

---

## Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board

### **PUBLIC NOTICE OF INTENT TO RELY ON NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) DOCUMENTS**

**Project Applicant: U.S. Marine Corps, Department of the Navy**

**Project Title: P-192 Potable Water Blending/Treatment Facility**

**Project Location: Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms,  
San Bernardino County, California**

**Project Description.** The U.S. Marine Corps proposes to construct and operate a new drinking water treatment and blending facility within the boundaries of the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) located north of the town of Twentynine Palms, California (Project).

The purpose of the Project is to ensure continued availability of safe, regulatory compliant potable water for the Marines, civilian personnel, and residents and to sustain the MCAGCC's mission. The Project is needed because the MCAGCC has been reliant on a single groundwater source (Surprise Springs) to provide all potable water for over 60 years. This reliance is not sustainable and requires the use of an additional aquifer (Deadman) to reduce overdrafting of the Surprise Springs Aquifer. The water quality of the Deadman Aquifer does not meet California drinking water standards and Surprise Springs will continue to degrade in quality and availability over time, requiring the construction of a drinking water treatment facility.

The Project would consist of five infrastructure projects, including: (1) construction of a new drinking water treatment plant; (2) installation of potable water transmission lines; (3) construction and installation of supporting utilities to include electrical utilities (primary and secondary distribution system, telecommunications information systems infrastructure and an industrial control system, fiber optic cable, high voltage cable, and emergency back-up generator, and a transformer); (4) construction of three new 1,000 gallon-per-minute water wells; and (5) roadwork to include improvement, maintenance, and repair of approximately 2.66 linear miles of an existing supply route, construction of approximately 160 linear feet of road to access the new drinking water treatment plant from the existing supply route, improvement, maintenance, and repair of approximately 1.78 linear miles of existing roads from the new drinking water treatment plant to the new water wells, and construction of parking areas and roads within the perimeter fence of the new drinking water treatment plant and around each water well site. The new

NANCY WRIGHT, CHAIR | PAULA RASMUSSEN, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

treatment plant will include the construction of two new Class II surface impoundments for disposal of brine through evaporation. The Project would occur on land and along existing roads within the MCAGCC's Sandhill Training Area that contains densities (21-50 per square mile) of desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) but are not known to contain any other federally-listed or special-status species, has been surveyed and confirmed to have no cultural resource concerns, and is Category 1 (i.e., restricted) and Category 2 (i.e., sensitive) Special Use Areas. The Project would permanently impact approximately 69.25 acres (28.02 hectares).

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared that considered a range of Project alternatives and focused on potential environmental impacts to geological resources, biological resources, cultural resources, water resources, air quality, public health and safety, and utilities. Cumulative effects of the Project in combination with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions were also analyzed. A summary of potential environmental consequences with implementation of the Project or the No-Project Alternative is presented in Table ES-1 of the EA.

No significant environmental impacts were identified for the Project or any of the other evaluated alternatives, and a Final EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONISI) was issued on September 6, 2018. A Final Supplemental EA/FONSI, which examined potential environmental impacts from an expanded project boundary, was also issued on September 25, 2019.

**Regulatory Requirements.** The construction and operation of the Class II surface impoundments needed for disposal of brine produced by operation of the treatment plant are regulated under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Water Code, § 13000 et seq.) and implementing regulations in California Code of Regulations, title 27, section 20005 et seq. The U.S. Marine Corps applied for Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin Region (Regional Water Board). The Regional Water Board's issuance of WDRs is subject to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq.

The U.S. Marine Corps, as Lead Agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), prepared a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and circulated the document for a 30-day public comment period. Based on the draft EA and comments received, the U.S. Marine Corps issued a Final EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and later issued a Final Supplemental EA/FONSI (collectively, NEPA Documents). Pursuant to the NEPA Documents, the Project will not have a significant impact upon the existing environment or the quality of the human environment.

The NEPA Documents were prepared before a CEQA document would otherwise be completed for the Project. The Regional Water Board, as Lead Agency under CEQA, believes that the NEPA Documents for this Project meet the requirements of CEQA. The Regional Water Board intends to use the NEPA Documents instead of preparing a separate CEQA document. This public notice is being circulated pursuant to CEQA

Guidelines section 15225 found in title 14 of the California Code of Regulations.

**Document Availability.** Information on this matter, including copies of the NEPA Documents, is currently available and may be reviewed at the Regional Water Board office (73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100, Palm Desert, California 92260), during normal business hours. Interested persons may also receive a copy of the NEPA Documents by contacting Scot Stormo of the Regional Water Board at the address below. The NEPA Documents are also available online at the following website: <https://www.29palms.marines.mil/Staff-offices/Environmental-Affairs/>. This notice is also available on the Regional Water Board webpage at: [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/coloradoriver/public\\_notices/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/coloradoriver/public_notices/).

**Public Hearing.** The Regional Water Board intends to consider adopting WDRs for the P-192 Potable Water Blending/Treatment Facility during a public hearing that will commence at the following date and time:

**Date:** July 20, 2021

**Time:** 9:00 a.m.

**Location:** Virtual Meeting via Zoom Video Conference and Teleconference\*

\*As a result of the COVID-19 emergency and the Governor's Executive Orders to protect public health by limiting public gatherings and requiring social distancing, the Board meeting will occur solely via remote presence. In the event orders from the Governor of California change prior to the scheduled date of this meeting, the format of this meeting may change to also allow for in-person attendance at a physical meeting location (73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100, Palm Desert, CA 92260). Persons desiring to receive notice about changes to the format of this meeting should sign up for the Lyris e-mail list by subscribing to the Electronic Mailing List (select Board Meetings Agenda) at the following webpage: [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email\\_subscriptions/reg7\\_subscribe.html](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg7_subscribe.html)

Links for the Board meeting, a phone call option, and remote participation instructions are posted on the Regional Water Board's website at: [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/coloradoriver/board\\_info/remote\\_meeting/#participation\\_via\\_video\\_conference](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/coloradoriver/board_info/remote_meeting/#participation_via_video_conference)

Any person with questions or requests for additional information regarding this notice should contact Scot Stormo at (760) 776-8964 or [scot.stormo@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:scot.stormo@waterboards.ca.gov). Please bring this information to the attention of any person known to you who would be interested in this matter.

**Dated: June 11, 2021**

**Signed:** Original signed by  
Paula Rasmussen  
Executive Officer