



Robin Divine
Project Manager
Science applications International Corporation
4242 Woodcock Drive, Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228-1253

This letter is in response to the Draft Environmental Assessment for the U.S. Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarters, El Paso, Texas. The preferred site (Site 1) is part of Castner Range, an area that contains the greatest biodiversity and largest genetic reserve of native plants and wildlife of any area in the El Paso region. These areas of high biological diversity are ecologically complex and significantly more stable than disturbed areas. Site 1 contains the greater biological diversity of all sites being considered and it is therefore prudent for this community to protect and manage this land with extreme sensitivity.

The finding of no significant impact on human health or natural environment that was determined in the environmental assessment is based on scientific methods; however, it does not consider the concerns of the community regarding the impact this will have on decisions regarding the future land use of Castner Range. Further development of Castner Range accelerates human encroachment into one of the few remaining continuous open space areas that include prime native wildlife habitat. It may inadvertently set a precedent for further development and degradation of the meager native open space habitat that remains in El Paso.

The biological and ecological integrity of Site 1 and its cultural and scenic values are significantly important, regardless of the scale of the Franklin Mountains and the vastness of Castner Range. Habitat fragmentation is the number one threat facing all wildlife populations today. El Paso is an urban area that contains limited wildlife and native plant habitat. Castner Range is not only biologically rich but is also the most important and largest area of continuous open space in the El Paso region. Because it is connected to the Franklin Mountain State Park this remnant provides the best opportunity to retain our native plants and wildlife for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations.

The spectacular Mexican Poppy displays are only found on Castner Range within the state of Texas. Typical development methods grade and disturb extensive land areas in a manner that alters the soil and invites early succession non-native and invasive plants and animals. Even if care is taken to restore the area to its former condition, exotic (non-native plants) will arrive and alter the natural ecosystems. Although the Mexican poppy display occurs northeast of Site 1, it does not offset the facts that Castner Range including Site 1 is the only potential Mexican Poppy habitat left and that the poppies may spread to those areas over time or that the Station will disrupt the overall scenic beauty where the poppies occur.

In spite of the fact that there were no endangered species detected, when compared to the other sites Site 1 contains the best overall habitat for wildlife. Site 1 has a greater density and species richness of flora and fauna, more arroyos and other natural drainages and the least amount of runoff capacity. The preferred site also has the highest densities of the species of concern that are mentioned in the EA.

Although not detected on the biological surveys obtained, Golden Eagles, Red-tailed Hawks, Swainson's Hawks, and American Kestrels are regularly found in northeast El Paso at Sites 1 and 2. Members of the Trans-Pecos Chapter of the Audubon Society, including Bob Johnson and myself, often bird watch in the northeast section of El Paso where numerous raptors are easily found. Golden Eagles are generally found in the mornings roosting on power lines or hunting. Red-tailed hawks are found hunting, roosting and nesting. Swainson's hawk is a Neotropical migratory bird whose numbers are rapidly declining due to the continued use of pesticides in South America where they generally winter. Swainson's hawks breed every summer in parts of foothill and desert scrub habitats in northeast El Paso. Please review the enclosed pictures taken by Bob Johnson, former president of the Trans-Pecos Chapter of the Audubon Society and the nest location map.

Castner Range is a not only a biological and ecological jewel but is also a scenic treasure. Although most of the view will not be obstructed, 25% is significant to the residents of northeast El Paso and the community of El Paso at large. The pristine appearance of Castner Range is undoubtedly the most valuable resource in the northeast and possibly the entire El Paso county and region. Open space will dictate the future of El Paso and should be a considered a high priority. Open space planning with arroyo and desert protection ordinances exist in all other southwestern desert urban areas

Ecotourism is the wave of the future and open space/buffer zones are essential for the scenic and ecological conditions that will attract wildlife and profitable nature-based industries. El Paso has historically failed to integrate an ecological perspective into the model of a world based on economics. Consider the non-price costs of this development, such as the loss of community, scenic and cultural values in addition to the ecological costs of lost watershed, open space and wildlife habitat.

Finally, urban wildlife problems will increase in direct proportion to the amount of native habitat fragmentation. There have been numerous mule deer road kills and mountain lion sightings in the Site 1 area. Opportunistic mule deer will continue to invade and forage on human-made landscapes, mountain lions will continue to follow mule deer into the urban fringe and occurrences of ringtails, gray fox and coyotes and road kills incidents will increase.

Based on the stated "quality of life" values of the Franklin Mountains and Castner Range we recommend eliminating Site 1 from consideration. We propose that the two alternative sites be given substantial evaluation when making the final decision for the Station location. Neither of these sites contain any cultural artifacts and both sites have less biodiversity.

We ask that Site 3 is given consideration over Site 2. Site 2 is located in the area known by local bird watchers as "Hawk Alley." Golden Eagles and Red-tailed Hawks are

permanent residents there. Swainson's Hawks nest in honey mesquite trees and on the power poles and burrowing owls nest in desert scrub. There were 10 documented Swainson Hawk nests this year; 2 of the nests were located within a mile of Site 2 (see enclosed pictures and map). A burrowing owl nested this year within 2 miles of Site 2. Fifteen Swainson's hawk nests were documented in Hawk Alley in 2002. American kestrels and loggerhead shrikes are wintering and permanent residents here.

Nesting raptors on Site 1 were not documented due to the restrictions that exclude the public from Castner Range. Since the habitat is more diverse and secluded than the other sites, it is reasonable to presume that numerous birds of prey are roosting, hunting and nesting in Castner Range and at Site 1. Site 3 will have the least scenic, ecological, biological and cultural impacts. It contains the lowest probability of containing endangered plants or wildlife species of concern. Currently other urban development is occurring in Site 3. A new housing development and a highway overpass are currently being constructed that will buffer the school from the Site 3 Station. We think using the most developed area for the site is best for the community.

Long-term visionary planning is needed to conserve and preserve the treasure of Castner Range. We urge the Federal government to consider these values in their own planning process and consider creating a long-term plan for the entire Castner Range to ensure its biological integrity remains intact. The priority should be to *preserve the largest continuous area of open space possible that contains the greatest amount of natural and cultural resources and other community values*. Site 1 is part of the largest natural open space area remaining in El Paso. We recommend that Site 1 and the remaining undisturbed areas of Castner Range be maintained as "hands off" management areas and that it be dedicated to an Urban Wilderness Park or the Franklin Mountain State Park.

The following suggestions are recommended for developing the Station at Sites 1 or 2:

1. Preserve all arroyos and natural drainages
2. Landscape with Franklin Mountain or northern Chihuahuan Desert natives.
3. Use semi-permeable hardscape in the parking lots.
4. Use natural southwestern desert architecture in the development area.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Lois Balin, Urban and Wildlife Biologist
Texas Parks and Wildlife
200 N. Clark Drive
El Paso, TX 79905
(915) 774-9603

Nesting Swainson's Hawks in Hawk Alley – site P 606



1 Adult and 2 Swainson Hawk fledglings in Hawk Alley – site P 611



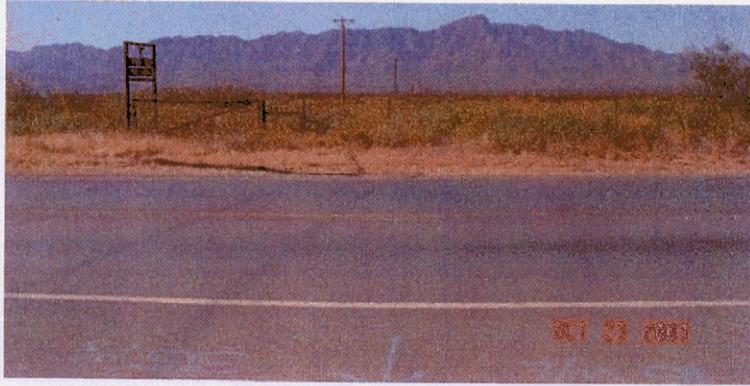
Golden Eagles in Hawk Alley



Golden Eagle hunting in Hawk Alley

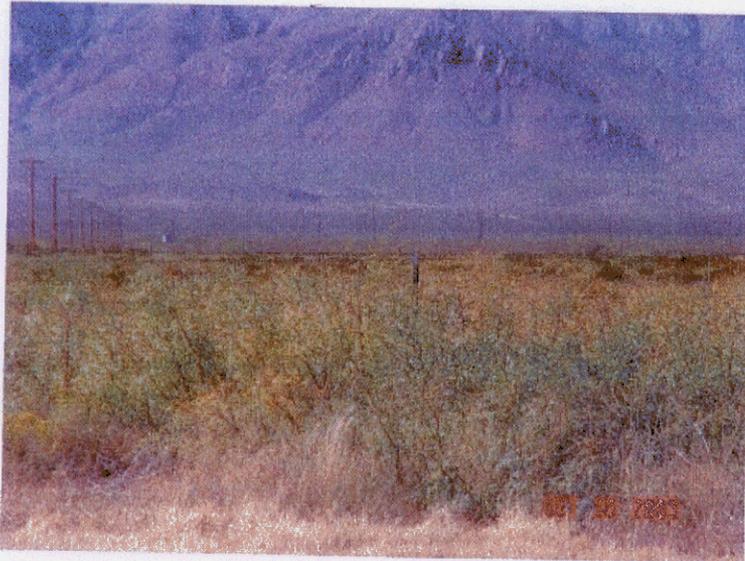


P - 607

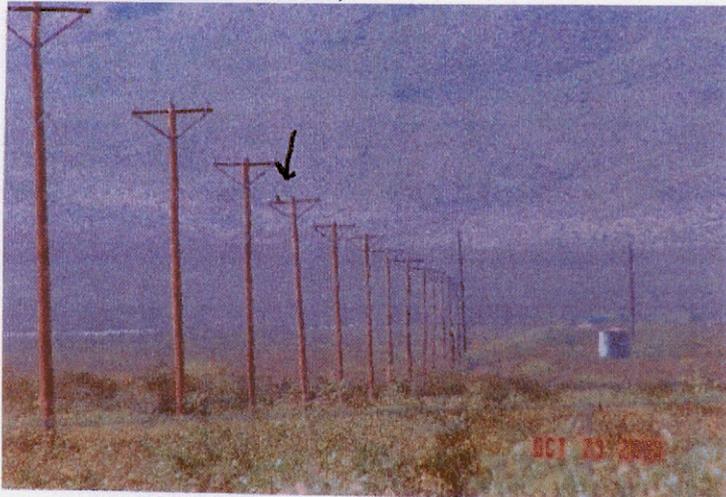


P - 608 (zoom of 607)

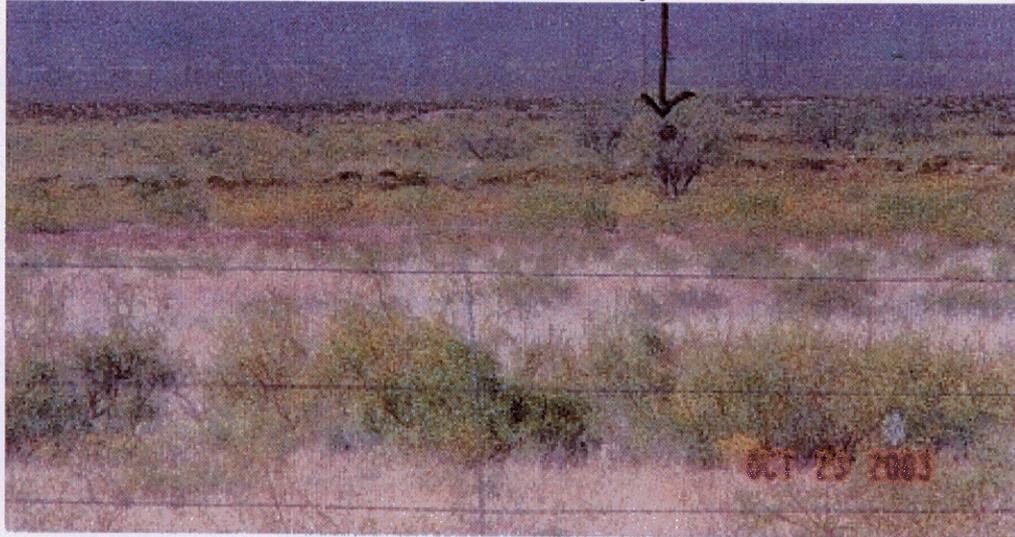
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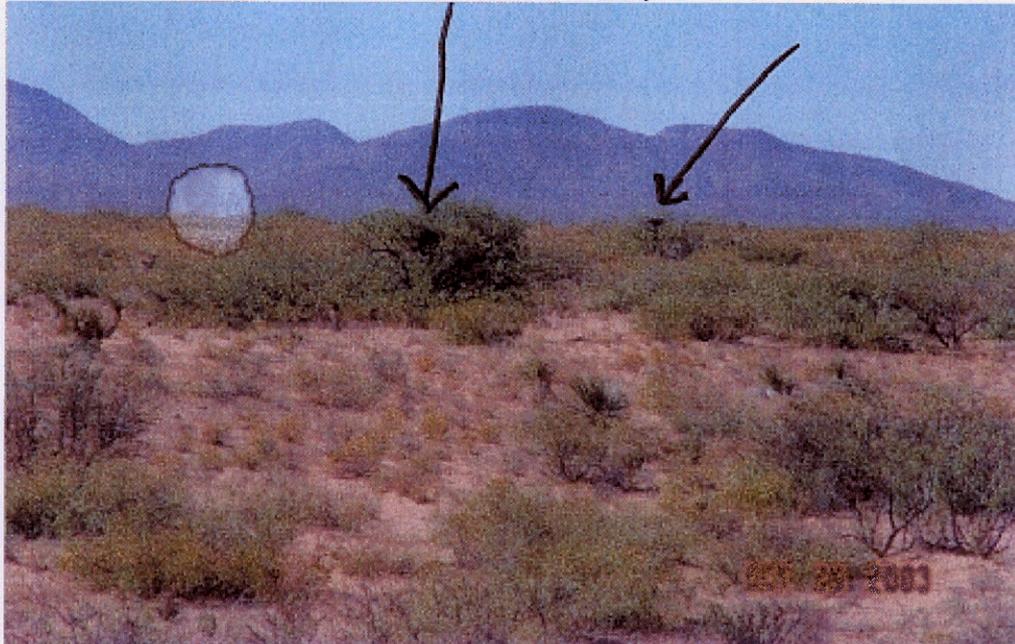
P - 609 (zoom of 608)

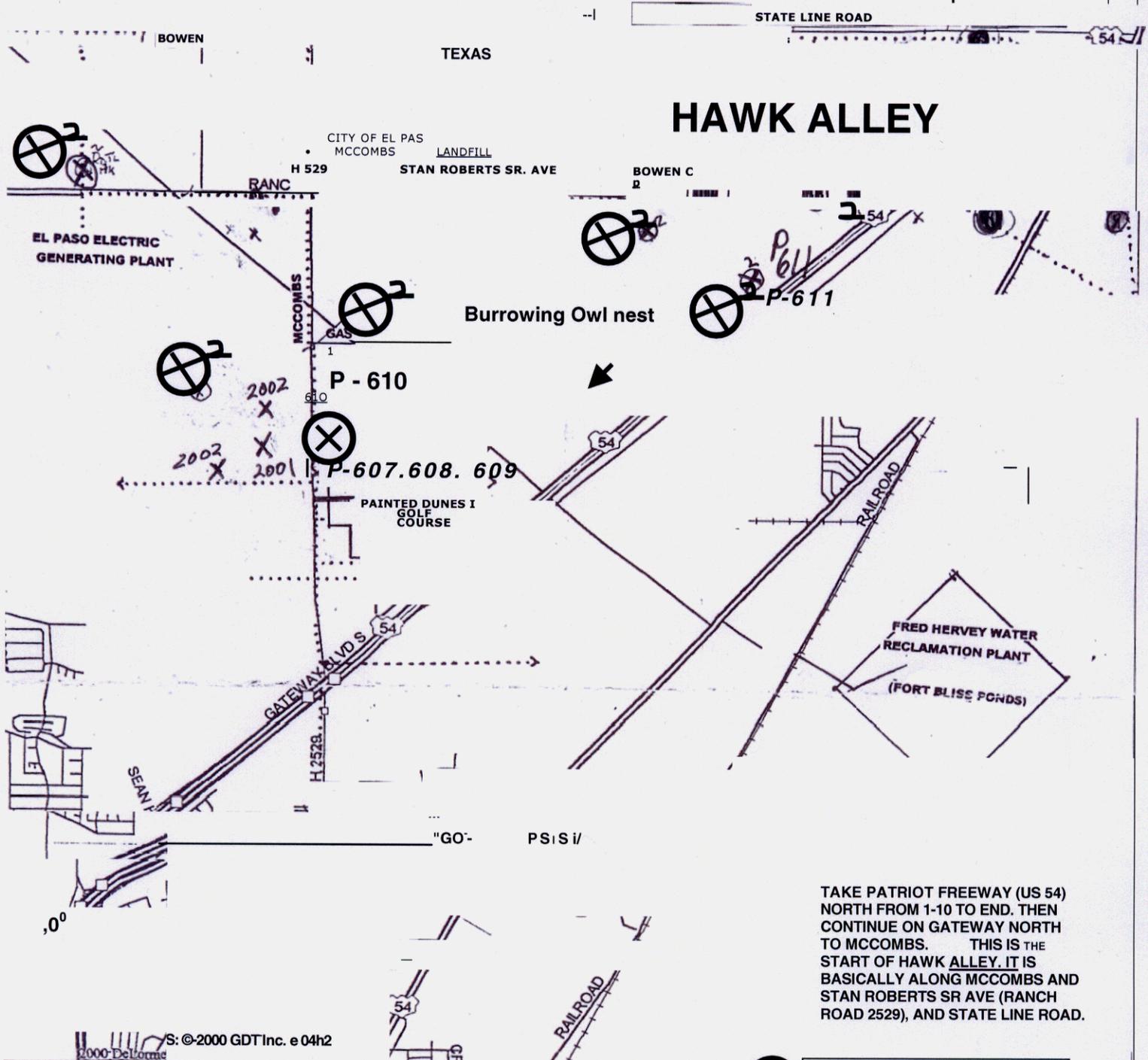


P – 610 Swainson's Hawk nest in Hawk Alley



P – 611 Swainson's Hawk nests in Hawk Alley





TAKE PATRIOT FREEWAY (US 54) NORTH FROM 1-10 TO END. THEN CONTINUE ON GATEWAY NORTH TO MCCOMBS. THIS IS THE START OF HAWK ALLEY. IT IS BASICALLY ALONG MCCOMBS AND STAN ROBERTS SR AVE (RANCH ROAD 2529), AND STATE LINE ROAD.

ag 13.00
 Thurs. Feb 22 14:27
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- m
- Local Road
- Major Connector
- State Route
- Trail
- Interstate/Limited Access
- US Highway
- El Exit Utility/Pipe

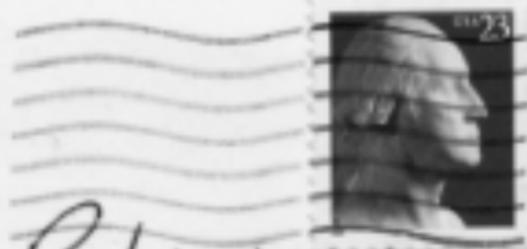
- Railroad
- Point of Interest
- Airfield
- County Boundary
- State Boundary
- Population Center
- Water
- Military Reserve

- 2003 Swainson Hawk nests
- ELECTRIC POWER LINES
- 2001 & 2002 Swainson hawk nests
- superscript = number of fledglings
- Burrowing Owl burrow/nest
- 2003 Chihuahuan Raven nests
- Photo number corresponding to pictures

E. Barton
708 Villa Flores
El Paso, TX 79912
**A. EPISD
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19151343-5981
Ms. Devine - How
can anyone possibly
think it is alright
to destroy Castner
range. A Border Patrol
Sector Headquarters
in place of the poppies
and a beautiful view.
Stop this encroachment!
Elish & Jim Barton



Ms. Robin Devine
Proj. Manager, Sci. Applications
Internat'l Corp.
4242 Wookcock
Suite 150
San Antonio, TX
78228

6127 Jesuque Dr.
El Paso Texas 79905
October 4, 2003

Robin Devine
SADC
4242 Woodstock St 150
San Antonio, Texas 78228

Dear Mr. Devine,

The use of Custer Range land
by the Border Patrol should be denied
until a thorough study can be done. I
feel sure there are other sites in the
adjacent areas which would be
acceptable and would preserve the
Chihuahuan and Sonoran Desert for
their uniqueness. Please make
an on-site inspection in the
Spring to see the beauty of the
area which is worth preserving.
Usually, March is the ideal time!

Sincerely,
Barbara M. Ballou

9138 Mt. San Berdu Drive
El Paso, TX 79924-7123
October 2, 2003

Ms. Robin Divine, Project Manager
Science Applications International Corporation
4242 Woodcock, Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

Dear Ms. Divine:

I am writing in regard to your company's assessment for development of Castner Range land in northeast El Paso. I live two miles from the area in question and feel very strongly about preservation of that land, from Rt. 54 up the mountainside to the boundary of the Franklin Mountains State Park.

I'm especially disappointed at the prospect of the Border Patrol's obtaining more property there for expansion of their facilities. I have resented the ugly museum building they erected there several years ago, for it has obscured view of the lovely little Wilderness Park Museum which so beautifully fits into the landscape! And the Border Patrol built right in the most lovely portion of the spring display of golden poppies which are a delight to all of us! (I find it so disappointing that I've vowed I'll never enter their museum which was designed and located with such base insensitivity to the environment.)

I have hiked that side of the mountain for years and so appreciate the native plants, from tiny wildflowers to giant Torrey's yucca and yucca baccata, sotol and a variety of blooming cacti. I have seen deer, skunk, rabbit and wildcat, found spoor of coyote, ringtails, and more. The wildlife is a precious asset to our area, and further development with the additional noise and lighting would adversely impact their habitat.

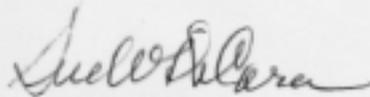
Granting the B.P. the go-ahead to extend their facilities on the Castner Range land would open that sensitive and beautiful area on the skirt of the Franklin Mountains to further development (which local developers have been licking their chops over for years -I've overheard some of them discussing amongst themselves what they'd do with the land, and felt

sickened by their insensitivity to Nature and to the delight it brings to so very many of us who love the wide expanse of open space, especially in the spring with flowers carpeting the flanks of the mountain in all directions!) It's refreshing to the spirit to sit in a restaurant (on the east side, below Rt. 54) and admire the mountain without seeing any structures (except the ugly Border Patrol museum), just desert land rising up to the mountain, with the multi-colored rock of the Franklins dotted with natural vegetation. It's a gorgeous view at any time of day -best at sunrise with the mountainside glowing salmon-colored, or at sunset with the mountain silhouetted against the western sky.

I have desired for years that the Castner Range be annexed to the Franklin Mountains State Park. Ms. Divine, my husband and I -and our neighbors and friends -don't want to have the Castner Range area desecrated by greedy developers, nor by Border Patrol or other government agencies' structures! Please hear me!

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,



Sue W. DiCara
a resident of this area for 38 years



October 7, 2003

Robin Divine
SAIC
4242 Woodcock, Suite 150
San Antonio, Tx 78228

Dear Robin,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft EA for the proposed Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarters in El Paso, Texas.

Franklin Mountains State Park (FMSP) was created by an act of the Legislature in 1979 following a growing concern over increasing development on the mountains. House Bill 867 established the range as a state park and thereby prevented any further development. Prior to that time, the Castner Range was long used as an artillery firing range before the military shut it down in the 1970's.

In reviewing the "Finding of no significant impact" attachment, I wanted to share the following concerns:

- Under 3.3 Site 1, you state that "land use, transportation and hazardous material would not be affected as a result of implementing the proposed action..." I feel compelled to disagree with this statement due to the fact that the undeveloped area leading up to and around the proposed site would be severely affected and should remain in its current, natural state.
- Under 3.3 Geology and Soils, you again state that "there would be no long-term effects on the soil and geology..." I find it difficult to consider the raw size of the proposed facility and still come to the conclusion that there will be no long-term effects to the property.
- Under 3.9 Aesthetics, you mention that the "proposed facilities would not detract from these features or diminish the views of these unique resources." Nothing could be further from the truth. Thousands of people came from all over this past spring to

To manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

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or historic site

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AUSTIN, TEXAS 78744-3291
512-389-4800

www.tpwd.state.tx.us



enjoy the sheer beauty of the Mexican poppies. These unique resources will continue to be a tourist attraction if and only if they remain undisturbed.

In reviewing the Environmental Assessment of the site, I would recommend at this time, on behalf of Texas Parks and Wildlife, Site 3 as the best available location for the proposed facility. This site captures many of the needs of the US Border while limiting further development on the Castner Range. Our hope is to have the entire range annexed to the state park in its current, undeveloped condition following the removal of unexploded ordinance.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on this document. Please feel free to contact me at (915) 566-6441 if you have any further questions.

Ray Sierra
Ray Sierra
Park Manager
Franklin Mountains State Park

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-
- ROBERT L. COOK
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Take a kid
hunting or fishing

• • •

Visit a state park
or historic site



Robin Divine
Science Applications International Corporation
4242 Woodcock, Suite 150
San Antonio, Texas 78228

Dear Ms. Divine,

Thank you on behalf of the El Paso Regional Group of the Sierra Club for the opportunity to comment on the September 2003 draft document *Environmental Assessment for the U.S. Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarters, El Paso, Texas*.

The Sierra Club recognizes the importance of accommodating the projected growth of the Border Patrol in El Paso. Clearly, the current Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarters location at Hawkins and Montana is inadequate for future needs. The Sierra Club also recognizes the importance of preserving El Paso's unique and priceless natural heritage. We feel that the selection of Site 1, on Castner Range, needlessly degrades the very qualities that make El Paso special.

While the aesthetic and "quality of life" values of the Franklin Mountains cannot be objectively measured, these factors nevertheless are very important. Locating the Border Patrol Station on Castner range *will* harm the biological, ecological and cultural resources of El Paso *significantly more* than would locating the Station at one of the other two sites. No rational person can argue that development of open land in the foothills of the majestic Franklin Mountains does not harm these aesthetic values. Therefore, in a relative ranking of the environmental impacts of the three potential sites, the Castner Range location indisputably has the highest cost in terms of these factors. The conclusion of this line of reasoning is equally indisputable. When several alternatives all meet the requirements, as they do in this case, it simply makes good sense to choose one that minimizes the intangible impacts. This means either Site 2 or Site 3. We believe that the overall advantages of Sites 2 and 3 were *not* adequately evaluated before the choice was made to propose Site 1.

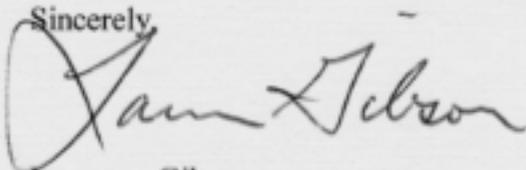
We are also concerned that the proposal to locate the Station at Site 1 was made without a comprehensive study of the future disposition of the entire Castner Range area. There is strong support locally for incorporating Castner Range into Franklin Mountains State Park, provided that issues related to unexploded ordnance can be resolved. Location of the Station at this site would be the first step in the piecemeal, uncoordinated development of Castner Range. Such development would overturn the efforts of many El Pasoans who have worked for years to maintain the pristine beauty of our mountains. It would also irresponsibly diminish our city's natural resources in ways from which recovery would be impossible. The only way to assure that "the nose of the camel" doesn't get "under the tent" is to not ever start developing this area.

In addition, it is quite clear that the citizens of El Paso *do not* want the Border Patrol Station to be located at the Castner Range site. Of the 37 comment letters in Appendix A of the EA, 31 of them (83.8%) oppose that location. Four (10.8%) express no preference, and two (5.4%) are in favor of Site 1. This is the time to listen to the voice of the people and make the decision based on public input rather than on the selfish interests of a minority.

In summary, the El Paso Regional Group of the Sierra Club strongly opposes the location of the U.S. Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarters on Castner Range (Site 1) because that location will; 1) Significantly harm the biological, ecological, cultural and "quality of life" values of the Franklin Mountains, 2) Fragment a currently intact, relatively unspoiled natural area, which would then encourage more development in the future, and 3) Ignore the express desires of the majority of El Pasoans who have offered their opinion on this issue.

The Border Patrol can count on our full support for locating the new Station and Headquarters at either Site 2 or Site 3.

Sincerely,



Laurence Gibson

Chair

El Paso Regional Group of the Sierra Club

cc: Hon. Joe Wardy, Mayor of El Paso
Hon. Susan Austin, City Representative, District 1
Hon. Robert A. Cushing, City Representative, District 2
Hon. Jose Alejandro Lozano, City Representative, District 3
Hon. John Cook, City Representative, District 4
Hon. Dan Power, City Representative, District 5
Hon. Paul J. Escobar, City Representative, District 6
Hon. Vivian Rojas, City Representative, District 7
Hon. Anthony Cobos, City Representative, District 8
Hon. Sylvestre Reyes, U.S. House of Representatives
Hon. Eliot Shapleigh
Hon. Kay Bailey Hutchinson
Pat Aduato, Director, Planning Department
Corps of Engineers, Albuquerque District
Luis E. Barker, U. S. Border Patrol
Lois Balin, TPWD Urban Wildlife Biologist
John Sproul, Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition
General Michael A. Vane, Commanding General, Ft. Bliss

Sept. 24, 2003

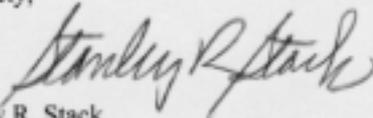
Robin Divine, Project Manager
SAIC
4242 Woodcock, Suite 150
San Antonio, Tx 78228

Dear Ms. Divine,

The Franklin Mountain Wilderness Coalition is a group representing 15 organizations and many individuals dedicated to preserving the scenic beauty and the wilderness character of the Franklin Mountains. Given our concerns for this area, and the importance of Castner Range in preserving a broad representation of the mountain range's natural ecosystems, we feel more time is required to study and thoroughly respond to the findings given in the recently released Draft Environmental Assessment for the Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarters. We request an extended period of time to respond to the Draft EA be granted. A period of 60 days would allow concerned groups and citizens a better opportunity to study the Draft EA and submit comments regarding it.

We appreciate the time and effort that has gone into preparing this long and complicated Draft and feel it deserves adequate study. Please grant this 60-day extension to allow that study. Thank you for your consideration. Please inform us of your response to this request.

Sincerely,



Stanley R. Stack
Secretary, Franklin Mountain Wilderness Coalition
3421 Montridge CT.
El Paso, Tx 79904

c: Rufus Johnson, Dept. of Homeland Security
Mark Horner, Army Corps of Engineers

5249 Angel Fire Place
Las Cruces, NM 88011
September 22, 2003

Robin Divine
SAIC
4242 Woodcock Suite 150
San Antonio, Texas 78228

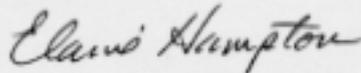
Dear Robin Divine:

I have taught at the University of Texas at El Paso for five years. I live south of Las Cruces, New Mexico. I love to be out in the beautiful desert. My heart aches for the poor environmental planning in the Paso del Norte area. Only a few places of true Chihuahuan Desert beauty remain. This degradation has occurred in a short time of two or three generations. At this pace, what will be left for our grandchildren?

The Castner Range is one of the few places left as an island of rich flora and fauna of the Chihuahuan Desert. By a strange fate, the buried bombs on the range have led to preservation of this area. I can drive over the pass or on the highway to Chaparral and see some native beauty. Putting a Border Patrol Station would be just one more environmental inconsideration in this rare and beautiful area. The few remaining species now have some protection from light, sound, human intrusion, and additional air pollution. The station would reduce that even further. I believe it will also open the door to further development. There are many locations for the Border Patrol facility that will not intrude on this fragile environment.

I urge you to consider an alternative location.

Sincerely,



Elaine Hampton, Ph.D.

Jane E. Poss
501 Spring Crest Drive
El Paso, TX 79912

Robin Divine
SAIC
4242 Woodcock Suite150
San Antonio, Texas 78228

Dear Ms. Divine:

I am writing about the Environmental Assessment(EA) regarding construction of a Border Patrol Station on the Castner Range in El Paso, TX. There are many reasons not to build on Castner Range. Among them, but addressed as being not significant in the EA, are the effects on the aesthetics, particularly for the inhabitants of the area surrounding and for those traveling by the proposed site. The Station would add significantly to the visual jumble that already exists at this site which includes a TxDot facility. This would be a cumulative effect that would alter the beautiful views from the surrounding neighborhood and the views experienced by travelers on the highway.

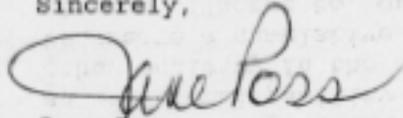
The noise and light generated by a 24-hour operation would have a negative impact to some depth into the Range, making this habitat no longer acceptable for many animal and plant inhabitants. The argument that the highway already provides a large sound and light impact on the area supports the argument that an additional facility will have additional impact. The EA says there is no other activity in the area with which the effects of this Station could combine to create a cumulative environmental impact, and yet, there is an ongoing UXO cleanup adjacent to, or near to, the proposed site. While the UXO cleanup is beneficial in its long-term effect of removing potential explosives and lead contamination from an area restricted primarily to animal life, this activity must be viewed as disruptive to normal patterns of life on the Range. These two activities combine to form a cumulative effect.

When the UXO cleanup has been completed, there will exist in close proximity to the proposed BP site, an area no longer considered dangerous to many activities. This cleaned area is part of Castner Range which has been declared excess to the needs of the Department of the Army, and is therefore subject to disposal under GSA regulations. Building a BP Station in this area will generate the possibility of further development.

The use of a portion of the Castner Range without a study that involves the whole Range represents poor land use planning. Many entities have identified Castner as a perfect addition to the Franklin Mountain State Park, including the Army Corps of Engineer subsidized studies, FMSP Management Plan, City of El Paso long-range planning documents, and others. To sidestep the intentions of decades of planning is unacceptable. This precedent, the proposed BP Station, would no doubt encourage others to attempt piecemeal use of a valuable resource, possibly breaking it into tiny islands unsuitable for inclusion in the State Park.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,


Jane Poss



September 29, 2003

COMMISSIONERS

KATHARINE ARMSTRONG
CHAIRMAN, AUSTIN

EDNEY ANGELO, JR.
VICE-CHAIRMAN, MIDLAND

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Robin Divine
SAIC
4242 Woodcock Drive
San Antonio, Tx 78228

Ms. Divine,

Thank you for mailing to this office a copy of the environmental assessment on the proposed site of the Border Patrol Sector Control Headquarters in El Paso, Tx. I have forwarded this information on to our Regional office.

Due to the time lost since the comment period began, I am requesting, on behalf of Texas Parks and Wildlife that the comment period be extended one week. The additional time will allow our offices to thoroughly review this document at all levels and provide our responses. Your consideration would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you,

Ray Sierra
Ray Sierra
Park Manager
Franklin Mountains State Park



Take a kid
hunting or fishing

• • •

Visit a state park
or historic site

9-27-03

Robin Divine
SAIC
4242 Wookcock, Suite 150
San Antonio, Texas 78228

I appreciated receiving the notebook on the location of the Border Patrol Headquarters.

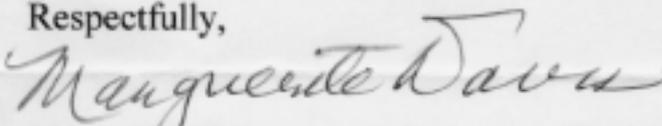
I have lived for 46 years right across Dyer Street from where the firings took place, so my children felt as though they had celebrated July 4 frequently.

I would like to see the station located at Site 2. While I know your needs, I am quite aware as to how politics work.. I prefer the entire location go to the state park. As we speak, about 1200 acres of the total approximately 8000 acres is being cleared starting June, 2003 and we are assured that we will know in advance, but I only found out because I attended the quarterly Fort Bliss Advisory. I also keep track of the Mountain Park Association, the Keystone Dam development, and have been a member of the El Paso Archaeology Society since 1957.

Thus, while I feel you have an excellent reason for wanting the Hondo Pass site, and you will keep it up responsibly, it will just be the "crack in dam" to allow these beautiful mountain slopes to open up to the money racketeers.

I have shared the notebook with many persons, and hopefully others will respond.

Respectfully,



Marguerite Davis
4915 Aiken Lane
El Paso, Texas 79924
(915) 755-3757
margdavi@gte.net

Bobbie Waltz
8810 Galena Dr.
El Paso, TX 79904-1718

Robin Divine
Project Manager, SAIC
4242 Woodcock
Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

23 September 2003

Dear Project Manager Divine:

After reviewing the report that you were kind enough to mail to me, I have a few questions and or observations. Firstly, after reading the environmental impact study, site #1 would suffer the greatest damage and even the loss of several examples of plant and animal life. The other two sites listed did not seem to suffer this fate. Secondly, it was stated that site #2 lacks infrastructure and that the city does not plan to extend utilities to that area. A visual inspection would demonstrate that things have changed. Since the report was made, the city of El Paso has built a water tower (reservoir) and pumping station approximately 1 mile to the west. There is already a commercial business just down the road (Painted Dunes) and there are established residential subdivisions less than three miles away (north west of proposed site #2) there are utilities within the area. Furthermore, as of this letter, just on the other side of the US-54 Highway, several new developments are now going in. Obviously, the city does plan to grow in that direction since it is in the process of doing so now. Site #3 has been pretty much eliminated due to the construction of the new Elementary School adjacent to the site.

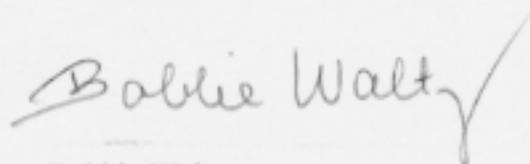
I understand from the style of writing and the manner in which the information was presented that there is an overwhelming bias to build on site #1. Despite having to remove the unexploded ordinance and the damage it would have on the environment. However, the document states that the land would have to be cleared of the ordinance prior to any development of the land. The cost of this could be avoided all together by not removing the unexploded ordinance and turning the land over to the State of Texas as has been proposed. If the Federal Government is determined to be rid of the land, then at least see that it goes to those who would maintain it as it is. Since it would not be developed, there would be no cost incurred. This is not an important issue to those outside our region. However, it is an emotional hot button issue for those of us who live here. Site #2, as outlined by this document seems to offer the minimal negative impact on the land,

environment as well as being located conveniently to both of the check points located just north east and north west respectively in New Mexico. This site also allows for easy access to the loop to facilitate easy passage to the Fabens / Clint area which reportedly has experienced a great deal of activity.

One point that was dismissed at the meeting and never fully addressed was to the reason that this new Head Quarters could not be located on Federally owned land just off the loop. For example, there is so much land near the Federal Detention Facility (Biggs Field) that could be accessed by the loop, centrally located between the lower valley and the upper valley regions and not too far from the current detention facilities. Since the land already belongs to the Federal Government, there would be no acquisition costs. Furthermore, there is a lack of unexploded ordinance to be removed. Additionally, there are already utilities in the area not to mention room to expand. There would be even less environmental impact at that location since it is not listed as part of the water shed area. However, when this was brought up at the meeting, all that was said was that it was "unacceptable". How strange!

I hope that enough people take the time to become involved in this project, and to insure that the new Head Quarters is located in an area that is acceptable to all parties concerned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bobbie Waltz". The signature is written in dark ink and includes a long, sweeping flourish at the end of the name.

Bobbie Waltz

Divine, Robin D.

From: sylevans [sylevans@flash.net]
Sent: Sunday, October 05, 2003 10:35 PM
To: robin.d.divine@saic.com
Subject: Please conform re Castner range

From the Franklin Park Wilderness Coalition

>
> Today I received a message from the Army Corps of Engineers announcing The
> extension of the deadline to respond to the Draft EA for the Border Patrol
Castner
> Range land request. The new deadline is Oct 24. Now is the time to
respond. Send
> those letters, and ask your friends to do the same.
> The maps provided by SAIC show the BP station extending north along
Gateway
> to approximately even with R.L. Schumaker on the east side of the Gateway.
The
> approx distance from Hondo Pass to Schumaker is 6/10 of a mile. The
distance from
> Hondo Pass to Transmountain Rd. is approx. 2 1/10 miles. That mean s the
EA finds
> insignificant that the BP Station will affect more than 25% of that view
of the
> mountain. How insignificant is 25%?
>
> The PSB is now conducting studies of its holdings in all parts of town,
and specifically
> of land surrounding the Franklins. The goal of the PSB is to gather input
from all
> stakeholders to appropriately plan future uses of that land. The plans
will be
> prepared after careful consideration of community needs
> and desires as well as with respect to contemporary standards of use for
largeparcels
> of land. These large parcels will be planned for use in a way that is
consistent,
> appropriate and agreeable to community needs, and all uses of the
surrounding area
> are considered before decisions are rendered. This is appropriate land use
planning.
> This is exactly the kind of consideration that is not being afforded to
the Castner
> Range.
>
> We should insist that our Federal government conform to our community
standards in
> their own planning process within our community. By creating a long-term
plan for
> the entire Range, the government would be doing so. This EA entirely
overlooks the
> lack of land use planning
> that is occurring on Castner. This point should be considered in the EA,
and
> indicate the need for an EIS, and for a study covering the whole of
Castner.
>
> Please urge your members to speak out by addressing a letter to:
> Robin Divine
> SAIC
> 4242 Woodcock Suite150
> San Antonio, Texas
> 78228

> or e-mailing a response to the EA concerning the Castner Range land
> request by the Border Patrol to:
> < robin.d.divine@saic.com >

> Yes, e-mail is ok, too. Thank you for your consideration.

> Stan Stack
> Sect'y, FMWC
> 3421 Montridge Ct.
> 564-0515 H
> 566-1561 W

> Your use of Yahoo! Groups is subject to <http://docs.yahoo.com/info/terms/>

Mrs. J. B. Henderson

1102 Cincinnati

El Paso, Texas 79902

Oct 14 2002

Ms. Divine,

I can't believe that the idea of destroying the Poppies on the Eastway Range in East El Paso to build a Border Patrol Building is one of the dumbest ideas of the Government Army.

My husband and I travel Hwy 54 most week ends going to Ruidoso N.M. Not only the view from Hwy 54 up the mountain side is beautiful but when the Poppies are in bloom it is breathtaking. This past Spring they were exceptionally beautiful because of early snow. This magnificent sight lasted about 6 weeks. This mountain side is undeveloped and it should stay that way. There is a lot of desert foliage out, away from the Poppy Fields.

that can be used for the Border
Patrol building on near Hwy 54.

Please do not allow this to happen.
I do strongly object to this plan -

Sincerely
Mary C. + J. B. Henderson

10-14-03

Dear Robin Divine,

Just yesterday, my husband & I were rejoicing of our beautiful mountain view from Hwy 54!!

During the stressful times our people experience in society today, please spare this area of construction. It would be even more beautiful without the current building.

Use the 2nd choice being considered!

Sincerely,
Warren & Betty Brasup

10/10/03

Regarding the Border Patrol Range
land request...

I do not consider the
destruction of this natural resource
"insignificant!"

Poppies in Northeast
El Paso

Rosalie M. Tibbetts
3401 Gabel Ave.
El Paso, TX 79904-1009

3/03



5870 Oleaster Dr.
El Paso, TX 79932-2338
Phone: (915) 584-3206
E-mail: hbennett@mt.wmwr.army.mil

Mariposa Mountain Bikes

October 3, 2003

Robin Divine
SAIC
4242 Woodcock Suite150
San Antonio, Texas 78228

Dear Robin,

My purpose in writing to you is to stress the erroneous conclusion of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the new US Border Patrol Headquarters (USBPHQ) in El Paso, TX.

Page 3-6 of your own EA states, "Site 1 is on the Castner Range. The site is on one of the few remaining alluvial fans of the Franklin Mountains that has not disturbed by recent human development." This fact alone should be sufficient for you to have recommended **not** building on the site! I have taken the liberty to suggest an alternative to the Site 1; in fact it is a conceptual re-design of the entire facility. Please take the time to study my proposal carefully. I will guarantee you that the destruction of this corner of the Alluvial Plane will not affect the environment in San Antonio in the least.

For once let's think 'outside the box' and build a new USBPHQ that will make for 'good neighbors' in El Paso, not destruction of our valuable heritage. Let's **don't** "Take paradise and put up a parking lot!" Thank you for your consideration and interest.

Sincerely,



Bill Bennett, CEO
Mariposa Mtb

Cf: Stan Stack, John Sproul (FMWC)

ACOE

US Border Patrol

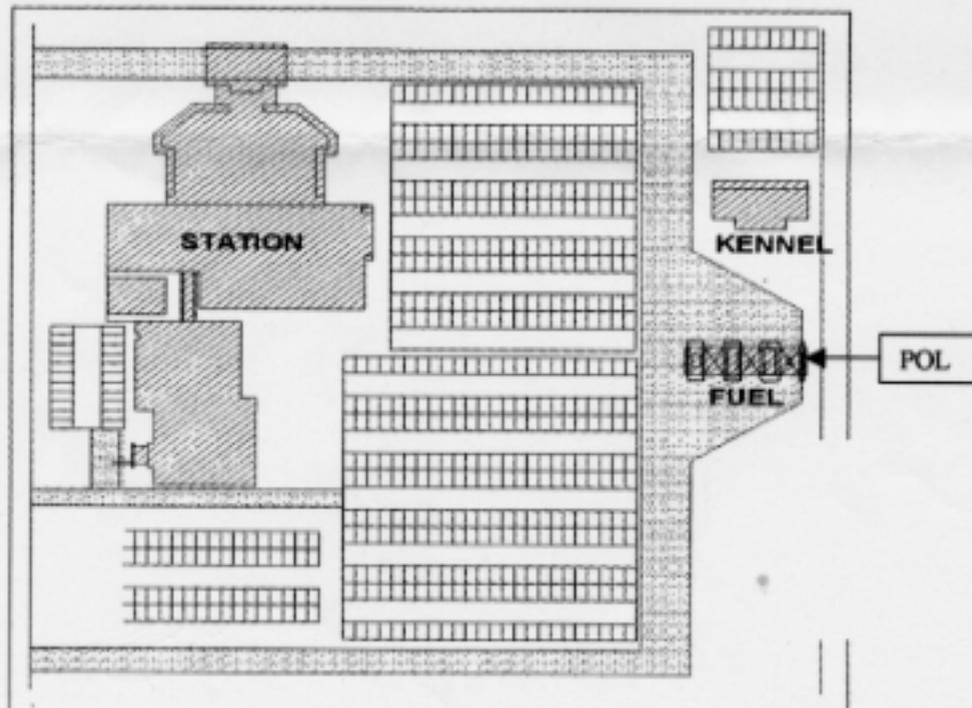
Custom Mountain Bikes and Components

US Border Patrol Head Quarters (USBPHQ)

Alternate Proposal

Background: Figure 1 is a rendering of the proposed USBPHQ from the draft environmental assessment document.

Figure 1: *Status Quo* 'Approved' USBPHQ Compound



There is a more intelligent design of the same facilities if one thinks 'outside-the-box.'

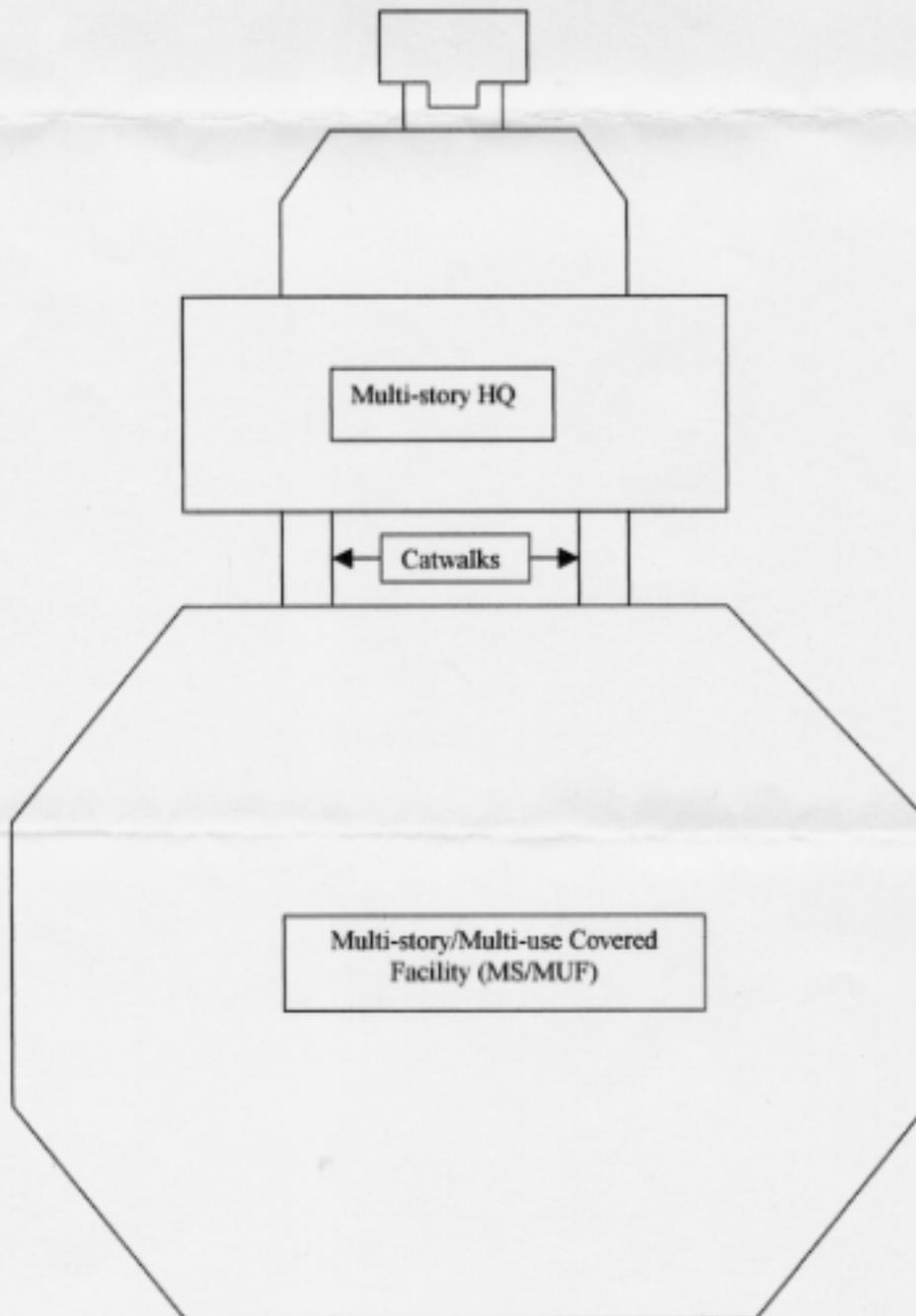
Analysis: The proposed design is basically a very large parking lot. There are a total of 538 parking spaces approved for the USBPHQ complex. The entire complex could be 're-imagined' as a two-story building with a four-story covered parking garage. Figure 2 is a rendering of this idea.

Discussion: There are intrinsic benefits to the concept proposed in Figure 2.

1. Less land, acreage would be required. God isn't making any more land, so one should conserve what we have.
2. Training facilities and SpecOps could be located in the MS/MUF, not HQ.
3. The kennel, and POL could be located on the ground floor of MS/MUF.
4. Having assets 'under-cover' provides protection from the elements. This includes privately owned vehicles (POV's), which would also be 'protected' and sheltered.
5. More astatically appealing than seeing acres of white vehicles with green stripes and lights on their roofs.

6. Catwalks to/from second floor secure parking to second floor holding area for temporary detention purposes.
7. The entire complex is intrinsically more secure than being in the 'wide open spaces' of Castner Range.
8. Concept creates unit cohesion by keeping functions in closer proximity.
9. Concept creates an intrinsic 'pecking order' with seniority and mission changes.

Figure 2: Proposed USBPHQ Complex
[Based on Provided Building Outline]



Conclusion: It is concluded that the design and site selection should be reevaluated based on this proposed concept.

Recommendation:

1. It is recommended that the proposed concept be adopted.
2. It is recommended that the USBPHQ be located on the 11.87-acre site at Harrison and Alabama.

October 13, 2003

Robin Divine
4242 Woodcock Avenue
Suite 150
San Antonio, Texas 78228

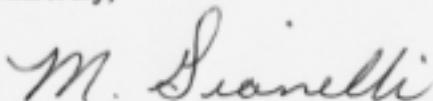
Dear Ms. Divine:

As an artist and a Master Gardener, I would like to **express my opposition** to your proposal to build the Border Patrol headquarters on sites 1 and 2. I have just finished reading the environmental impact report and I agree with the contents and disagree with the conclusion. The impact on the vegetation and the wildlife will be extensive. Plants in a high desert do not just grow back. It takes hundreds of years for vegetation to develop. Meanwhile less desirable plants move in and take over. The desert environment is very, very fragile. The expected movement and high number of invasive activities of the Border Patrol would severely damage the environment.

Now, I express my opposition from the artistic point of view. Have you seen the movie Under the Tuscan Sun? In several scenes, it shows fields of wild flowers blooming in what can be called true splendor. We in El Paso also have fields of wild flowers that bloom exactly where the Border Patrol wants to build its headquarters. El Paso treasures its poppies. Artists, photographers, families, students, children in the thousands last year gathered to admire the beauty of the fields of golden wild flowers blooming against the yellows and blues of the Castner Range. Please, please do not build there! Do not disturb what does not need to be disturbed. We treasure our poppies!

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M. Gianelli".

Marge Gianelli

Mary Corbett
4116 Clifton Ave
El Paso, Tx 79903

Oct 13, 2003

Robin Divine, SAIC
4242 Woodcock Avenue, Suite 150
San Antonio, Tx 78228

Dear Sir,

I am writing to voice my opposition to any development on the 45 acre Castner Range site. Specifically, I am opposed to a Border Patrol facility being located there. This is a fragile area ecologically and should be left alone. There is another proposed site (intersection of Hwy 54 and McCombs) which appears perfectly suitable and would fulfill the needs of the Border Patrol.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,
Mary Corbett

8120 Riverview
Canutillo, TX 79835

October 13, 2003

Robin Devine
4242 Woodcock Avenue
Suite 150
San Antonio, Texas 78228

Dear Robin Devine:

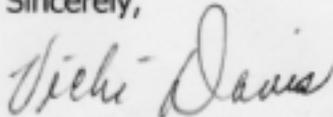
I would like **to express my opposition** to your proposal to build the Border Patrol headquarters on sites 1 and 2. Most people don't think much about El Paso and the surrounding area as even being a part of Texas. I mean we're not even in the same time zone as the rest of you 'real' Texans.

But those of us that live here by choice not only enjoy the desert, we revere it. The vegetation and wildlife are fragile, and the destruction of any part of it affects the other parts, and it takes hundreds of years to recover. Now I know that doesn't seem possible to you down in San Antonio. I lived there, too, and thought nothing about rain or foliage or trees. They were just there, and they were replaceable. Not so here. Did you know we've only had about 3.75 inches of rain so far this year? Is it any wonder it takes a hundred years for some plants to grow to the size they are now?

I'm sure it must be important to build a new Border Patrol Headquarters somewhere. But the Castner Range is where the poppies grow and is not even particularly near the border. Please don't kill the poppies. Build somewhere that has already been covered in concrete.

Thank you for you consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Vicki Davis

13 October 2003
5232 Jessica St.
El Paso, TX 79932

Robin Devine, Project Manager
SAIC
4242 Woodcock, Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

Attn: Robin Devine:

This is in response to your request for comments on the proposed Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarter in El Paso, Texas on approximately 40 acres of Department of Defense surplus property managed by the US Army in the area known as the Castner Range. I oppose the use of any part of the Castner Range. I believe it should be preserved and made available to those that wish to reflect on its beauty.

According to the Environmental Assessment Report prepared by the Army Corp of Engineers Site #1, the Castner Range is the preferred site. After reading your report I do not agree with your conclusion. I conclude that one of the other two sites would be more appropriate.

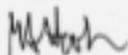
According to the report the area would benefit by the removal of unexploded ordnances. I would like to point to the island of Kahoolawe in the state of Hawaii. Ordnance removal has been going on for nearly a decade there. This project was expected to take one decade to complete. This project will not be finished in time. I do not believe that the scope of work required, nor the amount of money required, to remove the unexploded ordnances was properly addressed in your report. The hidden cost and time for ordnance removal on Site #1 makes Sites #2 and #3 more attractive.

The report states that a detailed wildlife survey was not conducted. The report does mention that there are several bird species concerns in the Fort Bliss area. It would be naive of us to conclude that the birds found on Fort Bliss do not also use the Castner Range. I believe the Corp of Engineers needs to conduct a detailed wildlife survey of the Castner Range before any conclusions are made.

In addition, I believe that development on even a portion of the Castner Range will have a negative impact on the spectacular spring viewing the poppies offer the El Paso community. When we do received rains during the spring the Castner Range becomes a field of poppies, glowing with life. Currently the TXDOT facility is clearly visible from the scenic overlook on the Transmountain Road. Adding any additional facilities will not only increase the impact on the view, but will encroach upon the reason for the view: the poppies.

I urge you to consider the value of this natural resource in your recommendations to the Border Patrol, and to select an areas such as Site #2 or #3 which does not host such unique biological resources.

Sincerely,



Greg Hook

10 October 2003
5232 Jessica St.
El Paso, TX 79932

Robin Devine, Project Manager
SAIC
4242 Woodcock, Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

Attn: Robin Devine:

This is in response to your request for comments on the proposed Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarter in El Paso, Texas on approximately 40 acres of Department of Defense surplus property managed by the US Army in the area known as the Castner Range. I oppose the use of any part of the Castner Range. I believe it should be preserved and made available to those that wish to reflect on its beauty.

According to the Environmental Assessment Report prepared by the Army Corp of Engineers Site #1, the Castner Range is the preferred site. After reading your report I do not agree with your conclusion. I conclude that one of the other two sites would be more appropriate.

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I urge you to consider the value of this natural resource in your recommendations to the Border Patrol, and to select an areas such as Site #2 or #3 which does not host such unique biological resources.

Sincerely,


Georgina Maldonado-Aguirre

10 October 2003
5237 Jessica St.
El Paso, TX 79932

Robin Devine, Project Manager
SAIC
4242 Woodcock, Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

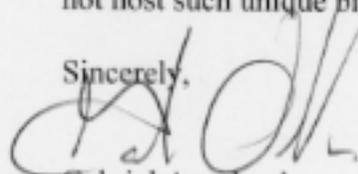
Attn: Robin Divine,

This is in response to your request for comments on the proposed Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarter in El Paso, Texas. The proposed location is on approximately 40 acres of Department of Defense surplus property managed by the US Army in the area known as the Castner Range. I oppose the use of any part of the Castner Range. I believe it should be preserved and made available to those that wish to reflect on its beauty.

There is a wonderful view of undeveloped Franklin Mountains sweeping up from our North-South Highway. I have enjoyed this view countless times. When friends visit, from out of town, I take them to enjoy this view at all times of the year. I believe that development on even a portion of the Castner Range will have a negative impact on the view the El Paso community enjoys. In addition, I believe any development on the Castner Range will have a negative impact on the spectacular spring viewing the poppies offer the El Paso community.

I urge you to consider the value of this natural resource in your recommendations to the Border Patrol, and to select an area such as Site #2, US54 and Mc Combs, which does not host such unique biological resources.

Sincerely,



Gabriel Arredondo

10 October 2003
5228 Jessica St.
El Paso, TX 79932

Robin Devine, Project Manager
SAIC
4242 Woodcock, Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

Attn: Robin Divine,

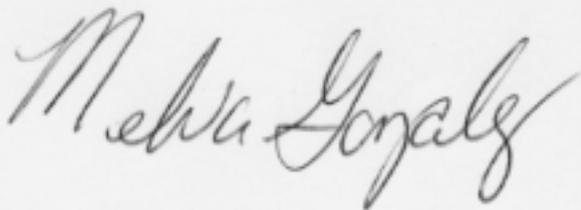
This is in response to your request for comments on the proposed Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarter in El Paso, Texas. The proposed location is on approximately 40 acres of Department of Defense surplus property managed by the US Army in the area known as the Castner Range. I oppose the use of any part of the Castner Range. I believe it should be preserved and made available to those that wish to reflect on its beauty.

There is a wonderful view of undeveloped Franklin Mountains sweeping up from our North-South Highway. I have enjoyed this view countless times. When friends visit, from out of town, I take them to enjoy this view at all times of the year. I believe that development on even a portion of the Castner Range will have a negative impact on the view the El Paso community enjoys. In addition, I believe any development on the Castner Range will have a negative impact on the spectacular spring viewing the poppies offer the El Paso community.

I urge you to consider the value of this natural resource in your recommendations to the Border Patrol, and to select an area such as Site #2, US54 and Mc Combs, which does not host such unique biological resources.

Sincerely,

Melva Gonzalez

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melva Gonzalez". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

10 October 2003
5830 West Valley Cir.
El Paso, TX 79932

Robin Devine, Project Manager
SAIC
4242 Woodcock, Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

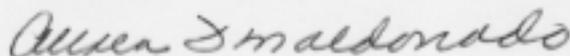
Attn: Robin Divine,

This is in response to your request for comments on the proposed Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarter in El Paso, Texas. The proposed location is on approximately 40 acres of Department of Defense surplus property managed by the US Army in the area known as the Castner Range. I oppose the use of any part of the Castner Range. I believe it should be preserved and made available to those that wish to reflect on its beauty.

There is a wonderful view of undeveloped Franklin Mountains sweeping up from our North-South Highway. I have enjoyed this view countless times. When friends visit, from out of town, I take them to enjoy this view at all times of the year. I believe that development on even a portion of the Castner Range will have a negative impact on the view the El Paso community enjoys. In addition, I believe any development on the Castner Range will have a negative impact on the spectacular spring viewing the poppies offer the El Paso community.

I urge you to consider the value of this natural resource in your recommendations to the Border Patrol, and to select an area such as Site #2, US54 and Mc Combs, which does not host such unique biological resources.

Sincerely,



Aurea F. Maldonado

10 October 2003
5830 West Valley Cir.
El Paso, TX 79932

Robin Devine, Project Manager
SAIC
4242 Woodcock, Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

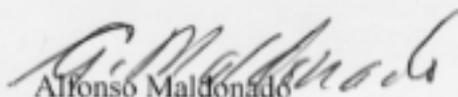
Attn: Robin Divine,

This is in response to your request for comments on the proposed Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarter in El Paso, Texas. The proposed location is on approximately 40 acres of Department of Defense surplus property managed by the US Army in the area known as the Castner Range. I oppose the use of any part of the Castner Range. I believe it should be preserved and made available to those that wish to reflect on its beauty.

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I urge you to consider the value of this natural resource in your recommendations to the Border Patrol, and to select an area such as Site #2, US54 and Mc Combs, which does not host such unique biological resources.

Sincerely,


Alfonso Maldonado

10 October 2003
321 Egret Way
El Paso, TX 79922

Robin Devine, Project Manager
SAIC
4242 Woodcock, Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

Attn: Robin Divine,

This is in response to your request for comments on the proposed Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarter in El Paso, Texas. The proposed location is on approximately 40 acres of Department of Defense surplus property managed by the US Army in the area known as the Castner Range. I oppose the use of any part of the Castner Range. I believe it should be preserved and made available to those that wish to reflect on its beauty.

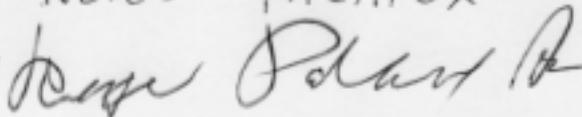
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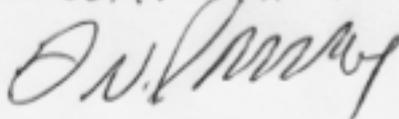
Sincerely,

The Palafox Family

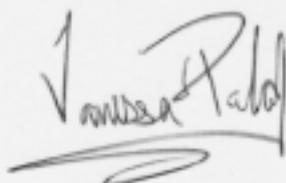
REYES PALAFOX



GILBERT PALAFOX



VANESSA PALAFOX



Date: OCT 12, 03
Address: 12059 MICHEL ANGELO AVE
EL PASO TX
79936-787

Robin Devine, Project Manager
SAIC
4242 Woodcock, Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

Attn: Robin Divine,

This is in response to your request for comments on the proposed Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarter in El Paso, Texas. The proposed location is on approximately 40 acres of Department of Defense surplus property managed by the US Army in the area known as the Castner Range. I oppose the use of any part of the Castner Range. I believe it should be preserved and made available to those that wish to reflect on its beauty.

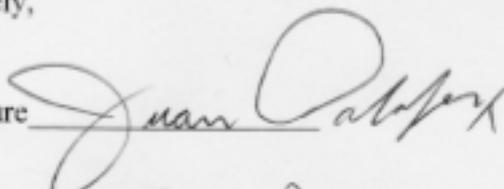
There is a wonderful view of undeveloped Franklin Mountains sweeping up from our North-South Highway. I have enjoyed this view countless times. When friends visit, from out of town, I take them to enjoy this view at all times of the year. I believe that development on even a portion of the Castner Range will have a negative impact on the view the El Paso community enjoys. In addition, I believe any development on the Castner Range will have a negative impact on the spectacular spring viewing the poppies offer the El Paso community.

I urge you to consider the value of this natural resource in your recommendations to the Border Patrol, and to select an area such as Site #2, US54 and Mc Combs, which does not host such unique biological resources.

Sincerely,

Signature

Print Name


JUAN PALAFOX

Date: 10-12-03
Address: 41501 Bobolinks
El Paso TX, 79922

Robin Devine, Project Manager
SAIC
4242 Woodcock, Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

Attn: Robin Divine,

This is in response to your request for comments on the proposed Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarter in El Paso, Texas. The proposed location is on approximately 40 acres of Department of Defense surplus property managed by the US Army in the area known as the Castner Range. I oppose the use of any part of the Castner Range. I believe it should be preserved and made available to those that wish to reflect on its beauty.

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I urge you to consider the value of this natural resource in your recommendations to the Border Patrol, and to select an area such as Site #2, US54 and Mc Combs, which does not host such unique biological resources.

Sincerely,

Signature Victor Rodriguez JR

Print Name Victor Rodriguez JR

Date: 12 OCT 2003
Address: 4505 Boblink
EL PASO TX 79922

Robin Devine, Project Manager
SAIC
4242 Woodcock, Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

Attn: Robin Divine,

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I urge you to consider the value of this natural resource in your recommendations to the Border Patrol, and to select an area such as Site #2, US54 and Mc Combs, which does not host such unique biological resources.

Sincerely,

Signature



Print Name

Heather R Chavez

Date: 10-11-03
Address: 4501 Bobolink
El Paso TX 79922

Robin Devine, Project Manager
SAIC
4242 Woodcock, Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

Attn: Robin Divine,

This is in response to your request for comments on the proposed Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarter in El Paso, Texas. The proposed location is on approximately 40 acres of Department of Defense surplus property managed by the US Army in the area known as the Castner Range. I oppose the use of any part of the Castner Range. I believe it should be preserved and made available to those that wish to reflect on its beauty.

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I urge you to consider the value of this natural resource in your recommendations to the Border Patrol, and to select an area such as Site #2, US54 and Mc Combs, which does not host such unique biological resources.

Sincerely,

Signature Gabriela Chavez

Print Name Gabriela Chavez

Bettye Jobe

OCT 16, 2003

Robin Divine SAIC -

I have resided at this address for 30 years.

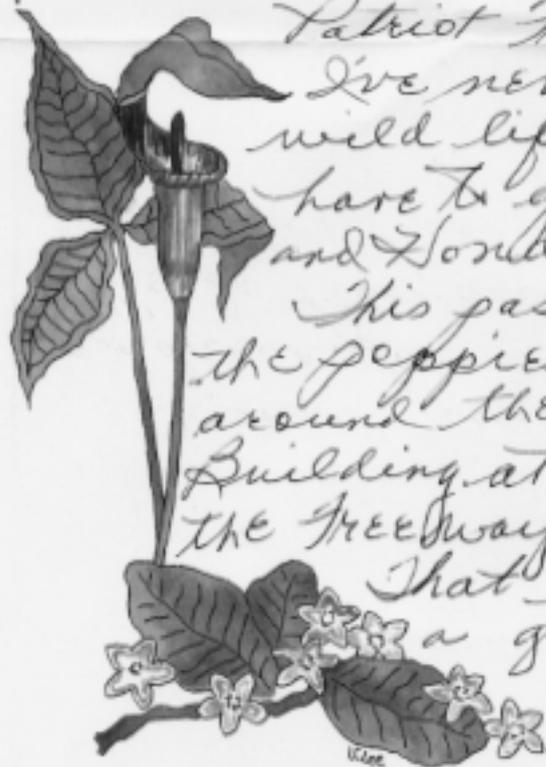
Hondo Pass, over the years, have been an eyesore with weeds and trash.

The 45 acres is close to Patriot Freeway, where

I've never seen any wild life. You would have to go above Magnolia and Hondo Pass.

This past few years, the peppies were en masse around the Transportation Building at Hondo Pass and the Freeway.

That building was a great improvement.



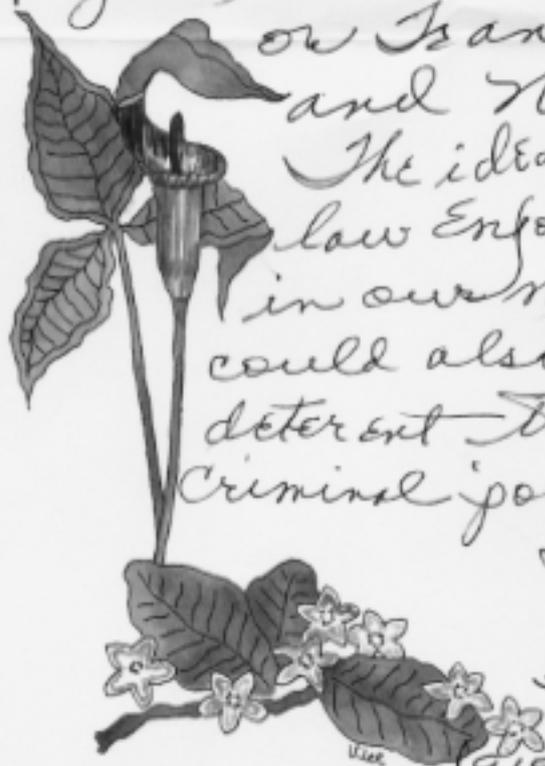
Bettye Jobe

I look forward to
the Border Patrol as
a neighbor.

It is the perfect
location for them, since
it is adjacent to the
freeway, which helps them
get to the Mexican border
on Transmountain
and New Mexico.

The idea of having a
law enforcement agency
in our neighborhood
could also act as a
deterrent to any local
criminal 'jackets'.

Sincerely,
Bettye Jobe
3316 Sands Ave.
El Paso, TX 79904
(915) 755-1652



10-16-03

Robin Divine
4242 Woodcock Ave.
San Antonio, TX. 78228

Dear Ms. Divine,

The Border Patrol here in El Paso is planning to obtain land for a new facility. One of the locations they are considering is in northeast El Paso an area unique for certain plant growth.

This rather small area is such that it supports beautiful yellow poppy growth every so many years when rainfall and other climatic conditions are just right.

These flowers don't last long but are very beautiful and you would not believe the number of El Pasoans who turn out for the brightly colored showing. People take their grandchildren to photograph in the flowers. Cameras are everywhere in the throngs of people and artists set up to paint the scene.

This situation does not happen every year. Conditions have to be just right.

In San Antonio you get lots of rain and you have greenery and flowers everywhere. Please understand we do not have that here. We need to protect what we do have in the way of natural beauty. We have barely over three inches of rain this year so far.

There are many sites where the Border Patrol could build huge facilities here and there would be nothing but pride and happiness for the patrol among the local population.

I feel the public relations would be much enhanced if the facility is built elsewhere, just for that simple fact.

Please come and visit and see for yourself. And then put this facility in one of many other possible sites.

Thank you,

Kenneth L. Thompson
3315 Gabel Ave.
El Paso, TX. 79904

BY ROBERT SANDOVAL
FORMALLY WITH RUDOLPH MILES & SONS CUSTOM BROKERS
NOW MILES UPS

LETTERS

Find another site for Border Patrol

I am writing in response to the recent Times story, "Poppies vs. progress," concerning development of Castner Range land.

I live near the skirt of the Franklin Mountains and for years have hiked, photographed and enjoyed its pristine beauty, enhanced each spring by the golden carpet of poppies surrounding the lovely Wilderness Park Museum, which fits so beautifully into the landscape.

I've resented the intrusion of the ugly, stucco cube of the Border Patrol Museum, designed and located with such insensitivity to the environment.

I'm disappointed — even shocked — at the prospect of the Border Patrol obtaining more property in that area for the expansion of its facilities. Surely, an industrial/commercial property area would be more suitable to its needs.

The wide expanse of open space up the mountain to the Franklin Mountains State Park boundary is a gorgeous view. By all rights it ought to be annexed to the park!

I don't want the area desecrated by greedy developers, nor by any more government agencies' structures! I urge readers to send e-mail comments before the Oct. 24 deadline to robin.d.divine@saic.com or regular mail to Robin Divine, 4242 Woodcock Ave., Suite 150, San Antonio, TX 78228.

Sue DiCara
Northeast El Paso

You can tell that I know what I am talking about.

PLEASE CONTACT:

STATE REP. "CHENTE QUINTANILLA D-EL PASO
75TH DISTRICT 120 N. Horizon, Suite A112, El Paso,
Texas 79927, (915) 859-3111, Fax. (915) 859-3120.
In Austin, Room Ext. E1.218, P.O. Box 2910, Austin, Tx
78768, (512) 463-0613, Fax. (512) 463-5896

They would appreciate a site like this near the Fabers and Caseta Bridge. They are going to build a 50 million dollar complex for border crossing that could compete with the Laredo Site. Laredo crosses 1,500 to 3,000 trailers daily.

Please ask them to take the TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL MATH TEST. They must have over 100 vehicles that use gasoline. The money they will save millions of U.S. TAX PAYERS DOLLARS. Plus the land in the lower valley will add to the COUNTY TAX BASE AND NOT to the CITY TAX BASE. It appears that the site in the NORTHEAST is a POLITICAL MOVE.

SAVING U.S. TAX PAYERS DOLLARS IS A MAJOR ISSUE NEXT YEAR. PLEASE CONTACT ALSO:

U.S. Rep. Silvestre Reyes, D-TEXAS, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515, (202) 225-4831. In El Paso: 310 N. Mesa. Suite 400, El Paso, Tx. 79901, Fax. (915) 534-7426 or silvestre.reyes@mail.house.gov

All El Paso would like to see the mountain free of developers. If you want to get rough, please check Mayor Joe Wardy's blood lines and you will see who is supporting his visions.

Best regards and lets hope nothing happens to us, like the DIXIE CHICKS.

Cordially yours,

Robert Sandoval

Democrats allege Halliburton overcharges

WASHINGTON — Halliburton, the Houston company with a no-bid contract to restore Iraq's oil industry, is charging U.S. taxpayers exorbitant prices to import gasoline into Iraq, two Democratic congressmen said Wednesday.

Reps. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., and John Dingell, D-Mich., wrote the Bush administration that the company's KBR subsidiary is billing the Army between \$1.62 and \$1.70 a gallon, while Iraqis are charged between 4 cents and 15 cents at the pump.

"Although Iraq has the second-largest oil reserves in the world, the U.S. taxpayer is, in effect, subsidizing over 90 percent of the cost of gasoline sold in Iraq," the lawmakers said in the latest Democratic attacks against the company formerly led by Vice President Dick Cheney. The charges cover the purchase and transportation of the petroleum from Kuwait and other countries.

Times wire reports

NEED I SAY MORE??

OUR CONGRESS-MEN IN HIGH PLACES AND WITH EXCESS MONEY AND OUR CABINET MEMBERS WHO HAVE STOCK IN THE ENERGY COMPANIES (BOMBS, GASOLINE, OIL, ELECTRICITY, HEATING FUEL AND OTHERS) ARE SELLING US DOWN THE RIVER FOR A FEW BUCKS.

NO ONE HAS TO BELIEVE THESE ACCUSATION!! THEY JUST HAVE TO CHECK THE STOCK MARKET. SOME OF THESE MEN MADE A FORTUNE IN THE RECENT TWO (2) WARS.

I DO HOPE YOU WIN YOUR CASE, TO SAVE THE MOUNTAIN. THESE TWO (2) MEN WILL PROBABLY BE YOUR BEST CHANCE. THEY CAN AT LEAST FILE AN INJUNCTION, LOCALLY OR IN WASHINGTON TO AT LEAST HAVE A STUDY ON THIS SITUATION.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL PEOPLE MAY ALSO BE ABLE TO HELP.

AGAIN, I WISH YOU THE BEST OF LUCK. HOWEVER, I STILL, WE ARE BEING SOLD DOWN THE RIVER FOR A FEW DOLLARS, BY THE PEOPLE IN POWER. AGAIN, YOU DON'T HAVE TO BELIEVE ME, JUST LOOK AT THE PEOPLE IN POWER, THEIR FRIENDS, IN HIGH ENERGY PLACES, THE FRAUD SCANDLES, THE JUDGE

RULINGS, ALL THAT GO IN FAVOR OF THE VERY SAME PEOPLE THAT COMMIT THESE FRAUDS.

AGAIN, BEST REGARDS.

Cordially yours,

ROBERT SANDOVAL

8212 Turquoise
El Paso, TX 79904
Oct. 17, 2003

Robin Divine, SAIC
4242 Woodcock Ave.
Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

Dear Robin Divine,

We are sending an urgent plea for you to rule AGAINST allowing the Border Patrol more acreage for its development in the Franklin Mountains foothills.

We wish you could live near this precious piece of land for a year. You would see the grand sweep of yellow poppies in the spring, the unique plants, the foxes, deer and other wildlife but, most of all, the great unspoiled panorama of land leading up to the mountains. It makes the soul soar.

We have a city filled with man-made buildings and concrete. The Franklins and surrounding foothills are a refuge, a place to catch one's breath and just say "ah, how beautiful the earth still is." Please do not take that away from us. The Border Patrol Museum, built without any aesthetic consideration, is a blight on the side of the mountain. We've had visitors admire the landscape then ask what is that "ugly thing built up there." Please do not let any more of this wonderful land be defiled.

El Paso has nothing but land around it and much empty land within it. We ask, no plead, with you to consider the alternate sites for the Border Patrol needs. Please do not allow the desecration of this precious land which, when once gone is gone forever.

We are hoping someday to add this wild and beautiful land to the State Park already in existence nearby.

Please, please, please don't let us lose this one and only gorgeous natural resource in this town.

Thank you for your consideration.

The Morley Family
The Morley Family

15 October, 2003

USACE, SAIC

Dear Ms. Divine,

I am a science teacher in El Paso, Texas and hold a M.S. in Biology. As a resident for over 20 years I have witnessed the city develop without long term planning in many areas, but none such a travesty as the proposed Site #1 (Castner Range) for the new Border Patrol Station.

The environmental assessment which I have read is laughable in many points. For example: 1) (3.2) Site 1 "the long-term loss of foothills desert shrubland plant communities would not be significant due to size of the area . . ." The foothills habitat and granitic soils it provides is unique and limited in area. There are 10's of thousands of mesquite and creosote-dominated acres with sandy soils in the El Paso area and Sites 2 or 3 are clearly better choices. Site 1 is refuge and home to numerous plant and animal species (loggerhead shrike, lyre snake and more). Further, this site is a buffer for wildlife from the busy U.S. 54. The upper slopes of Castner and hopefully future extension of Franklin Mts. State Park need this buffer. The proposed Site 1 would be a loss of this buffer and continue the habitat fragmentation occurring locally and globally.

2) (3.9) Site 1 "Given the scale . . . the proposed facilities would not detract from these features or diminish the views of these UNIQUE RESOURCES . . ." Somebody got that right! They are unique and their view should not be spoiled by a 20 acre parking lot, filling/maintenance station. U.S. 54 is elevated along Site 1 and who wants the beautiful vista spoiled by confiscated vehicles? Sites 2 and 3 are flat and driving past a native landscaped facility would not be an eyesore as it would at the base of El Paso's ecological treasure. The presence of Northgate dam at Site 1, which is earthen and already blending in with successional native vegetation, is not a visual buffer for the proposed facility and the millions of people who travel Hondo Pass and U.S. 54. The proposed facility at Site 1 would be UNAESTHETICALLY pleasing, or just plain ugly, with or without native plant revegetation.

3) (3.4) Air quality is an issue as well. Ozone, CO, and particulates from Site 1 would negatively impact many more residents of NE El Paso than the less densely populated areas of Sites 2 & 3. Please have your consultants (I hope you didn't pay them too much) review an airshed map of NE El Paso. You may also have them check prevailing winds.

4) (3.7) Noise pollution is yet another issue. Yes, "noise pollution is common to all three sites" is certainly true. So, does it make sense to increase vehicular noise near the greatest population density (Site1)?

5) (3.6) Socioeconomic considerations should also include that the U.S. Border Patrol gets the land for free, while local water utility rate payers don't benefit from the sale of PSB lands. The perennially depressed economics of El Paso would receive federal dollars IF Site 1 were not chosen. Sounds like environmental INJUSTICE to me.

For these reasons I oppose the Border Patrol Facility at Site 1.

The Environmental Assessment was read and discussed by two classes of environmental science students. They were assigned the task of writing pro or con letters, based upon the EA and their opinions. I trust you will be receiving some. In

Thursday, October 16, 2003 America Online: Timdil

addition, our student council and some of my students began a petition. I trust their comments will be heard as well.

Sincerely, *Tim Dillon*

Tim Dillon
3303 Gabel Avenue
El Paso, TX 79904

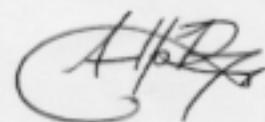
Arnulfo Ramirez
Chapin high school
7000 Dyer
El Paso, TX 79904

Dear Robin,

My point of view concerning this issue is that it would be unnecessary to use Castner Range as a site to build the new Border Patrol Headquarters. There have been two other sites that were considered for the building site. At these sites it would be easier to construct because it would be less work to clear up the site therefore, it would be much faster to build upon. I think that the most appropriate site to use would be site 2, located near the intersection of interstate 54 and McCombs Street. This site is located in a n underdeveloped area and is compatible with their preliminary plans. It is nowhere near neighborhoods, wont harm the environment and its unique resources and plant life.

At Castner Range there are animals and plants that would be harmed and run out of their habitat and their normal environment. The soils in Castner range are richer in nutrients providing life for the plants that are found here. Some of the plants found on this range aren't found anywhere else in Texas and it would be a shame to lose these organisms that make El Paso unique. Other sites that have been built in the past couple of years have already disturbed the environment. I also believe that with building this site it would encourage more development in that area and it is unnecessary when there are other sites that would be more suitable and would cause fewer disturbances to build upon.

Sincerely,



2905 Titanic Avenue
El Paso, TX 79904
October 16, 2003

Robin Divine, Project Manager, S.A.I.C
4242 Woodcock Avenue, Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

Dear Ms. Divine:

El Paso has been blessed with a beautiful mountain range -the Franklin Mountains. Every developer in El Paso, no matter what they are building, wants to destroy part of our mountain by building on it -or so near it cuts off everyone's view of the mountain.

Now it is the Border Patrol who want to build a new facility. There are many reasons why they should not be permitted to build on or close to the mountain. First of all, they have built a museum next to the lovely Wilderness Park Museum which fits so beautifully into the landscape. However, the Border Patrol Museum is an ugly stucco cube (that looks like a garage) designed with complete insensitiveness to the environment.

Then a Border Patrol facility includes all of the following which would have the result of a complete disaster to the beautiful mountain, for it is a huge undertaking. They will have a main building, a helicopter pad, kennels for their dogs, covered and uncovered parking, a fuel island and fuel tanks, a car wash canopy, an emergency generator and a support building for a radio tower. It will be surrounded by a security fence and lighting. How many acres will be destroyed? Once gone, they are gone forever -never to be beautiful again.

There will be two expensive things that must be done. It will take months of bulldozing to flatten the property and the land must be cleared of all the explosives, as it had been a firing range. They will destroy a magnificent part of the mountain, part of our poppy fields which I have watched since I was about ten -and I am now 91! It will have a harmful effect on the wildlife, besides being out of place near a quiet neighborhood of homes.

There is another spot equally as good for the Border Patrol -not on the mountain, already level and just as near to the freeway. What is wrong with that one? The spot they have chosen is very far away from the border -why not get closer to where they are needed. This is something I cannot understand.

Please consider carefully what I have written above.

Sincerely,

Henrietta R. Owen
Henrietta R. Owen

Georgia L. Pettit
5312 Prince Edward Ave.
El Paso, Texas 79924

October 16, 2003

Robin Divine
4242 Woodcock Ave.
Suite 150
San Antonio, Texas 78228

Dear Robin:

I live very near the foot of the beautiful Franklin Mountains, and have since early 1958 when I first came to El Paso. I have seen the destruction of the scenery the past few years by the building of museums, etc.

The poppies in the spring are absolutely gorgeous, and do not grow anywhere else in El Paso. The poppies bring visitors from out of state and of course from other parts of El Paso.

I do support the Border Patrol Museum, and additional facilities, but think it could have been much better designed to enhance the mountain area. I believe there are other properties available in Northeast El Paso area for expansion of the Border Patrol facilities. I definitely think they should explore these other options.

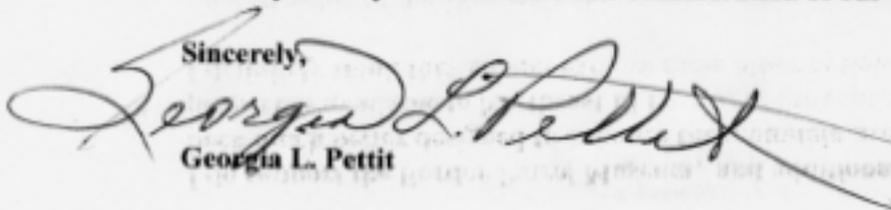
As a Director of the Woman's Department of the Chamber of Commerce, and Chairwoman of Las Amigas (a welcoming part of the Chamber), board member of Discover El Paso, I am vitally interested in promoting the city and it's unusual beauty. We have had far too many areas of our city destroyed by builders greed and/ or insensitivity.

Our city is different in character and scenery than other parts of Texas.
It has special features and our beautiful mountain one of the highlights !

Please look into other areas of Northeast El Paso to build additional Border Patrol facilities.

Thank you for your assistance and consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Georgia L. Pettit". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Georgia L. Pettit

•
•
•
•
•
•
•

Lon McBride
3421 Sunnyside
El Paso, TX 79904-4543
(915) 565-3557

October 14, 2003

Robin Devine, SAIC
4242 Woodcock Ave. Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

Dear Madam:

This letter is forwarded to you in order to address the negative aspects of placing a 45-acre Border Patrol facility on Castner Range. This pristine environmental habitat is home to many species of plants and wildlife to include the ever popular Mexican poppy. There are also many other environmental concerns ranging from air pollution to aesthetics.

If the Border Patrol maintenance facility was chosen to inhabit the proposed site along US-54 and Hondo Pass drive, it would severely impact the already limited space where the Mexican poppies currently grow. This is the only place in Texas where these poppies grow wild, and if they are displaced of their habitat, there could be very negative setbacks as a result. An example of a negative aspect of this encroachment would be less natural beauty as well as significantly lower funding from tourists that stop by just to see the poppies.

The wildlife that is supported by the vegetation around the Castner Range area will also be negatively affected by having their habitat depleted by the removal of their food and water sources. By causing the primary consumers in the food chain hardships and even death, the effect travels right up the food chain to the bigger animals leaving no predators or prey in the area.

Air pollution would affect the wildlife and the nearby housing areas. Less than 100 yards away on two sides of the proposed plan for Castner Range, there are extensive residential communities that would be affected by the mass of air pollution created from all the vehicles that will constantly be in and out of the facility. This will have very bad long range affects on the residents of these areas, especially the children.

The noise that would be created by all of the constant "hustle and bustle" that goes along with a facility of this caliber would further affect wildlife and nearby residential areas. At present, there is only a Texas Department of Transportation Highway Maintenance Facility located at the intersection of Hondo Pass and the Gateway South, a Border Patrol maintenance facility would further increase the noise that is generated. It would be of everyone's best interest to keep this "buffer zone" between city and wilderness free of any other obstructions from hearing the natural sounds of the wildlife of this area.

Last but certainly not least, the aesthetics of the site as proposed would be more than an eye sore for years to come. As one of the last natural areas in the city of El Paso it would be best not to develop it for any reason no matter the excuse. Because I am personally a cross-country runner who frequents the proposed area because of its vast terrain features and general good running atmosphere, I feel most concerned about how the Border Patrol facility would affect this terrain. Being a life-time resident of Northeast El Paso, where Castner Range is located, I enjoy the year-round, beautiful scenery this area provides.

I sincerely urge you and your colleagues along with the Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Border Patrol, and the other federal agencies involved, to further look into all of the negative aspects of this proposed site. With two other site possibilities, there is no reason that this historical and natural site should be built upon.

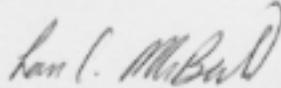
.....

October 14, 2003

Page 2

Site numbers two and three of the Army Corps of Engineers assessment would be much more suitable for a development of this magnitude. These sites have nearly no residential areas around them. They are in areas already zoned as commercial sites, and those locations make the most sense in a transportation view. If built at or near the intersection of Loop 375 (Transmountain Rd.) and McCombs streets, there would be access not only directly to The Loop for eastside travel, but going west on 375 provides the quickest and easiest travel to the Westside of town. As far as the central area of town access, the location would be in prime position for easy merging with US 54.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lon C. McBride".

Lon McBride
Concerned High School Student

Robin Divine, SAIC

4242 Woodcock Ave Suite 150

San Antonio, TX 78228

Dear sir;

Objections to the Border Patrol's Use of Castner Range for a New Station

I want to express my disapproval of this proposed project's use of Castner Range, that will have negative impacts on the local area's Chihuahuan Desert fauna and flora.

If approved, this action will not only have direct environmental impacts, but will also set a damaging precedent encouraging additional development in one of El Paso's last remaining natural treasures. Placement of the Border Patrol facilities on Castner Range would be a stimulus for further development efforts in the area and would encourage others to pursue piecemeal development of Castner Range lands; this concern has become even more troubling, due to the most recent proposal that the land be acquired via a lease.

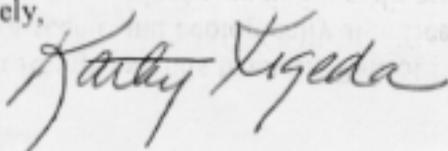
Castner Range extends from the Patriot Freeway almost to the mountain ridgeline and includes some of the most scenic and ecologically significant parts of the mountains. Hidden springs, complex geological features, unique plant associations, diverse landforms and noteworthy archaeological sites are among the important natural resources of the area. The proposed facilities would certainly have direct effects on the plant and animal resources on the 40 acres in question and would degrade scenic qualities of the area.

I once again state, that due to the aforementioned concerns, that the two other northeast El Paso sites that are not on Castner Range, be considered the primary and secondary sites for the proposed Border Patrol station.

I continue to favor Alternative 2 because it meets the Border Patrol's requirement for ready access to a major highway (U.S. 54), is linked directly to the international border, does not conflict with existing developed neighborhoods, can serve as a stimulus for future economic development in that portion of northeast El Paso, and lastly, it avoids the costs, environmental impacts and likely time delays associated with construction on Castner Range.

I appreciate the opportunity to once again provide my input as a citizen of El Paso, and request that the proposed Border Patrol Station be sited outside of Castner Range.

Sincerely,



KATHY KISEDA
404 KENYON JOYCELANE
EL PASO, TX 79902
(915) 533-4615

Please, please no more
development of the Franklin
Mountains. There are too
many sites better suited,
such as Highway 54 and
Mc Lones.

Betty Webb
426-3 De Lara Estates
Chaparral N.M. 88081

17 Oct 03

Robin Devine, SAIC
4242 Woodcock Avenue
Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

Dear Robin,

I am writing to oppose the extension of Border Patrol Facilities at Castner Range. In fact I wish they would raze the ugly box like building they built on this beautiful pristine area, which sticks out as the ugliest site ever, no concern whatsoever in building to blend in with the beautiful area. I wish they would move that operation and any other future plans to an industrial area, where it should be.

My concern is not only for the beautiful area, but also for the wildlife and plants. This is a unique area which we as El Pasoans are most fortunate to have.

I am 75 years old and I am thinking not only of myself, my friends and relatives who feel the way I do, but for the future generations to enjoy.

Please do not allow the Border Patrol to further desecrate this area.

Thanks,

Maria Luisa A. Inocencio

MARIA LUISA A. INOCENCIO
5708 Creston Ave.
El Paso, TX 79924
(915) 755-2543

Wed.

As a resident of North East El Paso for over 30 years - I am appalled at the idea that anyone would consider - even for a moment - digging up the land between Hondo Pass & Iron Mt. for any reason.

Certainly that is no place for the Border Patrol.

And anyone who has taken time to drive out there to see the Poppies in the Spring - would be very unhappy to have that taken away. We have so little here to attract people - & the gorgeous poppy display is breathtaking. Please don't tell me that building there would not disturb the Poppies. I am getting older - but I am not a fool.

I am sure there are empty lots & buildings elsewhere that would provide a suitable location for this building.

Let's not take away a beautiful stretch of land unnecessarily.

HWalt@ELP.RR.COM

Rebecca Walt
9005 Beek
El Paso TX 79904

751-
6898

No to construction on the
mountain!

Dear Robin,

The Franklin Mountains are
the only mountains in Texas.
The east side is so beautiful
in the spring with the poppies
but it is beautiful all year too.
Please do not let any construction
begin on the mountain especially
when there are other sites of
choice.

Sincerely,

Patsy Elliott

S

Rafaela Schuller
9411 Waverly Dr
El Paso, TX 79924

El Paso, Oct 18, 2003

Dear Mr. Divine,

Enclosing, I am sending Sue Di Cara's letter to editor to El Paso Times about possible development of Costner Range land in the foothills of the Franklin Mts.

Please, Mr. Divine, do what is in your power to save this beautiful land as a future addition to our beloved Franklin Mountains intact. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Rafaela Schuller

1 enclosure

LETTERS *10-18-03*

El Paso Times
**Find another site
for Border Patrol**

I am writing in response to the recent Times story, "Poppies vs. progress," concerning development of Castner Range land.

I live near the skirt of the Franklin Mountains and for years have hiked, photographed and enjoyed its pristine beauty, enhanced each spring by the golden carpet of poppies surrounding the lovely Wilderness Park Museum, which fits so beautifully into the landscape.

I've resented the intrusion of the ugly, stucco cube of the Border Patrol Museum, designed and located with such insensitivity to the environment.

I'm disappointed — even shocked — at the prospect of the Border Patrol obtaining more property in that area for the expansion of its facilities. Surely, an industrial/commercial property area would be more suitable to its needs.

The wide expanse of open space up the mountain to the Franklin Mountains State Park boundary is a gorgeous view. By all rights it ought to be annexed to the park!

I don't want the area desecrated by greedy developers, nor by any more government agencies' structures! I urge readers to send e-mail comments before the Oct. 24 deadline to robin.d.divine@saic.com or regular mail to Robin Divine, 4242 Woodcock Ave., Suite 150, San Antonio, TX 78228.

Sue DiCara
Northeast El Paso

Robert,

10-16-03

Please consider another site to build the Border Patrol Station. The Franklin Mts are too beautiful to build on.

Thank you
Debbie Sutton

Robin Divine, SAIC

4242 Woodcock Ave Suite 150

San Antonio, TX 78228

Dear sir,

Objections to the Border Patrol's Use of Castner Range for a New Station

I want to express my disapproval of this proposed project's use of Castner Range, that will have negative impacts on the local area's Chihuahuan Desert fauna and flora.

If approved, this action will not only have direct environmental impacts, but will also set a damaging precedent encouraging additional development in one of El Paso's last remaining natural treasures. Placement of the Border Patrol facilities on Castner Range would be a stimulus for further development efforts in the area and would encourage others to pursue piecemeal development of Castner Range lands; this concern has become even more troubling, due to the most recent proposal that the land be acquired via a lease.

Castner Range extends from the Patriot Freeway almost to the mountain ridgeline and includes some of the most scenic and ecologically significant parts of the mountains. Hidden springs, complex geological features, unique plant associations, diverse landforms and noteworthy archaeological sites are among the important natural resources of the area. The proposed facilities would certainly have direct effects on the plant and animal resources on the 40 acres in question and would degrade scenic qualities of the area.

I once again state, that due to the aforementioned concerns, that the two other northeast El Paso sites that are not on Castner Range, be considered the primary and secondary sites for the proposed Border Patrol station.

I continue to favor Alternative 2 because it meets the Border Patrol's requirement for ready access to a major highway (U.S. 54), is linked directly to the international border, does not conflict with existing developed neighborhoods, can serve as a stimulus for future economic development in that portion of northeast El Paso, and lastly, it avoids the costs, environmental impacts and likely time delays associated with construction on Castner Range.

I appreciate the opportunity to once again provide my input as a citizen of El Paso, and request that the proposed Border Patrol Station be sited outside of Castner Range.

Sincerely,

Rachel Alvarez

Carlos Rodriguez
Student at Chapin High School

October 15, 2003.

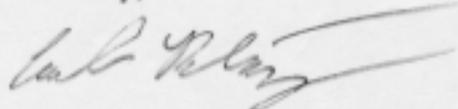
Dear Robin Divine,

I am against the use of Castner Range for a 45-acre site. It might be a wonderful place to build a Border patrol facility, but not safe for the environment. I believe that the Castner Range land should be left alone like it is suppose to.

By building a Border Patrol facility, you are destroying a wonderful and beautiful environment for plants and species. It has a granitic soil which brings more than ten species of plants that cannot be found anywhere else in Texas. These plants include poppies, silver puffs and canyon morning glory. The amazing view to Castner Range would be blocked by your facility. In a way you could say that you are ruining my backyard. If you proceed with your planning, you would be setting the example for other companies to build their facilities that will continuo on destroying and blocking the Castner Range area. Little by little it will disappear.

I understand that this is hard to consider, but it is possible to find another way and other land where we can all benefit from it. I would really appreciated if the Castner Range area would be left alone.

Sincerely,



Carlos Rodriguez

Dear Robin Devine,

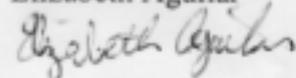
It has come to my attention that there will be possible construction of a Border Patrol Facility at Castner Range in the North East Part of El Paso. I am glad that my area of town has this opportunity to be developed with such an important facility. I understand that the possible area of the proposed site will be affected. I also understand that there are alternate sites for this construction.

I am opposed to the construction at Casnter Range because of environmental issues. I believe if the facility is built at Casnter Range it will affect the natural beauty of the Franklin Mountains. It has been a growing trend to develop on mountainsides, because of the views it gives. For this facility there is no need to be on the mountain. This facility will be a disturbance to the wildlife that inhabits the area. Disturbances such as; noise pollution, air pollution, and land being taken away will greatly affect the wildlife in area. We must always consider that we share this land with others, meaning animals that quite often have no say. We may not know the effects on these animals or the land until later down the road when it is too late. It is always better to take precautionary steps before hand and prevent anything bad that could happen.

From my understanding there are other alternative sites that are not on the mountain and will still have easy access to highways. Since these other alternative sites are not on the mountain, they will have more space for possible future expansion if need be for the facility. Also the alternative sites will have a less damaging effect to the environment. I believe that the alternative sites will be a better decision for everyone.

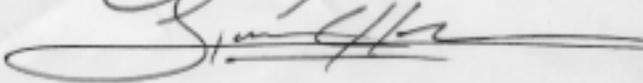
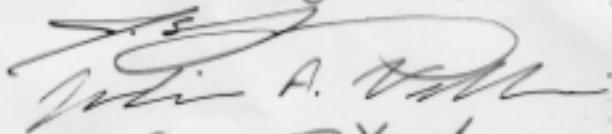
Chapin High School Student

Elizabeth Aguilar



Captain John L. Chapin High School AP Environmental Science Petition Against the Construction of Border Patrol Facility at Castner Range, El Paso, Texas

The following undersigned are opposed to the construction of the Border Patrol Facility along US 54 at Castner Range. Sites 2 or 3 in the far northeast would have less damaging environmental and visual impact than along our beautiful Franklin Mountains.

Name(printed)	Signature
1. Crystal Deal	Crystal Deal
2. Michelle Townsend	
3. Patrick Green	Patrick Green
4. Kimberly Hozak	Kim Hozak
5. Georgina Ruiz	Georgina Ruiz
6. Guadalupe Garza	Guadalupe Garza
7. Philip Romike	Philip Romike
8. Angel Rosalez	Angel Rosalez
9. Oscar Macedo	Oscar Macedo
10. Steve Chacon	
11. Darren Herring	Darren Herring
12. June Martin	June Martin
13. Susan Norris	Susan Norris
14. James Edward Moreno	
15. Julian A. Vellucci	Julian A. Vellucci
16. Brittany Pilant	Brittany Pilant
17. Jennifer Reed	Jennifer Reed

- 18. Jaelyn Morgan Jaelyn Morgan
- 19. Holly Ambriz Holly Ambriz
- 20. Patricia Castillo Patricia Castillo
- 21. Shade Brown Shade Brown
- 22. Lisa Nien Lisa Nien
- 23. A.J. Williams A.J. Williams
- 24. Juan Rodriguez Juan Rodriguez

Signature	Name (Printed)
[Signature]	1. Crystal Dool
[Signature]	2. Patricia Castillo
[Signature]	3. Shade Brown
[Signature]	4. Kimberly Boral
[Signature]	5. Georgina Ruiz
[Signature]	6. Guadalupe Lopez
[Signature]	7. Priscilla Romales
[Signature]	8. Angel Rosales
[Signature]	9. Oscar Macedo
[Signature]	10. Steve Green
[Signature]	11. June Martin
[Signature]	12. June Martin
[Signature]	13. Susan Harris
[Signature]	14. James Grant Harris
[Signature]	15. Julian A. Velasco
[Signature]	16. Anthony Piment
[Signature]	17. Jennifer Reed

**Captain John L. Chapin High School AP Environmental Science
Petition Against the Construction of Border Patrol Facility at
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El Paso, Texas**

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Name(printed)	Signature
1. Jorge Martinez Jr.	
2. Freddy Cruz	
3. Destiny Vega-Benitez	Destiny Vega-Benitez
4. Walter Winston	
5. Chris Day	
6. Theresa Turner	Theresa Turner
7. Jesse Lopez	
8. Leigh McWhorter	Leigh McWhorter
9. DAREN WALKER	Daren Walker
10. Rene Hernandez	Rene Hernandez
11. MATTHEW TURNER	
12. LISA LYONS	
13. Patricia Jose Maratta	
14. Patricia Hays	Patricia Hays
15. Elizabeth Stewart	Elizabeth Stewart
16. Nancy Beeth (Nancy Beeth)	Nancy Beeth
17. Daryl A Gonzalez	Daryl A Gonzalez
18. Matthew Navarrete	Matthew Navarrete
19. Erin Lawton	Erin Lawton

**Captain John L. Chapin High School AP Environmental Science
 Petition Against the Construction of Border Patrol Facility at
 Castner Range,
 El Paso, Texas**

The following undersigned are opposed to the construction of the Border Patrol Facility along US 54 at Castner Range. Sites 2 or 3 in the far northeast would have less damaging environmental and visual impact than along our beautiful Franklin Mountains.

Name(printed)	Signature
1. Andrea Macias	
2. Tamatha Rowe	Tamatha J. Rowe
3. William Harden	William Harden
4. Darcy Cleaver	Darcy Cleaver
5. Matthew Caligon	Matthew Caligon
6. Estella Morales	Estella Morales
7. Joanna Sapient	Joanna
8. Paola Chavez	Paola Chavez
9. Kara Holifield	Kara Holifield
10. Sarah Loney	Sarah Loney
11. Adriana Onete	Adriana Onete
12. Stephanie Nava	Stephanie Nava
13. Jacinda Laird	13) Jacinda Laird
14. Sparkle Mickle	Sparkle Mickle
15. Alexandra Caldera	Alexandra Caldera
16. Ashlee Lewis	Ashlee Lewis
17. April Herbst	April Herbst

4

Captain John L. Chapin High School AP Environmental Science Petition Against the Construction of Border Patrol Facility at Castner Range, El Paso, Texas

The following undersigned are opposed to the construction of the Border Patrol Facility along US 54 at Castner Range. Sites 2 or 3 in the far northeast would have less damaging environmental and visual impact than along our beautiful Franklin Mountains.

Name(printed)	Signature
1. E. J. Perode	<i>E. J. Perode</i>
2. Michael Monroe	<i>Michael Monroe</i>
3. Jeanna Rodriguez-Gawson	<i>Jeanna Rodriguez-Gawson</i>
4. Erin Eley	<i>Erin Eley</i>
5. SHANNON MALONEY	<i>Shannon Maloney</i>
6. Katie BAYER	<i>Katie Bayer</i>
7. Mary Smith	<i>Mary Smith</i>
8. monica Rocha	<i>monica Rocha</i>
9. Sarah Christman	<i>Sarah Christman</i>
10. Augusta Liddie	<i>Augusta Liddie</i>
11. Jack McCluskey	<i>Jack McCluskey</i>
12. Vivian Hernandez	<i>Vivian Hernandez</i>
13. CHRIS Ramirez	<i>Chris Ramirez</i>
14. Devon Pangle	<i>Devon Pangle</i>
15. Arturo Quijano	<i>Arturo Quijano</i>
16. Jeff Cleaver	<i>Jeff Cleaver</i>
17. Alyssa Romero	<i>Alyssa Romero</i>
18. Athena Becker	<i>Athena Becker</i>

**Captain John L. Chapin High School AP Environmental Science
 Petition Against the Construction of Border Patrol Facility at
 Castner Range,
 El Paso, Texas**

The following undersigned are opposed to the construction of the Border Patrol Facility along US 54 at Castner Range. Sites 2 or 3 in the far northeast would have less damaging environmental and visual impact than along our beautiful Franklin Mountains.

Name(printed)	Signature
1. Morgan Tilburg	<i>Morgan Tilburg</i>
2. Ryan Britz	<i>Ryan Britz</i>
3. Aaron Salas	<i>Aaron Salas</i>
4. TONI MANAIO	<i>Toni Manai</i> <i>Kimberly Blessinger</i>
5. Kimberly Blessinger	<i>Kimberly Blessinger</i>
6. Lorraine McWhorter	<i>L. McWhorter</i>
7. Pete Biddle	<i>Pete Biddle</i>
8. Arturo Uribe	<i>Arturo Uribe</i>
9. Rachel DeWitt	<i>Rachel DeWitt</i>
10. ALMA M. S. Puentes	<i>Alma M. S. Puentes</i>
11. Faith N. Portillo	<i>Faith Portillo</i>
12. Michael Hicks	<i>Michael Hicks</i>
13. Hilda Chavez	<i>Hilda Chavez</i>
14. Kate Meals	<i>Kate Meals</i>
15. Brandon Smith	<i>Brandon Smith</i>
16. Patricia Diaz	<i>Patricia Diaz</i>
17. Michael Duscholz	<i>Michael Duscholz</i>

Captain John L. Chapin High School AP Environmental Science
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Name(printed)

Signature

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Donna Ulrich-Mullers | D. Ulrich-Mullers |
| 2. Kimberly Cowan | Kim Cowan |
| 3. Nicole Hollins | Nicole Hollins |
| 4. Mia Cho | Meghan |
| 5. Miranda Alvarez | Miranda Alvarez |
| 6. Sarah Stroud | Sarah Stroud |
| 7. Megan Ayla Gibbs | |
| 8. Libby Yingling | Libby Yingling |
| 9. Alex Vane | Alex Vane |
| 10. Frances Mena | Frances Mena |
| 11. Caryn English | Caryn English |
| 12. Eric Barrera | E. A. Barrera |
| 13. Kristin English | Kristin English |
| 14. Allison Avalos | Allison Avalos |
| 15. Ashlee Pagan | Ashlee Pagan |
| 16. Reina Marquez | Reina Marquez |
| 17. Rebecca Muroz | Rebecca Muroz |

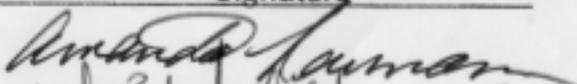
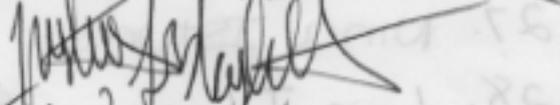
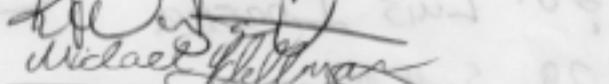
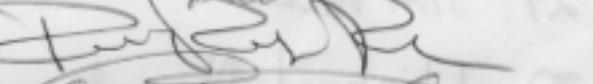
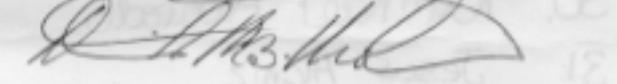
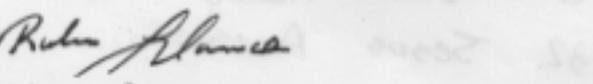
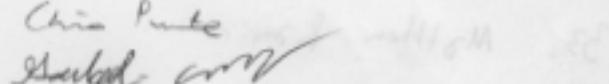
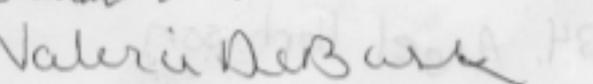
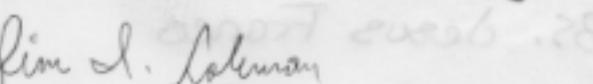
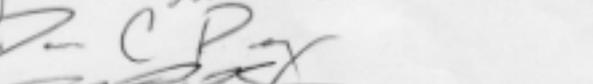
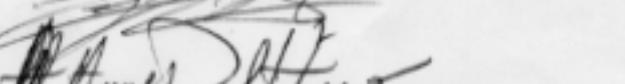
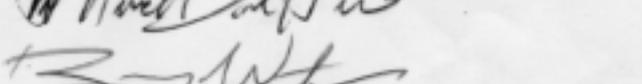
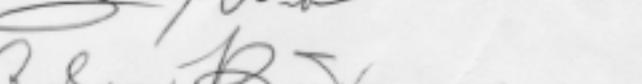
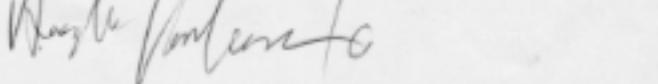
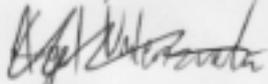
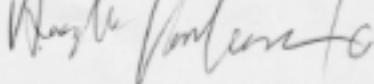
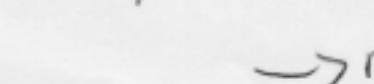
Captain John L. Chapin High School AP Environmental Science
Petition Against the Construction of Border Patrol Facility at
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The following undersigned are opposed to the construction of the Border Patrol Facility along US 54 at Castner Range. Sites 2 or 3 in the far northeast would have less damaging environmental and visual impact than along our beautiful Franklin Mountains.

Name(printed)	Signature
1. Timera C. Woodell	Timera Woodell
2. Whitney Avalos	Whitney J. Avalos
3. Lauren Martinez	Lauren Martinez
4. Gerardo Saenz	Gerardo Saenz
5. Leah Bromberg	Leah Bromberg
6. Diane Kirby	Diane Kirby
7. Sara Cochran	Sara M. Cochran
8. Lana Chaney	Lana Chaney
9. Debbie Dickinson	Debbie Dickinson
10. Ruben Gonzalez	Ruben Gonzalez
11. Steve Clacor	Steve Clacor
12. Chris Jarvis	Chris Jarvis
13. Robert Kelley	Robert Kelley
14. Ciara Goodwin	Ciara Goodwin
15. Carlos Mesta Carlos Mesta	Carlos Mesta
16. Valerie Montes	Valerie Montes
17. Kendrick Roy	Kendrick Roy

**Captain John L. Chapin High School AP Environmental Science
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Name(printed)	Signature
1. AMANDA NEWMAN	
2. Susan Haskell	
3. Kimberly Wingett	
4. Michael Goldmann	
5. Ryan Reyes	
6. David Molina	
7. Ruben Lamas	
8. Chris Puente	
9. Galindo Cruz	
10. Valeria DeBusk	
11. Jim Coleman	
12. JASON PEREZ	
13. Cody LaBree	
14. Anael Del Hierro	
15. Barry Watson	
16. Andy Ramirez	
17. 	
18. Angel Valenzuela	

→ more on
back

- 19. Shonté Cotton
- 20. Blanca Quiroz
- 21. Maria Rodriguez
- 22. Newlegion Studios
- 23. Veronica Vargas
- 24. Lori Luis
- 25. Sarita Martin
- 26. Angelina Davis

- Shonté Cotton
- Blanca Quiroz
- Maria Rodriguez
- Newlegion.com - 

- 27. Nina Isturis
- 28. Luis Ibarra
- 29. Scott Newman
- 30. Michael Alvarado
- 31. Jesus Alaniz
- 32. Jesus Acosta
- 33. Matthew Ramirez
- 34. Angel Harbison
- 35. Jesus Franco

- Veronica Vargas
- Lori Luis
- Sarita Martin
- Angelina Davis
- Nina Isturis
- 
- Scott Newman
- Michael Alvarado
- Jesus Alaniz
- Jesus Acosta
- Mathw Ramirez
- Jesus Franco

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Name(printed)	Signature
1. Tara Dusenbury	Tara Dusenbury
2. Arturo Espinoza	Arturo Espinoza
3. Sarah Belinsky	Sarah Belinsky
4. David Yero	David Yero
5. DENISE CERVANTES	Denise Cervantes
6. Mican Maldonado	Mican Maldonado
7. Jesse Gueneru	Jesse Gueneru
8. Arturo Espinoza	Arturo Espinoza
9. Steve Hernandez	Steve Hernandez
10. David Baltzell	David Baltzell
11. Joshua Flores	Joshua Flores
12. Roberto De la Vega	Roberto De la Vega
13. Elma L Meraz	Elma L. Meraz
14. Sade Davis	Sade Davis
15. Brittany Campbell	Brittany Campbell
16. Nancy Diaz	Nancy Diaz
17. Jessica Guirrola	Jessica Guirrola
18. Laura Martinez	Laura Martinez

Captain John L. Chapin High School AP Environmental Science
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Name(printed)	Signature
1. Amanda Reyes	Amanda Reyes
2. Denise Cortez	Denise Cortez
3. Adam Garza	Adam Garza
4. Lakheta Johnson	Lakheta Johnson
5. Gannel Cordero	Gannel Cordero
6. Mike Mace	Mike Mace
7. Ivan Harris	Ivan Harris
8. Alex Granados	Alex Granados
9. Praxedis Gomez	Praxedis Gomez
10. Tania Beckman	Tania Beckman
11. Angelica Gutierrez	Angelica Gutierrez
12. Christine Lopez	Christine Lopez
13. Charles Roberts	
14. Charles Roberts	Charles Roberts
15. AUSTIN GOODWIN	
16. Monica Garcia	Monica Garcia
17.	

Captain John L. Chapin High School AP Environmental Science
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Name(printed)	Signature
1. GIBBS, CLAUDIA	Claudia Gibbs
2. Darbi Thompson	DARBI THOMPSON
3. Frank Gibbs	Frank Gibbs
4. Frankie Leigh Reynolds	Frankie Leigh Reynolds
5. Nicole Lia Gonzalez	Nicole Lia Gonzalez
6. Johnna Kirby	Johnna Kirby
7. Brenda Mora	Brenda Mora
8. Irene Hernandez	Irene Hernandez
9. Amber Martin	Amber Martin
10. EDDIE BALLESTEROS	Eddie Ballsteros
11. Krystle Hernandez	Krystle Hernandez
12. Darlene Edwards	Darlene Edwards
13. Natasha Jenkins	Natasha Jenkins
14. SILVIA AGUERO	Silvia Agüero
15. Tameeka Ward	Tameeka Ward
16. Monika Monsanto	Monika Monsanto
17. Cecilia Jimenez	Cecilia Jimenez

12

Captain John L. Chapin High School AP Environmental Science
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The following undersigned are opposed to the construction of the Border Patrol Facility along US 54 at Castner Range. Sites 2 or 3 in the far northeast would have less damaging environmental and visual impact than along our beautiful Franklin Mountains.

Name(printed)

Signature

1. Lauren Baker
2. Danielle Brissette
3. Karl Biedert
4. Nicholas Gautier
5. Ian McBride
6. Lauren Miller
7. Maria Springsteen
8. Andrea SanMartín
9. Loretta Dillon
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.

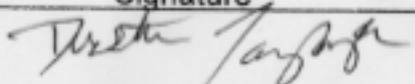
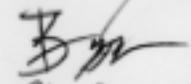
[Handwritten signature]
Danielle Brissette
[Handwritten signature]
Karl Biedert

[Handwritten signature]
Nicholas Gautier
[Handwritten signature]
Ian McBride
[Handwritten signature]
Lauren A. Miller
[Handwritten signature]
Maria Springsteen
[Handwritten signature]
Andrea SanMartín
[Handwritten signature]
Loretta Dillon

13

Captain John L. Chapin High School AP Environmental Science
Petition Against the Construction of Border Patrol Facility at
Castner Range,
El Paso, Texas

The following undersigned are opposed to the construction of the Border Patrol Facility along US 54 at Castner Range. Sites 2 or 3 in the far northeast would have less damaging environmental and visual impact than along our beautiful Franklin Mountains.

<u>Name(printed)</u>	<u>Signature</u>
1. DUSTIN ZOZAYA	
2. Brandon Zozaya	
3. CINDY ZOZAYA	Cindy Zozaya
4.	
5.	
6.	
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17.	

Captain John L. Chapin High School AP Environmental Science
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Castner Range,
El Paso, Texas

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Name(printed)

Signature

1. Jennifer Nestin

Jennifer Nestin

2. Daniel Montoya

Daniel E. Montoya

3. Malia Seward

Malia R. Seward

4. Shayla Seward

Shayla Seward

5. Sabrina Goerner

Sabrina Goerner

6. Lauren Moylan

Lauren Moylan

7. Marissa Carl

Marissa Carl

8. Daniel Estrada

Daniel Estrada

9. Valerie Bertalli

Valerie Bertalli

10. Amanda Sposato

Amanda Sposato

11. Kira Seward

Kira Seward

12.

13.

14.

15.

16.

17.

Captain John L. Chapin High School AP Environmental Science
 Petition Against the Construction of Border Patrol Facility at
 Castner Range,
 El Paso, Texas

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Name(printed)	Signature
1. Hildegard Johnson	Hildegard Johnson
2. ARTURO PACHECO	Arturo Pacheco
3. Samuel Biew	Samuel Biew
4. Celinda Crews	Celinda Crews
5. William Anderson	William Anderson
6. VICTOR BISSUETT	Victor Bissuett
7. Leslie Cordova	Leslie Cordova
8. David Bissuett	David Bissuett
9. Richard Acosta I	Richard Acosta I
10. Richard Acosta II	Richard Acosta II
11. Lisa Acosta	Lisa Acosta
12. Jacqueline Harper	Jacqueline Harper
13. Lovett, VEDAM	Lovett VEDAM
14. Lovett Andrea N	Lovett Andrea N
15. Andrea Ortiz	Andrea Ortiz
16. Alejandra Pacheco	Alejandra Pacheco
17. Ronald G. Olsen	Ronald G. Olsen

Captain John L. Chapin High School AP Environmental Science
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Castner Range,
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<u>Name(printed)</u>	<u>Signature</u>
1. Sonya Vargo	Sonya Vargo
2. Brenda Siley	Brenda Siley
3. Terry Taylor	Theresa Taylor
4. Sandra Diaz	Sandra Diaz
5. Maribel Moreno	Maribel Moreno
6. Maria M. Torres	Maria M. Torres
7. MARIA ADEL SIERRA	Maria A Sierra
8. CYNTHIA CORONADO	C. Coronado
9. Manuel A. Nava	Manuel A. Nava
10. Friscilla Ortiz	Friscilla Ortiz
11. Laura Barraza	Laura Barraza
12. Ruben Avila	Ruben Avila
13. AIDA Gonzalez	Aida Gonzalez
14. Ruth Armstrong	Ruth Armstrong
15. Carmas Casillo	Carmas Casillo
16. Maria J. Jaque	Maria J. Jaque
17. Christina Castillo	Christina Castillo

10-18-03
5033 Royal Dr
E. P. M.
79924

Please, Please, Please
Leave the mountains
alone, they need to be
annexed into the wilderness
Park so they are safe
from greedy developers.

The other side of the
mountain that developers
have turned into eye sores
must not be allowed into
the pappy fields.

Thank you

Helen L. Brady

This is in regard to land
use ^{assessment} at Castner Range.



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

10711 Burnet Road, Suite 200
Austin, Texas 78758
(512) 490-0057



October 16, 2003

Robin Divine
Science Applications International Corporation
4242 Woodcock Drive, Suite 150
San Antonio, Texas 78228-1253

Consultation # 2-15-02-I-0165

Dear Ms. Divine:

This letter is in response to your September 3, 2003, draft environmental assessment (EA) for the construction of a new U.S. Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarters (Station) in El Paso County, Texas. The preferred site for the Station is on the southeastern corner of the Castner Range, located at the intersection of U.S. Highway 54 and Hondo Pass Road on land owned by the Department of Defense - Fort Bliss. The two alternative sites are owned by the City of El Paso - Public Service Board and are located northeast of the proposed site on non-military land. The Station will encompass approximately 18 hectares (45 acres) with approximately 1.4 hectares (3.5 acres) of office space to accommodate up to 350 agents.

This project was previously reviewed in a January 8, 2002, letter from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). We expressed concern about potential habitat for several listed species existing on the preferred site, as well as the alternative sites. In particular, we were concerned about the presence of the Sneed pincushion cactus (*Coryphantha sneedii*). The proposed site is described in the EA as a desert foothills scrub-shrubland dominated by lechugilla (*Agave lechugilla*), creosotebush (*Larrea tridentata*), prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia aciculata*), and sotol (*Dasyliirion wheeleri*). This is in contrast to the dry limestone outcrops characteristic of this species' habitat. We believe this species will not be impacted by the project on the preferred site due to lack of suitable habitat. In addition, this species is found only in the Franklin Mountains. Therefore, we do not anticipate this species is present on either of the alternative sites.

There does not appear to be any of the riparian areas characteristic of habitat for the southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) on any of the three sites under consideration. In addition, we agree that it is unlikely the least tern (*Sterna antillarum*), Northern aplomado falcon (*Falco femoralis septentrionalis*), or Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*) may be found on any of the three sites.

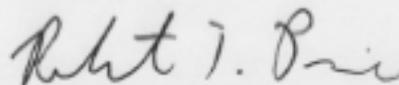
TAKE PRIDE[®]
IN AMERICA 

We would like to take this opportunity to express concern about siting the Station at Castner Range. This site does not appear to support federally listed threatened and endangered species; however, the ecological significance of this site should not be undermined. The diversity and uniqueness of the foothills plant community of the Franklin Mountains are not only an aesthetic boon to the local community, but also serve in watershed/filtration capacity that could be hindered by the construction of approximately 18 hectares (45 acres) of impervious cover. In addition, the site has not been disturbed in over 30 years which means that a diverse biocommunity (including rare species) has probably become established in the area. Also, it is anticipated that the Castner Range will one day be added to the Franklin Mountains State Park, which is alluded to in the City of El Paso's 2010 Land Use Plan¹. Fragmentation of the Castner Range should be avoided if other suitable sites exist.

We recommend the two alternative sites be given considerable evaluation when making the final decision for the Station siting. It is unclear as to their role in water infiltration and value to the local wildlife community. However, given the ecological fragility of the Castner Range, we believe that these sites, which appear to be located in more disturbed areas, are less likely to impact fish and wildlife resources.

We thank you for your concern for endangered and threatened species and other natural resources, and we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed project. If we can be of further assistance or if you have any questions about these comments, please contact Jana Milliken of our staff at 512-490-0057, extension 243. Please refer to the Service Consultation number listed above in any future correspondence regarding this project.

Sincerely,



Robert T. Pine
Supervisor

cc: Lois Balin, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (El Paso)
Danny Allen, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (Austin)

2620 Justus Street
El Paso, TX 79930
October 22, 2003

Robin Divine
Science Applications International Corp.
4242 Woodcock Ave., Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

Dear Robin:

With all the wide open spaces available for construction, please do not allow our beautiful poppy fields to be destroyed. This site is the only one in Texas in existence and is enjoyed by everyone in El Paso and those who are fortunate to drive through and see this gorgeous display of wild poppies.

I am of the opinion that we must do everything possible to preserve nature's beauty. So much has been lost forever in the pursuit of building 'something new' - let us take care of God's gifts and preserve them instead of destroying them.

I have been enjoying this beautiful display of poppies since I was a very young child. My parents took us to see it every year. I am now 81 years of age and would love to see this field of poppies preserved for the enjoyment of generations to come.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Marian B. Grady
Marian Breckenridge Grady

Robin Divine, SAIC

4242 Woodcock Ave Suite 150

San Antonio, TX 78228

Dear sir,

Objections to the Border Patrol's Use of Castner Range for a New Station

I want to express my disapproval of this proposed project's use of Castner Range, that will have negative impacts on the local area's Chihuahuan Desert fauna and flora.

If approved, this action will not only have direct environmental impacts, but will also set a damaging precedent encouraging additional development in one of El Paso's last remaining natural treasures. Placement of the Border Patrol facilities on Castner Range would be a stimulus for further development efforts in the area and would encourage others to pursue piecemeal development of Castner Range lands; this concern has become even more troubling, due to the most recent proposal that the land be acquired via a lease.

Castner Range extends from the Patriot Freeway almost to the mountain ridgeline and includes some of the most scenic and ecologically significant parts of the mountains. Hidden springs, complex geological features, unique plant associations, diverse landforms and noteworthy archaeological sites are among the important natural resources of the area. The proposed facilities would certainly have direct effects on the plant and animal resources on the 40 acres in question and would degrade scenic qualities of the area.

I once again state, that due to the aforementioned concerns, that the two other northeast El Paso sites that are not on Castner Range, be considered the primary and secondary sites for the proposed Border Patrol station.

I continue to favor Alternative 2 because it meets the Border Patrol's requirement for ready access to a major highway (U.S. 54), is linked directly to the international border, does not conflict with existing developed neighborhoods, can serve as a stimulus for future economic development in that portion of northeast El Paso, and lastly, it avoids the costs, environmental impacts and likely time delays associated with construction on Castner Range.

I appreciate the opportunity to once again provide my input as a citizen of El Paso, and request that the proposed Border Patrol Station be sited outside of Castner Range.

Sincerely,

Cathy Hernald

10-17-03

Dear Robin Divine

I would like to voice my opinion in regards to the Border Patrol facility being plan to be built on Castner Range. I am a resident in the northeast and a currently a Senior at Andress High School. I am against it because Castner Range is one of the few mountain sites not inhabited yet. A lot of the wildlife that remains on the mountain isn't found anywhere else. I think we should preserve what we have left.

I hope you take my letter into consideration and won't ruin the wildlife on the mountain. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely
Laura Chavez

Oct. 19, 2003

Robin Divine SAIC
4242 Woodcock Ave. Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

Dear Mr. Divine,

For about three months each spring, El Pasoans can boast of a fantastic natural display unequalled anywhere else in the world. This is the season when the Mexican Gold Poppies bust into bloom in Northeast El Paso, blanketing many acres with their golden beauty.

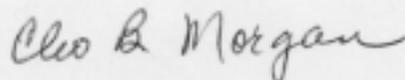
We are told the granite soil is uniquely right to encourage their growth. People from all over El Paso and many from other places come to enjoy this spectacular sight. The roadsides and area parking lots are often full.

We are told that a deal is pending to convert 45 acres of this region into a site for the Border Patrol. This would take a large amount of the area and greatly reduce the several plant species indigenous to the region including the Mexican Gold Poppies. If one request for use of this land is granted, we may be sure others will follow and again reduce or eliminate one of El Paso's most unusual natural resources.

Two other sites have been proposed for the Border Patrol, and we are told they are also under consideration. However, we are told they will cost more. When finances crowd out aesthetic values life becomes dull indeed. I have lived in Northeast El Paso for the past 20 years and have anticipated the arrival of the Mexican Gold Poppies each spring. It has been amazing to see them spreading their display of color across the mountainside and the interest they generate for our community.

Please don't allow the Border Patrol, or anyone else to have the land where the poppies grow. Adding the poppy acres to the Franklin Mountain State Park is a much more beneficial plan to ensure this natural wonder will be available for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Cleo B. Morgan
Apt. 106
1831 Murchison Dr.
El Paso, TX 79902

Robin Divine, SAIC

4242 Woodcock Ave Suite 150

San Antonio, TX 78228

Dear sir;

Objections to the Border Patrol's Use of Castner Range for a New Station

I want to express my disapproval of this proposed project's use of Castner Range, that will have negative impacts on the local area's Chihuahuan Desert fauna and flora.

If approved, this action will not only have direct environmental impacts, but will also set a damaging precedent encouraging additional development in one of El Paso's last remaining natural treasures. Placement of the Border Patrol facilities on Castner Range would be a stimulus for further development efforts in the area and would encourage others to pursue piecemeal development of Castner Range lands; this concern has become even more troubling, due to the most recent proposal that the land be acquired via a lease.

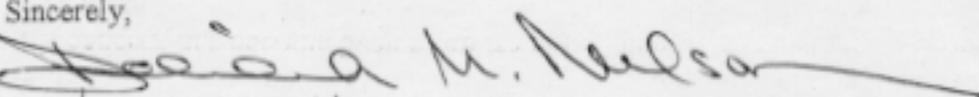
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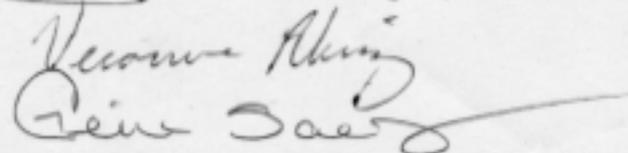
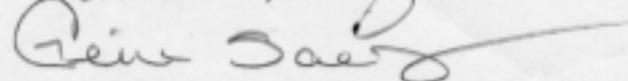
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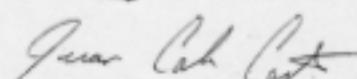
I continue to favor Alternative 2 because it meets the Border Patrol's requirement for ready access to a major highway (U.S. 54), is linked directly to the international border, does not conflict with existing developed neighborhoods, can serve as a stimulus for future economic development in that portion of northeast El Paso, and lastly, it avoids the costs, environmental impacts and likely time delays associated with construction on Castner Range.

I appreciate the opportunity to once again provide my input as a citizen of El Paso, and request that the proposed Border Patrol Station be sited outside of Castner Range.

Sincerely,

 Cecilia M. Nelson

 Veronica Alving
 Gene Saeb

 Juan Cab Cast

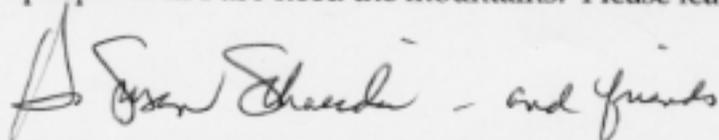
October 18, 2003

H. Susan Schneider
607 Blanchard
El Paso, TX 79902

Robin Divine, SAIC
4242 Woodcock Avenue, Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

I am writing to request that you reconsider your decision to place a new Border Patrol facility on the Castner Range site near the Franklin Mountains. While I believe that the sources quoted in the *El Paso Times* are probably right about the negative impact of this development on particular species of native flora, that is not my primary reason for writing this letter. I am writing as a person who lives in an increasingly congested and stressful urban environment. We who live here are becoming more and more aware of our need for the natural beauty and majesty of our mountains. If this facility is built along the freeway, it will be one more man-made structure which interrupts the glory of the natural carpet of wildflowers in the spring. It will be one more intrusion into the lives of not just the deer, fox, coyotes, birds and other fauna who live in the Franklin Mountains, but one more concrete and asphalt intrusion into the daily lives of those who drive along the freeway and currently receive strength and joy from the remaining undisturbed vistas along the mountain foothills.

I implore you to choose the alternative site along Highway 54 and McCombs. The people of El Paso need the mountains. Please leave them alone.

 - and friends

H. Susan Schneider

Alberto Vaccarella 238 PASO NOBLE DR. EL PASO TX 79912
Virginia Sordani 10612 Getrock El Paso TX 79935
Susan Smith 1222 Mesita Dr, El Paso TX 79902
Blanca Ayala 913 Fireside Lane, El Paso, Tx. 79912
Dereides Guzman 4001 Las Vegas El Paso TX 79902
Jennifer Donora 6204 Via Aventura El Paso, TX 79912
Cody Glover 15337 Mineral El Paso, TX 79927

October 23, 2003

Robin Divine
Project Manager
Science Applications International Corporation
4242 Woodcock Drive, Suite 150
San Antonio, Texas 78228-1253

RE: Draft Environmental Assessment-Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarters in El Paso, Texas

Dear Ms. Divine:

Please accept this correspondence as my response to the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarters in El Paso, Texas.

As a long time resident of El Paso County I am opposed to the selection of the proposed Site 1, located at the southeastern corner of the Castner Range at the northwestern corner of the intersection of U.S. Highway 54 and Hondo Pass Road for the following reasons.

(1). In 1998, Parsons Engineering Science, at the request of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, prepared an Ordnance and Explosive (OE) Characterization and Cost Analysis Report for Castner Range. That report evaluated alternatives for cleanup of the range and future use of these lands. Regarding future use it concluded, and I agree, with the following:

It is recommended that the entire site be transferred to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for an annex to the Franklin Mountains State Park. The Park system is very interested in annexing all of the Castner Range because the eastern portion is unique high prairie grassland which is uncommon due to commercial/residential development in El Paso. The existence of Castner Range has preserved an impressive natural corridor from the crest of the Franklin Mountains to its foothills and provides a unique opportunity to experience the natural ecosystem of the area in close proximity to the population center of El Paso. In addition, the City of El Paso's 2010 Land Use Plan includes Castner Range as a part of the Franklin Mountains State Park because they realize that the tract is very desirable in the Park, and feel that there is more than adequate land within the immediate proximity of El Paso for growth into the next century.

(2). The discussion of the proposed Site 1 impacts is inadequate. The potential of Site 1 for increasing the likelihood for further development of Castner Range is especially problematic.

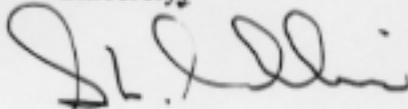
I believe that Alternative 2 (NW corner of U.S. Highway 54 and McCombs Street) is the best site for the proposed station and sector headquarters. However, I believe that other sites should still be considered. For example, greater economies of scale could be achieved by utilizing existing federal lands and infrastructure such as found at Biggs Army Air Field. I believe that the previous rationale given for rejecting this possible site is simply not compelling.

Another possible option that should be considered is the continued use of the Hawkins Boulevard location for the Sector Headquarters and the use of another location for the Border Patrol Station. This option would reduce the amount of acreage required by a combined site. A site requiring less acreage could then include the potential use of an existing Brownfields site that could be cleaned up and then re-used. A list of contaminated sites within El Paso County may be obtained from the Rio Grande Council of Governments.

Finally, given the environmental significance of Castner Range, an Environmental Impact Statement is needed to evaluate proposed Site 1 properly.

I am submitting this correspondence as a private citizen and thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,



Gary L. Williams
10925 Cardigan Drive
El Paso, Texas 79936

OCTOBER 23, 2003

HUGH S JAMESON
7817 BIG BEND DR
EL PASO TX 79904

MS JULIE HALL
CHIEF, ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES SECTION
U S ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
ALBUQUERQUE DISTRICT
4101 JEFFERSON PLAZA
ALBUQUERQUE NM 87109 3455

DEAR MS HALL:

MANY OF US IN EL PASO ARE CONCERNED AND UPSET ABOUT THE PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE ANY PART OR ALL OF THE U S BORDER PATROL OPERATIONS CURRENTLY IN PLACE AT THE INTERSECTION OF MONTANA AND HAWKINS IN EL PASO TEXAS. WE ARE MOST AFRAID THAT THE PREFERED LOCATION MIGHT BE AT HONDO PASS AND U S HIGHWAY 54 IN EL PASO.

THERE ARE NUMBER OF REASONS FOR OPPOSING A RELOCATION OF SUCH OPERATIONS TO THE HONDO PASS / U S 54 SITE:

- (1) THE REMEDIATION COSTS TO THE TAXPAYER ASSOCIATED WITH CLEANING UP THE SITE TO REMOVE POTENTIAL HAZARDOUS MATERIALS I.E., MILITARY ORDNANCE THAT FAILED TO EXPLODE OVER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL YEARS WHEN THE SITE WAS USED IN TRAINING AND/OR TESTING OF PERSONNEL.
- (2) OTHER SITE OPTIONS WOULD NOT REQUIRE THE SQUANDERING OF OUR TAX REVENUES ON SUCH AN EFFORT.
- (3) IF THE HONDO PASS U S 54 SITE IS THE PREFERED LOCATION WE WILL BE SIMPLY TRANSFERING VALUABLE PROPERTY, ONCE THE REMEDIATION EFFORT IS COMPLETED, FROM ONE ENTITY THAT DOES NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE LOCAL TAX BASE TO ANOTHER THAT WILL ALSO NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE TAX BASE. THIS IS LOSE / LOSE SITUATION.
- (4) IN ADDITION TO THE TWO OTHER SITES, ALSO LOCATED IN A NEARBY LOCATION IN NORTHEAST EL PASO, THERE IS ABUNDANT FEDERAL PROPERTY LOCATED NEARBY IN SOUTHERN OTERO COUNTY NEW MEXICO. INDEED, WITHIN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, A PRISON OPERATION HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED ON U S 54 IN OTERO COUNTY. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, IF THE U S ARMY HAS SURPLUS LAND AVAILABLE FOR A PRISON OPERATION, IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT SOME LAND MIGHT BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR THE BORDER PATROL OPERATION AS WELL.

OCTOBER 23, 2003

(5) THE PRESENT LOCATION OF U S BORDER PATROL OPERATIONS AT THE INTERSECTION OF HAWKINS AND MONTANA IN EL PASO, INCLUDES OPERATIONS THAT INVOLVE DETENTION FACILITIES WITH ABUNDANT GROUND LIGHT ALL NIGHT LONG. WE CERTAINLY DO NOT WANT THSOSE OPERATIONS TRANSFERED AS WELL. IT MAY WELL HAPPEN BECAUSE THE PRESENT SITE AT HAWKINS AND MONTANA IS ON OR ADJACENT TO AIRPORT AUTHORITY. THE MANY COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES ON AIRPORT AUTHORITY LAND MAKES ~~UNBIRAKKENTINKEZERNKXNXXEXXINEXXORRHXKXXATXRXKXSPFXRIRIHXNXXNIXNXY~~ THE PRESENT LOCATION OF THE BORDER PATROL OPERATIONS HIGHLY DESIRABLE IN TERMS OF ITS DEVELOPMENT AS COMMERCIAL PROPERTY CERTAINLY, THE AIRPORT AUTHORITY IS LOOKING FORWARD TO REMOVING A NON TAX PAYING ENTITY OFF ITS VALUABLE PROPERTY.

(6) IF ALL OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS ARE NOT ENOUGH, THERE ARE DEVELOPERS WHO WISH TO DESTROY A WILDERNESS AREA THAT WE DO NOT WISH TO BE DEVELOPED AT ALL. THE BOUNDARIES INCLUDE FT BLISS PROPERTY TO THE WEST, IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS, WOODROW BEAN TRANSMOUNTAIN ROAD TO THE NORTH, U S 54 TO THE EAST, AND HONDO PASS TO THE SOUTH. DURING THE WINTER AND SPRING OF THE YEAR WE ARE OFTEN TREATED TO A MAGNIFICENT DISPLAY OF MEXICAN POPPIES IN FULL BLOOM. ACRES AND ACRES OF THEM. NO ONE HAS PROFERED A COGENT ARGUMENT FOR DESTROYING THE BEAUTY OF THIS AREA WITHIN OUR CITY LIMITS. SUCH PEOPLE KNOW THE PRICE OF EVERYTHING AND THE VALUE OF NOTHING. WE DO NOT WISH FOR THE US ARMY TO DECLARE ANY PART OF THIS ACREAGE TO BE SURPLUS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. FOR TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN MORE COMMERCIAL BLIGHT IN AN AREA WHERE WE HAVE IT IN ABUNDANCE AT THE PRESENT TIME.

THANK YOU FOR ASKING.


 HUGH S JAMESON
 FAX 915 757 0130
 E-MAIL HUGHJ@DZN.COM

October 15, 2003

Robin Devine
SAIC
4242 Woodcock Suite 150
San Antonio TX. 78228

Dear Robin Devine:

We are extremely disappointed in the quality of the Environmental Assessment done on the proposed location of the Border Patrol headquarters in El Paso's beautiful Castner Range. Not one mention was made of the impact of this piece meal dismemberment that the proposed facility location represents on the extremely biologically diverse and botanically unique community found on the granitic substrate of the Fusselman Canyon alluvial fan. If the unique character of this area, as acclaimed by so many responders, is discounted why is there no documentation of the existence of other similar alluvial fan habitats along the Franklin Mountains? Was no such analysis done or was it determined what the scientific community in this area already knows; that there are no similar undeveloped alluvial fans with igneous substrate remaining in El Paso County. In fact, the Castner tract it is the only one in Texas and joins only 3 similar sites in all of New Mexico.

This is but one deficiency that is noted with the Assessment. There is no serious discussion of the alternative sites, no recognition of the irreplaceable scenic values of the area and of the sentiments of the community to protect those values, no acknowledgement of the inevitable future growth of the Border Patrol facilities, no examination of impact of the microwave and other telecommunication towers involved, no discussion of previous land use planning that calls for the inclusion of the area in the adjacent State Park, and certainly no mention of the potential harm this camel head in the tent may bring to a beloved environmental feature of this community. It is clear that such assessments as this one require absolutely no understanding of the value, of the uplift in spirit, of the great pride that the beautiful periodic display of Mexican gold poppies and other winter annual wildflowers brings to this poor, aesthetically maligned, desert community.

With all the land controlled by the US Government in El Paso County, such as elsewhere off Loop 375 on Fort Bliss or Biggs Field, why is Castner the only suitable parcel? Is it because of pre-selection that makes this document a scientific sham? Because of deficiencies such as those mentioned above, unfortunately, the document has all the appearance of a white wash justification for a presumed done deal. It should be withdrawn and revised to respond to the issues raised by those affected by this proposal. You may well continue to find no significant impact but do so in a manner that attempts to refute the issues raised rather than ignore them

Thank you for consideration of our comments.

Respectfully;

Kym + Wynn Anderson
Kym and Wynn Anderson
3015 Piedmont
El Paso, TX 79902

23 October 2003

Robin Devine
Project Manager
SAIC
4242 Woodcock, Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

Dear Ms. Devine:

Below are my comments regarding the draft Environmental Assessment for the U.S. Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarters for El Paso, Texas.

I would like to state at the outset that I am opposed to the use of the Castner Range site. I find in the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) much information that SAIC presents that makes this site unsuitable. I will go through the document discussing the shortcomings.

- 3.2.1.1: The document mentions that this site is part of one of the few alluvial fans on the Franklin Mountains. Undeveloped alluvial fans are poorly preserved around the base of the Franklins having been converted to housing tracts. Castner Range remains one of the few sites that has the potential to be set aside in the state park and preserve this productive habitat for future generations to study and enjoy. In section 3.4.1.1 the draft EA states that Hueco Bolson recharge occurs through the coarse gravels of the alluvial fans. If this is true then the site where the border patrol station will be built will further reduce the natural recharge. With El Paso's water supply in the Hueco Bolson being severely depleted we should not be paving over recharge areas.
- 3.2.3 and 3.2.3.1 (Table 3-1) Of the three sites studied, the Castner site had by far the highest avian use. Texas species of concern are likely to utilize the site in its natural state. Recent observations of migrating raptors along the Franklin Mountains have shown that zone-tailed hawks have been seen at least five times since 2001 (Kiseda, unpublished data). Prior to these records there were no reports of zone-tailed hawks from the northwest Trans Pecos area (Peterson & Zimmer, 1998). Thus the Castner Range site is within the use area of this particular species listed as threatened in Texas.

Even though the site has sustained some modification over the years, if the Castner site is chosen for the Border Patrol station it will eliminate any chance of the land recovering and providing useful habitat for species of special concern.

- 4-1-2-1: The EA states that the proposed Border Patrol station would not have any significant impact on traffic patterns. While this may be true, the report does not address what impact the future growth in El Paso will have on the accessibility issue for this site. One of the arguments for the Castner site is that it provides rapid access to Highway 54. Since traffic congestion continues to grow as El Paso grows, it is reasonable to expect that this site will experience become more congested than it is now. No mention is made of what is expected of traffic conditions in the future and how these will impact the Border Patrol's access to Highway 54. Future traffic patterns may be such that this area can be expected to negatively impact Border Patrol agent's access to Highway 54 making this site less desirable.

4.10.2.1: The EA states that the view from Highway 54 will not be affected. This is not true. The view will be permanently altered because there will now be buildings in the lower reaches of what are now unobstructed views. Additionally, the report does not mention that the view from the Gateway and along Hondo Pass will be significantly changed from that vantage point.

4.12: The report states that there will be a minor loss of vegetation. What is not stated is that 89% of the site will permanently pave over. This is land that, if undeveloped, can recover from previous habitat destruction that diminished the original biodiversity. Once build on, it will never be able to recover.

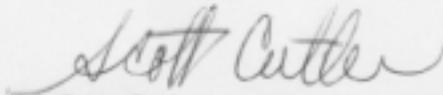
Castner Range should be left intact until a decision has been made as to its final disposition as a whole. It has great potential to be a unique addition to the Franklin Mountains State Park. Building the Border Patrol Station on this site will further diminish its integrity.

It strikes me that the best place for the Border Patrol Station is as close as possible to where most of it's work is performed which is near the border. There are many empty warehouses and abandoned structures along the border that could be razed and a multi-story building erected that could provide the same facilities as are proposed for the Castner site but do it on fewer acres and perhaps even at a lower cost. Razing a building may be less expensive than clearing unexploded ordinances (UXO's) from Castner Range.

Additionally, it has been in the news lately that Fort Bliss is leasing land for a desalinization plant. The Border Patrol should serious investigate the option of also leasing land for their station. This would eliminate the problem of clearing the land of UXO's and maintain the current integrity of Castner Range.

This report if full of reasons not to select the Castner Range site for the Border Patrol Station. There are alternatives to this site that should be investigated and considered more seriously.

Sincerely yours,



Scott Cutler
112 Colina Alta
El Paso, TX 79912
(915) 581-6071

References

- Kiseda, J. 2003. unpublished observations of migrating raptors from the Wyler Aerial tramway in El Paso, Texas
- Peterson, J. and Zimmer, B.R. 1998. Birds of the Trans-Pecos. University of Texas Press, Austin.

4116 Clifton Ave.
El Paso, TX 79903
October 23, 2003

Robin Divine
Science Applications International Corporation
4242 Woodcock Ave., Suite 150
San Antonio, Texas 78228

Dear Robin,

Thank you for providing a place for us to express our concerns about the possibility of using the Castner Range area for the Border Patrol. With El Paso's rather uncontrolled growth and now a pro-development administration in office, beautiful untouched areas preserving the Southwest's natural desert life are few and far between. Some years ago I was able to go with other teachers taking our classes on a field trip to the Wilderness Museum in that part of northeast El Paso. My mother used to climb mountains nearby; so, the thought of violating one of the remaining spots of such loveliness, for the Border Patrol is pretty appalling. Every effort to prevent that from happening will be appreciated!

Gratefully,

Sister Kathleen Corbett, S.C.

Robin Devine
SAIC
4242 Woodcock #150
San Antonio, TX 78228

October 20, 2003

Dear Sir or Madame:

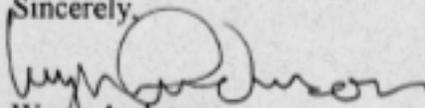
Please note the following exceptions, comments and requests concerning the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Proposed location of a Border Patrol Headquarters on the Fort Bliss/ Department of the Army property known commonly as the Castner Range:

1. The document fails to explain why public comments regarding land use conflicts did not warrant further agency response in accordance with 40 CFR 1503.4(a)(5). We request such an explanation.
2. The document ignores entirely the biological uniqueness and high diversity noted by commentators. Request reevaluation of impacts and their significance based upon acknowledgement of these biotic factors in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3) unique characteristics, and 40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4) degree to which effects are likely to be highly controversial. Include, for determination of significance, an analysis and comparison of the area of the Castner Range Franklin Mountain alluvial fan habitat/ecosystem involving igneous soils and biota as noted in public comments, with the remaining undeveloped fans containing the same attributes outside of Castner Range.
3. The document does not discuss potential expansion needs, which have been the subject of on-going comments made by the Border Patrol at meetings and is stated in this document in appendix E. This need is stated sufficiently often to warrant consideration as a reasonably foreseeable action in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.8(b). We request this analysis be performed.
4. No impact analysis is made of the microwave tower mentioned in appendix E, Memo from Albert Woo. WE request an analysis for visual and other impacts.
5. We believe that the analysis of alternatives was flawed and that other alternatives must be evaluated, specifically locations on and adjacent to Biggs Field, Fort Bliss. We request that this be done in accordance with 40 CFR 1502.14(a) and (b).
6. The analysis of land use impacts is found wanting and is entirely lacking in objective impact analysis. The document does not even mention the potential conflict with the Franklin Mountain Wilderness Park land use plan that includes Castner as part of the park, despite NUMEROUS references to this fact in the public comments. We note that the EA was not even sent to the State Park for review and comment! We request you analyze these impacts, in particular in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.8(b) "growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use". Also include impacts and land use conflicts that may result from security requirements, e.g. identifying and intercepting personnel on higher ground outside of Border Patrol property, as referenced in appendix E, Security Site Surveys, Site #1, lines 8 and 9, and expansion.

7. It is our finding that there will likely be a significant impact to land use and an EIS is warranted. By the EA's own definition of significance, an impact to land use would be considered significant if the action resulted in a major change in land use or conflicted with an existing use. We believe that the growth inducing effects and effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use that will result from this development are apparent, the fact is acknowledged in the EA in Section 4.1.2.1 lines 4, 5, and 6, and will result in a major change in land use from natural and potential state park land use to commercial/industrial, thereby resulting in a significant impact. To continue, "...land use was assessed for compatibility with... projected land uses..." Despite this statement, there was no attempt to assess this action for compatibility with the projected land use involving incorporating the land into the state park, disregarding the overwhelming body of public comment noting this future desired use. The development of this area of Castner is entirely incompatible with incorporation of the area into the state park. Analysis of the effects of this action in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.27(a) entire and 40 CFR 1508.27 (b)(3),(4), and (6) clearly was not performed or the EA would have reached a determination that this action has significant environmental impact. We request that an EIS be prepared for this proposed action involving use of Castner Range.
8. The most critical and pertinent issue is that Fort Bliss and the Department of Army is clearly the final decision maker as to whether to lease or not lease land now commonly known as Castner Range. This fact has been confirmed by the Border Patrol (appendix F line 15). This action represents a defacto decision in principle (as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)) by Fort Bliss and the Department of Army to continue leasing or otherwise disposing of Castner Range/"former Castner Range" real estate piecemeal without any umbrella NEPA analysis. In fact, neither the Army nor Fort Bliss has set, or defined, any boundaries in space and time as regards what will and will not be leased or otherwise disposed of. The statement on page 4-2, notes that the "proposed BPS... would be a compatible land use to the existing TXDOT compound already present" and implies clearly that this EA views that development of Castner is not an incompatible land use as long as it is adjacent to already developed areas, suggesting potentially limitless expansion. Previous real estate actions affecting Castner Range/"former Castner Range" lands include the Border Patrol museum, the Texas Department of Transportation yard, and the Veterans home. These real estate actions fall under the definition of "effects" as defined in 40 CFR 1508.8(b): "growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in land use, ... and related effects on... natural systems, including ecosystems". The Fort Bliss, Texas and New Mexico, Mission and Master plan, Section 4.11.3.6, states that the Castner Recreation Area (former Castner Range) is now in the process of being leased for nonmilitary use, however no NEPA analysis is provided. There is a significant cumulative impact on land use and the natural environment that has resulted from reducing Castner development into separate component parts. The fact that these actions involved governmental agencies is irrelevant to NEPA compliance. Fort Bliss and the Department of Army are piece-mealing the real estate actions involving Castner Range/"former Castner Range" lands. We request that

consideration of use of Castner land by the Border Patrol be suspended until the time that a comprehensive NEPA analysis is performed for the entire Area in accordance with 40 CFR 1500-1508.

Sincerely,



Wynn Anderson

Vice President, Native Plant Society of New Mexico
Past President, El Paso Native Plant Society
3015 Piedmont
El Paso, Texas 79902

PETITION FOR THE PROTECTION OF CASTNER RANGE

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, BELIEVE THAT THE CASTNER RANGE LAND WEST OF THE PATRIOT FREEWAY SHOULD REMAIN WILD AND BE ADDED TO FRANKLIN MOUNTAIN STATE PARK.

NAME	ADDRESS
Isela G. Jaloma	7769 Rosedale #1 (79915)
Angela Chavez	7136 S. DOW University Ave.
Stephanie Kuehne	4301 Flory 79904
Angela Carvalho	4301 Thomson 79904
Donald & Locker	9114 Raleigh 79904
Betty Jucker	9114 Raleigh 79904
Andrés	
Jacqueline Mond	6309 Nehemiah
Priscilla Fog	3208 Mobile 79930
Wendy Zetigna	601 Sorell
Skaran Becker	8722 Marble Dr 79904
Jannine Maynard	9010 Magnetic #108 79904
Ralph Pittman	1420 RV Drive 79928
Nola Tucker	10209 Niagara Falls 79924
Raul Astor	7600 ALPINE DR 79915
Sal Ostrada	6246 E-YANDELL 79905
Valerie Proena	4233 Canterbury 79902
Mimi Trunk	1100 Kelly Way 79902
Raul Espinoza	14131 CARRYBACK CT 79938
Carla	
Sue Walls	1108-C Vista Lago 79936
Chuck Kooshian	66 KINGERY 79902
Richard Seneca	1100 Kelly Way 79902
	733A ESPANA DRIVE 79912

Please return completed petition to:

Stanley R. Stack
3421 Montridge Ct.
El Paso, TX 79904-4531

October 21, 2003

Ms. Robin Divine, Project Manager
Science Applications International Corporation
4242 Woodcock, Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

Dear Ms. Divine:

I am writing to you at the last minute, still hoping that my letter, along with many others, will sway the decision of your assessment of Castner Range in favor of the preservation of the beauty of the desert landscape, one of El Paso's major assets.

Almost forty years ago, in February of 1964, I first came to El Paso as a young visitor from Germany and was deeply impressed by the sun, the blue sky and the imposing views of the barren mountains and the wide-open plains with their endless horizons. The friends I visited lived just north of Fort Bliss, pretty much at the edge of the desert. To me, El Paso was just desert then, exotic and beautiful.

Ten years later I came back to live in El Paso, quite a bit more "developed" by then. We raised five children in the Northeast and always felt privileged to have the desert and all its natural wonders as our extended backyard. Hiking was a frequent pastime and our excursions to admire the poppies in the spring are documented in the family album. When I went back to school in my thirties to become a teacher I wrote a little poem for a creative writing class that sang the praises of "My Desert" in 117 words.

It's now 2003 and El Paso has become quite a town with its industrial development, its economic importance as a gateway to Mexico and the political involvement of its citizens in Texas politics. On all sides the city is spreading into the desert. Construction of any kind is usually seen as positive, certainly by many interest groups involved in specific projects. To the average citizen it is obvious that progress in one area cannot always coordinate with the interests of other areas. Natural beauty and the preservation of desert wildlife and flora are of secondary concern for many.

If I were younger and actively involved in politics, big business or public service, I might not think about the importance poppies and wildlife in my hectic life on the job, but as grandmother and teacher in retirement, an "old European" lucky enough to have experienced the beauty of the Southwest desert, I beg you to do your very best to keep "progress" back a little longer...

Thanks!

Sincerely,

Andrea Aguirre

October 23, 2003

Robin Devine, Project Manager
Science Applications International Corporation
4242 Woodcock Drive, Suite 150
San Antonio, Texas 78228-1253

Dear Robin Devine,

The Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition (FMWC) consists of 15 member groups united in their desire to protect the scenic and wilderness character of the Franklin Mountains. The Border Patrol Station and Sector HQ (BPSHQ) proposed for Castner Range (CR) are of concern to the Coalition. In response to the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA), we would like to submit these comments:

Thanks to Army stewardship, El Paso has enjoyed a magnificent view of the Franklin Mountains across the land known as Castner Range. This view and its accompanying ecological uniqueness have been recognized worldwide, but have also become a treasured part of the heritage of all El Pasoans. Many El Pasoans believe that Castner Range is already a part of the Franklin Mountains State Park (FMSP), and as such assume that the land is protected from future development.

The FMSP and Texas Parks and Wildlife have included in the FMSP Plan the eventual addition of Castner Range into the Park. The City of El Paso 2010 Land Use Plan includes CR as part of FMSP. An independent study prepared for the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) recommends the CR land be included in the FMSP.

The use of CR for a BPSHQ would disregard these widely held views, and would set a precedent that piecemeal use of this resource is permissible. 40 CFR 1508.8 refers to the fact that indirect effects include induced changes in the pattern of land use, and these changes would be a significant factor in determining a need for an EIS. The Immigration and Naturalization Service National Environmental Protection Act (INS NEPA) Guidebook, part 3.5.1.2, refers to the need to consider significant any act that is incompatible with official land use plans for the specific site, and goes on to question whether the action would alter or affect an area that is being considered for protection by state, regional or local government.

In 40 CFR 1508.27, proximity to parkland intensifies the significance of noise intrusion into the Park.

The INS NEPA Guidebook states there are several reasons to perform an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Many are relevant to the Border Patrol land request. Selection of site #1 for construction has stirred a local controversy on environmental grounds, and as noted in part 3.5.1.6, this would be grounds for an EIS. The cumulative impact of ongoing CR cleanup and consequent potential availability of that cleaned land for disposal, combined with the precedent setting action of a BPS on CR indicate this need for an EIS (part 3.5.1.7). The INS NEPA Guidebook says that major actions that normally require an EIS include the construction or lease of a new INS facility (part 7.4). It states further that if facilitated meetings become necessary, this may

become a strong indicator that the action is controversial enough on environmental grounds to merit preparation of an EIS (part 6.6.2).

The Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) "40 Questions" refers to the time for NEPA processes and states that a reasonable time to perform an EA should be no more than 3 months, or substantially less. This Castner Range EA must be difficult, and therefore demand an EIS, for this process has so far taken more than 2 years.

Section 102(2)(C) of 42 USC indicates the need for an EIS in every report concerning a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

Recently, the U. S. Army published a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS on a proposal to lease or provide an easement for land on Ft. Bliss to the City of El Paso for construction and operation of a desalination plant. The proposed BP Station would require this same leasing or easement process, and so would seem to require an EIS as well.

The maps provided by (SAIC) show the BP station extending north along Gateway to approximately even with R.L. Schumaker on the east side of the Gateway. The approximate distance from Hondo Pass to Schumaker is 6/10 of a mile. The distance from Hondo Pass to Transmountain Rd. is approx. 2 1/10 miles. That means the EA finds insignificant that the BP Station will affect more than 25% of that view of the mountain. How insignificant is 25%? It seems obvious that the aesthetics of the area would be affected significantly.

The Draft EA dismisses aesthetics in part by stating that the dam on CR acts as a visual blockade of the view of the proposed BP site from further north on CR. This is incorrect. From Transmountain Rd. where the picnic and viewing sites exist on this recognized scenic roadway, it is quite easy to see the proposed BP location. The same is true of the view from the 2 museums on Transmountain Rd. It is only slightly more than 2 miles from this viewing spot to that location at Hondo Pass. The view of the Franklin Mountains from the neighborhood surrounding the proposed site, the view from the highway access road, and the view from the highway itself would be even more dramatically degraded were the BPS to be built at Site #1. Losing 25% of a view is significant.

It is not clear to the Coalition that consideration of all possible sites has been given. We feel that land on Biggs Army Airfield has not been fully evaluated, and that sites on Biggs Field or other military land other than CR might also exist.

Please explain why public comments regarding land use conflicts did not warrant further agency response in accordance with 40 CFR 1503.4(a)(5).

The document ignores entirely the biological uniqueness and high diversity noted by public comment contained within the Draft EA. We request reevaluation of impacts and their significance based upon acknowledgement of these biotic factors in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3) unique characteristics, and 40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4) degree to which effects are likely to be highly controversial. Include, for determination of significance, an analysis and comparison of the area of the Castner Range Franklin Mountain alluvial fan habitat/ecosystem involving igneous soils and biota as noted in public comments, with the remaining undeveloped fans containing the same attributes outside of Castner Range.

The document does not discuss potential expansion needs, which have been the subject of on-going comments made by the Border Patrol at meetings and is stated in this

document in appendix E. This need is stated sufficiently often to warrant consideration as a reasonably foreseeable action in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.8(b). We request this analysis be performed.

No impact analysis is made of the microwave tower mentioned in appendix E, Memo from Albert Woo. Analyze this for visual and other impacts.

We believe that the analysis of alternatives was flawed and that other alternatives must be evaluated, specifically locations on and adjacent to Biggs Field, Fort Bliss. We request that this be done in accordance with 40 CFR 1502.14(a) and (b).

The analysis of land use impacts is abysmal and entirely lacking in objective impact analysis. The document does not even mention the potential conflict with the Franklin Mountain Wilderness Park land use plan that includes Castner Range as part of the park, despite NUMEROUS references to this fact in the public comments. We note that the EA was not even sent to the State Park for review and comment! We request you analyze these impacts, in particular in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.8(b) "growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use". Also include impacts and land use conflicts that may result from security requirements, e.g. identifying and intercepting personnel on higher ground outside of Border Patrol property, as referenced in appendix E, Security Site Surveys, Site #1, lines 8 and 9, and expansion.

It is our finding that there will likely be a significant impact to land use and an EIS is warranted. By the EA's own definition of significance, an impact to land use would be considered significant if the action resulted in a major change in land use or conflicted with an existing use. We believe that the growth inducing effects and effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use that will result from this development are apparent, the fact is acknowledged in the EA in Section 4.1.2.1 lines 4, 5, and 6, and will result in a major change in land use from natural and potential state park land use to commercial/industrial, thereby resulting in a significant impact. To continue, "land use was assessed for compatibility with projected land uses". Despite this statement, there was no attempt to assess this action for compatibility with the projected land use involving incorporating the land into the state park, disregarding the overwhelming body of public comment noting this future desired use. The development of this area of Castner Range is entirely incompatible with incorporation of the area into the State Park. Analysis of the effects of this action in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.27(a) entire and 40 CFR 1508.27 (b)(3), (4), and (6) clearly was not performed or the EA would have reached a determination that this action has significant environmental impact. We request that an EIS be prepared for this proposed action involving use of Castner Range.

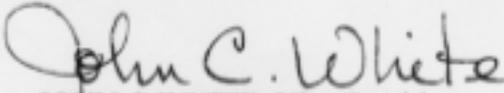
The most critical and pertinent issue is that Fort Bliss and the Department of Army is clearly the final decision maker as to whether to lease or not lease land now commonly known as Castner Range. This fact has been confirmed by the Border Patrol (appendix F line 15). This action represents a defacto decision in principle (as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)) by Fort Bliss and the Department of Army to continue leasing or otherwise disposing of Castner Range/"former Castner Range" real estate piecemeal without any umbrella NEPA analysis. In fact, neither the Army nor Fort Bliss has set, nor defined, any boundaries in space and time as regards what will and will not be leased or otherwise disposed of. The statement on page 4-2, notes that the "proposed BPS would be a compatible land use to the existing Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT)

compound already present" and implies clearly that this EA views that development of Castner is not an incompatible land use as long as it is adjacent to already developed areas, suggesting potentially limitless expansion. Previous real estate actions affecting Castner Range/"former Castner Range" lands include the Border Patrol museum, the Texas Department of Transportation yard, and the Veterans home. These real estate actions fall under the definition of "effects" as defined in 40 CFR 1508.8(b): "growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in land use, and related effects on natural systems, including ecosystems". The Fort Bliss, Texas and New Mexico, Mission and Master plan, Section 4.11.3.6, states that the Castner Recreation Area (former Castner Range) is now in the process of being leased for nonmilitary use, however no NEPA analysis is provided. There is a significant cumulative impact on land use and the natural environment that has resulted from breaking Castner development into separate component parts. The fact that these actions involved governmental agencies is irrelevant to NEPA compliance. Fort Bliss and the Department of Army are piecemealing the real estate actions involving Castner Range/"former Castner Range" lands.

We request that consideration of the use of Castner land by the Border Patrol be suspended until that time when a comprehensive NEPA analysis is performed for the entire area in accordance with 40 CFR 1500-1508. It is clear that to avoid violating the letter of the law and the spirit of NEPA, the BP must go ahead with an EIS if site #1 remains the preferred alternative. We do not believe an EIS would be needed if one of those alternatives off Castner Range were the preferred site.

Please inform us as to all decisions as they are rendered and provide us with copies of all documents and reports that are prepared in reference to this matter.

Sincerely,


JOHN C WHITE, Vice-President
Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition
PO Box 1316
Santa Teresa, New Mexico 88008-1316
jcwjpw@peoplepc.com

CF: Congressman Silvestre Reyes

Betsy Battenhoff
3215 Zion Dr.
El Paso, Texas 79904

10/13/03

Robin Devine, SAIC
4242 Woodcock Ave
San Antonio, TX

Dear Robin Devine,

I protest the placement of a
Border Patrol facility on Castner
Range in El Paso, TX. Our area
is already defaced and the mountain
carved out with jobs concrete
hauling rock away. Please place
the Border Patrol on the second
side of Highway 54 and McCombs.

Thank-you,
Mrs (Elizabeth) "Betsy" Battenhoff
toll 915-751-2232

Christian Morel
A.P. Environmental Science Student
Chapin High School
7000 Dyer
El Paso, TX 79904

Robin Divine
4242 Woodcock Ave. Ste 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

Dear Ms. Divine,

I have currently heard that the Border Patrol is planning to build a complex at Castner Range. I personally think this is a bad idea. Placing the complex on Castner Range would cause an increase in air pollution in the Northeast of El Paso and would cause certain species of plants to become extinct.

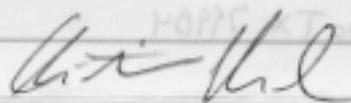
If the complex is built on site 1 the amount of air pollution in the Northeast will increase. The vehicles that are stationed in the complex will increase the amount of air pollution in the Northeast. If the complex was to be built in one of the other two sites the amount of air pollution would be more dispersed and not cause so many problems.

The other problem with building the complex at Castner Range is that there will be numerous species of plants that will become extinct. The plants that will become extinct will be poppies, Silver Puffs, and Canyon Morning Glory. These plants exist nowhere else in the country. Future generations of El Pasoans will not be able to experience the splendor of these plants.

Building a Border Patrol complex on Castner Range is a bad idea. It will add to the amount of air pollution in the Northeast and will cause numerous amounts of plant species to

become extinct. If the complex must be built let it be built on either site 2 or 3. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Christian Moral

October 24, 2003

Robin Divine, Project Manager
SAIC
4242 Woodcock, Suite 150
San Antonio, TX 78228

Re: Draft Environmental Assessment
for the U.S. Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarters
El Paso, Texas

Dear Ms. Divine:

I wish to offer the following comments on the draft environmental assessment (EA) for the Border Patrol's proposal to build a new station and sector headquarters in El Paso, Texas:

The Range of Alternatives Evaluated is Inadequate

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) implementing regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality state that federal agencies shall to the fullest extent possible "use the NEPA process to identify and assess the reasonable alternatives to the proposed action that will avoid or minimize adverse effects of these actions upon the quality of the human environment." The draft EA falls short on this score.

The draft EA states (p. 1-3) that the three alternative sites being evaluated were selected through a market-analysis study performed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and that "The market analysis is included in Appendix E of this document." However, Appendix E includes only an abbreviated tabular summary of the analysis and selected Border Patrol correspondence and memos. The material in Appendix E is not adequate for a critical evaluation of the Site Market Survey. The public needs to see the complete Survey to determine whether all viable site alternatives were given adequate consideration.

As an example, Biggs Field, which would appear to be a very suitable site, is described in the summary table as being rejected because "Ft. Bliss uses this area for egress, air operations and training." That may be, but it is not clear why this disqualifies Biggs Field as a suitable site. The public needs to see the full Site Market Survey to understand the reasoning behind this statement and to determine whether it is valid.

Although the three alternatives discussed in the draft EA are all described as viable, one of the documents in Appendix E indicates the Border Patrol concluded well over a year ago it would

not consider Site 3. In an April 17, 2002 letter from Luis E. Barker of the Border Patrol to Daniel Lenz of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Chief Patrol Agent Barker states that the Border Patrol "has recently removed Site 3 (McCombs between Sean Haggerty and Sarah Anne Ave.) from consideration due to the on-going construction of an elementary school in the Ysleta Independent School District." Still, this site was retained for analysis and public review in the EA. Some of the others with alleged shortcomings should have been also. The EA should give full analysis to a broader array of possible site alternatives.

In its scoping comments, the Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition asked you to evaluate the alternative of deferring any action on the Border Patrol's proposal until a comprehensive study of Castner Range and appropriate future use of the range lands can be completed. The draft EA includes no discussion of why this alternative was not carried forward for further analysis. Section 2.4 discusses only siting alternatives. The FMWC's suggested alternative, which is not the same as a "no action" alternative, continues to deserve full analysis.

Another alternative that deserves investigation is to keep the Sector Headquarters at the present location and move only the El Paso Station to a new location. The El Paso Station is just one of 12 Border Patrol stations in the El Paso Sector. It would seem there is no compelling operational requirement for having the El Paso Station and the Sector Headquarters at the same location.

Under this alternative, the Sector Headquarters would gain adequate room for expansion, and the acreage required for the El Paso Station would be reduced relative to that required for a station and sector headquarters, thus increasing the universe of potential sites. As an example, the table in Appendix E summarizing the Site Market Survey notes a 20+ acre brownfield site at Railroad and Transmountain that was rejected because "size of property inadequate." If the site is needed only for a new station and not a new sector headquarters, the acreage might well be adequate.

The Discussion of Impacts Due to Placing the Facilities at Site 1 is Inadequate

The draft EA does not acknowledge that construction at Site 1 would set a highly damaging precedent that would encourage future attempts to develop land on Castner Range. While there may be no other formal development proposals at this time, it is reasonable to foresee there will be in the future if Site 1 is selected for the Border Patrol facilities. No doubt proponents of these future proposals will seek to justify them on grounds they are compatible with the Border Patrol facilities and are small relative to "the vastness of Castner Range."

The fact that there are no other formal development plans for Castner Range at this moment is not a good reason for ignoring the potential for such plans arising in the future. As the draft EA notes, "the December 2000 *Fort Bliss, Texas and New Mexico, Mission and Master Plan Environmental Impact Statement* did not identify any potential federal, state or local uses of Castner Range." Yet, less than a year later, just such a potential use did surface: a Border Patrol Station and Sector Headquarters.

By its presence, this project can be expected to increase the likelihood of future requests to lease lower-elevation lands on Castner Range for public or private facilities. Given the ecological and scenic value of Castner Range, this is a highly significant impact.

The discussion of land-use impacts at Site 1 needs to address how construction at this site and the resulting increased potential for additional development on Castner Range will affect plans to incorporate Castner Range lands into Franklin Mountains State Park.

I appreciate the inclusion of a separate subsection on cumulative impacts (Sec. 4.2.2.5) in the discussion of impacts to biological resources. Other sections of Chapter 4 should include a like subsection. However, the conclusion that "the potential for cumulative impacts to biological resources from possible future projects is considered low on Castner Range" is erroneous.

As the draft EA recognizes, the lower-elevation lands on Castner Range are biologically important because almost all other alluvial fans associated with the Franklin Mountains have either been developed or are slated for future development. These lower-elevation lands are precisely the areas that will be subject to increased development pressure if the Border Patrol facilities are placed on Castner Range. The importance of the lower-elevation lands on Castner Range and the contribution they make to regional biodiversity need to be evaluated in greater detail, and, here as elsewhere, the EA needs to recognize that leasing Site 1 for the Border Patrol facilities has larger implications for the future of Castner Range.

In the discussion of impacts to geology and soils (Sec. 4.3), the draft EA states that "...the proposed construction activities primarily involve surface alterations and do not involve any major subsurface excavation, drilling or blasting..." On the contrary, the subsurface excavation required at Site 1 for finding and removing possible unexploded ordnance in areas planned for structures promises to be substantial and needs to be evaluated.

If the Castner Range Site Remains the Preferred Site, an EIS is Needed

The draft EA contemplates a finding of no significant impact for the proposed project. If the Castner Range site remains the preferred site, such a finding is highly inappropriate and legally indefensible. An environmental impact statement (EIS) will be necessary because:

- Due to its location on Castner Range the project is in an environmentally sensitive and ecologically critical area.
- The project will establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects.
- By increasing the likelihood of future requests to lease lands on Castner Range for public or private facilities, the project will likely result in highly significant cumulative adverse impacts.
- Those cumulative impacts would affect other land-use plans, most importantly the potential future addition of Castner Range to Franklin Mountains State Park.

- The environmental impacts of the project are highly controversial, as evidenced by the opposition to Site 1 expressed in the great majority of the scoping comment letters.
- The project is of a type for which the NEPA guidelines of the former Immigration and Naturalization Service normally require an EIS.

If the Castner Range Site Remains the Preferred Site, Fort Bliss Needs to be a Full Participant in the NEPA Process

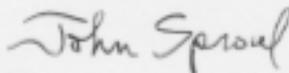
If Site 1 remains the preferred site, then Fort Bliss's decision on whether to lease the land will also require environmental analysis under NEPA. Moreover, as the owner and steward of Castner Range, Fort Bliss will need to address the broader issue of whether any leasing of Castner Range is appropriate and, if so, where. That will require a comprehensive study of the range and appropriate future use of its lands, all subject to analysis in an EIS.

It makes sense for the two NEPA analyses – the Border Patrol's and Fort Bliss's – to be coordinated. The logical approach would be for Fort Bliss to conduct the necessary studies and prepare an EIS on future use of Castner Range. If those studies conclude that leasing land in the southeast corner of the range is appropriate, then the Border Patrol could complete its environmental analysis by tiering off of the Fort Bliss EIS.

Alternatively, the Border Patrol could select a site not on Castner Range. An EIS probably would not be necessary, and there would be no need for the Border Patrol to coordinate with a comprehensive evaluation of the range by Fort Bliss.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and thank you for extending the comment period. I would not have been able to review the document before the original deadline. Please keep me informed as the environmental analysis for this project proceeds. If the Castner Range site remains the preferred site, please send me a copy of the draft EIS.

Very truly yours,



John Sproul
601 West Yandell Dr. #25
El Paso, TX 79902

October 23, 2003

Robin Devine, Project Manager
Science Applications International Corporation
4242 Woodcock Drive, Suite 150
San Antonio, Texas 78228-1253

Dear Robin Devine,

The Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition (FMWC) consists of 15 member groups united in their desire to protect the scenic and wilderness character of the Franklin Mountains. The Border Patrol Station and Sector HQ (BPSHQ) proposed for Castner Range (CR) are of concern to the Coalition. In response to the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA), we would like to submit these comments:

Thanks to Army stewardship, El Paso has enjoyed a magnificent view of the Franklin Mountains across the land known as Castner Range. This view and its accompanying ecological uniqueness have been recognized worldwide, but have also become a treasured part of the heritage of all El Pasoans. Many El Pasoans believe that Castner Range is already a part of the Franklin Mountains State Park (FMSP), and as such assume that the land is protected from future development.

The FMSP and Texas Parks and Wildlife have included in the FMSP Plan the eventual addition of Castner Range into the Park. The City of El Paso 2010 Land Use Plan includes CR as part of FMSP. An independent study prepared for the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) recommends the CR land be included in the FMSP.

The use of CR for a BPSHQ would disregard these widely held views, and would set a precedent that piecemeal use of this resource is permissible. 40 CFR 1508.8 refers to the fact that indirect effects include induced changes in the pattern of land use, and these changes would be a significant factor in determining a need for an EIS. The Immigration and Naturalization Service National Environmental Protection Act (INS NEPA) Guidebook, part 3.5.1.2, refers to the need to consider significant any act that is incompatible with official land use plans for the specific site, and goes on to question whether the action would alter or affect an area that is being considered for protection by state, regional or local government.

In 40 CFR 1508.27, proximity to parkland intensifies the significance of noise intrusion into the Park.

The INS NEPA Guidebook states there are several reasons to perform an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Many are relevant to the Border Patrol land request. Selection of site #1 for construction has stirred a local controversy on environmental grounds, and as noted in part 3.5.1.6, this would be grounds for an EIS. The cumulative impact of ongoing CR cleanup and consequent potential availability of that cleaned land for disposal, combined with the precedent setting action of a BPS on CR indicate this need for an EIS (part 3.5.1.7). The INS NEPA Guidebook says that major actions that normally require an EIS include the construction or lease of a new INS facility (part 7.4). It states further that if facilitated meetings become necessary, this may

become a strong indicator that the action is controversial enough on environmental grounds to merit preparation of an EIS (part 6.6.2).

The Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) "40 Questions" refers to the time for NEPA processes and states that a reasonable time to perform an EA should be no more than 3 months, or substantially less. This Castner Range EA must be difficult, and therefore demand an EIS, for this process has so far taken more than 2 years.

Section 102(2)(C) of 42 USC indicates the need for an EIS in every report concerning a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

Recently, the U. S. Army published a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS on a proposal to lease or provide an easement for land on Ft. Bliss to the City of El Paso for construction and operation of a desalination plant. The proposed BP Station would require this same leasing or easement process, and so would seem to require an EIS as well.

The maps provided by (SAIC) show the BP station extending north along Gateway to approximately even with R.L. Schumaker on the east side of the Gateway. The approximate distance from Hondo Pass to Schumaker is 6/10 of a mile. The distance from Hondo Pass to Transmountain Rd. is approx. 2 1/10 miles. That means the EA finds insignificant that the BP Station will affect more than 25% of that view of the mountain. How insignificant is 25%? It seems obvious that the aesthetics of the area would be affected significantly.

The Draft EA dismisses aesthetics in part by stating that the dam on CR acts as a visual blockade of the view of the proposed BP site from further north on CR. This is incorrect. From Transmountain Rd. where the picnic and viewing sites exist on this recognized scenic roadway, it is quite easy to see the proposed BP location. The same is true of the view from the 2 museums on Transmountain Rd. It is only slightly more than 2 miles from this viewing spot to that location at Hondo Pass. The view of the Franklin Mountains from the neighborhood surrounding the proposed site, the view from the highway access road, and the view from the highway itself would be even more dramatically degraded were the BPS to be built at Site #1. Losing 25% of a view is significant.

It is not clear to the Coalition that consideration of all possible sites has been given. We feel that land on Biggs Army Airfield has not been fully evaluated, and that sites on Biggs Field or other military land other than CR might also exist.

Please explain why public comments regarding land use conflicts did not warrant further agency response in accordance with 40 CFR 1503.4(a)(5).

The document ignores entirely the biological uniqueness and high diversity noted by public comment contained within the Draft EA. We request reevaluation of impacts and their significance based upon acknowledgement of these biotic factors in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3) unique characteristics, and 40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4) degree to which effects are likely to be highly controversial. Include, for determination of significance, an analysis and comparison of the area of the Castner Range Franklin Mountain alluvial fan habitat/ecosystem involving igneous soils and biota as noted in public comments, with the remaining undeveloped fans containing the same attributes outside of Castner Range.

The document does not discuss potential expansion needs, which have been the subject of on-going comments made by the Border Patrol at meetings and is stated in this

document in appendix E. This need is stated sufficiently often to warrant consideration as a reasonably foreseeable action in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.8(b). We request this analysis be performed.

No impact analysis is made of the microwave tower mentioned in appendix E, Memo from Albert Woo. Analyze this for visual and other impacts.

We believe that the analysis of alternatives was flawed and that other alternatives must be evaluated, specifically locations on and adjacent to Biggs Field, Fort Bliss. We request that this be done in accordance with 40 CFR 1502.14(a) and (b).

The analysis of land use impacts is abysmal and entirely lacking in objective impact analysis. The document does not even mention the potential conflict with the Franklin Mountain Wilderness Park land use plan that includes Castner Range as part of the park, despite NUMEROUS references to this fact in the public comments. We note that the EA was not even sent to the State Park for review and comment! We request you analyze these impacts, in particular in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.8(b) "growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use". Also include impacts and land use conflicts that may result from security requirements, e.g. identifying and intercepting personnel on higher ground outside of Border Patrol property, as referenced in appendix E, Security Site Surveys, Site #1, lines 8 and 9, and expansion.

It is our finding that there will likely be a significant impact to land use and an EIS is warranted. By the EA's own definition of significance, an impact to land use would be considered significant if the action resulted in a major change in land use or conflicted with an existing use. We believe that the growth inducing effects and effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use that will result from this development are apparent, the fact is acknowledged in the EA in Section 4.1.2.1 lines 4, 5, and 6, and will result in a major change in land use from natural and potential state park land use to commercial/industrial, thereby resulting in a significant impact. To continue, "land use was assessed for compatibility with projected land uses". Despite this statement, there was no attempt to assess this action for compatibility with the projected land use involving incorporating the land into the state park, disregarding the overwhelming body of public comment noting this future desired use. The development of this area of Castner Range is entirely incompatible with incorporation of the area into the State Park. Analysis of the effects of this action in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.27(a) entire and 40 CFR 1508.27 (b)(3), (4), and (6) clearly was not performed or the EA would have reached a determination that this action has significant environmental impact. We request that an EIS be prepared for this proposed action involving use of Castner Range.

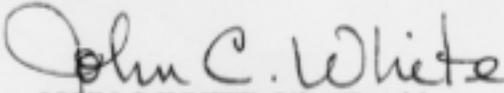
The most critical and pertinent issue is that Fort Bliss and the Department of Army is clearly the final decision maker as to whether to lease or not lease land now commonly known as Castner Range. This fact has been confirmed by the Border Patrol (appendix F line 15). This action represents a defacto decision in principle (as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)) by Fort Bliss and the Department of Army to continue leasing or otherwise disposing of Castner Range/"former Castner Range" real estate piecemeal without any umbrella NEPA analysis. In fact, neither the Army nor Fort Bliss has set, nor defined, any boundaries in space and time as regards what will and will not be leased or otherwise disposed of. The statement on page 4-2, notes that the "proposed BPS would be a compatible land use to the existing Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT)

compound already present" and implies clearly that this EA views that development of Castner is not an incompatible land use as long as it is adjacent to already developed areas, suggesting potentially limitless expansion. Previous real estate actions affecting Castner Range/"former Castner Range" lands include the Border Patrol museum, the Texas Department of Transportation yard, and the Veterans home. These real estate actions fall under the definition of "effects" as defined in 40 CFR 1508.8(b): "growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in land use, and related effects on natural systems, including ecosystems". The Fort Bliss, Texas and New Mexico, Mission and Master plan, Section 4.11.3.6, states that the Castner Recreation Area (former Castner Range) is now in the process of being leased for nonmilitary use, however no NEPA analysis is provided. There is a significant cumulative impact on land use and the natural environment that has resulted from breaking Castner development into separate component parts. The fact that these actions involved governmental agencies is irrelevant to NEPA compliance. Fort Bliss and the Department of Army are piecemealing the real estate actions involving Castner Range/"former Castner Range" lands.

We request that consideration of the use of Castner land by the Border Patrol be suspended until that time when a comprehensive NEPA analysis is performed for the entire area in accordance with 40 CFR 1500-1508. It is clear that to avoid violating the letter of the law and the spirit of NEPA, the BP must go ahead with an EIS if site #1 remains the preferred alternative. We do not believe an EIS would be needed if one of those alternatives off Castner Range were the preferred site.

Please inform us as to all decisions as they are rendered and provide us with copies of all documents and reports that are prepared in reference to this matter.

Sincerely,


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CF: Congressman Silvestre Reyes