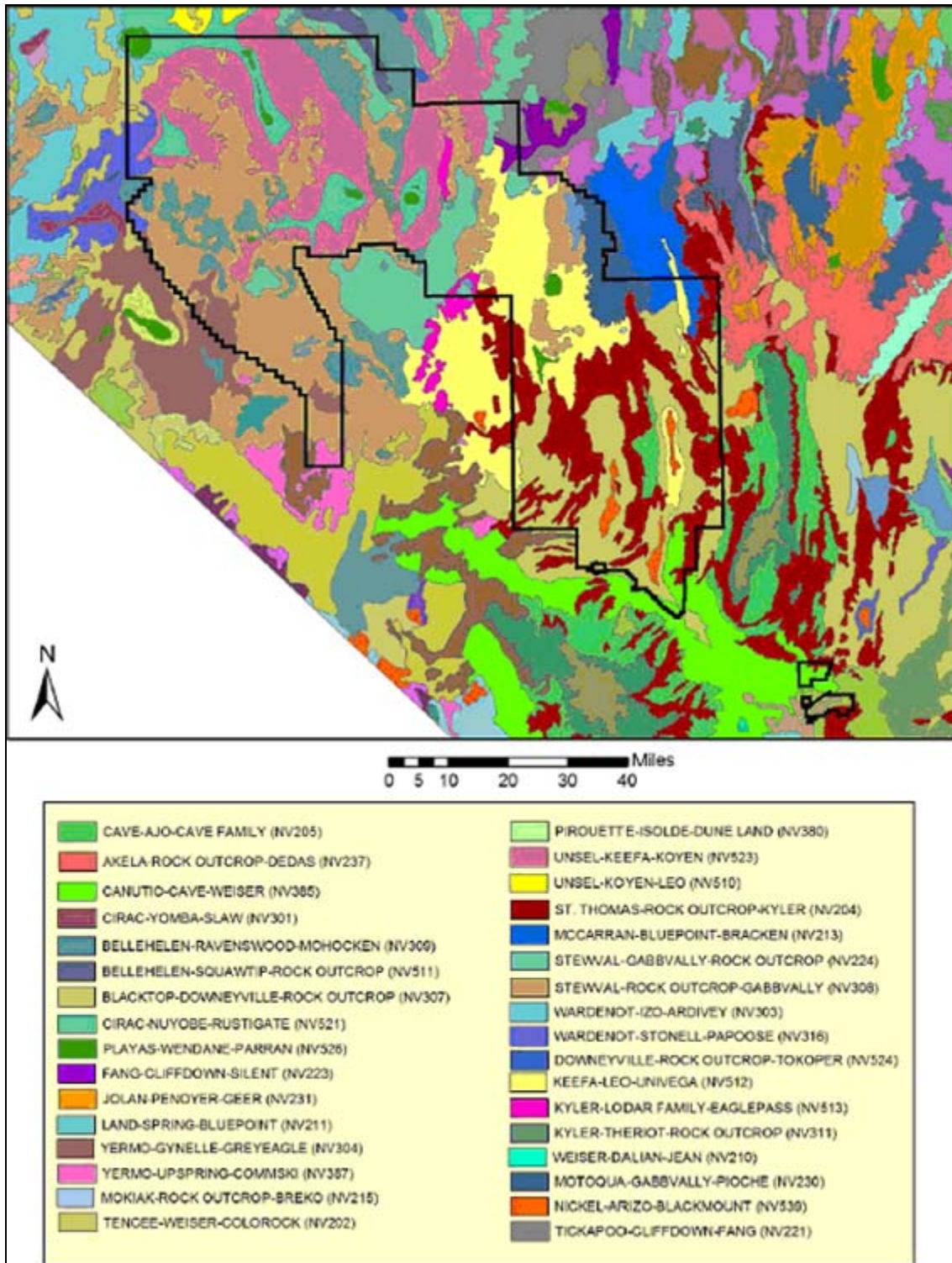
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Source: State of Nevada, Division of Water Resources

Figure 3.6.1-2
Major Aquifers in Nevada

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Source: Natural Resources Conservation Service STATSGO Data

Figure 3.6.1-3
General Soil Associations Found on NAFB, Creech AFB, and NTTR

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3.7 AIR QUALITY

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is an index for reporting daily air quality, which shows how clean or polluted the air is and explains what associated health effects might be of concern. The AQI focuses on health effects that may be experienced within a few hours or days after breathing polluted air. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) calculates the AQI for five major pollutants regulated by the Clean Air Act (CAA): ground-level ozone, particulate pollution (also known as particulate matter), carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide. For each of these pollutants, EPA has established national air quality standards to protect public health. Ground-level ozone and airborne particles are the two pollutants that pose the greatest threat to human health in the United States.

The AQI is divided into six categories: good, moderate, unhealthy for sensitive groups, unhealthy, very unhealthy, and hazardous. Each category corresponds to a different level of health concern. The six levels of health concern and their descriptions are:

- **Good:** AQI is 0 to 50; air quality is considered satisfactory and air pollution poses little or no risk.
- **Moderate:** AQI is 51 to 100; air quality is acceptable. However, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people. For example, people who are unusually sensitive to ozone may experience respiratory symptoms.
- **Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups:** AQI is 101 to 150; although the general public is not likely to be affected at this AQI range, people with lung disease, older adults, and children are at a greater risk from exposure to ozone, whereas people with heart and lung disease, older adults, and children are at greater risk from the presence of particles in the air.
- **Unhealthy:** AQI is 151 to 200; everyone may begin to experience some adverse health effects and members of the sensitive groups may experience effects that are more serious.
- **Very Unhealthy:** AQI is 201 to 300; this would trigger a health alert signifying that everyone may experience more serious health effects.
- **Hazardous:** AQI is greater than 300; this would trigger a health warning of emergency conditions. The entire population is more than likely to be affected.

Criteria Air Pollutants

The CAA requires EPA to set National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for six common air pollutants. These commonly found air pollutants are located all over the United States and include particulate matter, ground-level ozone, carbon monoxide, sulfur oxides, nitrogen oxides, and lead. These pollutants can harm human health and the environment, or cause property damage. The EPA calls these pollutants “criteria” air pollutants because it regulates them by developing human, health-based, and/or environmentally based criteria for setting permissible levels. The set of limits based on human health is called primary standards. Another set of limits intended to prevent environmental and property damage is called secondary standards. Table 3.7-1 provides the NAAQS.

**Table 3.7-1
National Ambient Air Quality Standards**

	Primary Standards		Secondary Standards	
Pollutant	Level	Averaging Time	Level	Averaging Time
Carbon Monoxide	9 ppm	8-hour	None	
	35 ppm	1-hour		
Lead	0.15 µg/m³	Rolling 3-month average	Same as Primary	
	1.5 µg/m³	Quarterly average	Same as Primary	
Nitrogen Dioxide	53 ppb	Annual	Same as Primary	
	100 ppb	1-hour	None	
Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)	150 µg/m³	24-hour	Same as Primary	
Particulate Matter (PM _{2.5})	15.0 µg/m³	Annual	Same as Primary	
	35 µg/m³	24-hour	Same as Primary	
Ozone	0.075 ppm	8-hour	Same as Primary	
	0.12 ppm	1-hour	Same as Primary	
Sulfur Dioxide	0.03 ppm	Annual	0.5 ppm	3-hour
	0.14 ppm	24-hour		
	75 ppb	1-hour	None	

Source: U.S. EPA (July 1, 2010)

Particulates – Particulate matter consists of solid particles, fine liquid droplets, or condensed liquids that have adsorbed onto solid particles. Particulates with a diameter of less than 10 micrometers are referred to as PM₁₀, while very fine particles equal to or less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter are referred to as PM_{2.5}.

Particulate emissions are primarily composed of smoke, dust, dirt, soot, fly ash, and condensing vapors. The particles of droplets are composed of different elements, depending on the emission source. Chemical reactions can occur in the atmosphere to form new chemical compounds or change gases and liquids into solid particles. Industrial processes that cause these emissions include combustion, incineration, construction, mining, metal smelting, metal processing, and grinding. Non-industrial sources include motor vehicle exhaust, road dust, wind-blown soil, forest fires, volcanic activity, and farm operations.

Ozone – Ozone is a gas that is composed of three oxygen atoms. It is not usually emitted directly into the air, but at ground level is created by a chemical reaction between oxides of nitrogen and volatile organic compounds in the presence of sunlight. In the earth's lower atmosphere, ground-level ozone is considered undesirable. Motor vehicle exhaust and industrial emissions, gasoline vapors, and chemical solvents, as well as natural sources, emit nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds that help form ozone. Ground-level ozone is the primary constituent of smog. Sunlight and hot weather cause ground-level ozone to form in harmful concentrations in the air. As a result, it is known as a summertime air pollutant. Many urban areas tend to have high levels of bad ozone, but even rural areas are also subject to increased ozone levels because wind carries ozone and pollutants over hundreds of miles.

Carbon Monoxide – Carbon monoxide is produced primarily from transportation, fuel burning for space heating, and electrical generation. Industrial processes, as well as wood, agricultural, and refuse burning, also contribute to emissions of carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide can exert toxic effects on humans by limiting oxygen distribution to organs and tissues. People with impaired circulatory systems are more vulnerable at lower levels than healthy individuals. Exposure to carbon monoxide can impair visual perception, work capacity, manual dexterity, learning ability, and the performance of complex tasks.

Sulfur Dioxide – Nationwide, the largest source of sulfur dioxide comes from coal-burning power plants. Sulfur dioxide is also emitted from smelters, petroleum refineries, pulp and paper mills, transportation sources, and steel mills. Other sources include residential, commercial, and industrial space heating. Human exposure to sulfur dioxide aggravates existing respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. Asthmatics and individuals with chronic lung and/or cardiovascular disease, children, and the elderly, are the most susceptible. Sulfuric acid is a component of acid rain, which can potentially acidify lakes, streams, and soils and can corrode building surfaces.

Nitrogen Dioxide – Nitrogen dioxide is formed during combustion processes that create extremely high temperatures, such as those that result from burning coal, oil,

and gas fuels, and from burning fuels in motor vehicle engines. Nitrogen oxides are necessary for the formation of ground-level ozone and can contribute to acid rain. The human respiratory system is susceptible to effects caused by exposure to nitrogen dioxide. Asthmatics are particularly sensitive to these effects.

Lead – The most common sources of lead emissions are gasoline additives, non-ferrous smelting plants, and battery manufacturing. Historically, lead was added to gasoline as an additive to prevent engine knocking. However, the lead content of gasoline began to be controlled in the 1970s, when legislation was introduced to gradually reduce lead levels. Human exposure to lead can occur through ingestion or inhalation. The nervous system is the most sensitive to the effects of lead and high exposures can result in behavioral and learning disorders.

3.7.1 General Project Area

Indian Springs is located 45 miles northwest of Las Vegas at an elevation of about 3,100 feet, in a desert setting. The Clark County Department of Air Quality and Environmental Management (DAQEM) monitors and regulates air emissions for the project area. The existing air quality in Clark County is considered in attainment or unclassified for all criteria pollutants (40CFR 81.329, September, 2004) except for 8 hour ozone (O₃), particulate matter 10 microns or less (PM₁₀) and carbon monoxide(CO). Clark County has been in attainment for CO since 2005, and has an EPA accepted State Implementation Plan, which outlines how it will maintain its attainment status. No air quality monitoring stations are known to be located near Indian Springs; however according to the USAF, Creech AFB is in attainment for all air quality standards. Table 3.7.1-1 provides a summary of actual emissions at Creech AFB for 2005. In addition, during communication with the USAF in 2009, DAQEM stated that Indian Springs, NV is currently in attainment for all criteria pollutants. (USAF EA 2009)

Table 3.7.1-1
Summary of Baseline Emissions at Creech AFB (tons/year)

Description	CO	VOCs	NO_x	SO_x	PM₁₀
Creech AFB	0.109	8.197	0.506	0.931	0.035
Clark County	487,741	65,574	82,956	47,273	68,899
Creech AFB %Contribution	0.000	0.0125	0.0006	0.0020	0.0001

Source: USAF EA, 2009

Air Quality Index

Tables 3.7.1-2 through 3.7.1-4 display the AQI data for Clark County.

Table 3.7.1-2
Number of Days within Each Category of the Air Quality Index for Clark County

Number of Days when Air Quality was...				
# Days with AQI	Good	Moderate	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Unhealthy
274	133	123	12	0

Source: U.S. EPA (2008)

Table 3.7.1-3
Air Quality Statistics for Clark County

Maximum	90 th Percentile	Median
125	87	50

Source: U.S. EPA (2008)

Table 3.7.1-4
Index Values for Criteria Pollutants in Clark County

CO	NO ₂	O ₃	SO ₂	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀
1	0	224	0	33	16

Source: U.S. EPA (2008)

Criteria Air Pollutants

Table 3.7.1-5 provides emission data by criteria air pollutant for Clark County.

Table 3.7.1-5
Emissions by Category for Criteria Air Pollutants in Clark County

Pollutant	Point Source Emissions	Nonpoint and Mobile Source Emissions
Carbon Monoxide	3,059	327,048
Nitrogen Oxides	38,345	34,003
Sulfur Dioxide	42,550	8,359
Volatile Organic Compounds	357	42,165
Particles < 2.5 micrometers Diameter	3,410	6,203
Particles < 10 micrometers diameter	4,136	40,042
Ammonia	324	1,412

Source: U.S. EPA (2002)

3.8 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND WASTE

Hazardous material is any item or agent (chemical, biological, or physical) that has the potential to cause harm to humans, animals, or the environment, either by itself or through interaction with other factors. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) defines a hazardous material as any substance or chemical that is a “health hazard” or “physical hazard”, including chemicals that are carcinogenic; toxic agents; irritants; corrosives; sensitizers; agents that act on the hematopoietic system; agents that damage the lungs, skin, eyes, or mucous membranes; chemicals that are combustible, explosive, flammable, oxidizers, pyrophones, unstable-reactive or water reactive; and chemicals that in the course of normal handling, use, or storage may produce or release dusts, gases, fumes, vapors, mists, or smoke that may have any of the previously mentioned characteristics. The EPA incorporates OSHA’s definition but adds any item or chemical that can cause harm to people, plants, or animals when released by spilling, leaking, pumping, pouring, emitting, emptying, discharging, injecting, escaping, leaching, dumping, or disposing into the environment.

Hazardous waste is defined by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) as a waste that has the potential to (1) cause, or significantly contribute, to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious irreversible, or incapacitating reversible illness; or (2) pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported, or disposed of, or otherwise managed. The RCRA is a hazardous waste regulation that was enacted in 1976. This act created a system that records hazardous materials and waste. All hazardous wastes must be tracked from the time they are generated until their final disposal. In addition, the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) provides regulation for hazardous waste because it creates a Superfund and provides for the cleanup and remediation of closed and abandoned hazardous waste sites.

Evaluation of hazardous materials and waste particularly focuses on underground storage tanks (USTs), aboveground storage tanks (ASTs), and the storage, transportation, handling, and use of pesticides and herbicides, fuels, and petroleum, oil, and lubrication (POL) products. In addition, if any hazardous waste was generated, stored, transported, or disposed of at or near the project site, evaluation would be needed.

Additional materials that may pose a risk to human health are asbestos-containing material (ACM) and lead-based paint (LBP). For ACMs, the EPA has proposed a concentration limitation of seven million fibers per liter of drinking water for long fibers (length greater or equal to five micrometers). In addition, OSHA has set limits of 100,000 fibers with lengths greater than or equal to 5 micrometers per cubic meter

of workplace air for 8-hour shifts and 40-hour workweeks. In 1978, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (16 Code of Federal Regulation CFR 1303) banned the residential use of LBP in the U.S. The U.S. Government defines LBP as “any paint or surface coating that contains lead equal to or exceeding one milligram per square centimeter or 0.5 percent by weight.”

In 1975, the Department of Defense (DoD) established the Environmental Restoration Program (ERP) to provide guidelines and funding for the investigation and remediation of hazardous waste sites caused by disposal activities at military installations. The ERP complies with CERCLA, the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA), and the RCRA. The ERP investigates and, if necessary, cleans up former disposal and test areas. In addition, Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 32-70 and Air Force Instruction (AFI) 32-7000 incorporate the requirements of all federal regulations, other AFIs, and DoD directives for the management of hazardous materials, hazardous waste, and additional dangerous substances.

3.8.1 Creech AFB

Activities at Creech AFB require the use and storage of a variety of hazardous materials associated with general aviation and vehicle maintenance activities. These include, but are not limited to, batteries, antifreeze, paint, aerosol cans, and solvents. The Nevada Test & Training Range contracts management of the 90-day Central Accumulation Site (CAS) at the base. The CAS accepts all types of hazardous wastes from all Creech AFB units. Creech AFB organizations operate Initial Accumulation Points (IAP) storing no more than 55 gallons of hazardous wastes or 1 quart of acutely hazardous waste prior to transfer to the CAS. Both the IAPs and CASs are subject to regular inspections, which could include operation and facility surveys, waste stream analyses, personnel review for training requirements, and documentation requirements. The Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office (DRMO) contracts for the removal and shipment of accumulated hazardous waste (USAF EA 2009).

3.8.2 Indian Springs

Hazardous Materials

During inspection of the Indian Springs 16.9 acres of resort property, presence of the improper use, storage, or disposal of hazardous material was not observed. Hazardous materials found on site include gasoline, diesel, and propane. Gasoline is stored in a 10,000-gallon UST, an 8,000 gallon UST, and a 5,000 gallon UST. Diesel fuel is stored in one 8,000-gallon UST. Propane is stored in two 500-gallon ASTs and one 250-gallon AST. There are two abandoned USTs on site as well; a 3,000-gallon capacity UST previously used for storing leaded gasoline, and a 50-gallon capacity

UST that was likely used to store heating oil. In addition, there is a 500-gallon UST that was used to store used oil, but is permanently out of use.

Asbestos-Containing Material (ACM)

The permanent commercial structures at the site were tested for the presence of ACM. A majority of the sample results came back negative. However, some asbestos was identified in floor tiles, the mastic glue that adheres those tiles to the floor, and in some of the sprayed on texturing in these structures.

Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)

Electric transformers and ballasts within older fluorescent light fixtures can contain PCBs. On site, there are a total of eight electric transformers. These transformers are suspected to contain PCBs due to their apparent age. There was no evidence of leakage. Composite soil samples were collected from beneath each of the transformer locations. PCBs were not detected in two of the three samples; however, 0.08 mg/kg of PCB-1260 was detected in the IS-TRANS-1 sample, which is considerably below the USEPA Preliminary Remediation Goal of 0.74 mg/kg for industrial soil and 0.22 mg/kg for residential soil (USEPA 2010).

Lead-Based Paint (LBP)

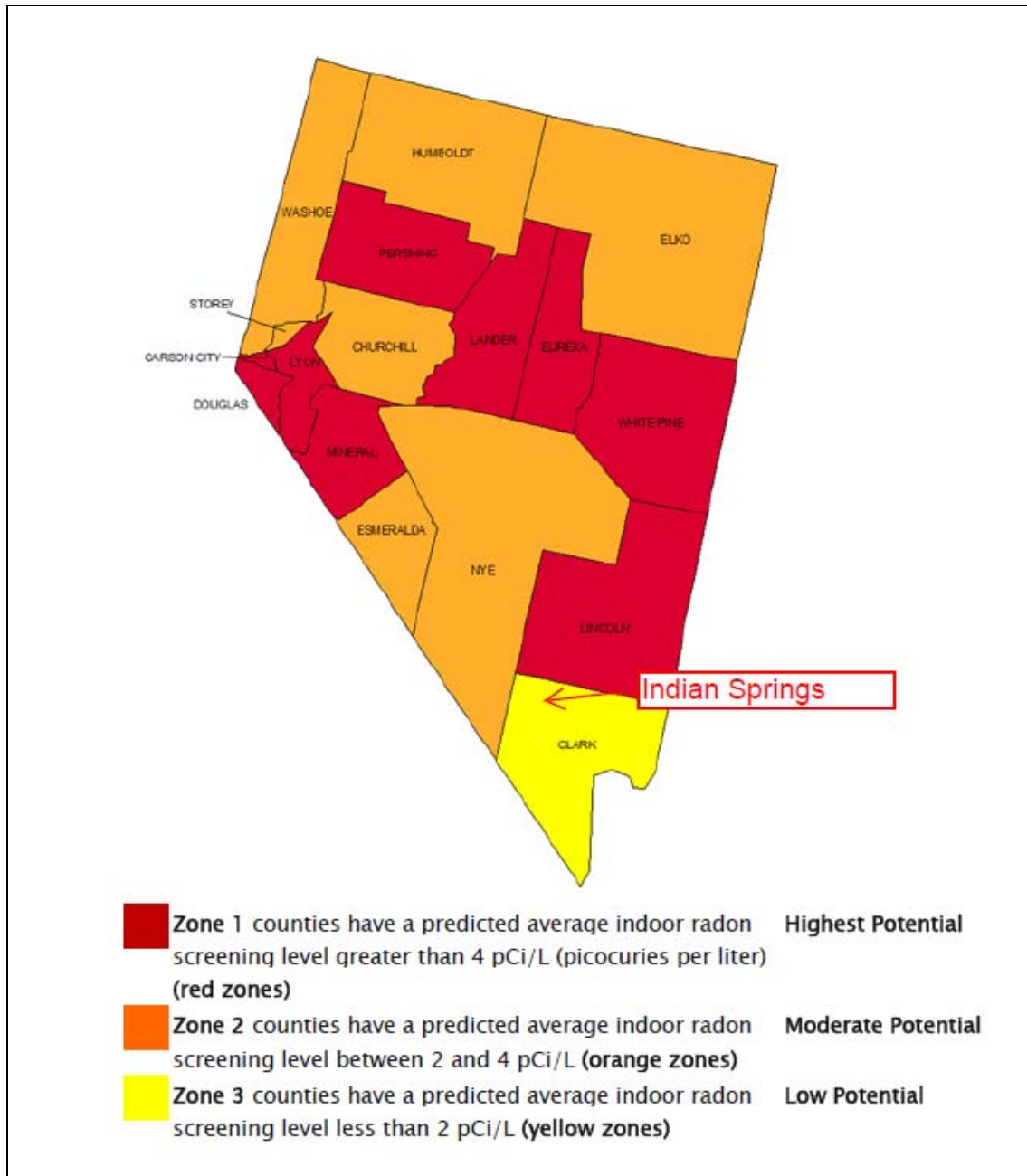
Samples of paint chips were collected from various locations at the site and analyzed for lead concentration. The results of this analysis revealed no significant amount of lead was present in any of the collected samples.

Radon

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that develops in soils and rocks as uranium decays. Radon is a noble, colorless, and odorless gas that has been determined to increase the risk of developing lung cancer. The EPA assigns zones to every county within the U.S. based on radon potential. The radon zone designation of the highest priority is Zone 1. Figure 3.8.2-1 shows Clark County classified as a Zone 3, having the lowest potential for radon. Radon is not suspected at the site.

Spills

There is no known documentation or evidence that any spills have occurred at the project site.



Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Figure 3.8.2-1
EPA Radon Zones of Nevada

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3.9 SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Safety and occupational health are concerned with protecting the safety, health and welfare of people engaged in work or employment. The goal of all safety and occupational health programs is to foster a safe work environment. As a secondary effect, it may also protect co-workers, family members, employers, customers, suppliers, nearby communities, and other members of the public who are affected by the workplace environment.

3.9.1 Creech AFB

Day-to-day operations and maintenance activities conducted at Creech AFB are performed in accordance with applicable USAF safety regulations, published USAF Technical Orders, and standards prescribed by Air Force Occupational Safety and Health (AFOSH) requirements. In addition, Unified Facilities Criteria (UFC) 3-260-01, Airfield and Heliport Planning and Design Criteria, limits locations and heights of objects and facilities around and in the immediate vicinity of an airfield to minimize hazards to airfield and flight operations. Any condition not meeting these requirements is classified as an approved waiver, a permissible deviation, an exemption, or a violation (UFC 3-260-01). Quantity-distance criteria specified in Department of Defense (DoD) 6055.9-Std, DoD Ammunition and Explosives Safety Standards and USAF Manual 91-201, Explosive Safety Standards. The standards include implementation of safe distances between non-explosive related facilities and personnel from weapons-loaded aircraft. Antiterrorism/Force protection measures are required in facility siting and construction to reduce the vulnerability of personnel and property (USAF EA 2009).

3.9.2 Indian Springs

Public safety is governed by local, state, and federal regulations and good construction practices. Typical requirements include construction traffic control following the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), OSHA worker safety requirements, including requirements to barricade and cover open trenches and pits, and OSHA Process Safety Management requirements associated with the treatment process.

3.10 NOISE

Noise pollution is a type of energy pollution in which distracting, irritating, or damaging sounds are freely audible. As with other forms of energy pollution, noise pollution contaminants are not physical particles, but rather waves that interfere with naturally occurring waves of a similar type in the same environment. In the narrowest sense, sounds are considered noise pollution if they adversely affect

wildlife, human activity, or are capable of damaging physical structures on a regular, repeating basis. In the broadest sense of the term, a sound may be considered noise pollution if it disturbs any natural process or causes human harm, even if the sound does not occur on a regular basis.

The prevailing source of artificial noise pollution is from transportation. In rural areas, train and airplane noise can disturb wildlife habits, thereby affecting the manner in which animals in areas around train tracks and airports hunt and mate. In urban areas, automobile, motorcycle, and even entertainment noise can cause sleep disruption in humans and animals, hearing loss, heart disease (as a result of stress), and in severe cases, mental instability.

The federal government has established noise guidelines and regulations for the purpose of protecting citizens from potential hearing damage and from various other adverse physiological, psychological, and social effects associated with noise. The Federal Interagency Committee on Noise developed land use compatibility guidelines for noise in terms of Day-Night Average A-weighted Sound Level (DNL). For outdoor activities, the EPA recommends a DNL of 55 decibels (dBA) as the sound level below which, there is no reason to suspect that the general population would be at risk from any of the effects of noise. DNL is the metric recognized by the United States government for measuring noise and its effects on humans.

3.10.1 General Project Area

Noise

The primary existing noise sources in the general vicinity of the project area are unmanned military aircraft, Thunderbird practice sessions, other jet flights, helicopter flights, and the loudspeaker announcement system at Creech AFB. The types of remote aircraft typically deployed at Creech AFB are much quieter than typical military or commercial jet aircraft. Secondary sources of noise include motor vehicle traffic on Highway 95, motor vehicle traffic along surface streets in Indian Springs, and wind-related sources. Highway vehicle traffic registers at approximately 75 A-Weighted Decibels (dBA) at 50 feet. Therefore, there are considerable sources of ambient noise within the vicinity of the project site (USAF EA 2009).

CHAPTER 4
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The following Proposed Action and Alternatives are evaluated in this section:

- Proposed Action: acquisition of the entire 16.9 acres of the Indian Springs Casino Resort Property and construction of a new perimeter fence to fully secure the mission of Creech AFB.
- Alternative 1: acquire 11.75 acres of the 16.9 acres of the resort property through a partial leasehold interest with a 175-foot stand-off and demolish buildings and structures as negotiated to increase the security buffer on the southern boundary of Creech AFB.
- Alternative 2: acquire a partial stand-off easement (3.2-acres) that extends 125 feet on the west and 65 feet on the north from the existing installation perimeter to increase the security buffer of Creech AFB.
- Alternative 3: continued surveillance/monitoring of the base perimeter, and renovation of the existing or construction of a new perimeter fence.
- No-Action Alternative: No action would be taken.

Once the acquisition is completed, future USAF development of these 16.9 acres would be analyzed in a separate EA, or a supplemental EA to this EA. At this time, future development of these 16.9 acres is unknown.

An impact severity table is provided in Table 4-1 to define the level of impact for each resource category evaluated in this Chapter.

4.1 ANALYSIS APPROACH

The approach used for this environmental impact analysis is to assess and compare potential impacts to environmental resources with implementation of the Proposed Action and Alternatives at Creech AFB and Indian Springs, NV. Alternatives to the Proposed Action are discussed in Chapter 2 and vary from the Proposed Action in terms of the amount of land to be acquired and the extent and/or necessity of demolition and construction. The direct and indirect effects are identified, and where appropriate, the implementation of best management practices to minimize potential environmental impacts along with any additional practical mitigation to minimize impacts is identified. Short- and long-term impacts are identified, where possible. In general, one long-term beneficial effect from implementation of the Proposed Action would be the increased security buffer at Creech AFB, which would increase Base security and ensure compliance with AT/FP regulations. Potential impacts are quantified wherever possible and discussed at a level of detail

necessary to determine the significance of the impacts. Cumulative effects of the Proposed Action and Alternatives when considering past, present, and foreseeable future actions are presented in Chapter 5.

4.1.1 Environmental Effects

This portion of the analysis considers the potential environmental impact to resources from implementation of Proposed Action and Alternatives. Just as cumulative effects in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.1) consider potential environmental impacts resulting from “the incremental impacts of an action when added to other past, present, and reasonable foreseeable future actions...” this analysis will evaluate the potential effects to individual resources due to the projects occurring in the same relative vicinity.

Table 4-1
Criteria for Rating Severity of Impacts

Impact Severity	Natural Resources¹	Threatened, Endangered, or Candidate Species	Cultural Resources	Airspace	Socioeconomic Resources
<i>Short-term</i> = Less than one year, normally during construction and recovery. <i>Long-term</i> = Longer than one year, normally from operations.					
Negligible	Impact localized and not detectable, or at lowest levels of detection	Change in a population or individuals of a species; consequences to population not measurable or perceptible, or other changes not measurable or perceptible	Impact to properties barely perceptible and not measurable; confined to small areas or affecting a single contributing element of a larger National Register District with low data potential	Impact not perceptible and not measurable; not affecting surroundings	Impact not detectable, no discernible effect on socioeconomic environment
Minimal	Impact localized and slightly detectable but would not affect overall structure of any natural community	Change in a population or individuals of a species, if measurable, would be small and localized, or other changes would be slight but detectable	Impact perceptible and measurable, but would remain localized; affecting a single contributing element of a larger National Register District with low to moderate data potential, or would not affect character-defining features of a National Register eligible or listed property	Impact perceptible but not measurable; would remain localized.	Impact slightly detectable but would not affect overall socioeconomic environment
Moderate	Impact clearly detectable; could affect individual species, communities, or natural processes appreciably	Change in a population or individuals of a species measurable but localized	Impact sufficient to change a character-defining feature but would not diminish resource's integrity enough to jeopardize its National Register eligibility, or it generally would involve a single or small group of contributing elements with moderate to high data potential	Impact detectable and possibly affecting integrity of surroundings.	Impact clearly detectable and could have an appreciable effect on the socioeconomic environment
Major	Impact highly noticeable and would substantially influence natural resources, e.g. individuals or groups of species, communities, or natural processes	Change in a population or individuals of a species measurable and would result in permanent consequence to the population	Substantial, highly noticeable change in character-defining features would diminish resource's integrity so much that it would no longer be eligible for National Register listing, or it would involve a large group of contributing elements or individually significant properties with exceptional data potential	Impact would have a significant impact on surroundings.	Impact would have a substantial, highly noticeable, potentially permanent influence on socioeconomic environment

Impact Severity	Land Use	Floodplain	Wetlands	Air Quality	Water Quality
<i>Short-term</i> = Less than one year, normally during construction and recovery.					
<i>Long-term</i> = Longer than one year, normally from operations.					
Negligible	Impact localized and not detectable, or at lowest levels of detection	Impact barely perceptible and not measurable. Crossing floodplains with overhead transmission lines is often unavoidable.	Impact barely perceptible and not measurable; confined to small areas and would not fill or destroy a wetland.	Impact not perceptible and not measurable; not affecting surroundings	Impact not detectable, no discernible effect on water quality.
Minimal	Impact localized and slightly detectable but would not affect overall community	Impact perceptible and measurable, but would remain localized, affecting an area that is unavoidable, such as repairing a pipeline or burying an upgraded electrical line.	Impact perceptible and measurable, but would remain localized; affecting a wetland that is unavoidable, such as repairing a pipeline or burying an upgraded electrical line.	Impact perceptible but not measurable; would remain localized.	Impact slightly detectable but would not affect overall water quality.
Moderate	Impact clearly detectable; could affect the community; implementable mitigation provided to avoid impacts	Impact sufficient to change a floodplain's features but with sufficient implementable mitigation that would not diminish the usefulness of the floodplain.	Impact sufficient to change a wetland but would not diminish resource's integrity enough to jeopardize its viability. A Section 404 from the Corps of Engineers would be required and implementable, appropriate mitigation would be required.	Impact detectable and possibly affecting integrity of surroundings. Air quality testing would be required.	Impact clearly detectable and could have an appreciable effect on the water quality of the environment.
Major	Impact highly noticeable; would substantially influence individual communities. This impact would be outside the parameters of the EA and would require the preparation of an additional EA.	Change in the floodplain that is measurable and would result in permanent consequence to the environment. This impact would be outside the parameters of the EA and would require the preparation of an additional EA.	Substantial, highly noticeable change in the wetland, resulting in a significant impact to wetlands. This impact would be outside the parameters of the EA and would require the preparation of an additional EA.	Impact would have a significant impact on surroundings. This impact would be outside the parameters of the EA and would require the preparation of an additional EA.	Impact would have a substantial, highly noticeable, potentially permanent effect on the environment. This impact would be outside the parameters of the EA and would require the preparation of an additional EA.

¹ Natural Resources includes wildlife and vegetation

4.2 LAND USE

This section focuses on the impacts to land use from implementation of the Proposed Action and Alternatives. The threshold level of significance for land use is the potential for the Proposed Action and Alternatives to change the land use in such a manner as to cause incompatibility with adjacent land management and/or uses.

4.2.1 Creech AFB

4.2.1.1 Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action (acquisition and demolition of the entire Indian Springs Casino Resort Property), the USAF would acquire the 16.9 acre project area, demolish the existing perimeter fence and all on-site buildings/improvements including electrical, plumbing and septic, and remove all underground storage tanks (USTs). In addition, a new perimeter fence would be constructed along the boundary. There would be a change in land use since the land is currently used for mixed commercial and residential purposes, and would become military property used by the USAF. The change in land use would have a long-term beneficial effect. By acquiring this land, Creech AFB would be able to increase the security buffer and comply with AT/FP regulations, which would help secure Creech AFB and its ability to fulfill its mission. No adverse impacts are anticipated under the Proposed Action.

4.2.1.2 Alternative 1

Alternative 1 (11.75 acre partial leasehold interest) would have a significant beneficial effect on land use for Creech AFB. The leasehold area would encompass 11.75 acres of the resort property, and would include the construction of a new perimeter fence. The change in land use would be beneficial in the long-term to Creech AFB because it would allow the base to increase its security buffer, as well as help secure the mission. No negative effects to land use are expected to occur under this alternative.

4.2.1.3 Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2 (acquire an easement), there would not be a significant change in land use. The easement area would be designated military property instead of commercial/residential property, and a new perimeter fence would be constructed. Since the easement area represents only a small portion (approximately 3.2 acres) of the 16.9 acres, the majority of the land would continue to be used for

commercial/residential purposes. Under this alternative, the small change in land use would have minimal beneficial effects.

4.2.1.4 Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3 (continued surveillance and perimeter fence renovation/construction), there would not be a significant change in land use. The 16.9 acres of resort property would remain under current ownership and the only change that would occur is the renovation of the old or construction of a new perimeter fence. Therefore, under this alternative, Creech AFB would be unable to secure a security buffer, and would leave the base in its current state.

4.2.2 Indian Springs

4.2.2.1 Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action (acquisition and demolition of the entire Indian Springs Casino Resort Property), the USAF would acquire the 16.9 acre project area, demolish the existing perimeter fence and all on-site buildings/improvements including electrical, plumbing and septic, and remove all USTs. In addition, a new perimeter fence would be constructed along the boundary. There would be a change in land use since the land is currently used for mixed commercial and residential purposes, and would become military property used by the USAF. In addition, the project area makes up a considerable portion of the commercially zoned property in the community, and acquisition of this land by the USAF could result in fewer businesses in Indian Springs. However, there would still be other commercially zoned property available in Indian Springs that would provide for relocation of the businesses on the subject property, as well as new businesses (identified on the Indian Springs Land Use Map). In addition, the Clark County Board of County Commissioners' future needs of the community would be addressed through an updated Visioning process. By design, "This process would identify potential growth areas on the south side of the highway and make those lands suitable for a wide range of business enterprises and attractive to potential developers. Therefore, implementation of this alternative would have a moderate short-term negative effect, but would result in a long-term positive effect on land use.

4.2.2.2 Alternative 1

Alternative 1 (11.75 acre partial leasehold interest) would not have a significant effect on land use. The leasehold area would encompass 11.75 acres of the resort property, and would include the construction of a new perimeter fence. However, the major utility of the land lies in the remaining 5.15 acres that includes the casino,

motel and gas station. Since these areas would not be affected, there would be a minimal effect to land use under this alternative.

4.2.2.3 Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2 (acquire an easement), there would not be a significant change in land use. The easement area would be designated military property instead of commercial/residential property, and a new perimeter fence would be constructed. In addition, any buildings or improvements that lie in part or entirely within the proposed easement area would be relocated or demolished. Since the easement area represents a small portion (approximately 3.2 acres) of the 16.9 acres, the majority of the land would continue to be used for commercial/residential purposes. Therefore, effects to land use would be minimal.

4.2.2.4 Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3 (continued surveillance and perimeter fence renovation/construction), there would not be a significant change in land use. The 16.9 acres of resort property would remain under current ownership and the only change that would occur is the renovation of the old or construction of a new perimeter fence. Therefore, under this alternative, the effects to land use are considered negligible.

4.2.3 No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, there would be no effects to the land use and the property would remain in its present condition. However, there would be a negative impact to the USAF under this alternative because Creech AFB would be unable to comply with the Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection guidelines.

4.3 SOCIOECONOMICS

Socioeconomic resources are defined as the basic attributes associated with the human environment, particularly population and economic activity. Population is described by the change in magnitude, characteristics, and distribution of people. Economic activity is typically composed of employment distribution, personal income, and business growth. Socioeconomics for this EA focus on the general features of the local economy that could be affected by the Proposed Action and Alternatives.

4.3.1 Creech AFB

4.3.1.1 Proposed Action

Implementation of the Proposed Action (acquisition and demolition of the entire Indian Springs Casino Resort Property) would involve demolition, construction and other related activities. These activities would contribute to the local economy through the addition of jobs and increased utilization of current businesses. However, these benefits would be considered short-term.

4.3.1.2 Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1 (11.75 acre partial leasehold interest), demolition of buildings and structures, UST abatement, land restoration and construction of a new perimeter fence could be performed as determined in the lease agreement. These activities would contribute to the local economy although the potential beneficial effects would be short-term.

4.3.1.3 Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2 (acquire an easement), demolition may be necessary to remove any buildings or improvements that lie within the proposed easement area. In addition, a new perimeter fence would be constructed. These activities would not have an appreciable effect on socioeconomics due to the minimal amount of work required for this alternative. Therefore, there would be minimal beneficial effects to socioeconomics under this alternative.

4.3.1.4 Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3 (continued surveillance and perimeter fence renovation/construction), no buildings or other structures would be removed or demolished. Consequently, the employees working at the businesses in the project area would keep their jobs. Therefore, the effect on the local economy and socioeconomic conditions would be considered negligible.

4.3.2 Indian Springs

4.3.2.1 Proposed Action

Implementation of the Proposed Action (acquisition and demolition of the entire Indian Springs Casino Resort Property) would both positively and negatively affect socioeconomics in Indian Springs, NV. Jobs would be created during the site demolition and perimeter fence construction. However, these beneficial effects are

considered short-term. Potential effects of the removal of the casino, gas station and the motel include negative impacts on employment and the local economy.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the working population lower age limit is 16. Given the age range of working individuals to be from 16-64 years of age, the 2010 Census indicates the working population of Indian Spring's residents is 673. Currently, there are approximately 30 employees at the Indian Springs Casino, Hotel, and RV Park. Based on this, the 30 employees make up 4.46% percent of the projected working population of Indian Springs. These employees would lose their current jobs under the Proposed Action; however, employment opportunities still exist in the community as well as in Las Vegas and surrounding areas. The project area makes up a considerable portion of the commercially zoned property in the community and acquisition of this land could result in fewer businesses in the community. However, there would still be commercially zoned property that could be utilized by the community if the acquisition takes place. The implementation of this alternative could have noticeable negative effects on the socioeconomic environment, which are considered moderate. These effects would be mitigated or eliminated if redevelopment occurs in the community, as proposed in the Clark County Visioning Process for Indian Springs.

4.3.2.2 Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1 (11.75 acre partial leasehold interest), demolition of buildings and structures, UST abatement, land restoration and construction of a new perimeter fence could be performed as determined in the lease agreement. The main part of the 11.75 acres that would be leased would include the trailer park. As such, demolition of the trailer park would occur. However, the casino, gas station, and hotel would remain open due to their location in the 5.15 acres that are not being leased. Therefore, effects to employment, the local economy, and socioeconomic conditions would be considered minimal.

4.3.2.3 Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2 (acquire an easement), demolition may be necessary to remove any buildings or improvements that lie within the proposed easement area. The rest of the businesses near the project area would remain open. Consequently, the majority of the employees working at the businesses near the project area would keep their jobs. Therefore, the effect on employment, the local economy, and socioeconomic conditions would be considered minimal.

4.3.2.4 Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3 (continued surveillance and perimeter fence renovation/construction), no buildings or other structures would be removed or demolished. Consequently, the employees working at the businesses in the project area would keep their jobs. Therefore, the effect on the local economy and socioeconomic conditions would be considered negligible.

4.3.3 No-Action Alternative

Under this alternative, there would be no acquisition of the property by the USAF and no demolition activities would take place. Therefore, employment, housing and socioeconomic factors would not be affected under this alternative.

4.4 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Procedures for assessing adverse effects to cultural resources are discussed in regulations for 36 CFR Part 800 of the NHPA. An action results in adverse effects to a cultural resource eligible to the National Register when it alters the resource characteristics that qualify it for inclusion in the register. Adverse effects are most often a result of physical destruction, damage, or alteration of a resource; alteration of the character of the surrounding environment that contributes to the resource's eligibility; introduction of visual, audible, or atmospheric intrusions out of character with the resource or its setting; and neglect of the resource resulting in its deterioration or destruction; or transfer, lease, or sale of the property. In the case of the Proposed Action, potential effects to cultural resources could result from ground disturbing activities associated with construction or demolition of significant structures.

4.4.1 General Project Area

4.4.1.1 Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action (acquisition and demolition of the entire Indian Springs Casino Resort Property), earth-disturbing activities would occur during demolition and construction. Any earth-disturbing activities might present the potential for affecting archaeological or cultural resources.

A proposal should be prepared prior to initiation of such activities that would present procedures in the event archaeological resources were discovered during demolition activities. At minimum, the demolition contractor would be instructed to halt demolition and immediately notify the Asset Management Chief (99 CES/CEA) or the Nellis AFB archaeologists (99 CES CEANC). Chairpersons of the

17 tribes with ancestral ties to Nellis AFB, NTTR, and Creech AFB would also be notified and presented an opportunity to comment prior to initiation of demolition activities. The Tribes would also be offered an opportunity to be present during a portion of the demolition work. With proper planning, monitoring and careful action during demolition activities, any effects to cultural resources would be minimal.

4.4.1.2 Alternative 1

The assessment of effects to cultural resources would be the same as described above in the Proposed Action.

4.4.1.3 Alternative 2

The assessment of effects to cultural resources would be the same as described above in the Proposed Action.

4.4.1.4 Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3 (continued surveillance and perimeter fence renovation/construction) demolition activities would not occur in the project area. Under this alternative, due to the lack of surface sites, there would be minimal potential to affect eligible properties. Native American tribes would be offered a presentation at the Nellis AFB Annual Meeting on these on-going efforts.

4.4.1.5 No-Action Alternative

The No-Action Alternative involves no earth-disturbing activities that could potentially affect any known archaeological or cultural resources. Therefore, this alternative would produce no significant effects to cultural resources at the site.

4.5 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Impacts to biological resources would be considered significant if one or more of the following conditions would result:

- Substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies or regulations by the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) or the USFWS;
- Substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies or regulations by NDOW or USFWS;

- Substantial adverse effect on federally-protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act;
- Interfere substantially with the movement of native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, wildlife corridors, or wildlife nursery sites;
- Conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources; or
- Conflict with the provisions or an approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

The definition of “substantial” is dependent on the species and habitats in question and the regional context in which the impact would occur as determined through consultation with USFWS, and the appropriate State and local Natural Resources management agencies. Impacts may be considered more adverse if the action affects previously undisturbed habitat or if the impact would occur over a large portion of available habitat in the region. These issues are discussed below with regard to their potential significance. Prior to the initiation of any project construction, surveys would be conducted to determine the presence of burrowing owls or special status plant and wildlife species, coordinated through the Nellis AFB Natural Resources Manager.

4.5.1 General Project Area

4.5.1.1 Proposed Action

Terrestrial Communities and Wildlife. Under the Proposed Action (acquisition and demolition of the entire Indian Springs Casino Resort Property), all buildings and infrastructure would be demolished and a new perimeter fence would be constructed at the project area. During demolition and construction, the amount of vegetation disturbed would be kept to the minimum required to complete the project. Following demolition, restoration of the affected vegetation would be implemented. During these activities some wildlife could be displaced due to an increase in noise and traffic from demolition and construction-related activities. However, no significant wildlife habitat is present at the project area; therefore, the impacts would be minimal.

Wetlands and Floodplains. No wetlands are present in the vicinity of the project area. In addition, the entire project area is located in Flood Zone X, which corresponds to an area having less than a 0.2 percent chance of annual flooding. Therefore, this area is not considered a floodplain. Under this alternative, demolition activities would not affect any wetlands or floodplains.

Threatened, Endangered, and Special Status Species. The desert tortoise and burrowing owl are the only special-status plant or animal species known, or likely, to occur in

the project area. However, it is highly unlikely that either species would be in the project area given the level of continued disturbance and activity in the area by tourists, patrons of the businesses, and those residing in the trailer park. Therefore, no effects to threatened, endangered, or special status species would occur under the implementation of the Proposed Action.

4.5.1.2 Alternative 1

Terrestrial Communities and Wildlife. Under Alternative 1 (11.75 acre partial leasehold interest), demolition and construction activities could cause a short-term minimal loss of vegetation. However, following demolition and construction, restoration of the affected vegetation would occur. In addition, some wildlife could be displaced due to an increase in noise and traffic from these activities. However, no significant wildlife habitat is present at the project area; therefore, the impacts would be minimal.

Wetlands and Floodplains. No wetlands are present in the vicinity of the project area. In addition, the entire project area is located in Flood Zone X, which corresponds to an area having less than a 0.2 percent chance of annual flooding. Therefore, this area is not considered a floodplain. Under this alternative, demolition activities would not affect any wetlands or floodplains.

Threatened, Endangered, and Special Status Species. The desert tortoise and burrowing owl are the only special-status plant or animal species known to inhabit the area. However, their presence is unlikely given the lack of critical habitat, and the continued disturbance and activity in the area by tourists, patrons of the businesses, and those residing in the trailer park. Therefore, no effects to threatened, endangered, and special status species would occur under the implementation of Alternative 1.

4.5.1.3 Alternative 2

Terrestrial Communities and Wildlife. Under Alternative 2 (acquire an easement), demolition and construction activities could cause a short-term minimal loss of vegetation. Following these activities, restoration of the affected vegetation would occur. In addition, some wildlife could be displaced due to an increase in noise and traffic from demolition and construction-related activities. However, no significant wildlife habitat is present at the project area; therefore, the impacts would be minimal.

Wetlands and Floodplains. No wetlands are present in the vicinity of the project area. In addition, the entire project area is located in Flood Zone X, which corresponds to an area having less than a 0.2 percent chance of annual flooding. Therefore, this area

is not considered a floodplain. Under this alternative, demolition activities would not affect any wetlands or floodplains.

Threatened, Endangered, and Special Status Species. The desert tortoise and burrowing owl are the only special-status plant or animal species known to inhabit the area. However, their presence is unlikely given the lack of critical habitat, and the continued disturbance and activity in the area by tourists, patrons of the businesses, and those residing in the trailer park. Therefore, no effects to threatened, endangered, and special status species would occur under the implementation of Alternative 2.

4.5.1.4 Alternative 3

Terrestrial Communities and Wildlife. Under Alternative 3 (continued surveillance and perimeter fence renovation/ construction), demolition activities would not occur at the project area. However, if the perimeter fence is renovated or a new fence is constructed, some wildlife could be displaced due to an increase in noise and traffic from construction-related activities. However, no significant wildlife habitat is present at the project area; therefore, the impacts would be minimal.

Wetlands and Floodplains. No wetlands are present in the vicinity of the project area. In addition, the entire project area is located in Flood Zone X, which corresponds to an area having less than a 0.2 percent chance of annual flooding. Therefore, this area is not considered a floodplain. Under this alternative, demolition activities would not affect any wetlands or floodplains.

Threatened, Endangered, and Special Status Species. The desert tortoise and burrowing owl are the only special-status plant or animal species known to inhabit the area. However, their presence is unlikely given the lack of critical habitat, and the continued disturbance and activity in the area by tourists, patrons of the businesses, and those residing in the trailer park. Therefore, no environmental effects would occur under the implementation of Alternative 3.

4.5.1.5 No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, all vegetation at the site would remain the same. The status of wildlife and threatened and endangered species at the project area would not be affected. Any wildlife species that inhabit the area are likely to remain present. In addition, there are no wetlands or floodplains present at or near the site, so no effects would occur under the No-Action Alternative.

4.6 WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

In terms of water resources, no aspects of current operations at the project area would affect the hydrologic setting or water sources; this would not change under the Proposed Action. Therefore, this analysis focuses on potential effects to water resources near the project area.

Soil, in general, refers to unconsolidated earthen materials overlying bedrock or other parent material. The principal factors influencing stability of structures are soil and seismic properties. Soil structure, elasticity, strength, and erodibility all determine the ability for the ground to support structures and facilities. Relative to development, soils typically are described in terms of their type, slope, physical characteristics, and relative compatibility or limitations with regard to particular construction activities and types of land use.

4.6.1 General Project Area

4.6.1.1 Proposed Action

Water Resources. Under the Proposed Action, water resources could be affected by storm water runoff from the project area during demolition and construction activities. However, effects resulting from runoff caused by these activities would be minimal. Standard construction practices such as silt fencing, straw bales, and/or inlet protection could be implemented to control runoff, erosion, and sedimentation from entering the city's storm water system. Since there is very little surface water in the vicinity of the project area, possible effects to surface water would be minimal.

Soil Resources. The Proposed Action (acquisition and demolition of the entire Indian Springs Casino Resort Property) would involve the demolition of all buildings and infrastructure, UST removal, and construction of a new perimeter fence. These actions would expose and disturb on-site soils, resulting in short-term exposure to wind soil erosion. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Action may temporarily affect the site's soils. However, the effects would be minimal and considered short-term.

4.6.1.2 Alternative 1

Water Resources. Under Alternative 1, water resources could be affected by storm water runoff from the project area during demolition and construction activities. However, effects resulting from runoff related to these activities would be minimal. Standard construction practices such as silt fencing, straw bales, and/or inlet protection could be implemented to control runoff, erosion, and sedimentation from

entering the city's storm water system. Since there is very little surface water in the vicinity of the project area, possible effects to surface and ground water would be minimal.

Soil Resources. Under Alternative 1 (11.75 acre partial leasehold interest), demolition of the existing perimeter fence, buildings, structures, (UST) abatement, land restoration and construction of a new perimeter fence would be performed as determined in the lease agreement. These activities have the potential to disturb on-site soils, which could result in short-term exposure to wind soil erosion. Therefore, implementation of Alternative 1 would have a short-term, minimal effect on the site's soils.

4.6.1.3 Alternative 2

Water Resources. Under Alternative 2 (acquire an easement), water resources could be affected by storm water runoff from the project area during demolition and construction activities. However, effects resulting from demolition or construction-related runoff would be negligible due to the lack of surface water near the project area.

Soil Resources. Under Alternative 2 (acquire an easement), demolition of the existing perimeter fence, buildings, and improvements in the easement area have the potential to disturb on-site soils, as could construction of the new perimeter fence. These activities may result in short-term exposure to wind soil erosion, which could temporarily affect the site's soils. However, due to the small scale of any necessary demolition, effects to soil resources would be negligible.

4.6.1.4 Alternative 3

Water Resources. Under Alternative 3 (continued surveillance and perimeter fence renovation/construction), demolition activities would not occur, but renovation and construction activities could occur in the project area. However, effects to surface and ground water resources resulting from the implementation of this alternative would be negligible due to the lack of surface water near the project area.

Soil Resources. Under Alternative 3 (continued surveillance and perimeter fence renovation/construction), demolition activities would not occur in the project area. However, renovation of the old perimeter fence or construction of a new perimeter fence could potentially affect soil resources. However, implementation of this alternative would have negligible effects on soil resources.

4.6.1.5 No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, no effects would occur to the water or soil resources at the site. The availability and quality of surface and groundwater resources would remain the same and no soil disruption would occur.

4.7 AIR QUALITY

A significant impact would occur if the project would violate any ambient air quality standard (NAAQS or state of Nevada); increase the number or frequency of violations; contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation; conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan; result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable ambient air quality standard; expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations; or create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people.

4.7.1 General Project Area

4.7.1.1 Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action (acquisition and demolition of the entire Indian Springs Casino Resort Property), impacts to air quality during demolition are expected to be minimal and short term. Air quality impact analysis involves estimating project emissions from implementation of the project, determining the concentrations of air pollutants from those emissions, and comparing those concentrations to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

Construction activities result in emissions of both particulate matter from soil disturbance and combustion pollutants (NO_x and CO) from off-road engine operation. Ozone (O₃) is not directly emitted by combustion engines, but at ground-level O₃ is created by a chemical reaction between oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOC) in the presence of sunlight. The EPA has set off-road engine emission limits (40 CFR Part 85). All off-road equipment used for the project would be required to comply with these standards.

The DAQEM, according to Clark County Air Quality Regulation Section 94, regulates fugitive dust from construction activities. The rule requires actions to prevent or reduce fugitive dust emissions. A Dust Control Permit would be required before any excavation or other soil disturbing activities can occur in the County, and dust reduction measures must be used for any project that would affect more than ten acres.

Emissions were estimated with the 2007 Windows version of the urban emissions model URBEMIS 2007 for Windows, version 9.2.4 available at <http://www.urbemis.com>. The model was used to estimate emissions for the implementation of this alternative. Emission estimates for equipment, worker traffic, and fugitive dust are included in the estimates. Dust reduction measures such as water spraying and chemical palliatives were assumed to be present in estimating the emissions.

Sources of air emissions would be up to two excavator/backhoes, two dozers, a watering truck, a portable generator and other equipment. All equipment was assumed to operate for ten hours per day for the analysis. It is assumed that an average of 10 workers per day would commute from Las Vegas. Calculated daily air emissions and impacts are shown in Table 4.7.1.1-1. Because the impact values are less than the national air quality standards, impacts to air quality would be minimal.

Table 4.7.1.1-1

Proposed Action Maximum Emissions and Impacts

Pollutant	Emissions lbs/day	Impact ug/m³	Standard ug/m³	Exceeds Threshold?
CO	41.45	233.65	9,000	No
NO ₂	78.48	44.24	100	No
PM ₁₀	3.81	8.59	150	No
PM _{2.5}	3.50	7.89	65	No
SO ₂	0	0	80	No

Source: URBEMIS 2007 for Windows, version 9.2.4

4.7.1.2 Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1 (11.75 acre partial leasehold interest), demolition activities as well as UST abatement would occur. In addition, a new perimeter fence would be built. The impacts to air quality at the project area during these activities are expected to be minimal and short term since the majority of the buildings on the property would remain intact.

4.7.1.3 Alternative 2

Implementation of Alternative 2 (acquire an easement), involves the demolition of any buildings or improvements that lie within the easement area and construction of a new perimeter fence. During demolition and construction, impacts to air quality at the project area are expected to be minimal and short term. However, the amount of emissions and the expected effects to air quality would be considered minimal.

4.7.1.4 Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3 (continued surveillance and perimeter fence renovation/construction), no demolition activities would occur at the project area. The only source of air emissions would be the vehicles used to monitor the perimeter, and the equipment used to renovate the perimeter fence or construct a new perimeter fence. However, the amount of emissions would be minimal and the expected effects to air quality would be negligible.

4.7.1.5 No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, current environmental conditions at the site would not change. Specifically, air quality in the area would remain the same and no changes would occur that would result in any unforeseen releases of criteria air pollutants.

4.8 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND WASTE

The nature and magnitude of potential impacts associated with hazardous and toxic materials and wastes depends on the toxicity, storage, use, transportation, and disposal of these substances. The threshold level of significance for hazardous materials, toxic substances, and hazardous waste is surpassed if the storage, use, handling, or disposal of these substances substantially increases the risk to human health due to direct exposure, substantially increases the risk of environmental contamination, or violates applicable federal, state, DoD, and local regulations.

4.8.1 General Project Area

4.8.1.1 Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action (acquisition and demolition of the entire Indian Springs Casino Resort Property), the structures located at the Indian Springs project area would be demolished. Since asbestos-containing material (ACM) was found in some of the permanent structures at the site, it is recommended that an asbestos abatement professional be on-site during demolition to ensure that the ACM is removed correctly and does not result in site contamination. In addition, the USTs used to store gasoline, diesel, heating oil, propane and used oil must be removed. This process must also be monitored or performed by professionals to ensure that the soil is not contaminated with the contents of the tanks. The contractor would also be required to have a spill prevention program, including spill cleanup materials on site. With proper monitoring and careful action during demolition activities, any environmental effects due to hazardous materials would be minimal.

In regards to the debris accumulated during demolition activities, the commercially available municipal solid waste landfills in the region have ample capacity to receive and dispose of project wastes. Therefore, no significant effects related to solid waste are likely to occur under the Proposed Action.

4.8.1.2 Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1 (11.75 acre partial leasehold interest), demolition of buildings and structures, UST abatement, land restoration and construction of a new perimeter fence could be performed as determined in the lease agreement. Since ACM was found in some of the permanent structures at the site, it is recommended that an asbestos abatement professional be on-site during demolition to ensure that the ACM is removed correctly and does not result in site contamination. In addition, the USTs used to store gasoline, diesel, heating oil, propane and used oil must be removed. This process must also be monitored or performed by professionals to ensure that the soil is not contaminated with the contents of the tanks. The contractor would also be required to have a spill prevention program, including spill cleanup materials on site. With proper monitoring and careful action during demolition activities, any environmental effects due to hazardous materials would be minimal.

In regards to the debris accumulated during demolition activities, the commercially available municipal solid waste landfills in the region have ample capacity to receive and dispose of project wastes. Therefore, no significant effects related to solid waste are likely to occur under this alternative.

4.8.1.3 Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2 (acquire an easement), demolition may be necessary to remove any buildings or improvements that lie within the easement area. Since ACM was found in some of the permanent structures at the site, it is recommended that an asbestos abatement professional be on-site during demolition to ensure that the ACM is removed correctly and does not result in site contamination. Under this alternative, the USTs would be left in place. Therefore, with proper monitoring and careful action during ACM removal and demolition activities, no significant effects related to hazardous materials are likely to occur under Alternative 2.

Any debris accumulated during demolition activities would be taken to the commercially available municipal solid waste landfills in the region, which have ample capacity to receive and dispose of project wastes. Therefore, no significant effects related to solid waste are likely to occur under this alternative.

4.8.1.4 Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3 (continued surveillance and perimeter fence renovation/construction), demolition and UST abatement activities would not occur at the project area. Due to the lack of these activities, the ACM in the buildings at the project area would remain undisturbed, and the USTs would remain in the ground. Therefore, there would be no effects to hazardous materials at the project area under this alternative.

4.8.1.5 No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, the property would not undergo demolition and would remain in its current state. The ACM would remain undisturbed and the USTs would be left in place. Therefore, there would be no effects to the hazardous materials at the project area if the No-Action Alternative were to be implemented.

4.9 SAFETY

In evaluating safety, the impacts would be considered adverse if human safety would be threatened.

4.9.1 Creech AFB

4.9.1.1 Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, demolition and construction activities would present potential security and ground safety concerns at Creech AFB. Construction workers would require access to the Base and would have to meet USAF security clearance requirements. Additional truck traffic during demolition and construction poses additional risk to pedestrian and vehicle traffic on the Base. Construction workers would be required to coordinate work with the Creech AFB safety officer and follow USAF Munitions, Ground Safety, and Aircraft Safety requirements. By following these measures, impacts to safety would be minimal.

4.9.1.2 Alternative 1

The construction/demolition impacts to safety under this alternative are the same as the Proposed Action.

4.9.1.3 Alternative 2

The construction/demolition impacts to safety under this alternative are the same as the Proposed Action.

4.9.1.4 Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3, restoration or replacement of the perimeter fence would present potential security and ground safety concerns at Creech AFB. Construction workers would require access to the Base and would have to meet USAF security clearance requirements. Additional truck traffic during restoration/construction could potentially pose a minor risk to pedestrian and vehicle traffic on the Base. Due to the small scale of the actions required by this alternative, impacts to safety would be minimal.

4.9.2 Indian Springs

4.9.2.1 Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action (acquisition and demolition of the entire Indian Springs Casino Resort Property), a minor increase in worker and public safety risk would occur during demolition and construction activities. These risks would be mitigated by selecting a contractor with a good safety record, and requiring the contractor to follow all applicable OSHA safety requirements, and MUCTD traffic control requirements. By following these requirements, impacts to public and employee safety should be minimal.

4.9.2.2 Alternative 1

The construction/demolition impacts to safety under this alternative are the same as the Proposed Action.

4.9.2.3 Alternative 2

The construction/demolition impacts to safety under this alternative are the same as the Proposed Action.

4.9.2.4 Alternative 3

Implementation of Alternative 3 (continued surveillance and perimeter fence renovation/ construction), would not require demolition. However, if renovation of the perimeter fence or the construction of a new perimeter fence occurs, this could cause a minor increase in worker and public safety risk. These risks would be mitigated by selecting a contractor with a good safety record, and requiring the contractor to follow all applicable OSHA safety requirements, and MUCTD traffic control requirements. By following these requirements, impacts to public and employee safety should be minimal, and therefore, would not be significant.

4.9.3 No-Action Alternative

Under this alternative, there would be no acquisition of the property by the USAF and no demolition activities would take place. Therefore, no significant effect to safety or occupational health would occur under the No-Action Alternative.

4.10 NOISE

In terms of aircraft operations, changes in noise levels of 3 dB or greater would constitute a significant change in the noise environment. However, to achieve such changes would require doubling of the number of operations at Creech AFB. No part of the Proposed Action or Alternatives would produce changes in operations.

Relative to construction, significant effects from noise would need to exceed occupational health and safety standards. All construction would operate with appropriate time and duration constraints, thereby adhering to required standards.

4.10.1 General Project Area

4.10.1.1 Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action (acquisition and demolition of the entire Indian Springs Casino Resort Property), all of the buildings and infrastructure at the project area would undergo demolition, and a new perimeter fence would be built. Due to the operation of demolition and construction equipment, there would be an increase in noise levels at the project area. However, this increase would be short-term and would have a minimal effect on noise levels. In the long-term, noise levels at the project site would remain unchanged.

4.10.1.2 Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1 (11.75 acre partial leasehold interest), demolition and construction of a new perimeter fence would occur at the project area. The operation of construction and demolition equipment would cause an increase in the noise levels at the project area. However, the increase in noise levels would be short-term, and would have a minimal effect on the noise levels at the project area.

4.10.1.3 Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2 (acquire an easement) demolition and construction related activities would cause an increase in the noise levels at the project area. However, the increased noise levels would be short-term and would have a minimal effect on the noise levels at the project area.

4.10.1.4 Alternative 3

Implementation of Alternative 3 (continued surveillance and perimeter fence renovation/ construction), would not require demolition. However, if the perimeter fence is renovated or a new fence is constructed, operation of construction equipment could cause an increase in noise levels. Though the noise levels would increase, it would be short-term and would have a negligible effect on the noise levels at the project area.

4.10.1.5 No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, noise levels at the project area would remain the same.

CHAPTER 5
CUMULATIVE EFFECTS AND IRREVERSIBLE
AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

5.0 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS AND IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

5.1 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

This chapter provides (1) a definition of cumulative effects, (2) a description of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions relevant to cumulative effects, and (3) an evaluation of cumulative effects potentially resulting from these interactions.

5.1.1 Scope of Cumulative Effects Analysis

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations stipulate that the cumulative effects analysis within an EA should consider the potential environmental effects resulting from “the incremental effects of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other action” (40 CFR 1508.7). Recent CEQ guidance in *Considering Cumulative Impacts* affirms this requirement, stating that the first steps in assessing cumulative effects involve defining the scope of the other actions and their interrelationship with the Proposed Action. The scope must consider geographic and temporal overlaps among the Proposed Action and other actions. It must also evaluate the nature of interactions among these actions.

Cumulative effects are most likely to arise when a relationship or synergism exists between a Proposed Action and other actions expected to occur in a similar location or during a similar time period. Actions overlapping with, or in close proximity to the Proposed Action would be expected to have more potential for a relationship than actions that may be geographically separated. Similarly, actions that coincide, even partially in time would tend to offer a higher potential for cumulative effects.

To identify cumulative effects, this EA addresses three questions:

1. Does a relationship exist such that elements of the Proposed Action might interact with elements of past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions?
2. If one or more of the elements of the Proposed Action and another action could be expected to interact, would the Proposed Action affect or be affected by effects of the other action?
3. If such a relationship exists, does an assessment reveal any potentially significant effects not identified when the Proposed Action is considered alone?

In this EA, an effort has been made to identify all actions that are being considered and that are in the planning phase at this time. To the extent that details regarding such actions exist and the actions have a potential to interact with the Proposed Action and the No-Action Alternative in this EA, these actions are included in this cumulative analysis. This approach enables decision makers to have the most current information available so that they can evaluate the environmental consequences of the Proposed Action and Alternatives as well as the No-Action Alternative.

5.1.2 Cumulative Effects of Reasonably Foreseeable Actions

This EA applies a stepped approach to provide decision makers with not only the cumulative effects of the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, Alternative 2, Alternative 3 and the No-Action Alternative, but also the incremental contribution of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions.

The following USAF actions have been or would be developed in the near future. No other known activities are in progress near the project area. No significant cumulative environmental impacts are anticipated as a result of implementing the Proposed Action. However, the USAF may opt to develop the 16.9 acres of land in the future.

**Table 5.1.2-1
Past, Present, and Future USAF Activities**

Description of Action	Responsible Agency	Status
Construction of an Airfield Fire/Crash Rescue Station	Creech AFB, NV	Contracting Process for Design/Build
Construction of an AFEES Gas Station	Creech AFB, NV	EA completed in July 2009
Upgrade of the Indian Springs Collection & Treatment System	Creech AFB; EPA; and Clark County Water Reclamation District	EA completed in December 2010

5.1.3 Assessment of Cumulative Effects by Resource Area

Analysis of the Proposed Action resulted in a finding of no significant direct or indirect effects on the resources analyzed. Therefore, these resources would not be discussed further in this section.

5.2 IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

Irreversible and irretrievable resource commitments refer to the use of nonrenewable resources and the effects that use of these resources would have on future generations. The irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources that would result from implementation of the Proposed Action involves the irretrievable commitment of fossil fuels, the consumption of energy resources, and human labor resources.

Energy Resources

Under implementation of the Proposed Action, the energy resources used would be gas or diesel fuel. These fuels would be used by demolition equipment as well as the vehicles used for worker transportation to and from the site. These fuels would also be used to power any generators necessary to run electrical equipment used during the project.

Human Resources

The use of human resources for activities involved in the Proposed Action is considered an irretrievable loss because it prevents personnel from engaging in other work activities.

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CHAPTER 6
INTERAGENCY/INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

6.0 INTERAGENCY/INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Commissioner Rory Reid
Chairperson, Clark County Commission
500 Grand Central Parkway
Las Vegas, NV 89106

Nevada State Clearinghouse
Department of Administration
Division of Budget & Planning
209 East Musser Street, Room 200
Carson City, NV 89701-4298

Mr. James Fisher, Chairman
Indian Springs Town Advisory Board
715 West Gretta Lane
Indian Springs, NV 89018

Ms. Jennifer Olsen
Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition
240 Water Street, Mail Stop 115
Henderson, NV 89009

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
99TH CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON (ACC)
NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE, NEVADA**

MAR 09 2011

Ms. Deborah Stockdale
99 CES/CEA
4349 Duffer Drive, Suite 1601
Nellis AFB, NV 89191-7007

Mr. James Fisher
Chairperson, Indian Springs Town Advisory Board
P.O. Box 12
Indian Springs, NV 89018

Dear Mr. Fisher,

The United States Air Force is in the process of preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) examining potential environmental impact that could result in the acquisition of private property in Indian Springs, NV. The property is located on the north side of US 95, adjacent to Creech AFB, in Clark County, NV. The purpose of the proposed acquisition is to increase the security buffer along the boundary of the installation as the Creech AFB mission has become critical to National Security and Overseas Contingency Operations.

Alternative forms of acquisition include easement, lease, and fee acquisition of land. All of these alternatives, as well as the No Action Alternative, will be examined in the EA.

Nellis AFB requests the assistance of the Indian Springs Town Advisory Board in identifying potential areas of environmental impact that should be addressed in the EA. Please forward any identified issues or concerns to Mr. Tod Oppenborn at the above address by March 22, 2011, or e-mail him at tod.oppenborn@nellis.af.mil. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deborah Stockdale".

DEBORAH STOCKDALE
Chief, Asset Management

Enabling America's Combat Edge

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EXCERPTS FROM FEDERAL REGULATION REFERENCES

1. 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Compliance Guide

In accordance with 40 CFR, Nellis AFB has concluded an EIS is not indicated for the proposed action and alternatives. The following excerpts are included for further reference:

Sec. 1508.14 Human Environment.

“Human environment” shall be interpreted comprehensively to include the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with that environment. (See the definition of “effects” (Sec. 1508.8).) This means that economic or social effects are not intended by themselves to require preparation of an environmental impact statement. When an environmental impact statement is prepared and economic or social and natural or physical environmental effects are interrelated, then the environmental impact statement will discuss all of these effects on the human environment.

2. 32 CFR Part 989, Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP) for the USAF

32 CFR 989.13 states, “Categorical Exclusion ‘(CATEX)’.

a. CATEXs define those categories of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have potential for significant effect on the environment and do not, therefore, require further environmental analysis in an EA or an EIS. The list of Air Force-approved CATEXs is in Appendix B. Supplements to this part may not add CATEXs or expand the scope of the CATEXs in Appendix B.

b. Characteristics of categories of actions that usually do not require either an EIS or EA (in the absence of extraordinary circumstances) include:

- (1) Minimal adverse effects on environmental quality.
- (2) No significant change to existing environmental conditions.
- (3) No significant cumulative environmental impact.
- (4) Socioeconomic effects only.
- (5) Similarity to actions previously assessed and found to have no significant environmental impacts.”

3. Based on these federal regulations, neither an EIS nor an Environmental Assessment (EA) is required for the proposed land acquisitions. However, 32 CFR 989.14(i) implies that an EA is appropriate in “cases potentially involving a high degree of controversy.”

Mr. Scott Bradley, Board Member
Ms. Ann Brauer, Board Member
Ms. Lisa Crow, Board Member

Honor the Warfighter

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CHAPTER 7
DISTRIBUTION LIST

7.0 DISTRIBUTION LIST

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Chairperson, Clark County Commission
500 Grand Central Parkway
Las Vegas, NV 89106

Nevada State Clearinghouse
Department of Administration
Division of Budget & Planning
209 East Musser Street, Room 200
Carson City, NV 89701-4298

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CHAPTER 8
REFERENCES CITED

8.0 REFERENCES CITED

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CHAPTER 9
LIST OF PREPARERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

9.0 LIST OF PREPARERS

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APPENDIX A
PUBLIC COMMENTS AND NELLIS AFB RESPONSES TO PUBLIC
COMMENTS

-----Original Message-----

From: Chris Munhall [<mailto:chrismun@clarkcountynv.gov>]

Sent: Friday, October 21, 2011 12:25 PM

To: 99 ABW/PA (Current Ops)

Cc: Lane, Todd R Civ USAF ACC 99 ABW/PA; MacNeill, Deborah J Civ USAF ACC 99 ABW/CCY; Larry Brown; Rachel Gritton

Subject: Draft EA - Creech AFB

Below are the official comments made and approved by the Clark County Board of County Commissioners at their meeting on October 18, 2011, agenda item #73. These comments are in reference to the draft Environmental Assessment document and public comment period relative to the possible acquisition by Creech AFB of the commercial properties on the north side of Highway 95 in Indian Springs.

Thank you for extending the comment period to include these comments.

Chris Munhall

Liaison to Commissioner Larry Brown

455-0341

We have Creech with its mission, which is critical to the security of our country. We have the historic town of Indian Springs, which has relied on these commercial enterprises as the source of services and employment to the residents of the community, and its mission to preserve and protect those opportunities. And we want to do everything possible to support both of these missions, and we believe we can, working together.

Regardless of the outcome of these potential acquisitions, whether they be in part or in full, now or in the future, we believe there are opportunities to grow the community of Indian Springs; to protect and preserve employment opportunities and provide services on the south side of the highway.

Working with the community, Nellis and Creech, BLM, state and federal representatives, we need to address the future needs of the community through an updated Visioning process. This process would identify potential growth areas on the south side of the highway and makes those lands suitable for a wide range of business enterprises and attractive to potential developers.

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Nellis AFB Response to Clark County Board of County Commissioners

Nellis AFB appreciates the Clark County Board of Commissioners review and comments on the Environmental Assessment and looks forward to working with local, state, and federal representatives in the Visioning process for the Indian Springs community.

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Response to the Acquisition of Resort Property Located in Indian Springs, Nevada
Draft Environmental Assessment

October 13, 2011

Indian Springs Town Advisory Board
Tom Seaver, Chair
Jayme Brown, Vice Chair
Ann Brauer
Lisa Crow
David Rohde

PO Box 12
Indian Springs, NV 89018

This document was compiled at the request of the Indian Springs Town Advisory Board in response to the “Acquisition of Resort Property Located in Indian Springs, Nevada Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA),” prepared for Headquarters, Air Combat Command and Nellis AFB, NV, August 2011. It was approved by a unanimous vote of the Board on October 13, 2011.

The Indian Springs Town Advisory Board (ISTAB) is appointed to assist the Board of County Commissioners in an advisory capacity with the decision-making process in supplying public services to the unincorporated community of Indian Springs.

It is the goal of the Board to support the Indian Springs Vision Statement:

“Indian Springs provides a clean, safe, healthy, sustainable environment for residents of all ages. We are recognized and respected for our unique, rural character and place in Clark County. We provide a diverse, viable, attractive alternative to the urban lifestyle of Las Vegas. Through effective planning, education, partnerships and volunteerism, we provide a place for all to live, learn, play, work and contribute now, and for generations to come.”

The Board’s overriding concern is that the implementation of the proposed action will have dire, irreversible, and irretrievable effects on the community.

There is a viable alternative that was not been considered that would accomplish the goals of the USAF without the negative impacts on the community and its residents: the USAF use USAF property to meet the USAF needs, rather than acquiring any of the limited private property, and 92% of the currently operating commercial property in Indian Springs. This alternative would also comply with USAF instructions on property acquisition.

Air Force Handbook 32-9007, Chapter 1, Section 1A states “determine if the requirement can be satisfied by (1.1.1) Use of other real property under Air Force control.” In 1.2 (Methods of Acquisition) it says real property should be acquired “in the most economical way and (with) the least adverse impact on the local economy.” Air Force Instruction 329001, 1.1 Real Property Acquisition, states that before acquiring real property by lease or purchase, consider “using other real property under Air Force control.”

There are serious deficiencies in the Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA). As documented in this response, the analyses of community characteristics and consequences are incomplete, missing, or incorrect.

A glaring omission in the DEA is cost analysis. The money for this project will come from taxpayer dollars. Waste of tax dollars cannot be tolerated, especially in this economic climate.

We believe that the deficiencies in the DEA make it impossible to arrive at an informed Record of Decision.

The following report is a summation of input received at ISTAB meetings from board members and community members.

We request that the USAF withdraw their Proposed Action in favor of using their own property to solve their increased security needs, leaving the community of Indian Springs intact. Should the acquisition be pursued further, we request that our comments be addressed before any record of decision is made.

Introduction and Overview

Because of the abundance of water, Indian Springs has had a long history. The Paiute Indians used the area to grow crops. During the 1800's it was a stopping over point for California emigrants. Charles Towner purchased that area, now referred to as "The Ranch," from the local Indians in 1876. Indian Springs was a convenient water and rest stop for travelers going back and forth from Las Vegas to the mining areas to the north.

The area along the wagon road, later railroad, and finally paved highway, was developed to provide services to travelers. During the 1930's and 1940's, the Ranch provided a quiet retreat for artists and writers, as well as residents of Las Vegas. The paving of US 95 in 1934 and the development of the Continental Test Site in 1951 resulted in rapid growth in Indian Springs, filling in the area between the highway and the Ranch.

With the advent of the Air Field, and then the Nevada Test Site, Indian Springs became a desirable place to live in order to avoid the long and dangerous drive back and forth from the Test Site and Las Vegas on a highway known as "The Widowmaker." In the 1960's a four-lane divided highway was completed. The property on the north side of the highway was home to the Indian Springs Post Office (now Auntie Moe's Trading Post), service station, bar, restaurant, and small grocery store and Laundromat. The casino was established in 1985.

The community is largely mobile/manufactured homes in parks or on larger private parcels. There are several churches, a K-12 school, and a small commercial area along US 95 that includes a motel, casino, 2 gas stations and souvenir shop. There is also a community center with meeting rooms, and a branch of the Clark County Library and two community parks.

The ISTAB has been in existence for over 30 years. It is a 5-member board appointed by the Board of Clark County Commissioners every two years. Its purpose is to serve as a liaison between the community and the Board of County Commissioners on matters concerning the community.

Since 1953 the Airfield has been the practice field for the USAF Thunderbirds. Through the years, there have been ups and downs at the Indian Springs Auxiliary Airfield, but in the 1980's the military families left, and later Base Housing was demolished. With the coming of unmanned aerial vehicles, the base, now renamed Creech AFB, has grown rapidly in size. A new sewage facility has been built east of the field by Clark County Reclamation, with an arrangement that the Air Force will pay its share in installments.

Over the years, Air Force activities have impacted Indian Springs. For example, the resurfacing of a crosswind runway necessitated that private property intended for residential use be rezoned for industrial use due to the accident potential zone. Later, USAF personnel stated that the wrong runway had been improved. The other crosswind runway would not have impacted any private property.

During the years military personnel occupied base housing in Indian Springs, services that might have developed in the community to serve both civilian and military needs could not develop because those services were provided to military residents on base, for example a child care facility. The military shared some of its recreational facilities with the community and school, and often worked in cooperation with the community in common interest activities. When the base was reclassified as an isolated assignment, the military families moved away, and the relationship between the two entities began to change.

1 of the most positive areas of cooperation between the base and the community has been emergency services. Fire and ambulance services for each are backed up by the other, with positive consequences for both groups. However, in a time when there are about 3000 military and civilian personnel on base, the military has withdrawn its ambulance from the base, despite building an additional emergency service facility.

The community has always tried to maintain a cordial relationship with the military. However, the proposal to acquire the vast majority of the community's operating commercial enterprises and demolish them has raised serious concern. Because of state and county law and regulation, it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to rebuild in another location. Furthermore, it is not economically feasible for new services to develop in the current economic situation. Even in good economic times, businesses have been uninterested in developing here due to the size of the community, the capital investment, and time required.

This property acquisition has been a topic of discussion and concern at ISTAB meetings for at least 5 years. The Board has continually made their concerns known in detail to representatives of the USAF who have attended these meetings on a fairly regular schedule since 2005. A review of the ISTAB minutes shows a consistently high level of concern about the consequences of the proposed property acquisition since 2006. However, this source was not used in the preparation of the DEA.

Our analysis of the DEA follows.

Response by Chapter

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

Land Use: The area included in the proposed action comprises 92% of the operating commercial property in Indian Springs. The demolition of this area would have far more than “a moderately negative effect on land use in Indian Springs” (p. 3). As already stated, the probability of relocating and rebuilding these businesses elsewhere in the community is limited by law, regulation, and economic circumstances.

Socioeconomics: The DEA states that 35 jobs would be lost by the proposed action (4.3.2.1, p.4-10), resulting in “negative effects on socioeconomics that would be considered moderate (p. 3). In the community there are approximately 10 other jobs of a similar type. The loss of 35 jobs would be a 78% reduction in service jobs in the community, far more than a “moderate” effect.

We believe the “finding of no significant impact” is in error.

Chapter 1 – Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

1.2 – Background: Why were 2000 census numbers used when 2010 census figures are available? The population of Indian Springs is reported as 1302 (2000 census). 2010 census figures are available, and indicate a population of 991.

Figures 1.2-2 and 1.2-3 (p. 1-5 ff) are maps that show the relationship of the community and Creech AFB. On both maps, all or most of the community is shown, but only a small portion of USAF property, giving an incorrect impression of the size of the community compared to the USAF. According to Nellis AFB factsheets, the restricted Nellis ranges cover more than 5,000 square miles. Indian Springs is about 1 square mile, with several large undeveloped areas.

Chapter 2 – Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives

As already mentioned, we propose that the USAF should address its security needs using property already under its control. This would allow the evaluation criteria “minimize the socioeconomic impacts to Indian Springs residents” and “minimize the costs...” to be met.

Chapter 3 – Description of the Affected Environment

3.1.3—Resources Eliminated— Environmental Justice: The DEA states, “there would not be a disproportionately high or adverse impact to minority or low-income groups.” While this may be fair in terms of minorities, there is no analysis to justify the elimination of low-income groups. Indian Springs is not a “high-income” area, and the jobs affected by the proposed action are not “high-income” jobs. Loss of those jobs will have a great effect on those who lose them and their families. The unemployment rate in the community would be increased.

Thorough analysis of this factor is missing.

3.2.2—Indian Springs (Land Use): The DEA states that there is industrial land use in Indian Springs. This is not true. Land uses are residential, commercial, and public facility.

3.3.1—Creech AFB: The reference to “Indian Springs Conservation Camp and Boot Camp, located just east of the community of Indian Springs and Creech AFB...” is incorrect in two ways. It is the Three Lakes Conservation Camp, etc., and the facility is NOT located just east of the community or the base. The facility is 7-8 miles south on US 95.

3.3.2—Indian Springs: Rather than using the available 2010 census information, the DEA cites the 2000 census and Clark County 2005 projections, both of which are prior to the economic down-turn which has negatively impacted Indian Springs’ as much or more than the rest of Southern Nevada. The 2010 population figure cited is more than twice the actual 2010 census figure. The graph on page 3-11 shows a sharp upturn in 2010 population rather than the 24% decline experienced during the last 10 years.

The evaluation of employment opportunities in Indian Springs is incomplete. Opportunities for employment in Indian Springs, for people living in Indian Springs, are Creech AFB, the businesses on the commercial properties that are the subject of this DEA, another small bar/restaurant located on Clark Lane, the K-12 school, Parks and Recreation, Metropolitan Police Department, Nevada Highway Patrol, and Nevada Department of Forestry. Many of the jobs require special training, qualification, and/or certification. Outside the community, opportunities exist at the Nevada National Security Site (requiring security clearance), the correctional facilities, and Las Vegas, all of which require commuting. The DEA makes no mention of the numbers of Indian Springs residents employed by the entities cited, making it impossible to evaluate how the loss of 35 jobs will affect the community. Because of poor quality housing, limited services, and spouse employment in other locations, many of those who work in Indian Springs choose to

live in Las Vegas.

How was the “median home cost” calculated? In 2010 there were about 9 home sales, ranging from \$10,000 to \$120,000. The median cost was \$37,300 and the mean cost was \$49,300. Both of these figures are approximately half of the \$74,150 figure cited (p 3-10).

3.4 – Cultural Setting

3.4.2 Indian Springs

While this section gives a vague history of the Great Basin, the history of Indian Springs is slighted. The area on the north side of the existing highway where services were established, and the area surrounding the spring were the first two parts of the community to develop. The development of the continental test site, and the establishment of the Indian Springs Army Air Field, which later became Creech AFB, brought new residents who filled in the area between the parts. These new residents expected their residency in Indian Springs would be short term, so they chose to live in mobile homes. As long-term employment became more assured, people began investing in residential property. At the same time, the businesses along the north side of US 95 grew in size and variety. Although those businesses have changed in size and/or services provided over the years, this has been the only significant commercial area to develop in the community. The DEA fails explore the reasons people could and did settle here, and why they continue to live here. This is important to understanding the community and how the loss of the commercial property will affect us.

We have no comments on the remainder of this section, except for 3.10.1. In summarizing noise impacts on the property, Thunderbird practice sessions, other jet flights, helicopter flights, and the “Big Voice” announcement system on Creech AFB are not mentioned.

Chapter 4 – Environmental Consequences

4.1 – Analysis Approach : The statement is made that “Potential impacts are quantified where possible and discussed at a level of detail necessary to determine the significance of the impacts.” Quantification is lacking in many areas of the DEA. In other areas quantification is presented in a way that under estimates impacts to the community. We have attempted to draw attention to these problems throughout this response.

4.2.2.1 – Land Use – Indian Springs – Proposed Action: Though it is possible to quantify the land use impacts to the community of the proposed action and each alternative, there is no attempt to do so in this, or any other section, of this DEA. Nor is the location of “other commercially zoned property available in Indian Springs

that could be used to support new business” identified. The alternatives lack quantification of effects on land use.

The amount of area for potential commercial development (or relocation) is irrelevant under current economic conditions, and the history of the loss of commercial activities over the years that have never been recovered or recreated is well known here.

There is no equivalent commercial property available. Long before the economic downturn, the owner of a local commercial property found that it did not make economic sense to redevelop his commercial property. If the owner of a potential commercial property was a willing seller, and the owner of the resort property was a willing buyer with adequate funding, it would take a long time and a lot of money to rebuild what already exists on the north side of the highway in another location. State and local laws and regulations limit the placement of casinos through a distance restriction from schools and churches. In a community as small as Indian Springs the area eligible for rebuilding is tiny. The community itself cannot “utilize” property.

4.3—Socioeconomics: There is no quantification of how the alternatives would benefit, even temporarily, the Indian Springs economy. Will there be jobs? What kind and how many? Are there people in Indian Springs who are qualified and available to fill these jobs? Is there a guarantee that a contractor will hire Indian Springs residents?

4.3.2—Socioeconomics—Indian Springs: It is stated that not only will the 30 employees on the north side of the highway lose their jobs, but also the 5 at the Shell Station on the south side. Is this true? If so, there will be NO fuel available in Indian Springs, no place for drivers to refuel their vehicles or themselves. The local towing company, emergency and police personnel use these stations to fuel their vehicles. In addition to causing further hardship to the community, people would be inclined to store emergency fuel at their homes, which is a hazardous practice.

It is also stated that the 35 employees who would lose jobs make up “only” 1.9% of the total population of Indian Springs. Not only does that figure erroneously assume that the population is 1842, but using the entire population to evaluate the impact of job losses is misleading at the very least. According the 2010 census, there are 617 people between 19 and 65 years of age in the community, generally the age of the working population. The southern Nevada unemployment rate is 14.2% as of August 2011. That means we can assume that there are at least 88 unemployed in Indian Springs. The loss of 30 jobs (just those on the north side of the highway) brings the unemployment rate to 19%. If all 35 jobs are lost, the rate increases to 20%. Furthermore, what are the “employment opportunities (that) still exist in the

community..." for those who lose their jobs?

There is no analysis of the effect on the local economy through the loss of taxes, licensing fees and other revenues from the affected property. Nor is there any analysis of the effect on property values in the rest of the community caused by the loss of services currently available. Without the ability to buy fuel and some food items locally, fewer people would be willing to remain in the community, and property values would most certainly decline further than they already have.

In the DEA, there is no analysis of the economic effect on truck traffic on US 95 that depends on access to fuel, parking, food, and the licensing station located on the property in question. There is no other facility in Indian Springs large enough to serve the needs of truckers.

Under the Proposed Action, the impacts would indeed have "noticeable negative effects on the socioeconomic environment (p. 4-11)." To characterize them as "moderate" does not take into account the true magnitude of the impact on the community. This could be, but is not, quantified.

4.4 Cultural Resources: The DEA does not thoroughly present the history of the property in question. There is a 1 acre parcel dedicated, with a monument, "In Memory of Joe Rarick, 1971" that has picnic tables. Auntie Moe's Trading Post occupies the former US Post Office. There is an additional building that was once a grocery store, then a restaurant. This area is of importance to the history of the community, and has the potential to redevelop in the future if it is not demolished.

4.6 Water and Soil Resources: There is potential for further contamination of groundwater on the property due to the presence of underground storage tanks. Protection of groundwater is very important. In addition, the water rights associated with the property should be protected and reserved for future growth of the community.

Chapter 5 Cumulative Effects and Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

In the process of considering "Cumulative Effects and Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources," no consideration is given to the permanent losses to Indian Springs through loss of land use, employment, revenue and a historical part of the community. In the past, when services and businesses have been lost, they have returned.

This property acquisition has been a topic of discussion and concern at Indian Springs Town Advisory Board meetings for at least 5 years. The Board has

continually made their concerns known in detail to representatives of the USAF who have attended these meetings on a fairly regular schedule since 2005. A review of the minutes shows a consistent high level of concern about the consequences of the proposed property acquisition since 2006. However, this source was not used in the preparation of the DEA.

Conclusion

There are serious deficiencies in the Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA). As shown in this response, the analyses of community characteristics and consequences are incomplete, missing, and/or incorrect.

The DEA does not analyze the true costs to the community.

There is a complete lack of cost analysis of each alternative. Taxpayer dollars will be used to finance this project. This acquisition was informally considered in the past and found to be too expensive. In these economic times it is unwise to use tax money to accomplish something that can be done on property the USAF already owns, and without causing permanent harm to Indian Springs.

We believe that the deficiencies in the DEA make it impossible to arrive at an informed Record of Decision.

We ask that the DEA be withdrawn.

We ask that the USAF address using USAF property to address their needs.

Nellis AFB Responses to Indian Springs Town Advisory Board Comments:

FONSI Land Use comments: *The area included in the proposed action comprises 92% of the operating commercial property in Indian Springs. The demolition of this area would have far more than “a moderately negative effect on land use in Indian Springs”. (p. 3). As already stated, the probability of relocating and rebuilding these businesses elsewhere in the community is limited by law, regulation, and economic circumstances.*

Response to FONSI Land Use comments: While the proposed action comprises 92 percent of the currently operating commercial property in Indian Springs, it does not encompass the currently available commercial land or additional undeveloped land that could be rezoned for commercial use. As such, it would be possible for the businesses located on the casino property to rebuild on other commercial property. While there are limitations posed by existing laws, the Clark County Board of County Commissioners would be working with the community, Nellis AFB, Creech AFB, BLM, and state and federal representatives to provide a solution to those constraints. The currently projected moderate effects on land use may be offset by an increase in the available land suitable for a wide range of business enterprises.

FONSI Socioeconomics comments: *The DEA states that 35 jobs would be lost by the proposed action (4.3.2.1. p.4-10), resulting in “negative effects on socioeconomics that would be considered moderate (p. 3). In the community there are approximately 10 other jobs of a similar type. The loss of 35 jobs would be a 78% reduction in service jobs in the community, far more than a “moderate” effect.*

We believe the “finding of no significant impact” is in error.

Response to FONSI Socioeconomics comments: The final EA has been corrected to indicate that only 30 jobs would be lost with the implementation of the Proposed Action, which is approximately 4.46% of the workforce. As outlined in the EA, this would equate to a moderate effect. If redevelopment efforts are successful, the loss of employment may ultimately be offset by new businesses at other locations.

Chapter 1, Section 1.2 comments: *Why were 2000 census numbers used when 2010 census figures are available? The population of Indian Springs is reported as 1302 (2000 census). 2010 census figures are available, and indicate a population of 991.*

Response to Chapter 1, Section 1.2 comments: 2000 census numbers were used because the 2010 census figures were not yet available when the DEA was written. The Final EA has been updated using the 2010 census figures to show a population of 991, a decrease in population of -23.9% from 1,302 in 2000.

Figures 1.2-2 and 1.2-3 comments: *Figures 1.2-2 and 1.2-3 (p. 1-5 ff) are maps that show the relationship of the community and Creech AFB. On both maps, all or most of the community is shown, but only a small portion of USAF property, giving an incorrect impression of the size of the community compared to the USAF. According to Nellis AFB factsheets, the restricted Nellis ranges cover more than 5,000 square miles. Indian Springs is about 1 square mile, with several large undeveloped areas.*

Response to Figures 1.2-2 and 1.2-3 comments: The maps are included in this portion of the EA in order to establish the areas that would be acquired based on the Proposed Action and Alternatives. The maps are not included to show the size of the community or Creech AFB, and no comparison is necessary or implied. The area of potential impact is outlined in the maps.

Chapter 2 comments: *As already mentioned, we propose that the USAF should address its security needs using property already under its control. This would allow the evaluation criteria “minimize the socioeconomic impacts to Indian Springs residents” and “minimize the costs...” to be met.*

Response to Chapter 2 comments: The area proposed for acquisition is the only area needed for security reasons based on current mission requirements. Using other land in the area of the base does not alleviate the AT/FP concerns for the area of concern.

Chapter 3, Section 3.1.3 comments: *The DEA states, “there would not be a disproportionately high or adverse impact to minority or low-income groups.” While this may be fair in terms of minorities, there is no analysis to justify the elimination of low-income groups. Indian Springs is not a “high-income” area, and the jobs affected by the proposed action are not “high-income” jobs. Loss of those jobs will have a great effect on those who lose them and their families. The unemployment rate in the community would be increased.*

Thorough analysis of this factor is missing.

Response to Chapter 3, Section 3.1.3 comments: Environmental Justice is defined by the EPA as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies”. The EPA has this goal for all communities and persons across this Nation. It would be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work. In summary, Environmental Justice ensures that low-income or minority populations are not discriminated against in favor of other groups. Since the Proposed Action and Alternatives do not involve

environmental or health hazards, there is no disproportionately high or adverse impacts to either minorities or low-income populations.

Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2 comments: *The DEA states that there is industrial land use in Indian Springs. This is not true. Land uses are residential, commercial, and public facility.*

Response to Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2 comments: The final EA has been reworded to reflect the land uses as stated by the Indian Springs Town Advisory Board.

Chapter 3, Section 3.3.1 comments: *The reference to “Indian Springs Conservation Camp and Boot Camp, located just east of the community of Indian Springs and Creech AFB...” is incorrect in two ways. It is the Three Lakes Conservation Camp, etc., and the facility is NOT located just east to the community or the base. The facility is 7-8 miles south on US 95.*

Response to Chapter 3, Section 3.3.1 comments: The name and location of the camp has been corrected in the final EA.

Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2 comments: *Rather than using the available 2010 census information, the DEA cites the 2000 census and Clark County 2005 projections, both of which are prior to the economic down-turn which has negatively impacted Indian Springs’ as much or more than the rest of Southern Nevada. The 2010 population figure cited is more than twice the actual 2010 census figure. The graph on page 3-11 shows a sharp upturn in 2010 population rather than the 24% decline experienced during the last 10 years.*

The evaluation of employment opportunities in Indian Springs is incomplete. Opportunities for employment in Indian Springs, for people living in Indian Springs, are Creech AFB, the businesses on the commercial properties that are the subject of this DEA, another small bar/restaurant located on Clark Lane, the K-12 school, Parks and Recreation, Metropolitan Police Department, Nevada Highway Patrol, and Nevada Department of Forestry. Many of the jobs require special training, qualification, and/or certification. Outside the community, opportunities exist at the Nevada Nation Security Site (requiring security clearance), the correction facilities, and Las Vegas, all of which require commuting. The DEA makes no mention of the numbers of Indian Springs residents employed by the entities cited, making it impossible to evaluate how the loss of 35 jobs will affect the community. Because of poor quality housing, limited services, and spouse employment in other locations, many of those who work in

Indian Springs choose to live in Las Vegas.

How was the “median home cost” calculated? In 2010 there were about 9 home sales, ranging from \$10,000 to \$120,000. The median cost was \$37,300 and the mean cost was \$49,300. Both of these figures are approximately half of the \$74,150 figure cited (p 3-10).

Response to Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2 comments: The population data has been updated using the 2010 Census and the historical graft removed. At this time, the

publicly available 2010 Census data does not indicate where residents are employed. The median home cost section was removed, as the latest available data reflects a 5-year average estimate, which was released prior to the current housing down-turn.

Chapter 3, Section 3.4.2 comments: *While this section gives a vague history of the Great Basin, the history of Indian Springs is slighted. The area on the north side of the existing highway where services were established and the area surrounding the spring were the first two parts of the community to develop. The development of the continental test site, and the establishment of the Indian Springs Army Air Field, which later became Creech AFB, brought new residents who filled in the area between the parts. These new residents expected their residency in Indian Springs would be short term, so they chose to live in mobile homes. As longterm employment became more assured, people began investing in residential property. At the same time, the businesses along the north side of US 95 grew in size and variety. Although those businesses have changed in size and/or services provided over the years, this has been the only significant commercial area to develop in the community. The DEA fails to explore the reasons people could and did settle here, and why they continue to live here. This is important to understanding the community and how the loss of the commercial property will affect us.*

Response to Chapter 3, Section 3.4.2 comments: Nellis AFB thanks the Indian Springs Town Advisory Board for providing these details regarding recent settlement in Indian Springs. It was never our intention to minimize the rich settlement history of the Great Basin and Indian Springs. We certainly concur that businesses have and will continue to change in size and service over the years, and again had no intention to minimize the history of Indian Springs.

Chapter 3, Section 3.10.1 comments: *In summarizing noise impacts on the property, Thunderbird practice sessions, other jet flights, helicopter flights, and the "Big Voice" announcement system on Creech AFB are not mentioned.*

Response to Chapter 3, Section 3.10.1 comments: The final EA has been revised to include the "Thunderbird practice sessions, other jet flights, helicopter flights, and the "Big Voice" announcement system on Creech AFB noise impacts on the property".

Chapter 4, Section 4.2.2.1 comments: *Though it is possible to quantify the land use impacts to the community of the proposed action and each alternative, there is no attempt to do so in this, or any other section, of this DEA. Nor is the location of "other commercially zoned property available in Indian Springs that could be used to support new business" identified. The alternatives lack quantification of effects on land use.*

The amount of area for potential commercial development (or relocation) is irrelevant under current economic conditions, and the history of the loss of commercial activities over the years that have never been recovered or recreated is well known here.

There is no equivalent commercial property available. Long before the economic downturn, the owner of a local commercial property found that it did not make economic sense to redevelop his commercial property. If the owner of a potential commercial property was a willing seller, and the owner of the resort property was a willing buyer with adequate funding, it would take a long time and a lot of money to rebuild what already exists on the north side of the highway in another location. State and local laws and regulations limit the placement of casinos through a distance restriction from schools and churches. In a community as small as Indian Springs the area eligible for rebuilding is tiny. The community itself cannot “utilize” property.

Response to Chapter 4, Section 4.2.2.1 comments: The effects that change in land use would have on the community cannot be quantified. However, the estimated effect is that while the land use would change under the Proposed Action, there is still other commercial land (see the Indian Springs Planned Land Use Map, Figure 3.2.2-1) available in Indian Springs. While the town would lose its current buildings on that property, there is an increased potential for rebuilding those businesses, which in effect could increase tourism in Indian Springs. The Clark County Board of County Commissioners stated that the future needs of Indian Springs would be addressed in the Visioning process. As a community partner, Nellis and Creech AFB leadership support compatible development and growth in the Town of Indian Springs.

Chapter 4, Section 4.3 comments: There is no quantification of how the alternatives would benefit, even temporarily, the Indian Springs economy. Will there be jobs? What kind and how many? Are there people in Indian Springs who are qualified and available to fill these jobs? Is there a guarantee that a contractor will hire Indian Springs residents?

Response to Chapter 4, Section 4.3 comments: There is no reliable way to determine how much the Proposed Action and Alternatives would benefit the Indian Springs economy. There is no way of ascertaining the kind or number of positions that would be available for demolition, construction, restoration or other related activities, nor is there a way to know which individuals would qualify for the jobs. There is however, a realistic probability that Indian Springs residents would have some job opportunities.

Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2 comments: It is stated that not only will the 30 employees on the north side of the highway lose their jobs, but also the 5 at the Shell Station on the south side. Is this true? If so, there will be NO fuel available in Indian Springs, no place for drivers to refuel their vehicles or themselves. The local towing company, emergency and police personnel use these stations to fuel their vehicles. In addition to causing further hardship to the community, people would be inclined to store emergency fuel at their homes, which is a hazardous practice.

It is also stated that the 35 employees who would lose jobs make up “only” 1.9% of the total population of Indian Springs. Not only does that figure erroneously assume that the population is 1842, but using the entire population to evaluate the impact of job losses is misleading at the very least. According the 2010 census, there are 617 people between 19 and 65 years of age in the community, generally the age of the working population. The southern Nevada unemployment rate is 14.2% as of August 2011. That means we can assume that there are at least 88 unemployed in Indian Springs. The loss of 30 jobs (just those on the north side of the highway) brings the unemployment rate to 19%. If all 35 jobs are lost, the rate increases to 20%. Furthermore, what are the “employment opportunities (that) still exist in the community...” for those who lose their jobs?

There is no analysis of the affect on the local economy through the loss of taxes, licensing fees and other revenues from the affected property. Nor is there any analysis of the effect on property values in the rest of the community caused by the loss of services currently available. Without the ability to buy fuel and some food items locally, fewer people would be willing to remain in the community, and property values would most certainly decline further than they already have.

In the DEA, there is no analysis of the economic effect on truck traffic on US 95 that depends on access to fuel, parking, food, and the licensing station located on the property in question. There is no other facility in Indian Springs large enough to serve the needs of truckers.

Under the Proposed Action, the impact would indeed have “noticeable negative effects on the socioeconomic environment (p. 4-11).” To characterize them as “moderate” does not take into account the true magnitude of the impact on the community. This could be, but is not, quantified.

Response to Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2 comments: Only the gas station on the north side of the highway would be closed. There would be no effects to the gas station on the south side of the highway.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the working population lower age limit is 16. Given the age range of working individuals to be from 16 to 64 years of age, the 2010 Census indicates the working population of Indian Spring’s residents is 673. Therefore 30 jobs account for 4.46 percent of the working population. There is a moderate negative effect to socioeconomics.

Loss of taxes, licensing fees and other revenues are only a factor with the Proposed Action; the Alternatives would leave these businesses intact. However, even with the Proposed Action, there may only be short-term negative effects because these businesses could be relocated to commercial property on the south side of the highway. Thus, property values may not be adversely affected since there would be a renewed attraction to the area due to the new casino, motel, and other buildings as the Visioning process is carried forward.

The economic effect on truck traffic on US 95 would be minimal in the short term. Even with the gas station on the north side of the highway closed, the gas station on the south side could expand. In the Las Vegas Review Journal article: *Military base expansion may hurt some Indian Springs businesses* (31 Oct 2011), Jonathan Leal, the manager of both gas stations, indicated the only changes would be to expand to accommodate increased foot traffic and to be open 24 hours. He stated: "I'm not really sure a closure would hurt my income". With the expansion of the south side gas station and the vacant area near it, truckers would still be able to access fuel, parking, and food.

Chapter 4, Section 4.4 comments: *The DEA does not thoroughly present the history of the property in question. There is a 1 acre parcel dedicated, with a monument, "In Memory of Joe Rarick, 1971" that has picnic tables. Auntie Moe's Trading Post occupies the former US Post Office. There is an additional building that was once a grocery store, then a restaurant. This area is of importance to the history of the community, and has the potential to redevelop in the future if it is not demolished.*

Response to Chapter 4, Section 4.4 comments: Nellis AFB understands that ownership of the property would require obligations to assess, and if necessary protect, any cultural resources on the property with potential for eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places under the National Historic Preservation Act. Nellis AFB would work with Indian Springs citizens, local historic organizations, and the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office to create a plan to mitigate impacts and protect historically significant sites.

Chapter 4, Section 4.6 comments: *There is potential for further contamination of groundwater on the property due to the presence of underground storage tanks. Protection of groundwater is very important. In addition, the water rights associated with the property should be protected and reserved for future growth of the community.*

Response to Chapter 4, Section 4.6 comments: The potential of contamination of the groundwater from the removal of the underground storage tanks (USTs) is considered minimal. There are companies that specialize in removal of USTs that would perform the work to prevent contamination. However, leaving these tanks underground could have an appreciable effect on the groundwater in the future if these tanks begin to leak. There would actually be long-term beneficial effects due to the removal of the USTs. Water rights issues would be determined in the acquisition agreement.

Chapter 5 comments: *In the process of considering "Cumulative Effects and Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources," no consideration is given to the permanent losses to Indian Springs through loss of land use, employment, revenue and a historical part*

of the community. In the past, when services and businesses have been lost, they have returned.

This property acquisition has been a topic of discussion and concern at Indian Springs Town Advisory Board meetings for at least 5 years. The Board has continually made their concerns known in detail to representatives of the USAF who have attended these meetings on a fairly regular schedule since 2005. A review of the minutes shows a consistent high level of concern about the consequences of the proposed property acquisition since 2006. However, this source was not used in the preparation of the DEA.

Response to Chapter 5 comments: The USAF is committed to protecting the safety and security of Creech AFB and the Indian Springs community. The proposed action, in combination with the Visioning process, would benefit both national security and the Indian Springs community through compatible planning and development. The Visioning process identified by the Clark County Board of County Commissioners would assist in increasing employment opportunities, revenue, and would help to make the land use on the south side of the highway suitable for a wide range of businesses. Therefore, permanent losses to land use, employment, and revenue should not occur.

Nellis AFB would like to thank the Indian Springs Town Advisory Board for participating in the NEPA process regarding the proposed casino property acquisition and alternatives. Nellis AFB looks forward to working with our community partners in the Visioning process to achieve compatible planning and development.