

**SECTION 13.0**  
***RELATED PROJECTS AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS***





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## 13.0 RELATED PROJECTS AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS

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This section of the ESP addresses the potential cumulative impacts associated with the implementation of the Planned Action and other projects/programs that are planned for the region. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time by various agencies (Federal, state, and local) or individuals. Informed decision-making is served by consideration of cumulative impacts resulting from projects that are proposed, under construction, recently completed, or anticipated to be implemented in the reasonably foreseeable future.

USBP has been conducting law enforcement actions along the border since its inception in 1924, and has continually transformed its methods as new missions, IA modes of operations, agent needs, and national enforcement strategies have evolved. Development and maintenance of training ranges, station and sector facilities, detention facilities, and roads and fences have affected thousands of acres with synergistic and cumulative impacts on soil, wildlife habitats, water quality, and noise. Beneficial effects have resulted from the construction and use of these roads and fences, including but not limited to: increased employment and income for border regions and surrounding communities, protection and enhancement of sensitive resources north of the border; reduction in crime within urban areas near the border; increased land value in areas where border security has increased; and increased knowledge of the biological communities and pre-history of the region through numerous biological and cultural resources surveys and studies.

With continued funding and implementation of CBP's environmental conservation measures, including environmental education of its agents, use of biological and archaeological monitors, wildlife water systems, and restoration activities, adverse impacts of future and ongoing projects would be prevented or minimized. However, recent, ongoing, and reasonably foreseeable proposed projects will result in cumulative impacts. General descriptions of these types of activities are discussed in the following paragraphs.

**Cumulative Fencing along Southwestern Border.** There are currently 62 miles of landing mat fence at various locations along the U.S./Mexico international border (CRS 2006); 14 miles of single, double, and triple fence in San Diego, California; 70 miles of new primary pedestrian fence at various locations along the U.S./Mexico international border; and fences at POE facilities throughout the southern border. In addition, 225 miles of fence (including the 14 miles planned in the USBP Yuma Sector) are currently being planned for Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

**Past Actions.** Past actions are those within the cumulative effects analysis areas that have occurred prior to the development of this ESP. The effects of these past actions are generally described throughout the previous sections.

**Present Actions.** Present actions include current or funded construction projects, USBP or other agency actions in close proximity to the planned fence locations, and current resource management programs and land use activities within the cumulative effects analysis areas. Ongoing actions considered in the cumulative effects analysis include the following:

- Secure Border Initiative (SBI<sub>net</sub>) Projects – SBI<sub>net</sub> is a comprehensive program focused on transforming border control through technology and infrastructure. The goal of the program is to field the ideal combination of technology, infrastructure, and staffing, and integrate them into a single comprehensive border security suite for DHS. It is the goal of SBI<sub>net</sub> to have operational control of both the northern and southern borders within 5 years.

**Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions.** Reasonably foreseeable future actions consist of activities that have been approved and can be evaluated with respect to their effects. The following activities are reasonably foreseeable future actions:

- SBI<sub>net</sub> Projects - Potential future SBI<sub>net</sub> projects include deployment of sensor technology, communications equipment, command and control equipment, fencing, barriers capable of stopping a vehicle, and any required road or components such as lighting and all-weather access roads. SBI<sub>net</sub> is planning to construct and retrofit a total of approximately 57 towers within the western portion of the Tucson Sector in FY 2008.

Other CBP Projects:

- Construction of Primary Fence. The FY 2007 DHS Appropriations Act provided \$1.2 billion for the installation of fencing, infrastructure, and technology along the border (CRS 2006). CBP is proposing to construct up to 225 miles of primary fence in the Rio Grande Valley, Marfa, Del Rio, and El Paso, Texas; Tucson and Yuma, Arizona; El Centro and San Diego, California, sectors. In addition, up to 200 miles of vehicle barriers are also currently being planned in the El Centro, Yuma, Tucson, El Paso and Marfa sectors.

In addition, USBP might be required to implement other activities and operations that are currently not foreseen or mentioned in this document. These actions could be in response to national emergencies or security events like the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, or to changes in the mode of operations of cross border violators.

Plans by other agencies that would also affect the region's natural and human environment include various road improvements by Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and/or Santa Cruz County. The majority of these projects would be expected to occur along existing corridors and/or within previously disturbed sites. The magnitude of the impacts would depend upon the length and width of the road right of way (ROW) and the extant conditions within and adjacent to the ROW.

The 2007 Road EA documented several ADOT projects planned in the next 5 years (CBP 2007b). The details of these projects are incorporated herein by reference. Following is a summary of the types of ADOT projects currently in the planning stage:

- Country Club Road-Ruby Road – design of frontage roads
- U.S./Mexico border – Business I-19 roadway improvements
- Junction of State Route-189 and I-19 – roadway improvements
- Doe Street to Baffert Drive – retrofit, sidewalks, landscaping
- Patagonia Lake/Sonoita Creek – design planning
- State Route-82 between Mileposts 38 and 39.5 – slope flattening
- State Route-189 at Milepost 0.095 – drainage improvements
- Mariposa POE – parking lot and road improvements

Other agencies, such as BLM, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Marine Corps, NPS, and USFS, routinely prepare or update Resource Management Plans for the resources they manage. USFS has the responsibility of managing approximately half of all lands within Santa Cruz County. In addition to general range land management, the types of projects conducted by USFS include:

- lake maintenance projects;
- pasture divisions and grazing allotment management plans;
- fuelwood/hazardous fuel reduction plans;
- specific habitat improvement projects;
- facility planning;
- invasive exotic plant management programs;
- land exchanges;
- pipeline/transmission ROWs; and
- mechanical brush control plans.

The City of Nogales is the designated gateway from and to Mexico on the CANAMEX Trade Corridor. The name “CANAMEX” is derived from the country names of Canada, America, and Mexico, where a western trade corridor of 1,700 miles of existing highway and interstate systems connects the three countries. The CANAMEX corridor would likely become one of the most important north/south trade corridors in North America. The state governments of Arizona and Nevada are committed to obtaining funds to construct a four-lane divided highway in anticipation of the CANAMEX Trade Corridor. The completion of these projects would create an uninterrupted north/south highway system down the spine of the CANAMEX Trade Corridor. This project is in the planning stage, and potential impacts are unknown at this time.

A summary of the anticipated cumulative impacts of the Planned Action (i.e., construction of 7.6 miles of TI east of the DeConcini POE) is presented in the following sections. Discussions are presented for each of the resources described previously.

### **13.1 AIR QUALITY**

The emissions generated during and after the construction of the fence will be short-term and minor; thus, no long-term or cumulative major impacts are expected. Although maintenance of the fence and construction/access road will result in cumulative impacts on the region's airshed, these impacts will be minimal, even when combined with the other proposed developments in the border region. No air quality standards will be exceeded, and no obstruction of air quality plans, or exposure of sensitive receptors will occur. BMPs designed to reduce fugitive dust have been and will continue to be standard operating procedure for CBP construction projects. Deterrence of and improved response time to cross border violators, due to the construction of the fence and road, will be expected to reduce the need for future off-road enforcement actions by USBP agents.

### **13.2 NOISE**

Most of the noise generated by the Planned Action will occur during construction and thus will not contribute to cumulative impacts on ambient noise levels. Routine maintenance of the fence and road will result in slight temporary and sporadic increases in noise levels that will continue to occur over the long-term. Potential sources of noise from other projects in combination with routine maintenance are not enough (temporally or spatially) to increase ambient noise levels above the 65 dBA range in the ROI. Thus, the noise generated by the construction and maintenance of the fence and road, when considered with the other existing and proposed projects in the region, will be a minor adverse cumulative impact.

### **13.3 LAND USE AND AESTHETICS**

The Planned Action will affect 116 acres permanently. While an additional 26 acres of equipment staging areas will be temporarily affected, these areas will return to the current use upon completion of construction. Land that is primarily used for cattle grazing and USBP patrol activities will be acquired through lease, easement, or fee title to the government and will become part of the TI system (i.e., road and fence footprint) that provides improved border enforcement. Therefore, this action will have a minor cumulative adverse impact.

There will be no major impact on visual resources from implementing the Planned Action, due in part to the surrounding development and the existing border TI. Construction and maintenance of the primary pedestrian fence, when considered with existing and proposed developments in the surrounding area, including other USBP-proposed TI components (e.g., relocation of 55 permanent lights adjacent to the project corridor [CBP 2007a]), will not have a major cumulative adverse impact on the visual quality of the region. Areas north of the border will experience beneficial, indirect cumulative impacts from the reduction of trash, soil erosion, and wildfires produced by IAs.

### **13.4 SOILS**

The Planned Action and other USBP actions in the area have not reduced prime farmland soils or agricultural production. Pre- and post-construction SWPPP measures will be implemented to control erosion. No inappropriate soil types are located at the project site that will present a safety risk. The impact on 116 acres of permanently altered and 26 acres of temporarily disturbed soils, when combined with past and proposed projects in the region, will be minor to moderate cumulative adverse impact.

### **13.5 WATER RESOURCES**

Coordination with the USACE-Los Angeles District will occur prior to construction within potential jurisdictional WUS to discuss mitigation measures that could be implemented to provide no net loss of the functions of these sensitive resources. The required SWPPP measures will reduce erosion and sedimentation during construction to negligible levels and will eliminate post-construction erosion and sedimentation from the site. The same measures will be implemented for other construction projects; therefore, the cumulative impact of the Planned Action will be minor to moderate.

The Planned Action will have no major impact on floodplains. Fences and roads will be designed to so that floodwater conveyance is not impeded and that flood elevations, frequencies, and durations are not be increased. Therefore, when combined with other existing and proposed projects in the region, any cumulative adverse impacts on floodplains will be negligible.

There will be minor impact on groundwater resources as a result of the withdrawal of 7.6 acre-feet of water for the construction and maintenance of the fence and road. When combined with past and proposed projects in the region, the Planned Action is not considered to have a major cumulative adverse impact.

### **13.6 VEGETATION COMMUNITIES**

Removal of Scrub-Grassland and Riparian Deciduous Forest and Woodland communities (as identified in the Planned Action), will not have a major cumulative impact on vegetation, due to the vast amount of similar habitat contained within and surrounding the project corridor and the juxtaposition of the project corridor with other disturbed and developed areas. Without mitigation to offset potential impacts, the loss of 2 acres of Cottonwood–Willow community will be considered a moderate cumulative impact, due to its importance to many riparian wildlife and aquatic species. However, prior to construction of any proposed project, mitigation measures, as deemed appropriate, will be implemented to offset potential impacts.

Other USBP projects, including vegetation clearing and additional lighting, will have cumulative adverse impacts. The extent of these impacts is not known, since the actions are not planned or defined to date. However, the long-term viability of vegetation communities in the ROI will not be threatened. This loss of vegetative

habitat, when combined with other ground-disturbing or development projects in the ROI, will not have a major cumulative impact on the region's vegetation communities.

### **13.7 WILDLIFE**

Removal of wildlife habitat will have minor cumulative impacts due to the vast amount of similar habitat contained within and surrounding the project corridor.

As a result of past and planned projects within the Tucson Sector, cumulative impacts due to fragmentation of habitat are considered moderate to substantial. Most all of the border within the Tucson Sector will have physical barriers installed once all proposed and planned projects are completed. Many segments of these barriers will be vehicle fence rather than primary pedestrian fence. In addition, even future primary pedestrian fence that is constructed within arroyos or washes would be likely designed and constructed to allow conveyance of flood flows, which would require some small gaps in the fence panels. Thus, there will still be opportunities for transboundary migration.

Due to the vast amount of similar habitat contained within and surrounding the project corridor, the juxtaposition of the project corridor with other disturbed and developed areas, and the fact that there will be gaps in the barriers, the long-term viability of species and communities in the project region will not be threatened. Thus, when combined with other ground-disturbing or development projects in the project region, the Planned Action will not have a major cumulative negative impact on the region's biological resources.

As part of the coordination with USFWS, conservation measures have been developed, as appropriate, to minimize cumulative impacts on protected species. Therefore, this action, when combined with other existing and proposed projects in the ROI, will not jeopardize the continued existence of any species.

### **13.8 CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Six NRHP-eligible sites are within the project corridor. Five of these sites are border monuments and can be avoided by the proposed action. One archaeological site AZ EE:9:257 is recommended to be avoided. If avoidance is not possible testing is recommended to mitigate adverse effects. As a result cultural resources will be affected by the planned action.

### **13.9 SOCIOECONOMICS**

Construction under the Planned Action will result in a temporary, minor and beneficial impact on the region's economy. There will be no long-term or cumulative adverse impact on residential areas, populations, or minority or low-income families.

### **13.10 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

Only minor increases in the use of hazardous substances (e.g., POL) could occur as a result of the construction and maintenance of the fence and road. No health or safety risks will be created by the Planned Action. Therefore, the Planned Action, when combined with other ongoing and proposed projects in the region, is not expected to have a major cumulative impact.

### **13.11 ROADWAYS AND TRAFFIC**

The potential for delays and disruption of traffic will not occur on a daily basis, as heavy equipment transport will occur intermittently and equipment will be stockpiled at one of the temporary staging areas. Traffic levels and patterns will return to normal conditions following the construction period. Therefore, the Planned Action, when combined with other currently proposed or ongoing projects within the region, will not have a major cumulative impact.

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