



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
News Release

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BLM Extends Comment Period for Army's Desert Tortoise Translocation

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is extending the public's opportunity to comment on the environmental assessment (EA) analyzing possible impacts from the Department of the Army's plan to move (translocate) desert tortoises to both BLM-managed public lands, as well as other Army-managed lands. The public comment period is now extended to August 31, 2009.

The Army's Fort Irwin National Training Center has requested authorization from the BLM to move desert tortoises from its expanded training facility approximately 50 miles north of Barstow onto public lands managed by the BLM's Barstow and Ridgecrest field offices. Desert tortoises would be moved south and west of the current Fort Irwin boundary onto various public lands in the Superior-Cronese Desert Wildlife Management Area.

As a result of the legislative expansion of Fort Irwin in 2001, the base is converting approximately 24,000 acres known as the Southern Expansion Area and approximately 70,000 acres known as the Western Expansion Area into useable military-training lands. The Army is required to translocate tortoises from these expansion areas before military training may take place on these lands. The BLM is evaluating the suitability of the public lands involved for translocation of the tortoises from the Army expansion areas to BLM-managed lands to facilitate fulfillment of this requirement.

Copies of the EA are on BLM's website at: www.blm.gov/ca/forms/nepa/search.php?fo=Barstow. Paper copies are available at the following locations: BLM Barstow Field Office, 2601 Barstow Road, Barstow, CA 92311, Phone: (760) 252-6000; BLM Ridgecrest Field Office, 300 S. Richmond Rd., Ridgecrest, CA 93555, Phone: (760) 384-5400; and BLM California Desert District, 22835 Calle San Juan de Los Lagos, Moreno Valley, CA 92553, Phone: (951) 697-5200.

Written comments may be submitted by letter to BLM, Barstow Field Office, Attention: Chris Otahal, 2601 Barstow Road, Barstow, CA 92311, Phone: (760) 252-6033 or by e-mail to caftirwin@blm.gov. All comments must be received on or before the close of business August 31, 2009 to be fully considered.

-BLM-

"visit our website at www.ca.blm.gov"

California Desert District Office – 22835 Calle San Juan de Los Lagos, Moreno Valley, CA 92553- (951) 697-5217