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18 September 2026

Brian D. Knight, Chief - Environmental Division
Department of Army, U.S. Garrison White Sands
Environmental Division (Building 163/DPW)
DES Fire Station and Access Control Point Modernization EA Comments
White Sands Missile Range, NM 88002

RE: Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) for Directorate of Emergency Services (DES) Fire Station and Access Control Point Modernization White Sands Missile Range (WSMR), New Mexico; NMERT Project No. NMERT-6501.

Dear Mr. Knight,

WSMR, U.S. Army Garrison has prepared a draft EA and draft FNSI for DES Fire Station and Access Control Point Modernization (Proposed Action). The New Mexico Department of Wildlife (Department) would like to thank WSMR for the opportunity to review the draft EA and draft FNSI for the Proposed Action. The Department has the following comments on the draft EA and draft FNSI for the Proposed Action.

General Comments

The Department greatly appreciates the incorporation of our previous recommendations, including those from New Mexico Environmental Review Tool (NMERT)-generated project reports, to the draft EA for the Proposed Action.

As of 1 July 2026, the Departments name officially changed to the New Mexico Department of Wildlife, with a new acronym of NMDOW. To align with this change, we request all mentions of the Department be updated to the new name and acronym.

Section-Specific Comments to Minimize Impacts of the Proposed Action on Wildlife

Section 3.3: Soil Erosion Effects

The Department appreciates the Best Management Practices (BMPs) and mitigation measures included in section 3.3.3, especially the focus on re-seeding disturbed areas where possible and the enhancement of pollinator habitat.

The Department also appreciates the planned development of an erosion and sedimentation control plan for each construction site. As a part of these plans for each construction site, or as a BMP for all sites if appropriate, the Department recommends burying the edges of any erosion-control blankets that are used post-construction, and using blankets without fused mesh corners (e.g., use woven mesh). These measures can reduce the chances of unintentional wildlife entanglement. We also recommend avoiding the use of plastic netting or mesh and regularly checking the erosion-control blankets after applying them to identify and release any wildlife that does become entangled.

Section 3.5: Biological Resources

The Department acknowledges the thorough surveys completed for each of the sites and the use of NMERT-generated project reports (i.e., for NMERT-5769 through NMERT-5772) in planning for the Proposed Action. The included BMPs encompass the Department's recommendations and will protect wildlife and their habitats before, during, and after construction.

Due to the Proposed Action's inclusion of demolition, as appropriate, as discussed in the draft EA, the Department recommends conducting pre-demolition surveys for any roosting bats that might be using the structure that is going to be demolished as a summer breeding site or a winter hibernation site. Demolition can often be performed in spring or fall when bats are not regularly using such structures either for breeding or hibernating.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Proposed Action's draft EA and draft FNSI and for your consideration of the Department's comments. If you have any questions regarding terrestrial habitat or species, please contact Meredith Dalton, Terrestrial Habitat Specialist, at (505) 709-0671 or meredith.dalton@dgf.nm.gov.

Sincerely,

Virginia Seamster
Assistant Chief for Technical Guidance
Ecological and Environmental Planning Section