

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Department of Toxic Substances Control
Site Mitigation and Restoration Program
8800 Cal Center Drive
Sacramento, CA 95826

Subject: DRAFT FINAL MITIGATED

Project Title: Beale MMRP Munitions Response Site FR970 NTCRA and 7 MRS Remedial Action

State Clearinghouse No.: 2021040530

Project Location: The 7 MRS are in the northeastern and eastern portions of the AFB; FR970 Site is southeast of the intersection of Warren Shingle Road and A Street, Beale Air Force Base (AFB)

County: Yuba

Project Description: The United States Air Force (USAF) is undertaking a non-time-critical removal action (NTCRA) to expedite the removal of munitions and explosives of concern (MEC) at the Rocket Range (FR970) site (Figure 1). The FR970 site spans portions of the Coyote Run Golf Course, a recently closed public golf course with unrestricted access for surface activities by recreational users and maintenance workers. The remainder of the site is in use for seasonal cattle grazing with access by cattle ranchers. While barbed wire fencing is present for cattle management, there is no fencing nor are there natural barriers to prevent on-Base personnel from accessing the site. The NTCRA is primarily focused on removing MEC to reduce the potential for on-site exposure to potential human receptors.

It is anticipated that field activities at FR970 will occur concurrently with a remedial action to remove MEC from an additional seven munitions response sites (7 MRS) located to the north, northeast, and east of FR970 (Figure 2). Although the NTCRA to be implemented for FR970 and the remedial action to be implemented for the 7 MRS have followed separate tracks, the removal/remedial actions that were selected for implementation have similar objectives, are similar in nature, are within the boundary of Beale AFB, and will be performed during a similar time frame. Consequently, the activities are discussed together in this Initial Study to ensure that there are no potentially significant cumulative effects.

The objective for the FR970 site and the 7 MRS is to provide protection of public health, welfare, and the environment from actual or threatened releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants from the site/MRS, which may present an imminent and substantial endangerment to public health or welfare. The remedies were therefore selected to address MEC explosive hazards and MC risk.

Finding of Significant Effect on Environment: The proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment (*An Initial Study supporting this finding is attached.*)

Mitigation Measures: See Attachment A for required mitigation measures.

Branch Chief's Signature

Date

Dominique S. Forrester
Branch Chief's Name

Acting Branch Chief
Title

916-255-3613
Phone #

ATTACHMENT A**Monitoring:**

AMM-1: A Service-approved biologist will conduct preconstruction surveys of all ground disturbance areas in sensitive habitats to determine whether any Federally protected species may be present prior to the start of construction. These surveys will be conducted two weeks prior to the start of construction activities. If any Federally protected species are found during the preconstruction surveys, the Service-approved biologist will contact the Beale AFB Natural Resource Manager (NRM) who will then contact the Service's Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office to determine how to proceed. At least 15 working days prior to the onset of survey activities, Beale AFB will submit the name (s) and credentials of biologists who will conduct these preconstruction surveys. No project activities will begin until proponents have received written approval from the Service that the biologist(s) is qualified to conduct the work.

AMM-2: A Service-approved biologist will monitor construction activities in or adjacent to sensitive habitats. The biological monitor will ensure compliance with these conservation measures, required to protect Federally-protected species and their habitats. If Federally protected species are found that are likely to be affected by work activities, the Service-approved biologist will have the authority to stop any aspect of the Proposed Action that could result in unauthorized take of a Federally protected species. If the biological monitor exercises this authority, the monitor will notify the Beale AFB NRM who will then contact the USFWS Beale AFB POC by telephone and letter within one working day.

Environmental Awareness Training:

AMM-3: A Service-approved biologist will conduct environmental awareness training for all field personnel working within and near sensitive habitat on Beale AFB. Training will be provided at the start of work and upon arrival for any new workers on the project site. The program will consist of a briefing on environmental issues relative to the planned project. The training program will include an overview of the legal status, biology, distribution, habitat needs, and compliance requirements for each Federally-listed species that may occur in or have the potential to occur within the Action Area. The presentation will also include a discussion of the legal protection for endangered species under the ESA, including penalties for violations. A fact sheet conveying this information will be distributed to all personnel who enter the project site. Upon completion of the orientation, employees will sign a form stating that they attended the program and understand all avoidance and minimization measures. These forms will be maintained at Beale AFB and will be accessible to the appropriate resource agencies.

Additional Measures:

AMM-4: Prior to initiation of the Proposed Action, sensitive areas, such as vernal pools, wetlands, watercourses, and potential habitat for Federally protected branchiopod species, will be staked, flagged, or fenced as exclusion zones where construction activities may not occur. Access routes will be maintained outside of staked or flagged areas. Orange construction barrier fencing (or an appropriate alternative method) will designate exclusion zones where construction activities cannot occur. The contractor will remove all fencing, stakes and flagging within 60 calendar days of project completion.

AMM-5: Motor vehicles and equipment will only be fueled and serviced in designated service areas. All fueling and maintenance of vehicles and other equipment will occur at least 250 ft. from any wetland/drainage habitat or water body. Prior to the onset of work, Beale AFB or its contractors will prepare a plan to allow a prompt and effective response to any accidental spills. Workers will be informed of the importance of preventing spills and of the appropriate measures to take should a spill occur.

AMM-6: The number of access routes, number and size of staging areas, and the total area of the activity will be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the project goal. Off-pavement access routes can only be used if the soil is dry.

AMM-7: Access routes will be established in upland areas, when feasible. Where it is necessary for access routes to go through a wetland feature, the work will be completed in the dry season and weight dispersing mats will be placed to avoid any potential effects to species and/or sensitive habitats. Off-road access routes will not be used during the Limited Operations Period (Nov 1-May 1) unless approved by the Beale AFB NRM.

AMM-8: In the event that a new vehicle access route is required in special status species habitat, the route would be pre-surveyed by a USFWS-approved biologist to minimize impacts, and the NRM and the Service will be notified to determine actions required to minimize impacts. If routes will be reused over multiple years, they would be assessed annually to ensure that they are clear of special status species.

AMM-9: Access roads must be constructed so that the length of the road minimizes any adverse effects on wetlands and must be restored as closely as possible to preconstruction contours and elevations (e.g., at grade, corduroy roads, or geotextile/ gravel roads).

AMM-10: All vehicle operators will follow the posted speed limit on paved and unpaved golf cart paths in the Action Area. These pathways aren't likely to be subject to erosion by repeated use of heavy equipment traffic resulting from this project. Per the Fugitive Dust Emissions rule, a person shall take every reasonable precaution to not cause or allow the emissions of fugitive dust from being airborne past the Action Area especially near threatened or endangered species or their habitats.

AMM-11: All road areas will be watered, or alternative dust control measures will be used, during project construction to prevent excessive dust erosion from silting nearby vernal pools.

AMM-12: Routes and boundaries will be clearly demarcated. Off-road travel outside the demarcated construction boundaries is strictly prohibited.

AMM-13: All materials, vehicle parking and staging areas will be designated by the Beale Environmental Office and located at least 50 ft. away from drainages and other wetlands. Storage of all construction material/debris will be kept to the designated storage/staging area.

AMM-14: No pets or nonmilitary firearms will be allowed in the Action Area during Proposed Action implementation.

AMM-15: A Service-approved biologist will monitor and ensure that the spread or introduction of invasive exotic plant species will be avoided to the maximum extent possible. When practicable, invasive plants found in the Action Area will be removed using non-chemical methods.

AMM-16: No trenches or holes greater than 6 inches deep will be left open at the end of the day and may be covered with plywood or cone markers; trenched areas and holes will be compacted and restored to normal grade.

AMM-17: All upland vegetated areas disturbed by construction greater than 100 square ft. will be revegetated with a Beale AFB approved native seed mix. Exposed soil must be hydro-seeded and depending on slope, covered with a biodegradable geotextile to prevent sediments from entering waterways. Any straw used for erosion control materials will be "certified weed free."

AMM 18: Reseeded areas will be monitored and maintained by Beale AFB as needed until there is 70% perennial vegetation cover in the seeded area.

AMM-19: All erosion control materials will be certified weed free to prevent the spread of invasive species.

AMM-20: Site-specific erosion control measures (i.e., hay bales, silt fencing) will be implemented and in place at all times during construction. Proper erosion and sediment control measures will be installed. The contractor will install and maintain erosion control systems such as gravel/sand bags, silt fence, straw bale barriers, erosion control/stabilization blankets, straw wattles, etc. as needed to protect drainage ditches, storm drains, seasonal wetlands and water bodies from sedimentation resulting from construction activity. Erosion control devices will not contain plastic netting and will be "certified weed free."

AMM-21: All wetlands/drainages/vernal pools will have erosion control measures (straw wattles, hay bales, silt fencing) installed when mechanical work is within 50 ft. of a wetland or where hydrological continuity exists between the construction activities and the wetland. Soil erosion and sediment controls will be used and maintained in effective operating condition during construction, and all exposed soil and other fills must be permanently stabilized at the earliest practicable date.

AMM-22: Any authorized structure or fill will be properly maintained, including maintenance to ensure public safety.

AMM-23: During construction activities, all trash will be properly contained, removed from the work site daily, and disposed of properly. Following construction, all refuse and construction debris will be removed from work areas. All garbage and construction-related materials in construction areas will be removed immediately following project completion.

AMM-24: No activity may use unsuitable material (e.g., trash, debris, car bodies asphalt, etc.). Material used for construction or discharged must be free from toxic pollutants in toxic amounts.

AMM-25: A Fire Prevention and Suppression Plan will be prepared prior to the planned project.

AMM-26: A Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan will be prepared prior to the project implementation. All machinery will be properly maintained and cleaned to prevent spills and leaks. Any spills or leaks from the equipment will be reported and cleaned up in accordance with applicable local, State and Federal regulations.

AMM-27: Any worker who inadvertently kills or injures a Federally protected species, or finds one injured or trapped, will immediately report the incident to the biological monitor. The biological monitor will notify Beale AFB NRM who will then verbally notify the Service within three working days and will provide written notification of the incident within five working days.

Vernal Pool Branchiopods:

AMM 28: No work will be conducted within 100 ft. of streams or wetlands between November 1 and May 1, unless specifically approved by the Beale AFB Natural Resources Manager and the Service.

AMM 29: For project intrusive work utilizing a mini excavator or requiring MEC detonation adjacent to (within 10 meters) vernal pool species' habitat, silt fencing or other appropriate best management practices (BMPs) will be implemented to prevent sediment from entering vernal pool branchiopod habitat, as appropriate. A USFWS-approved Biologist will flag areas for installation of silt fencing or BMPs prior to initiation of intrusive work utilizing a mini excavator or requiring detonation, as appropriate. BMPs may include silt fencing, sandbags and weed-free straw bales, or straw wattles.

AMM 30: For intrusive actions/investigations in branchiopod habitat, the topsoil to a depth of approximately 1 inch will be saved and set aside/containerized to be placed back on top of the excavated site to minimize the number of vernal pool crustacean cysts damaged. All material below the topsoil that is excavated will be removed from the habitat feature and retained/containerized, once work is completed holes will be backfilled with the same soil to the original grade and compacted once removal is complete. These locations will not be seeded. Stockpiled soils will be covered and surrounded by straw wattles at all times.

AMM 31: All upland excavations will be refilled, compacted, and returned to pre-project conditions. Disturbed area larger than 10 square ft. will be seeded with a native seed mix approved by Beale AFB.

AMM 32: If possible, intrusive work adjacent to or within branchiopod habitat shall have protection (plastic tarps) covering the aquatic feature to ensure the soil being removed and backfilled during the excavation process does not adversely impact habitat. Soil erosion and sediment controls must be used and maintained in effective operating condition during construction process. These materials shall be removed at the earliest practicable date after the construction process is complete at the pit location.

Monarch Butterfly:

It should be noted that these Mitigation Measures will not be fully implemented unless the species is listed under the ESA. Project-specific requirements may be added or amended as necessary by NRM staff to meet requirements under the ESA and Integrate Natural Resources Management Plan for Beale AFB and the Lincoln Receiver Site (Beale AFB 2019). Conservation measures are in accordance with the Monarch Conservation on Department of Defense Lands in the West: Best Management Practices-2018.

All fieldwork that occurs within 100 ft. of milkweed plants or 250 ft. from occupied habitat (roosting and breeding sites) will implement the following measures to avoid or minimize disturbances and adverse effects to the species. Where surveys for milkweed have not been conducted, either pre-project surveys or during-project surveys will be completed by Beale AFB to identify milkweed stands. Additionally, if milkweeds are identified within the project area, then surveys for adult and larval monarchs will be conducted both before and after the project.

AMM 33: No herbicides or pre-emergents will be used for this project.

AMM 34: All individuals conducting weed/vegetation control activities within the buffer area (100 or 250 ft. as defined above) will receive training on the identification of milkweed plants and a description of both adult and larval monarchs in order to identify and avoid milkweed and monarchs during all activities.

AMM 35: Milkweed numbers and species would be assessed by Beale AFB in project areas where impacts to milkweed may occur due to activities such as ATV access and Beale AFB would implement the following restoration measures:

- The impacts of milkweed removal in known monarch breeding areas would be minimized by planting equivalent milkweed species at a 3: 1 ratio. The impacts of milkweed removal in habitat not known to be used by monarchs will be minimized by planting milkweed at a 2: 1 ratio.
- All newly planted milkweed will be regionally native and preferably of the same species removed. Milkweed species selection and replanting location will be at the discretion of the NRM.

AMM 36: A 2-ft. buffer would be maintained around extant milkweed plants during off-road vehicle access, restoration and habitat enhancement planting, and other ground-disturbing activities to protect breeding habitat.

AMM 37: Within occupied habitat, willows and other trees suitable for roosting that are known to be or with the potential to be (within occupied habitat) used as roosting sites will be preserved.

AMM 38: No trimming of trees used by monarchs as roosting sites will occur during the active season (March 15 through October 31).

AMM 39: Any areas within 250 ft. of known monarch breeding habitat requiring reseeding will include species beneficial to monarchs, including native milkweed. All seed mixes must be approved by the NRM.

AMM 40: Mowing projects during the summer will be conducted during the morning to avoid injuring resting monarchs.

AMM 41: Generally, mowing will not be conducted within 100 ft. of areas with suitable monarch habitat during the active season (March 15 through October 31).

- If mowing must be conducted (i.e., for habitat restoration projects benefiting Monarchs or other listed species) and vehicle access must be allowed, all milkweed plants would be identified and avoided.

AMM 42: Conservation measures will be adjusted if additional guidelines are released by the USFWS.