
Section 1.0
INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE AND NEED

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) addresses the potential for effects, beneficial and adverse, of proposed infrastructure construction and improvements along the U.S.-Mexico border by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) of the Department of Homeland Security. The proposed infrastructure construction activities consist of primary and secondary pedestrian barrier fencing, vehicle barrier fencing, roads (all weather primary, maintenance, and drag), lighting, and associated drainage structures within the USBP Naco and Douglas Stations' Areas of Operation (AO).

This document supplements the Final EA for Infrastructure within U.S. Border Patrol Naco-Douglas Corridor, Cochise County, Arizona (INS 2000), herein referred to as the Corridor EA. The Corridor EA was prepared to document impacts associated with projects that facilitate the USBP's mission to deter the illegal entry of illegal aliens (IAs) into the U.S. and reduce illegal drug activity along the U.S.-Mexico border between Douglas and Naco Station AOs. It also addressed the cumulative effects of past and reasonably foreseeable projects in the Naco-Douglas corridor.

The project area, herein referred to as the project corridor, consists of proposed infrastructure that has not been specifically addressed as such in the Corridor EA or other subsequent National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents. The actions that have already been addressed by previous NEPA documents will be discussed in detail later in this document. The project corridor extends from the western boundary of the USBP Naco AO to the eastern boundary of the USBP Douglas AO (Figure 1-1).

The infrastructure projects proposed by the USBP are part of a continued national strategy for controlling illegal border activity through deterrence. This initiative has involved the ongoing need to tactically position border infrastructure and operations to provide an effective and seamless deterrence against illegal crossings while enhancing the USBP's capability to safely and efficiently extend control of the U.S.-Mexico border.

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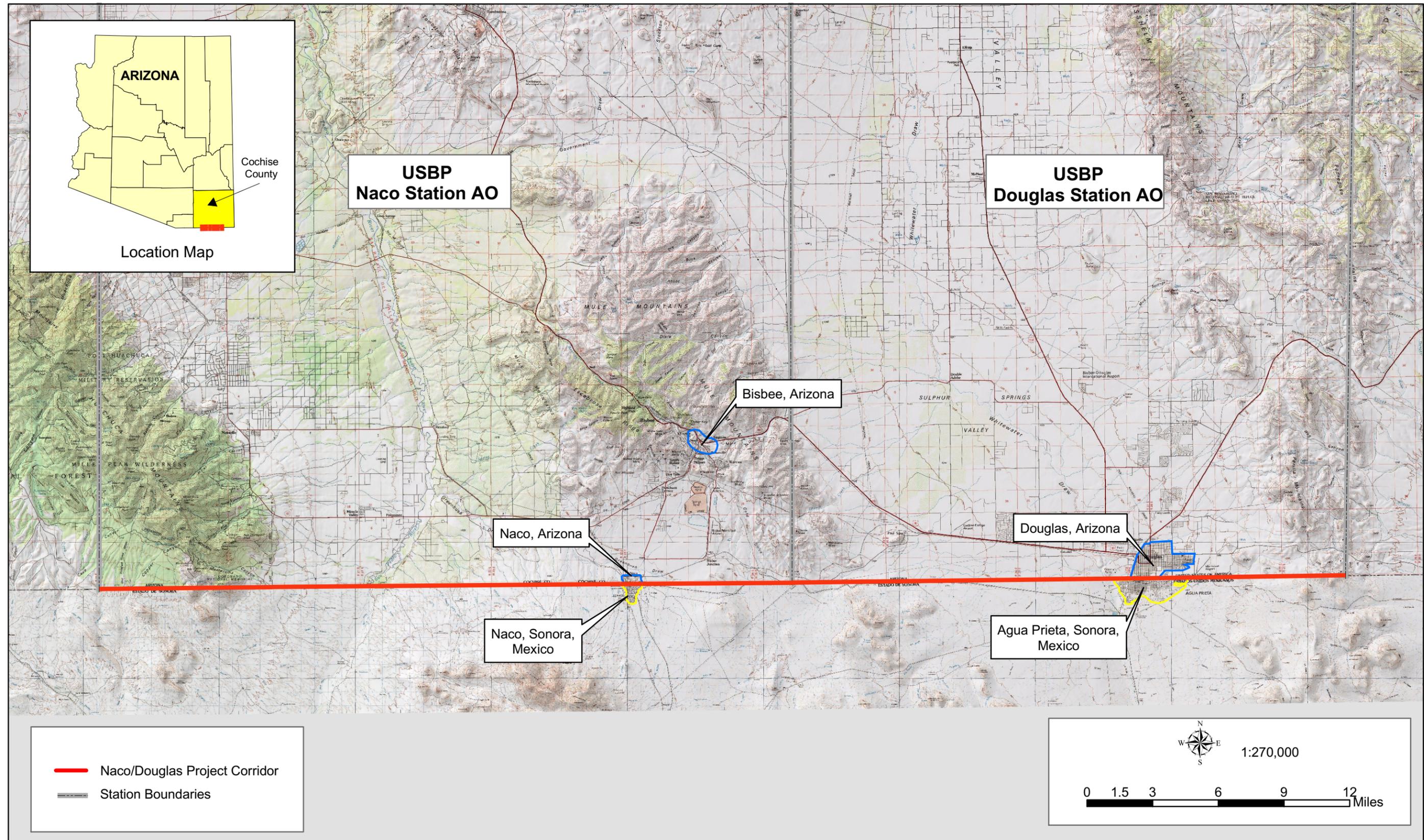


Figure 1-1: Naco/Douglas Project Corridor

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This SEA is also tiered from the Final Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and Joint Task Force-Six (JTF-6) activities along the U.S.-Mexico Border (INS 2001a). This PEIS addressed past and proposed infrastructure for the USBP along the entire southwestern border. The JTF-6 was a cooperating agency because they performed many of the border infrastructure projects for the USBP. Future infrastructure projects, such as those described herein, were identified and analyzed in the Supplemental PEIS. A commitment was made in the Supplemental PEIS to prepare site-specific NEPA documents, such as this one, as the need for future projects is identified. In addition a PEIS for USBP operations in Yuma and Tucson Sectors and a Biological Opinion for the Tucson Sector are in their final stages.

This SEA is also referenced to several other documents, which contain actions within the project corridor:

- Final Environmental Assessment for Road Improvements Along King's Ranch Road and the U.S.-Mexico Border Near Douglas, Cochise County, Arizona (INS 2002a).
- Final Environmental Assessment For Conversion of Vehicle Barriers To Landing Mat Fence Naco, Arizona (USACE 2002).
- Final Environmental Assessment for JTF-6 Proposed Fence, Lighting, Road Repair and Improvement Project Douglas, Cochise County, Arizona (INS 2001b).
- Final Environmental Assessment For Naco Roadway and Fence Construction Naco, Cochise County, Arizona (INS 2003a).
- Final Environmental Assessment for JTF-6 Proposed Fence and Road Improvement Project, Naco, Cochise County, Arizona (USACE 2000).
- Final Environmental Assessment U.S. Border Patrol Temporary Vehicle Barriers Naco and Douglas, Arizona (INS 2002b).
- Final Environmental Assessment for Portable Lights within the Naco Corridor, Cochise County Arizona (INS 2001c).
- Supplemental Environmental Assessment for Whitewater Draw, Douglas, Cochise County, Arizona (USACE 2001).

This SEA is intended to evaluate the potential impacts that are expected to occur within the project corridor. The proposed action consists of the infrastructure (e.g., roads,

fences, lights, and drainage structures) that is deemed essential for the effective enforcement of the border strategy and integral to the success of the USBP to maintain control of the border.

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the State of Arizona, and a handful of private landowners control the majority of the land composing the project corridor. While wildlife habitat preservation is the predominant land use on public lands, private landowners generally maintain their lands for agricultural purposes. The geography along the U.S.-Mexico border at the Naco Station generally consists of rolling hills covered by dense scrub brush and mesquite trees. The approximate elevation of the Naco Station AO is 4,800 feet mean sea level (msl). However, the southern reaches of the Huachuca Mountains, which bound the western most portion of the Naco Station AO, reach elevations up to 8,000 feet msl. In the Douglas Station AO, the geography along the U.S.-Mexico border is generally flat and cut by numerous washes. The approximate elevation of the station is 4,000 feet msl. Further, to the east, the Parilla, Pedregosa and Swisshelm Mountains provide a natural barrier for northern travel from the border; some of these mountains reach elevations up to 8,000 feet msl.

The summers are very hot and dry with temperatures rising well above 100 degrees Fahrenheit (°F). In winter the average daily temperatures range from lows of 28°F to highs of 60°F. Snow can accumulate to a depth of several feet on the mountain peaks and can occur from November to April. Most of the rainfall in the area occurs during the summer months (July through September), usually as intense and violent thunderstorms.

The lack of natural barriers in areas along the U.S.-Mexico border results in numerous opportunities for illegal traffic to cross into the U.S. These are harsh and dangerous environments. Some border roads exist, but most are unpaved and rarely maintained. Furthermore, there is a limited infrastructure system (i.e., roads) in the north-south direction for the USBP to effectively gain reliable access to the border within the Naco and Douglas Stations' AO.

1.1.1 USBP Organization and Authority

The USBP has the responsibility to regulate and control immigration into the U.S. In 1924, the U.S. Congress created the USBP to serve as the law enforcement entity of the INS and it did so until November 25, 2002, when Congress transferred all INS responsibilities to the newly created U.S. Department of Homeland Security with the passage of the Homeland Security Act of 2002. The official transfer of responsibilities occurred on March 1, 2003. Recently the USBP was integrated as a department into the CBP. The CBP also assumed responsibilities and functions of other branches of the INS, as well as the U.S. Customs Service and the U.S. Agricultural Quarantine Inspectors.

The USBP's primary function remains to prevent and deter the unlawful entry of smugglers, terrorists, and illegal aliens along the U.S. land borders and between the ports-of-entry (POE). With the increase in illegal drug trafficking, the USBP also has become the leader for drug interdiction between land POEs. Illegal aliens have become a significant issue, as Mexican IAs account for 54 percent of all IAs residing within the U.S. Apprehension rates for the USBP currently average more than 1.5 million IAs annually throughout the country. The INS reported that there are between 7 and 11 million IAs in the U.S. (GAO 2001).

Following the terrorist attacks on U.S. soil on September 11, 2001, the U.S. Attorney General emphasized the need to prevent terrorism. The USBP is a key element in responding to this new threat to our nation and its citizens. The ability of the USBP to insure the integrity and security of our national borders would be an integral part of this effort to deter and prevent terrorism. The deployment of operations, infrastructure, and technology strategies along the U.S.-Mexico border are key elements in the USBP's efforts to deter and prevent terrorists from entering the U.S. For example, in FY 2002 the Tucson Sector apprehended IAs from over 56 countries.

The primary sources of authority granted to officers of the USBP are the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), found in Title 8 of the U.S. Code (USC), and other statutes relating to the immigration and naturalization of aliens. Secondary sources of authority are administrative regulations implementing those statutes, primarily those found in Title 8 of the Code of Federal Regulations (8 CFR Section 287), judicial decisions, and

administrative decisions of the Board of Immigration Appeals. In addition, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) mandates USBP to acquire and/or improve equipment and technology along the border, hire and train new agents for the border region, and develop effective border enforcement strategies.

Subject to constitutional limitations, USBP officers may exercise the authority granted to them in the INA. The statutory provisions related to enforcement authority are found in Sections 287(a), 287(b), 287(c), and 287(e) [8 USC § 1357(a,b,c,e)]; Section 235(a) [8 USC § 1225]; Sections 274(b) and 274(c) [8 USC § 1324(b,c)]; Section 274(a) [8 USC § 1324(a)]; and Section 274(c) [8 USC § 1324(c)] of the INA. Other statutory sources of authority are Title 18 of the USC (18 USC), which has several provisions that specifically relate to enforcement of the immigration and nationality laws; Title 19 [19 USC § 1401(i)], relating to U.S. Customs Service cross designation of USBP officers; and Title 21 [21 USC § 878], relating to Drug Enforcement Agency cross-designation of USBP officers.

Section 287(a)(3) of the INA provides further authority to USBP agents to enter any lands and/or facilities within 25 miles of the international borders, without prior approval of the property owner, in the pursuit of illegal aliens and/or drug traffickers. The USBP attempts to stay on established roads during their apprehension efforts to avoid environmental impacts, increase their own safety, and reduce maintenance costs to vehicles. However, it is within their authority to traverse all lands during apprehension.

1.1.2 Naco Station

The Naco Station AO is located in southeastern Arizona within Cochise County and includes approximately 1,256 square miles. The Naco Station's AO includes approximately 36 miles of international border from Montezuma Pass near the Huachuca Mountains and eastward to a point on the border that is approximately 5 miles east of Bisbee Junction Road near Cook Canyon. However, in early Fiscal Year (FY) 2003 the Naco Station acquired 5 additional miles of what was formerly the jurisdiction of Douglas Station. Prior to this change in jurisdiction, the Naco Station AO included approximately 31 miles bounded in the east at a point directly south of the Bisbee Junction Road. In order to remain consistent with the Corridor EA, alternatives identified in this SEA will utilize the past jurisdictional alignments. This area of southern Arizona is rural and

isolated. The Town of Naco (population 833) is the only community within the project corridor and is where the USBP station headquarters are located. Naco Station has a patrol force of approximately 203 agents that patrol the border (USBP 2002a, 2003). The nearest major community within the Naco Station AO is Bisbee (population 14,000) located approximately 10 miles north of Naco. The Naco Station experiences high amounts of illegal traffic, both alien and narcotics. Staging of both IAs and narcotics takes place just south of the border in Naco, Sonora.

The Naco Station currently maintains a traffic checkpoint on State Route 90, north of Huachuca City. USBP agents patrol the entire AO on improved and semi-improved roads using 4x4 vehicles, all terrain vehicles (ATVs), and horses. Roving patrols are also conducted along public and private access roads leading to and from the border. However, operations that actually occur on the U.S.-Mexico border such as line-watch operations are limited due to access and lack of adequate roads for patrol.

The Naco Station utilizes infrequent flights as patrol routes originating out of Fort Huachuca's Libby Army Airfield or the Tucson International Airport. The flight paths are usually limited to low-level flights along the alignment of the U.S.-Mexico border. Deviations from this route are only made to follow tracks, persons, or vehicles that have entered the U.S. illegally. Agents at the Naco Station patrol 77 miles of improved and semi-improved roads within their AO on a daily basis. There is currently one repeater (communications signal) and two checkpoints (Highway 80 and Highway 90) within the station's AO, although the checkpoint at Highway 80 located north of Tombstone is operated by the Wilcox Station. The Naco Station maintains 21 miles of drag roads along the border, eight remote video surveillance (RVS) sites, and ground sensors in use within the station's AO.

1.1.3 Douglas Station

The Douglas Station AO is located within Cochise County Arizona and covers approximately 1,019 square miles. Figure 1-1 (shown previously) illustrates that the station's AO includes approximately 20 miles (formerly 25 miles as noted earlier) of the international border from Cook Canyon, which is located approximately 6 miles east of Naco, Arizona, to approximately 12 miles east of Douglas. Douglas is the only major city located within the station AO and is where the station headquarters are located.

Currently, there is a patrol force of approximately 469 USBP agents. The Douglas Station leads the Tucson Sector in terms of density of illegal traffic, both alien and narcotics. It is not uncommon to have 100 to 200 illegal aliens staging along Mexico Highway 2 preparing to cross the border on any given evening. Just across the border from the City of Douglas is Agua Prieta, Sonora, Mexico, a town of 61,841 people, where organized smuggling operations of both aliens and narcotics are regularly staged (INS 2002c).

USBP activities within the Douglas Station's AO are primarily concentrated near the City of Douglas, as well as patrols occurring on approximately 88 miles of improved and semi-improved roads. The Douglas Station currently maintains a traffic checkpoint located on State Highway 191. There are 25 miles of drag roads within the Douglas Station's AO that are prepared once daily. Off-road activities entail the cross-country tracking of alien groups using horses or on foot, and are conducted several times daily throughout the station's AO. ATVs are also used outside the city limits to patrol the U.S.-Mexico border. The Douglas Station currently utilizes a total of 59 temporary vehicle barriers along approximately 0.9 mile of border. These include three barricades covering 0.1 mile east of the POE and 56 barricades covering approximately 0.8 mile west of the POE.

Douglas has helipad and refueling capabilities located at the local airport. There are currently no regular flights or set patrol routes in the Douglas area. When assistance is requested, helicopters fly along the border near the City of Douglas. Deviations from this route are only made to follow tracks, persons, or vehicles that have entered the U.S. illegally. There are ground sensors and 13 RVS sites in use by the Douglas Station.

1.1.4 Infrastructure Components

The following subsections provide general descriptions of the types of infrastructure that have been completed or planned/proposed for construction for each alternative, including the No Action Alternative. The design of each infrastructure project will vary depending upon the USBP Station's strategic needs, local terrain, regulatory constraints and guidelines, community perceptions, funding, and the alternative that is ultimately selected for implementation.

1.1.4.1 Primary and Secondary Fencing

Primary pedestrian fences are generally 14 to 17 feet high and situated within 2 to 6 feet of the border. Generally, operational needs, terrain and other restricting obstacles dictate the placement of these structures. Examples of typical fences employed by USBP are provided in Photographs 1-1 through 1-4.

Secondary fences are pedestrian barrier fencing that are installed 130 to 300 feet north of the primary fence. These fences serve as a containment element that enhance the ability of apprehension through enhanced response time by impeding northward traffic and, thus assures deterrence to illegal crossings. This combination of primary and secondary pedestrian barrier fences serves to create the basis for absolute certainty of apprehension and therefore immediate deterrence defensibility in high traffic areas.

The majority of the proposed pedestrian barrier would likely be constructed from surplus military landing mat (Photograph 1-1) similar to the existing fence in the area at a cost of approximately \$5,000/mile. Each landing mat panel would be welded to the next to form a solid fence. Vertical support poles would be installed using an auger and holes would be grouted with concrete. Currently, only 4 miles in the Douglas AO and 3 miles in the Naco AO have been constructed.

Approximately 2 miles of decorative picket style fences (Photograph 1-2) have been used (e.g., near the Douglas POE, where there are approximately 2 miles). The intended use of picket fences is for aesthetic reasons rather than structural or cost effectiveness. This fence has only been used in an urban setting due to the high cost of construction (approximately \$200,000/mile) and the relative low durability of this design.

The bollard fence (Photograph 1-3) consists of a double row of 10- to 15-foot high steel pipe poles, approximately 6 inches in diameter, placed on 8.5-inch centers. The pipes would be filled with concrete for added strength and security. The two rows are offset, such that the gaps between the poles would be filled by the poles of the other row. A concrete footer is required to anchor the poles, approximately 20 inches wide and 3 feet deep. This type of fence is normally only used in areas with flowing water that would damage other types of fences. It is the most expensive to construct, costing approximately \$1,000,000/mile.



Photograph 1-1. Landing Mat Style Fence



Photograph 1-2. Picket Style Fence



Photograph 1-3. Bollard Style Fence



Photograph 1-4. Sandia Style Fence

Sandia fences (Photograph 1-4) have been used in other areas along the border. The current standard design consists of vertical secure metal mesh panels attached to 16-foot steel poles. Additional 6-foot panels are secured to the top panels at an angle of 45 degrees toward the south. The poles would be anchored to a 12-inch wide by 4-foot deep concrete footing that runs the length of the proposed fence. Generally, this type of fence has been used as a secondary fence behind the landing mat panel fence or in maximum-security situations because of the high construction costs (approximately \$200,000/mile) and high maintenance costs if subjected to vandalism.

1.1.4.2 Vehicle Barriers

Vehicle barriers are placed in high vehicle traffic areas rather than primary pedestrian fences. As the name implies, vehicle barriers are designed to impede illegal vehicle

entry; however, they do not preclude pedestrian or wildlife movement. It should be noted that pedestrian fences could be barriers to illegal vehicular traffic as well, depending on materials/design. Permanent barriers are placed on the southern toe of existing border roadways, unless natural barriers exist, providing significant deterrence and protection from illegal vehicle traffic. The vehicle barriers cannot be rolled or moved manually, and can be either temporarily or permanently set in place. The proposed vehicle barriers are typically constructed of welded metal such as railroad track (Photograph 1-5), but may be also constructed of pipe (Photograph 1-6). Currently approximately 1.2 miles of vehicle barriers exist east of the Naco POE and 0.9 miles of barrier exist approximately 1 mile west of the POE. The Douglas Station also employs temporary vehicle barriers. These barricades are not permanently emplaced in order for the USBP to block off specific areas that are subjected to illegal vehicle entries. The majority of these barricades are constructed of railroad steel (photograph 1-7 and photograph 1-8).



Photograph 1-5. Primary Vehicle Barrier (railroad track)



Photograph 1-6. Primary Vehicle Barrier (pipe)



Photograph 1-7. Temporary Vehicle Barrier (railroad track)



Photograph 1-8. Temporary Vehicle Barrier being loaded

1.1.4.3 Roadway Construction

Most of the existing roads along the U.S.-Mexico border were not designed to withstand environmental elements and high vehicle traffic. As a result, many have succumbed to erosion and are impassable. To compound this problem, vast areas of the U.S.-Mexico border do not have any road access to the border at all, which greatly deminishes response times of USBP agents.



Photograph 1-9. Typical Drag Road

The majority of the dirt roads constructed within the border region were approximately 12 to 24 feet wide when originally built. Over the years, vegetation has encroached to the point that some roads are now typically less than 10 feet wide. In addition, most roads have experienced wind and water erosion that has resulted in long, impassable stretches. The current conditions of these roads do not allow efficient use by the USBP.

New road construction would involve grading and leveling proposed roadbeds, filling areas with existing materials (existing on roadways) or engineered fill, lifting and bedding stretches of road, and installing drainage structures to aid with water drainage.

Typically, past upgrading or repair of these roads produced a road width of 20 feet with parallel drainage. To allow for added safety and increased response time, new roadway designs have been incorporated to increase the width of new or upgraded road construction to a total of 28 feet wide plus appropriate shoulder grades. A typical new border road would be 28 feet wide consisting of a 24-foot wide all-weather surface with two 2-foot shoulders on each side and up to 5 feet on either side to allow for grade and parallel drainage.

Drag roads are typically constructed on the south side of patrolled roads. Drag roads are essential tools utilized by USBP agents to detect illegal border crossings. Tires are pulled along the roadbed to smooth out the surface leaving a freshly prepared surface,

as depicted in Photograph 1-9, which allows USBP agents to detect signs of recent illegal alien traffic.

Installation of primary fences and vehicle barriers generally requires the construction of a road (approximately 10 feet wide) immediately adjacent to construction activities. To allow future maintenance on fences, these construction roads are considered a permanent infrastructure component. In order to minimize cut and fill activities, these roads follow the contour of the land and would be used infrequently. Therefore, all-weather surfaces along the construction roads are not required because USBP traffic can access these areas from adjacent patrolled roads. Conversely, with the installation of secondary fences, maintenance roads are required to serve as reliable access to contained areas. These maintenance roads are constructed similar to that of the all-weather roads (24-foot all-weather surface), yet shoulders would be minimized as required to limit construction activities.

The all-weather roads, maintenance roads, and drag roads ensure a greater enforcement presence along rural areas of the border and increase the safety of USBP agents. Additionally, improved access along the border enhances response time of agents, projects a certainty of apprehension, and thus creates deterrence to illegal crossing attempts. A diagram of a typical layout of these structures (patrolled roads and drag road) is provided in Figure 1-2.

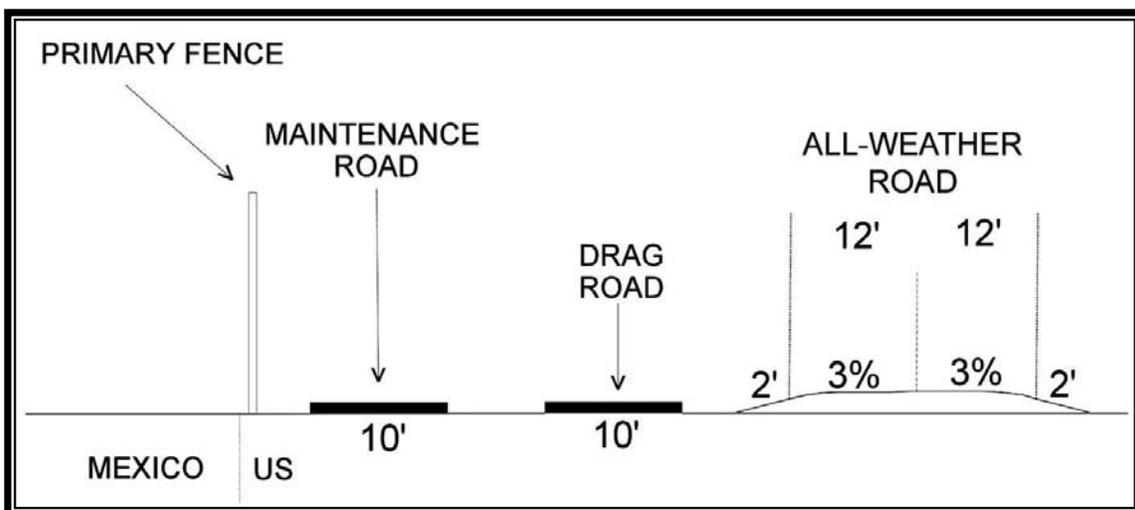


Figure 1-2. Typical All-Weather Road and Drag Road Layout

1.1.4.4 Permanent Lighting

Because many illegal aliens utilize the cover of darkness as camouflage to evade USBP agents, lighting has proven to be essential in deterring illegal crossings. Lighting increases effectiveness of USBP operations, as well as provides an element of security and safety for USBP agents.

Construction of permanent lights similar to the one depicted in Photograph 1-10 consists of stadium-type lights approximately 80 to 100 feet above grade. Light bulbs are typically 1,000 watts and can be either low or high pressure sodium vapor or metal halide bulbs. Two types of poles are typically considered: wooden poles encased in concrete steel culverts (to prevent them from being cut down), and steel poles with concrete footings. Overhead or underground electrical lines provide power from existing grids. Placement of light poles is estimated to affect no more than a 5-foot by 5-foot area, and the area affected by illumination is expected to be within 60 to 300 feet of the border depending on the extent of illumination that is required for effective and safe enforcement. Approximately 5 miles (i.e., 2 miles in the Naco AO and 3 miles in the Douglas AO) of permanent lighting has been installed within the project corridor. Light poles have typically been spaced approximately 225-400 feet apart near the urban areas of the Town of Naco and the City of Douglas. New lighting designs have utilized different wattages (or types of lights) and realigned the light poles to 225 feet apart to control the illumination. The extent of illumination is reduced further, by shielding the north, east, and west sides of the bulbs (GTR 2002). Shielding techniques would effectively contain illumination, yet, supply adequate lighting for safe operations.



Photograph 1-10. Typical Permanent Lighting

It should be noted that in addition to permanent lighting, the Naco and Douglas Stations employ portable generator powered lighting. A 10.5-mile corridor currently exists in the Naco AO (approximately 8 miles west of the Naco POE and 3.5 miles east) where portable lighting is used to enhance USBP patrols and driving conditions. In the Douglas Station, 73 portable lights are similarly proposed for use along the U.S.-Mexico Border

across the entire AO. Portable lighting is often moved in response to illegal activity, so that the entire area is not continuously illuminated.

1.1.4.5 Drainage Structures

Low-water crossings such as the one presented in Photograph 1-11 would reduce erosion and road maintenance without adversely altering existing drainages along the border. Low-water crossings are typically concrete slabs or culverts with gravel, rip-rap, gabions and other erosion control devices placed on the banks in order to control erosion. Many of the current washes in remote areas are not passable for extended periods of time following flood events. In light of this, construction and/or improvement of low-water crossings alone would improve USBP agents response time through reliable access. Engineers typically analyze each drainage and assess whether or not a low-water crossing is needed. Analysis includes the need for low-water crossings, minor culverts, major culverts, bridges or additional improvements.



Photograph 1-11. Typical Low-water Crossing

1.1.4.6 Remote Video Surveillance (RVS)

Ground sensors and RVS are components of USBP's Integrated Surveillance Intelligence Systems (ISIS), which has become an integral part of the detection process, thereby enhancing the agents' ability to apprehend illegal entrants. ISIS components include, but are not limited to, unattended ground sensors, low-light television cameras, infrared cameras, towers (and their connections to power and communication lines), and intelligent computer aided detection (ICAD). The various remote sensing systems can be used separately or in combination with several types of systems or with other, more routine, enforcement actions (i.e., patrols). However, to be most effective, or for maximum optimization, the ISIS needs to be utilized in conjunction with other infrastructure and resources.

RVS systems have become a powerful tool in the detection of IAs and illegal drug traffickers. The purpose of RVS systems is to aide the USBP in the detection of illegal activity along the U.S. borders by providing 24-hour surveillance capabilities. The RVS system is a passive all-weather monitoring system, which provides continuous electronic surveillance using day and night imagery.

For the purpose of this SEA, discussion of RVS systems is limited to its purpose as an added component in combination with other infrastructure. Generally, these systems are tactically positioned north of the project corridor, yet within line of sight of target areas along the border. Currently the Douglas and Naco Stations have 8 RVS systems. An additional 9 RVS site locations were recently addressed in the Final EA for the installation and operation of 9 RVS systems (INS 2003b). For general purposes, each RVS site is expected to occupy a 50-foot by 50-foot area. The benefits associated with the USBP's ability to provide 24-hour surveillance capabilities would add to the overall effectiveness of the USBP fulfilling their mission. However, further discussion of RVS systems in this document will be limited since the actual number, location, and design are not known at the present time.

1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the programs and improvements discussed in this SEA is to facilitate USBP law enforcement along the identified section of the U.S.-Mexico border as mandated by Federal laws. The need for these programs is to gain, maintain, and extend control of the U.S.-Mexico border. The major goals of the USBP enforcement strategy and the purpose of the proposed infrastructure components in this document are:

- Deter illegal entries
- Enhance the safety of USBP agents
- Reduce the current enforcement footprint
- Create a defensible and enforceable zone that reduces illegal crossings and drug smuggling operations
- Enhance response time for USBP agents

The U.S. experiences a substantial influx of illegal immigrants and drugs each year. Both of these illegal activities cost the American citizens billions of dollars annually. Costs are related directly to criminal activities, including the cost of apprehension, detention and incarceration of criminals; and, indirectly in loss of property, illegal participation in government programs and increased insurance costs. To combat the rising numbers of IAs in the U.S., the Clinton Administration committed additional resources to law enforcement agencies, including the USBP. As indicated in Figure 1-3, the numbers of agents assigned to the Naco and Douglas Stations have dramatically increased since the FY of 1996. In response to these manpower increases IA traffic has decreased, yet remain at unacceptable levels.

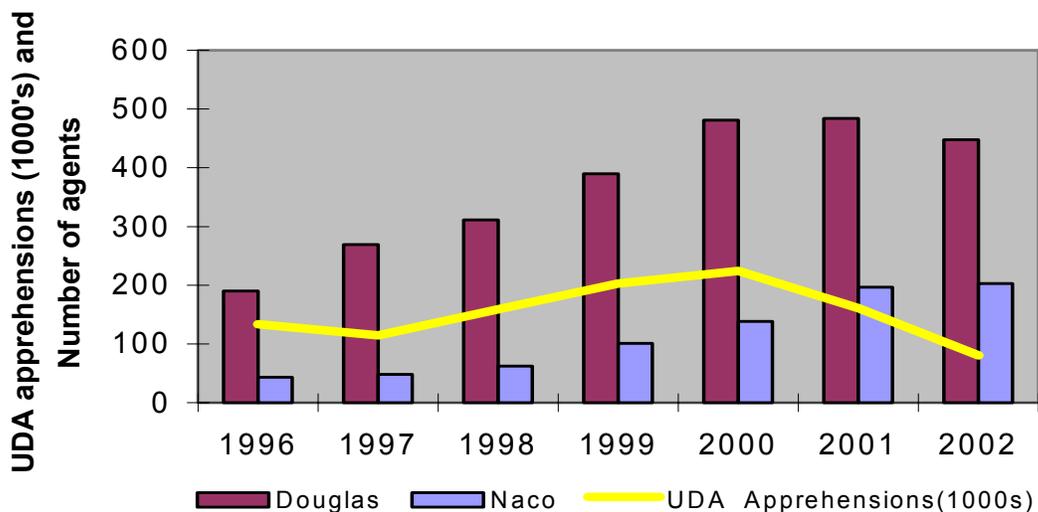


Figure 1-3. USBP Staffing Levels and IA Apprehensions at Naco and Douglas Stations

Source: USBP 2000, 2002a, 2002b

The constant flow of IAs passing through the U.S.-Mexico border area also threatens public lands, archaeological and historic buildings/structures, and endangered species habitat. Vehicles used by smugglers are continuously being abandoned in National Parks and other natural and sensitive areas. Removal of these vehicles is becoming an ever-increasing burden on Federal and state land managers, private landowners, as well as the USBP. IAs have trampled vegetation and left litter and deposited human excrement in an area that extends from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM's) Guadalupe Canyon in the southeast corner of Arizona to the National Park Service (NPS) Coronado National Memorial south of Sierra Vista (Arizona Daily Star 2000). The

following description was taken from a letter written by James Bellamy, Superintendent at the Coronado National Memorial to Senator Jon Kyl on June 20, 2000.

“This activity [IA invasion into protected areas] has significantly impacted park resources. Human foot traffic has created several trails the width of one-lane roads. The large numbers of people have destroyed vegetation, exposed bare ground, eroded deep hillsides, and caused scars that will take years to heal. Smaller trails cover some parts of the park like spider webs. Litter covers the ground in many places, particularly plastic water bottles, food containers, discarded clothing and blankets. Conditions are very unsanitary in many places due to the amount of feces and toilet paper.”

Drug trafficking has also become an increasing problem. USBP stations along the southwestern border experienced a 19% increase in the number of drug seizures from FY 1998 to FY 1999. More importantly, the value and number of drug seizures along the southwestern border represent at least 95% of those made by the USBP throughout the nation and is related to the high percentage of total USBP manpower required along the southwestern border. Partially in response to successful deterrence programs in other border areas such as San Diego, California and El Paso, Texas, the Naco and Douglas Stations experienced a steady rise in the number of seizures from FY 1996 to FY 2000. In response to increased manpower and infrastructure projects, the Naco and Douglas Stations experienced a steady fall in the number of seizures since FY 2000. However, the most alarming fact is that despite changes in the number of seizures, the USBP has seen a doubling effect in the pounds of drugs (particularly marijuana) seized since FY 1994 (Figure 1-4).

The negative impacts of widespread drug use on society continues to affect the work force, educational system, general law and order, and traditional family values and structure (Office of National Drug Control Policy 1998 and 1999). Rising rates of violent crime, serious damage to the nation's health and economy, and strains on vital relationships with international allies led the U.S. Congress to develop the National Drug Control Strategy. The National Drug Control Strategy included the USBP and mandated a “prevention through deterrence” strategy. The National Drug Control Strategy also formulated a multi-year approach that required the USBP and other local drug law enforcement agencies to “... gain, maintain, and extend control...” of the border region

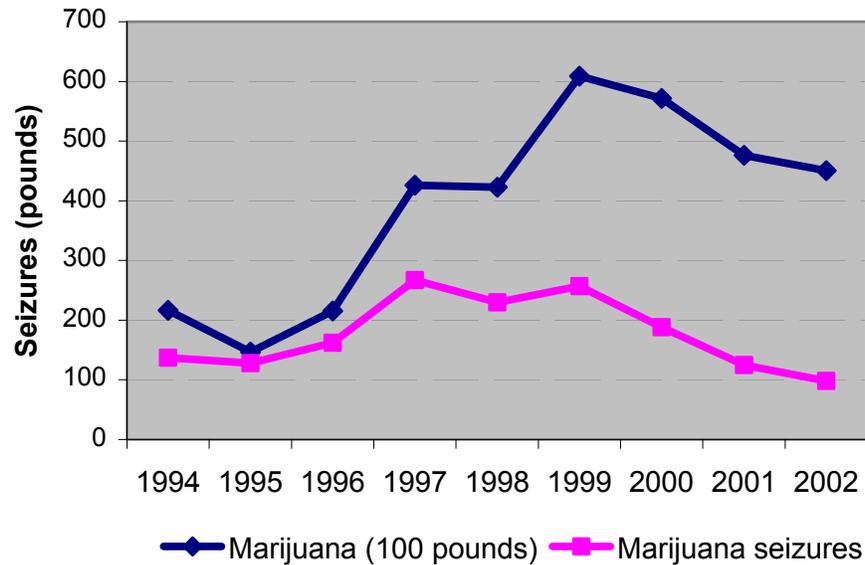


Figure 1-4. Total Marijuana Seizures and Total Pounds, For the USBP Douglas and Naco Stations Combined (1994-2002)

Source: USBP 2000, 2002a, 2002b

necessitating the construction and implementation of various infrastructure systems to enhance the USBP's ability to detect and apprehend IAs and drug traffickers. As mentioned earlier, collectively, the USBP Naco and Douglas Stations are responsible for approximately 57 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border, most of which are remote and rugged lands. Monitoring such a vast area creates a somewhat daunting task. Illegal immigrants and/or drug traffickers use many areas of the border to gain access to the U.S.

As a part of its enforcement operations, the USBP has had to establish highly trained rescue teams known as the Border Patrol Search Trauma and Rescue Team (BORSTAR). During FY 2002, the Tucson Sector BORSTAR engaged in 235 individual rescue missions in high-risk areas of the west desert corridor. These areas are considered to be high risk due to remoteness and rugged terrain, lack of transportation infrastructure, very limited water or shade, and temperatures that range from freezing winter nights to 115°F summer temperatures. The 28-member Tucson Sector BORSTAR rescued 340 persons during the FY02 missions. BORSTAR personnel also provided medical treatment to 168 persons.

The Naco and Douglas Stations use a variety of methods to detect and deter illegal drug traffickers. Deterrence is achieved through the actual presence (24 hours per day, seven days per week) of USBP agents on the border, fences and other physical (natural and man-made) barriers, lighting, and the knowledge that the illegal entrants would be detected and apprehended. Detection of the illegal traffickers is accomplished through a variety of low-technology and high-technology resources including observing physical signs of illegal entry (vehicle tracks and footprints, clothes, etc.), visual observation of the illegal entries, information provided by private landowners or the general public, ground sensors, and RVS.

In past enforcement operations, strategies were reactive, and because little emphasis was placed on deterring illegal crossings, it diminished the importance of infrastructure along the U.S.-Mexico border. The USBP was forced to focus efforts primarily on making apprehensions after the international boundary was breached. This strategy utilized the “element of surprise” by deploying their limited resources away from the border in concealed positions. However, as illicit trafficking continued to increase, the area that the USBP was required to patrol also increased. The USBP’s inability to deter or contain illegal migration resulted in an increase in the geographic footprint, and subsequent environmental impacts, of illegal immigration patterns.

The purpose and need for the Proposed Action is to effectively employ the necessary infrastructure so that the detection and apprehension can be assured at the border. This will substantially reduce the enforcement footprint, create deterrence, increase the safety of USBP agents, and decrease the environmental impacts associated with illegal entries.

1.3 REPORT ORGANIZATION

This report is organized into nine major sections including this introduction. Section 2 describes all alternatives considered during the preparation of the SEA. Section 3 discusses environmental baseline conditions for resources potentially affected by the proposed action, while Section 4 discusses the environmental consequences in relation to each of the viable alternatives. Mitigation measures are discussed in Section 5 and public involvement is addressed in Section 6. Sections 7, 8, and 9 present a list of the references cited in the document, a list of acronyms and abbreviations, and a list of the

persons involved in the preparation of this document, respectively. Appendix A includes vegetation data and infrared photography of the entire project area. Appendix B provides correspondence conducted during the development of this SEA. Appendix C provides a list of species protected by the State of Arizona in Cochise County. Appendix D provides an air quality and emissions analysis. Appendix E has supporting documents of the public involvement process, such as the Notice of Availability (NOA).

1.4 APPLICABLE ENVIRONMENTAL STATUTES AND REGULATIONS

This SEA was prepared under contract to the USACE, Fort Worth District, in accordance with, but not limited to the NEPA of 1969; Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended; the National Historical Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended; the Archaeological and Historical Preservation Act (AHPA) of 1974, as amended; Executive Order (E.O.) No. 11593, "Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment"; E.O. No. 11988, "Floodplain Management"; E.O. No. 11990, "Protection of Wetlands"; E.O. No. 13007, "Indian Sacred Sites"; E.O. No. 13045, "Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks"; and E.O. No. 12898 "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice." Table 1-1 summarizes the pertinent environmental requirements that guided the development of this EA.

Table 1-1. Applicable Environmental Statutes and Regulations

Federal Statutes
Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954
National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended
Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, as amended
National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended
Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1972
Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended
Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974
Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1980
Clean Air Act of 1990, as amended
Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990
Clean Water Act of 1997, as amended
Executive Orders, Memorandums, etc.
Floodplain Management (E.O. 11988) of 1977
Protection of Wetlands (E.O. 11990) of 1977
Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments (Presidential Memorandum) of 1994
Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice to Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (E.O. 12898) of 1994
Indian Sacred Sites (E.O. 13007) of 1996
Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks (E.O. 13045) of 1997
Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments (E.O. 13175) of 2000
Protection of Migratory Birds & Game Mammals (E.O. 11629) of 2001