

**NEVADA BIGHORNS
UNLIMITED**

**Non-Profit Tax Exempt
ID 88-0180276**



**P.O. Box 21393
Reno, Nevada 89515-1393
Phone & Fax
(775) 323-1177
www.nevadabighorns.org**

December 9, 2016

Nellis Air Force Base
99th Air Base Public Affairs
4430 Grissom Avenue, Suite 107
Nellis AFB, NV 89191

RE: NTTR Military Land Withdrawal and LEIS Scoping Comments

Dear U.S. Air Force:

Nevada Bighorns Unlimited - Reno (NBU) is a sportsmen's group concerned with the conservation of bighorn sheep as well as other issues impacting various wildlife species throughout Nevada. Our membership represents the largest single chapter of sportsmen and women in the state of Nevada with over 3,400 members. We ask that you strongly consider these scoping comments during the development of the Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR) Military Land Withdrawal Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS).

Upon review of the proposed withdrawal of over 300,000 acres of public land, major concerns with potential adverse impacts to wildlife were raised. The Desert National Wildlife Refuge (DNWR) represents a significant portion of Nevada's total bighorn sheep population and is an important area to numerous other wildlife species. Specifically, we have concerns regarding the impacted ability to manage wildlife and their habitat, impacted access to and maintenance of water developments, and loss of access to important recreational areas.

Impacted Ability to Manage Wildlife and their Habitat

Managing bighorn sheep and other wildlife species is a huge responsibility and the systems that biologists and managers with the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) are responsible for are very dynamic. This is particularly true in the arid deserts of southern Nevada where the NTTR and DNWR exist. The proposed expansion would further limit these already difficult to manage areas. Effective wildlife management requires allowing managers full access to inventory, monitor and sometimes even manipulate the landscape for the betterment of wildlife. Closing off or restricting additional areas within DNWR will negatively impact wildlife and their habitat and is not supported by NBU.

Impacted Access to and Maintenance of Water Developments

Numerous water developments exist within the DNWR consisting of enhanced spring sites as well as guzzlers. The water developments represent enormous financial and labor investments by NDOW and volunteers. They have enhanced habitat and created areas that are both invaluable

Nevada Bighorns Unlimited-Reno

~ Sportsmen working for the future of Nevada's wildlife ~

and irreplaceable. Access must be retained to these areas so people can benefit from the wildlife that utilizes them. Additionally, maintenance is of premier importance and these areas will likely become non-functional if not cared for properly. Closing off access to these water developments is not acceptable.

Loss of Access to Important Recreational Areas

The lands that occur within the proposed withdrawal area represent vast areas of continuous landscape that recreationists consisting of hunters and non-hunters use throughout the year. These areas must not be closed off to the public.

NBU strongly supports multiple use management on our public lands. We also support the U.S. Air Force and look forward to seeing alternatives developed that allow a reasonable solution to the NTTR's training needs while also allowing NDOW, Nevada's sportsmen and other recreationists continued access to our public lands on DNWR.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joshua C. Vittori". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'J'.

Joshua C. Vittori - President
Nevada Bighorns Unlimited