FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
for the
PROPOSED U.S. BORDER PATROL STATION, LAREDO, TEXAS

I have reviewed the attached Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Fort Worth District, for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) proposed land purchase, construction of a U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) station, and relocation of agents to the new facility on an approximately 10-acre tract at the southeast corner of Grand Central Boulevard and the McPherson Road extension in Laredo, Webb County, Texas.

Existing conditions pose significant operational challenges to the USBP and require concentrated agent deployment throughout the area. Implementation of the proposed action would aid the USBP in controlling and deterring the influx of illegal immigration and contraband from Mexico into the United States in the Laredo Sector.

The INS proposes to purchase an approximately 10-acre tract of land from a private landowner in order to construct a USBP station at the southeast corner of Grand Central Boulevard and the McPherson Boulevard extension in Laredo, Webb County, Texas. The USBP agents stationed at the currently leased Laredo North Station would relocate to the new facility when construction is complete. The new station would consist of the following structures or components: a single-story building (30,500 square feet [sf]) with a detention area (2,500 sf); three aboveground storage tanks (two 10,000-gallon gasoline tanks and one 12,000-gallon diesel tank); a 2,500-sf drive/parking area; a dog kennel for 26 dogs; and a radio tower.

The analysis of potential project-related environmental impacts is documented in the EA prepared for the project. Biological and cultural resources surveys were conducted to identify any sensitive resources potentially affected by the project. Findings were coordinated with the appropriate resource agencies. The portion of cultural resource site 41WB361 represented within the project area (41WB361B) is not recommended as eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The removal of approximately 10 acres of potential habitat for three state-listed threatened reptiles, and any reptiles it would contain, would not contribute to the federal listing of these species due to the low number of individuals which could occur at the project site. There would be no effect to federally listed endangered, threatened, or candidate species from the proposed action.

The proposed action is not anticipated to have any significant adverse impacts to soils, water, biological, or cultural resources. No significant adverse impacts are anticipated to land use, socioeconomics, hazardous materials and waste, air quality, or noise. In addition, the proposed action is not anticipated to have any long-term adverse impacts to the environment.

A review of the EA and coordination with the appropriate agencies indicate that implementation of the proposed action, as described in the EA, would not have any significant impacts on the quality of the physical and biological environment. All requirements of the National

Environmental Policy Act have been satisfied; therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

May 28, 1998
Date

Rick Diefenbeck
RICHARD J. DIEFENBECK,
Director
Office of Administration
Headquarters Facilities and
Engineering Division

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF THE U.S. BORDER PATROL STATION IN LAREDO, WEBB COUNTY, TEXAS

Prepared for:

IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE
(Lead Agency)

Prepared by:

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
FORT WORTH DISTRICT
Fort Worth, Texas

MAY 1998

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Executive Summary

This Environmental Assessment (EA) assesses the potential for adverse or beneficial environmental impacts in accordance with provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. The scope of this EA addresses the potential impacts of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) proposed property purchase, construction of a U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) station, and relocation of agents from a temporary facility to the new facility. The proposed facility would be located on an approximately 10-acre tract of land at the southeast corner of Grand Central Boulevard and the McPherson Boulevard extension in Laredo, Webb County, Texas.

The purpose of the proposed action is to construct a new facility to replace the currently leased facility that serves as the Laredo North Station. The new station is necessary to accommodate an increased number of agents who have been assigned to the sector as mandated by Congress. The INS Long-Range Facility Master Plan for South Texas rated the old Laredo North Station as in need of costly renovation, and it cannot accommodate the 150 USBP personnel now at the Laredo North Station. This required INS to lease a temporary facility that is now the current Laredo North Station. The current Laredo North Station can accommodate up to 250 personnel, but has inadequate ancillary facilities and does not have the capability to expand to include these facilities. A new station would allow more efficient and effective operations in a modern facility that can best support the USBP mission.

INS has requested that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Fort Worth District, assess impacts from the proposed action. The new station would consist of the following structures or components: a single-story building (30,500 square feet [sf]) with a detention area (2,500 sf); three aboveground storage tanks (two 10,000-gallon gasoline tanks and one 12,000-gallon diesel tank); a 2,500-sf drive/parking area; a dog kennel for 26 dogs; and a radio tower.

This EA addresses nine alternatives to the proposed action, of which eight were eliminated from detailed analysis because they did not meet USBP/INS mission and operation requirements. The proposed action meets the USBP's operational and administrative needs and directives.

The current Laredo North Station is a leased, temporary facility. If the no action alternative is selected, the USBP station proposed for Laredo would not be built. However, required administrative and operational support which is necessary to the USBP mission would be hampered by the existing leased facility. The leased facility was intended to be a temporary facility until the new station could be constructed. It lacks ancillary facilities (dog kennels, aboveground fuel tanks, etc.) and adequate parking areas. This facility cannot be expanded to meet operational requirements. As mandated by Congress, 100 additional USBP personnel would be stationed in Laredo. In addition, the new personnel would also need approximately 70 additional vehicles to carry out their mission and administrative duties; the current leased facility does not have adequate parking.

Leasing or purchasing a different existing facility was considered as an alternative to the proposed action. The government was unable to locate any suitable existing facilities for lease or

purchase in the Laredo area that would adequately meet the USBP's operational and administrative needs and directives. Consequently, this alternative was eliminated from further analysis.

Another alternative considered was the renovation of the old Laredo North Station. In support of the Long-Range Facility Master Plan for South Texas, the INS rated several of its facilities. The old Laredo North Station was rated by the INS as a facility in need of major modernization. In addition, the old station cannot accommodate the 150 USBP personnel currently working at the leased Laredo North Station. The old station would have to be expanded to accommodate 250 agents. Modernizing a facility that is too small is not considered a good value to the government. These factors resulted in the elimination of this alternative from detailed analysis.

Six alternative sites were considered for location of the proposed facility. Site 1 was too small, and Site 2 was too close to a residential area. Sites 3 and 4 will be utilized for future highway construction. Site 5 is impaired by a road that only offers one-way access to Interstate Highway 35. Site 6 was too small. Thus, the six alternative locations for the proposed new facility were eliminated from further analysis.

Approximately 10 acres of habitat would be lost for three state-listed threatened species. No federally listed or state-listed threatened, endangered, or candidate species were observed during the survey. There would be no effect to any federally listed threatened, endangered, or candidate species as a result of the proposed action.

A cultural resources survey resulted in the identification of a newly recorded extension (within the project area) of a previously recorded archeological site (41WB361), which has been designated as 41WB361B, consisting of a low- to moderate-density scatter of lithic artifacts. The portion of site 41WB361 represented within the project area (41WB361B) is not recommended as eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Potential soil erosion and related surface water runoff impacts are possible during construction of the proposed action. Procedures and methods that would be implemented to mitigate impacts to soils and surface water resources would be developed in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for the proposed action. Recommendations outlined in the SWPPP would reduce surface water runoff to receiving drainages located downslope of the project site.

There would be no significant adverse effects to the natural environment associated with the proposed project. The proposed action would not significantly affect the air quality, noise, or socioeconomics and would not pose significant hazardous material concerns in the project area. The proposed action would not affect any federal species listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered in accordance with the Endangered Species Act. With environmental design measures specified as part of the proposed action, there would be negligible impacts to area land use, soils, wetlands and waters of the United States or groundwater resources, biological resources, and historic properties.

This EA was made available for public comments for a 30-day period ending May 26, 1998. Comments should be sent in writing to Ms. Linda Ashe, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District, ATTN: CESWF-EV-EE, Room 13A18, 819 Taylor Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76102-0300, (817) 978-6382.

Based on environmental design measures, including biological and cultural surveys conducted in March 1998 to verify the existence of threatened and endangered species, wetland habitats, and historic properties, no significant adverse effects to the natural environment are expected when implementing the proposed action.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This environmental assessment (EA) presents the potential impacts associated with the proposed construction of a U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) station in Laredo, Texas (Figure 1-1). The lead agency for this project is the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

1.1 Background

The INS is the federal agency responsible for enforcing the laws regulating the admission of foreign-born persons (i.e., aliens) to the United States and for administering various immigration benefits, including the naturalization of resident aliens. As part of the INS, the USBP is responsible for maintaining control of the borders and coastlines of the United States and its territories by preventing illegal crossings by aliens between ports of entry, the interdiction of narcotics, and other law enforcement activities. The USBP is a highly mobile force of uniformed agents who spend most of their time patrolling the areas along the 8,000 miles of international boundaries in vehicles, aircraft, or boats, as well as on horseback and/or on foot.

The Laredo Sector USBP is responsible for carrying out this mission in the central Texas-Mexico border region and is active in curbing the flow of illegal immigrants and contraband into the United States. The Laredo Sector is responsible for patrolling 178 miles of the United States-Mexico international border and utilizes a total of 540 agents during 24-hour operations to accomplish this mission. Over 141,887 apprehensions occurred in the sector from October 1996 to September 1997. During this same time, over 78,374 pounds (lbs) of marijuana, 64 ounces of heroin, and 5,490 lbs of cocaine and other drugs with a total value of nearly $239,120,492 were seized in the Laredo Sector.

1.2 Proposed Action

The INS proposes to purchase an approximately 10-acre (ac) tract of land from a private landowner in order to construct a station at the southeast corner of Grand Central Boulevard and the McPherson Boulevard extension in Laredo, Webb County, Texas (see Figure 1-1). The USBP agents stationed at the currently leased Laredo North Station would relocate to the new facility when construction is complete.

1.3 Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed action is to construct a new facility to replace the currently leased facilities that serve as the Laredo North Station. The new station is necessary to accommodate an increased number of agents who have been assigned to the sector as mandated by Congress. The INS Long-Range Facility Master Plan for South Texas rated the old Laredo North Station as in need of costly renovation (INS 1995), and it cannot accommodate the 150 USBP personnel now at the Laredo North Station. This required INS to lease the temporary facility that is now the current Laredo North Station. The current Laredo North Station can accommodate up to 250 personnel, but has inadequate parking and does not have the capability to expand these parking

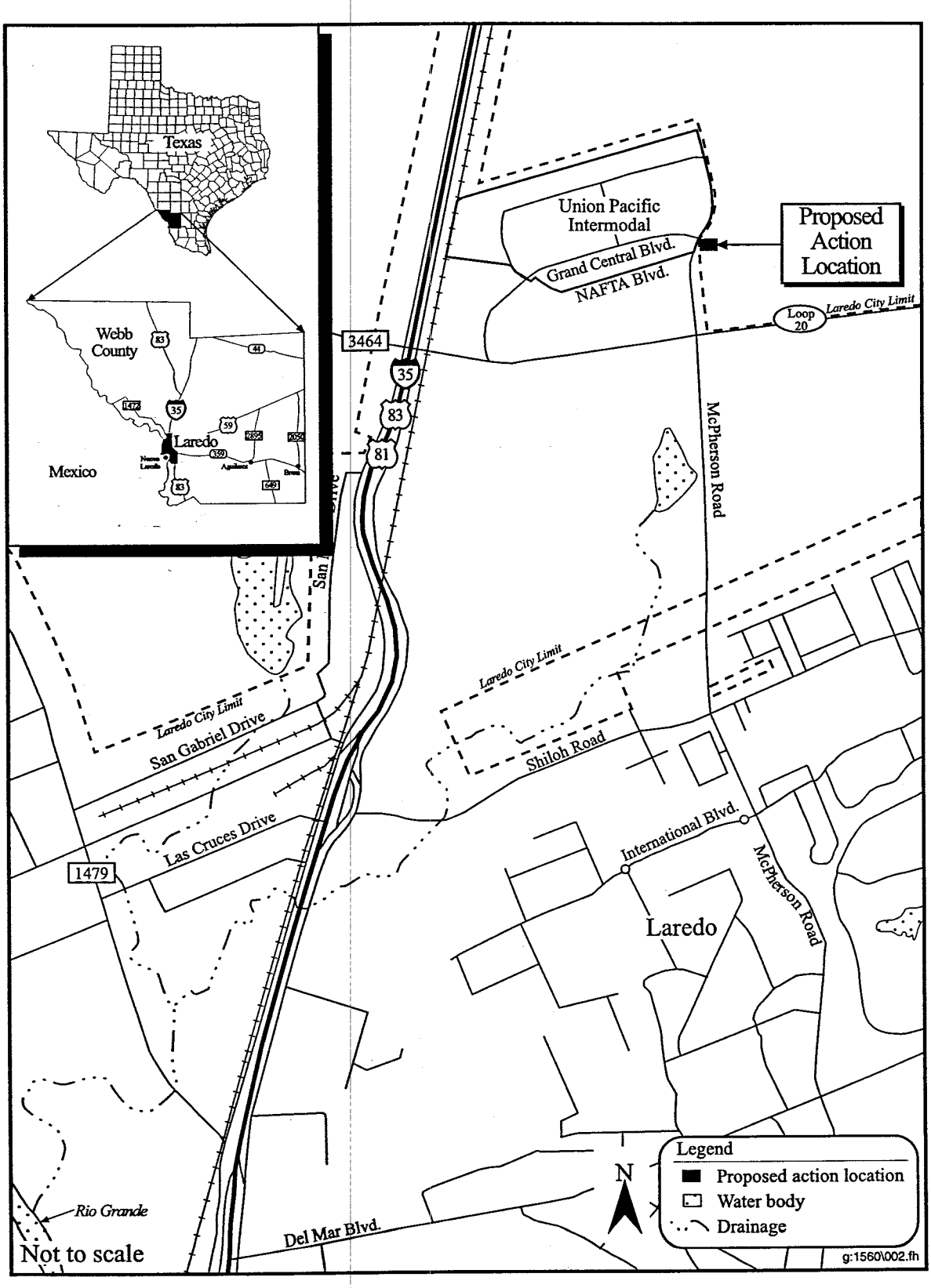

Figure 1-1. Proposed Action Location, Laredo, Texas.

facilities. A new station would allow more efficient and effective operations in a modern facility that can best support the USBP mission.

1.4 Relevant Environmental Issues

Several environmental issues were determined to merit analysis due to probable impacts from the proposed action. Issues analyzed in this EA include: land use, air, noise, soils, natural resources, cultural resources, socioeconomics, municipal services, and hazardous materials.

1.5 Regulatory Compliance

This EA was prepared by Geo-Marine, Inc., in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Fort Worth District, for INS pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (Public Law [P.L.] 90-190, 42 United States Code [U.S.C.] 4321 et seq.), as amended in 1975 by P.L. 94-52 and P.L. 94-83. Additional guidance is provided by the INS Procedures Relating to the Implementation of NEPA which implement Section 102 (2) of NEPA and the regulations established by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508). Numerous other federal and state laws regulate activities which may affect the environment. Table 1-1 lists pertinent environmental regulations that helped guide the preparation of this EA.

Table 1-1
Applicable Environmental Statutes and Regulations

Federal Statutes
Archeological and Historic Preservation Act
Clean Air Act, as amended
Clean Water Act, as amended
Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
Endangered Species Act, as amended
Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendment
Migratory Bird Treaty Act
National Historic Preservation Act, as amended
National Environmental Policy Act, as amended
Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
Noise Control Act

Executive Orders, Memorandums, and INS Regulations
Flood Plain Management (Executive Order 11988)
Protection of Wetlands (Executive Order 11990)
Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (Executive Order 12898)
INS Procedures Relating to the Implementation of NEPA

State Statutes, Regulations, or Applicable Permits
Antiquities Code of Texas
Texas Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act/Texas Natural Resource Code
Texas Parks and Wildlife Code
Texas Water Quality Standards/Texas Consolidated Permit Rules

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Proposed Action

The INS proposes to purchase an approximately 10-ac tract of land from a private landowner in order to construct a station at the southeast corner of Grand Central Boulevard and the McPherson Boulevard extension in Laredo, Webb County, Texas (see Figure 1-1). The USBP agents stationed at the currently leased Laredo North Station would relocate to the new facility when construction is complete. Approximately 100 new USBP personnel (and approximately 70 additional vehicles) would be stationed in Laredo and work at the station. An estimated 281 family members would accompany the agents and live in the Laredo area. The proposed action meets the USBP's operational and administrative needs and directives.

The proposed facility would be secured with a perimeter fence and gate, and would consist of the following structures or components:

- a 30,500-square foot (sf), single-story station building with a 2,500-sf detention area;
- a 2,500-sf drive/parking area;
- a dog kennel for 26 dogs;
- a radio tower; and
- two 10,000-gallon gasoline and one 12,000-gallon diesel aboveground fuel tanks with a pump station.

2.2 Alternatives to the Proposed Action

This EA addresses nine alternatives to the proposed action, of which eight were eliminated from detailed analysis because they did not meet USBP/INS mission and operation requirements. Section 2.2.1 presents the no action alternative, which is carried forward as required by the regulations established by the CEQ (42 CFR 1502.14). Section 2.2.2 presents those alternatives which were eliminated from further analysis.

2.2.1 Alternatives Carried Forward for Detailed Analysis

If the no action alternative is selected, the USBP station proposed for Laredo would not be built. However, required administrative and operational support which is necessary to the USBP mission would be hampered by the existing leased facility (see Section 1.3). The leased facility was intended to be a temporary facility until the new station can be constructed. This leased facility lacks ancillary facilities (dog kennels, aboveground fuel tanks, etc.) and adequate parking areas. This facility cannot be expanded to meet operational requirements. As mandated by Congress, 100 additional USBP personnel would be stationed in Laredo. In addition, the new personnel would also need approximately 70 additional vehicles to carry out their mission and administrative duties; the current leased facility does not have adequate parking.

2.2.2 Alternatives Eliminated from Detailed Analysis

2.2.2.1 Lease or Purchase an Existing Facility

Leasing or purchasing a different existing facility was considered as an alternative to the proposed action. The government was unable to locate any suitable existing facilities for lease or purchase in the Laredo area that would adequately meet the USBP's operational and administrative needs and directives. Consequently, this alternative was eliminated from further analysis.

2.2.2.2 Renovation of an Existing Facility

Another alternative considered was the renovation of the old Laredo North Station. In support of the Long-Range Facility Master Plan for South Texas, the INS rated several of its facilities (INS 1995). The rating system was based on the condition of the building and the site in conjunction with the estimated cost of repairs as a percentage of the cost for facility replacement. The old Laredo North Station was rated by the INS as a facility in need of major modernization; the modernization would cost between 26-50 percent of the cost for replacement. In addition, the old station cannot accommodate the 150 USBP personnel currently working at the leased Laredo North Station. The old station would have to be expanded to accommodate 250 agents. Modernizing a facility that is too small is not considered a good value to the government. These factors resulted in the elimination of this alternative from detailed analysis.

2.2.2.3 Alternative Sites

Six alternative sites were considered for location of the proposed facility (Figure 2-1). Site 1 is too small and Site 2 is too close to a residential area. Sites 3 and 4 will be utilized for future highway construction. Site 5 is impaired by a road that only offers one-way access to Interstate Highway 35. Site 6 is too small. Thus, the six alternative locations for the proposed new facility were eliminated from further analysis.

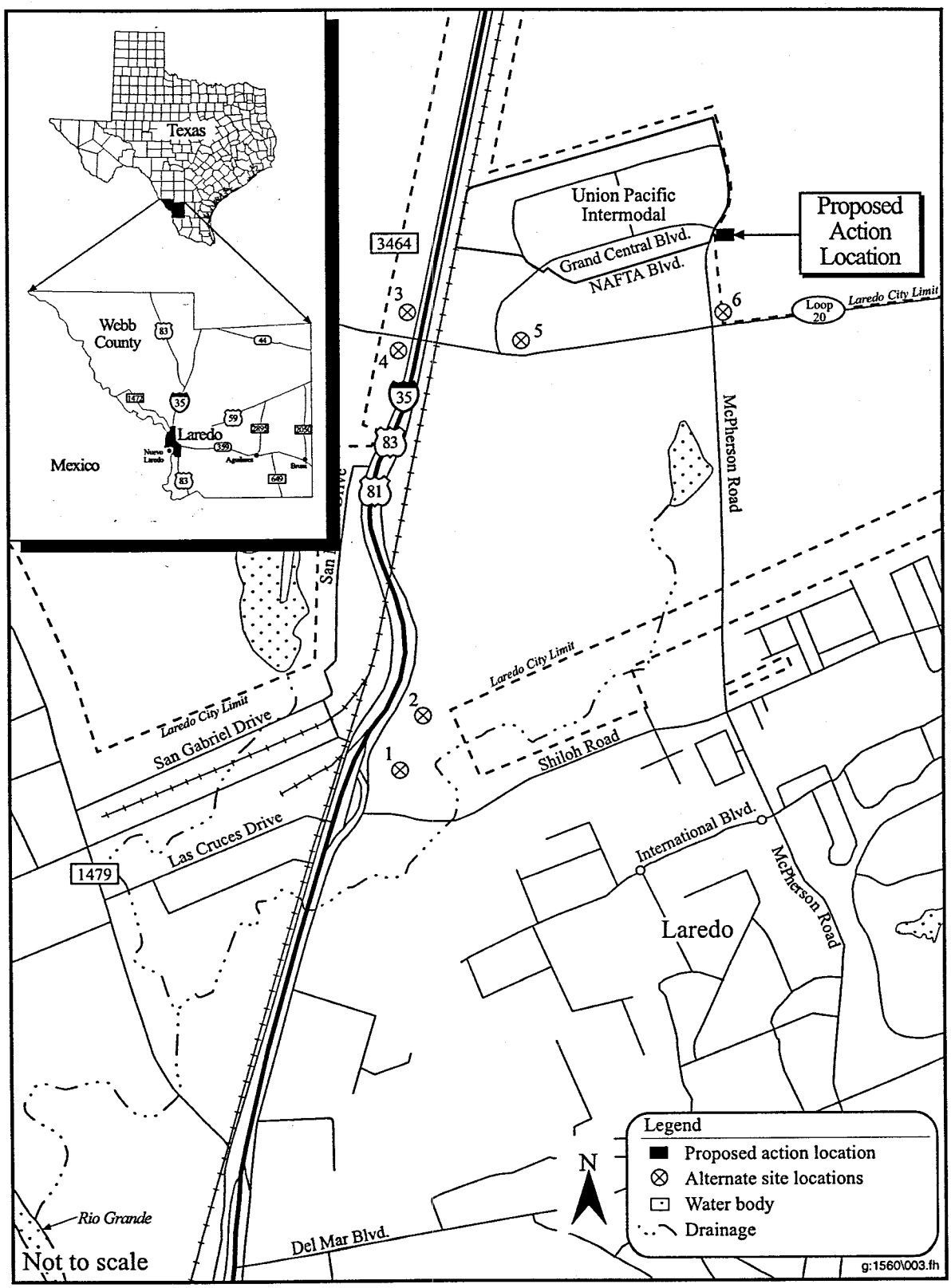

Figure 2-1. Location of Alternate Sites for the Proposed Action, Laredo, Texas.

3.0 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

The proposed project area is an approximately 10-ac tract located outside of, but adjacent to, the city limits of Laredo, in Webb County, Texas. The project area is located in the South Texas Plains Physiographic Province and the Tamaulipan Biotic Province (Dice 1943; Blair 1950).

3.1 Land Use

The proposed site is an undeveloped tract outside of, but adjacent to, the city limits of Laredo. According to the City of Laredo Planning Department, the land use of the site is unclassified (Pena 1998). The land use immediately surrounding the site consists of rural land to the north, south, and east and industrial to the west. The proposed site is unzoned, but is across the street from an industrial park to the west. The proposed site is approximately 0.25 mile from a rail yard to the northwest. The industrial land to the west is classified as M-1, defined by the Planning Department as light manufacturing district. The M-1 zoning code authorizes facilities such as proposed by the USBP (Pena 1998). The proposed site showed signs of agricultural grazing (cattle hoofprints). The nearest residences are approximately one mile south of the site.

3.2 Soils

Copita fine sandy loam is the site-specific soil type that occurs within the Copita-Verick soil association at the project site. The Copita fine sandy loam is moderately deep and formed on broad convex plains. It is typically underlain to a depth of 60 inches by a layer of yellow sandstone and possesses a moderate percolation rate. The physical-chemical characteristics and potential for development activities (e.g., shallow excavations and small buildings) of the Copita fine sandy loam soil can be found in the soil survey for Webb County (Soil Conservation Service [SCS] 1985).

3.3 Water Resources

3.3.1 Groundwater

The major aquifer in the project area is the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer. Water quality from the aquifer is fresh to slightly saline (Ashworth and Hopkins 1995). Groundwater in the project area is located at an approximate depth of 300 feet below the surface (P. Martinez 1998). The Copita soil has a moderate percolation rate; however, because of the depth of the groundwater and the high evaporation rate, it is possible, although not probable, that a small percentage of surface water at the site seeps down to the groundwater (SCS 1985).

3.3.2 Wetlands and Waters of the United States

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1977 (P.L. 95-217) authorizes the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers, to issue permits for the discharge of dredged or fill material into Waters of the United States, including wetlands. Wetlands are those areas

inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for saturated soil (USACE 1987).

Waters of the United States (Section 328.3[2] of the CWA) are those waters used in interstate or foreign commerce, subject to ebb and flow of tide, and all interstate waters including interstate wetlands. Waters of the United States are further defined as all other waters such as intrastate lakes, rivers, streams, mudflats, sandflats, wetlands, sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, natural ponds, impoundments of waters, tributaries of waters, and territorial seas. A site-specific survey to identify potential jurisdictional wetlands and/or Waters of the United States within the approximately 10-ac project site was conducted in March 1998. Potential jurisdictional Waters of the United States were not observed on the project site. Also, surface water resources (e.g., drainage channels, ponds) were not located within or adjacent to the proposed project site. Surface runoff flows southeast toward an unnamed intermittent stream.

3.3.3 Floodplains

A 100-year flood (intermediate regional flood) is defined as a flood level that occurs with an average frequency of once in 100 years at a designated location, although it may occur any year, even two years in a row. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is responsible for implementation and management of the National Flood Insurance Program under 44 CFR; however, local government (e.g., City of Laredo) is responsible for administration of the floodplain within its respective municipal borders. FEMA regulates the impact of vertical development on surface water elevation and flood limits within the floodplain. Additionally, FEMA requires prior approval for all flood protection measures and has established a standard height for all protective levees of three feet above the 100-year floodplain elevation.

According to the Webb County, Texas (Unincorporated Areas) FEMA map (Community Map Number 481059, Panel Number 0650B), effective May 17, 1982, the project site is within the Zone C designation. This designation is given to areas determined to be outside of the 500-year floodplain and in areas of minimal hazard (FEMA 1982).

3.4 Air Quality

The air quality baseline environment consists of identifying applicable state and federal ambient air quality standards and the current attainment status of the proposed project area.

3.4.1 Federal and State Standards

Under the authority of the Clean Air Act (CAA) of 1977 (P.L. 95-95), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established nationwide air quality standards to protect public health and welfare with an adequate margin of safety. These standards, known as the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), were developed for "six" criteria pollutants: ozone (O_3), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), carbon monoxide (CO), particulate matter less than 10 microns in

diameter (PM_{10}), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), and lead (Pb). The standards were presented in terms of concentration (parts per billion [ppb], parts per million [ppm], or micrograms per cubic meter [$\mu g/m^3$]) determined over various periods of time (averaging time). Short-term standards (one-hour, eight-hour, or 24-hour periods) were established for pollutants with acute health effects; long-term standards (annual average) were established for pollutants with chronic health effects. Under the CAA, state and local agencies may establish air quality standards and regulations of their own, provided these are at least as stringent as the federal requirements. The State of Texas has adopted the NAAQS (40 CFR Part 50) as the state's air quality criteria (Table 3-1) (Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission [TNRCC] 1997a).

3.4.2 Air Quality Control Regions

Webb County falls within the EPA's Brownsville-Laredo Air Quality Control Region (Webb County - AQCR Region [No.] 213). This is one of a nationwide system of AQCRs established by the EPA for air quality planning purposes (40 CFR Part 81). Webb County is in the TNRCC AQCR No. 15 (TNRCC 1997a).

3.4.3 Potential Sources of Air Pollution

The proposed project airshed encompasses largely rural and undeveloped areas; thus, air quality is generally good, except for occasional windblown dust. Although Laredo, Texas, and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, are communities of intermediate size, major urban areas are not present in the project area. Thus, no substantial urban/industrial air pollution would be expected as in the larger border "sister cities" such as El Paso/Ciudad Juarez.

A number of anthropogenic (man-made) sources of air contaminants may affect the air quality of the proposed project area. These include industrial emissions, mobile (vehicular) emissions, area source emissions (e.g., emissions from numerous residences and small commercial establishments in an urban setting), dust resulting from wind erosion of agricultural lands, and pollutants transported into the proposed project area on winds blowing from urban/industrial areas outside the region (Joint Task Force Six [JTF-6] 1994).

3.4.4 Status of Air Quality

The responsibility to monitor the attainment of air quality standards and the authority to regulate air emission sources is performed by the TNRCC. The TNRCC is responsible for monitoring ambient air quality in the counties and comparing monitoring data with applicable state standards and the NAAQS. The TNRCC has one ambient air monitoring station located in Laredo. A summary of the monitoring data for PM_{10} (1989-1996) and O_3 (1996) are presented in Table 3-2. No monitoring data are available for SO_2, NO_2, CO, or Pb (TNRCC 1997b).

Table 3-1
State of Texas and the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)

Pollutant	Averaging Period	National Primary[a]	National Secondary[a]
Ozone (O_3)	1-Hour[b]	125 ppb	125 ppb
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	1-Hour[c]	35.5 ppm	35.5 ppm
	8-Hour[c]	9.5 ppm	9.5 ppm
Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2)	3-Hour Average[c]	No Standard	550 ppb
	24-Hour Average[c]	145 ppb	No Standard
	Annual Arithmetic Average[d]	35 ppb	No Standard
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)	Annual[d]	54 ppb	54 ppb
Particulates (PM_{10})	24-Hour Average[b]	155 $\mu g/m^3$	155 $\mu g/m^3$
	Annual Arithmetic Mean[d]	51 $\mu g/m^3$	51 $\mu g/m^3$
Lead (Pb)	Quarterly[d]	1.55 $\mu g/m^3$	1.55 $\mu g/m^3$

[a]Parenthetical value is an approximately equivalent condition.
[b]Not to be exceeded on more than three days over three years.
[c]Not to be exceeded more than once per calendar year.
[d]Not to be exceeded.
ppb = parts per billion
ppm = parts per million
$\mu g/m^3$ = micrograms per cubic meter
Source: 40 CFR Part 50; TNRCC 1997a

Table 3-2
Maximum Concentration of PM_{10} and O_3 for the City of Laredo

Years	PM_{10} ($\mu g/m^3$) 24-Hour	PM_{10} ($\mu g/m^3$) Annual	O_3 (ppb) 1-Hour
1989	71	44.6	ND
1990	67	32.4	ND
1991	75	34.8	ND
1992	123	32.5	ND
1993	60	29.9	ND
1994	88	32.5	ND
1995	64	31.3	ND
1996	150	42.1	73

PM_{10} = Particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter
ND = No data
O_3 = Ozone
$\mu g/m^3$ = micrograms per cubic meter
ppb = parts per billion
Source: TNRCC 1997b

3.4.5 Current Emissions within the Proposed Project Area

Two major factors control the dispersion of pollutants, topography and climate. Topography in the project area is relatively level to gently undulating terrain with little or no obstructions to wind movement. Thus, the terrain will not trap pollutants and will allow for speedy dispersion of pollutants. The project area is predominantly rangeland with minimal commercial and residential development (e.g., City of Laredo).

Climate in the project area is classified as subtropical with hot summers and mild winters; the mean January temperature is 41 degrees (°) Fahrenheit (F), and the mean July temperature is 99° F. Skies are generally clear throughout most of the year. Average annual rainfall is 22 inches. Average noon relative humidity for the project area is 60 percent. The prevailing wind speed is 12 miles per hour (mph) from the southeast and helps to disperse pollutants in the project area (Ramos 1997).

Review of the O_3 and PM_{10} data summaries in the TNRCC Air Monitoring Report of 1995 and 1996 indicates that the project area is designated as unclassified, but treated as being in attainment for the criteria pollutants. From 1989-1996, the readings for PM_{10} have been below 100 $\mu g/m^3$ for six of the eight years and below the exceedance threshold each year of record (Butts 1998). Therefore, it can be concluded that concentrations of the criteria pollutants within the project area would fall below the applicable NAAQS limits established for the protection of public health (TNRCC 1997b).

3.5 Biological Resources

3.5.1 Vegetation

A survey to determine the existing vegetation types located on the proposed project site was conducted in March 1998. The site is used for grazing cattle, and the vegetation community consists of a buffelgrass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) savanna.

Vegetation was predominantly buffelgrass, with a ground cover varying from approximately 20 percent on the gravelly upper slopes to 85 percent on the more silty lower slopes. Scattered shrubs and forbs included guayacan (*Guaiacum angustifolium*), mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*), allthorn (*Koeberlinia spinosa*), blackbrush (*Acacia rigidula*), huisache (*Acacia minuta*), spiny hackberry (*Celtis pallida*), Berlandier wolfberry (*Lycium berlandieri*), amargosa (*Castela texana*), Engelmann prickly pear (*Opuntia phaeacantha* var. *discata*), pencil cholla (*Opuntia leptocaulis*), coyotillo (*Karwinskia humboldtiana*), pepperweed (*Lepidium* sp.), silverleaf nightshade (*Solanum elaeagnifolium*), Texas vervain (*Verbena halei*), western bitterweed (*Hymenoxys odorata*), and deer pea (*Vicia ludoviciana*).

3.5.2 Wildlife

The native faunal components of the Southern Gulf Coastal Plains in Webb County support 348 species of birds, which are dominated by wood warblers (Parulinae-39 species); swans, geese, and ducks (Anseriformes-27 species); sandpipers and phalaropes (Scolopacidae-23 species); sparrows and towhees (Emberizinae-21 species); kites, eagles, and hawks (Accipitrinae-21 species); tyrant flycatchers (Tyranninae-20 species); and gulls, terns, and skimmers (Laridae-14 species). The majority of these species occur in spring and fall when neotropical migrants (e.g., flycatchers, warblers) pass through on their way to either summer breeding or wintering grounds and during the winter when summer resident birds (e.g., robins [*Turdus*], kinglets [*Regulus*], and sparrows) from the northern United States and Canada arrive to spend winter (JTF-6 1994).

The majority of the 60 mammalian species found in the area are insectivorous bats (Chiroptera) and rodents (Rodentia; e.g., rats and mice [Muridae]). Other common mammals include opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), skunks (Mustelidae), armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), rabbits (Leporidae), javelina (*Tayassu tajacu*), and white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). Only 23 species of amphibians are found within the project area; treefrogs (*Hyla*) and toads (*Bufo*) are the most abundant and common amphibian groups, comprising 43 percent of the population. The reptilian community, consisting of 23 species, is dominated by the commonly found colubrid snakes (38 percent: small burrowing; large brown-blotted terrestrial [*Heterodon/Elaphe*, etc.]; racers, indigo, and whipsnakes [*Masticophis*]; garter and ribbon [*Thamnophis*]; aquatic [*Nerodia*]; and venomous snakes [*Crotalus*]) and various species of commonly occurring iguanid lizards (Iguanidae), skinks (Scincidae), and whiptails (Teiidae).

Wildlife observed during the March 1998 survey of the proposed project site include brown-crested flycatcher (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*), song sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*), and black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*). A list of common birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles by habitat type for Webb County is cataloged in the Environmental Baseline Texas Land Border report (JTF-6 1994).

3.5.3 Threatened and Endangered Species

3.5.3.1 Federal

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 (P.L. 93-205) and the amendments of 1988 (P.L. 100-578) were enacted to provide a program of preservation for endangered and threatened species and to provide protection for ecosystems upon which these species depend for their survival. The ESA requires all federal agencies to implement protection programs for designated species and to use their authorities to further the purposes of the Act. Responsibility for the listing of an endangered or threatened species and for the development of recovery plans lies with the Secretary of Interior and Secretary of Commerce. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is responsible for implementing the ESA within the continental United States.

An endangered (E) species is a species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. A threatened (T) species is a species likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range. Proposed species are those which have been formally submitted to Congress for official listing as endangered or threatened.

In addition, the USFWS has identified species which are candidates for possible addition to the list of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants (50 CFR Parts 17.11 and 17.12) under the ESA of 1973, as amended. Former Candidate Category 1 species are now listed as "candidates." Candidate (C) species are defined as those species for which the USFWS has on file sufficient information on their biological status and threat(s) to propose them as endangered or threatened, but for which issuance of the proposed rule is precluded by work on higher priority species. The USFWS maintains a candidate list to: (1) provide advance knowledge of potential listings that could affect land-planning decisions, (2) solicit input to identify candidates not requiring protection or additional species that may require protection under the ESA, and (3) solicit information needed to prioritize the order in which species will be proposed for listing. Candidate species have no legal protection under the ESA.

A total of 10 federally listed endangered or candidate species occur or potentially occur within Webb County. Eight species are listed as endangered and two as candidate. Information pertaining to the distribution, habitat requirements, and reason for decline of the endangered and candidate species is listed in Table 3-3.

3.5.3.2 Critical Habitat

Critical habitat is defined in Section 3 of the ESA as: (1) the specific areas within the geographical area occupied by a species, at the time it is listed in accordance with the Act, on which are found those physical or biological features (i) essential to the conservation of the species and (ii) that may require special management considerations or protection; and (2) specific areas outside the geographical area occupied by a species at the time it is listed, upon a determination that such areas are essential for the conservation of the species. "Conservation" means the use of all methods and procedures needed to bring the species to the point at which listing under the Act is no longer necessary. Section 4(a)(3) of the Act, as amended, and implementing regulations (50 CFR Part 424.12) require that, to the maximum extent prudent and determinable, the Secretary will designate critical habitat at the time a species is determined to be endangered or threatened. No designated critical habitat was defined within the proposed project site, and there is no designated critical habitat in the Laredo area.

Table 3-3
Distribution, Habitat Requirements, and Reasons for Decline of Federal/State Endangered, Threatened, Candidate, and Proposed Candidate Species Potentially Occurring and Known to Occur in Webb County

Common/Scientific Name	Status Fed.	Status St.	Habitat Requirements/Reasons for Decline	Habitat Present in Proposed Project Area
PLANTS				
Johnston's frankenia *Frankenia johnstonii*	E	E	Tamaulipan scrub vegetation on rocky gypseous hillsides or saline flats/poor reproduction, limited distribution	No
Ashy dogweed *Thymophylla tephroleuca*	E	E	Open scrub and brush community in sandy loam/poor reproduction, restricted range	Yes
FISH				
Blue sucker *Cycleptus elongatus*	_	T	Rio Grande and its tributaries/reservoirs, exotic species	No
Bluntnose shiner *Notropis simus*	_	E	Rio Grande and its tributaries/dewatering, pollution, exotic species	No
Conchos pupfish *Cyprinodon eximius*	_	T	Rio Grande and its tributaries/dewatering, pollution, exotic species	No
Rio Grande darter *Etheostoma grahami*	_	T	Rio Grande and its tributaries/dewatering, exotic species	No
REPTILES				
Reticulate collared lizard *Crotaphytus reticulatus*	_	T	Rock piles of riparian brushlands/habitat destruction, collecting	No
Texas horned lizard *Phrynosoma cornutum*	C	T	Arid-semiarid land with sparse vegetation/pesticides, commercial exploitation	Yes
Texas indigo snake *Drymarchon corais erebennus*	_	T	Thornbrush woodland, mesquite savanna/habitat destruction, commercial exploitation	Yes

Common/Scientific Name	Status Fed.	Status St.	Habitat Requirements/Reasons for Decline	Habitat Present in Proposed Project Area
REPTILES (cont'd)				
Texas tortoise *Gopherus berlandieri*	_	T	Brushlands, native rangelands, firm but not hard soil/habitat destruction, commercial exploitation	Yes
BIRDS				
American peregrine falcon *Falco peregrinus anatum*	E	T	Rio Grande floodplain and terrace/pesticides, collecting by falconers	No
Arctic peregrine falcon *Falco peregrinus tundrius*	E	T	Rio Grande floodplain and terrace/pesticides, collecting by falconers	No
Brown pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*	E	E	Along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts, rare inland/pesticides (DDT)	No
Common black-hawk *Buteogallus anthracinus*	_	T	Riparian woodlands/habitat loss and modification	No
Interior least tern *Sterna antillarum athalassos*	E	E	Inland river sandbars for nesting and shallow water for foraging/declining population, riverine alterations	No
Mountain plover *Charadrius montanus*	C	-	Arid short-grass prairie/habitat loss	No
Northern gray hawk *Buteo nitidus maximus*	_	T	Subtropical woodlands, riparian woodlands/habitat loss, clearing	No
White-faced ibis *Plegadis chihi*	_	T	Marshy areas and lakes/pesticides	No
Wood stork *Mycteria americana*	_	T	Lakes, ponds, and rivers/habitat loss, altered hydrology	No
Zone-tailed hawk *Buteo albonotatus*	_	T	Steep canyons, river woodlands/habitat loss and modification	No

Common/Scientific Name	Status Fed.	Status St.	Habitat Requirements/Reasons for Decline	Habitat Present in Proposed Project Area
MAMMALS				
Coati *Nasua nasua*	_	E	Woodlands, rocky canyons, riparian areas/erratic distribution, habitat destruction	No
Jaguarundi *Felis jagouaroundi cacomitli*	E	E	Dense, thorny thickets/habitat destruction, predator control, hunting	No
Ocelot *Felis paradis*	E	E	Subtropical brushlands, woodlands/habitat destruction, predator control	No

Fed. = Federal
St. = State
E = Endangered
T = Threatened
C = Candidate

Source: Correll and Johnston 1979; TPWD 1998a, 1998b; USFWS 1997, 1998

3.5.3.3 State

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), Natural Heritage Program, maintains computerized records of state-listed threatened and endangered species by county. The State of Texas does not list threatened and endangered species using the same criteria as the federal government. When the USFWS lists a plant species, the State of Texas then lists that plant. Thus, the list of threatened and endangered plants in Texas is the same as the federal list.

The state has separate laws governing the listing of animal species as threatened or endangered. Threatened and endangered animal species in Texas are those species so designated according to Chapters 67 and 68 of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code and Section 65.171 - 65.184 of Title 31 of the Texas Administrative Code. Animals that are not currently listed by the federal government may be listed by the state as threatened or endangered. The state does not have the authority at this time to list invertebrates. The state lists eight endangered species and 14 threatened species as occurring or potentially occurring in Webb County (see Table 3-3).

3.5.3.4 Survey Results

In March 1998, the proposed project site was surveyed for 14 federally listed and state-listed endangered, threatened, and candidate species. Survey methodology involved walking parallel north-south transects, spaced approximately 80 feet apart, within the proposed project site while looking for listed species. No federally listed or state-listed endangered, threatened, or candidate species were observed within the proposed project site, although habitat does exist on the project site for the federally endangered ashy dogweed. However, this species is characteristically found in deeper sandy soils and would have a low potential to occur on the proposed project site. Suitable habitat of moderate-to-good quality (i.e., dry rangeland) exists on the project site for three reptiles listed as threatened by the state: Texas horned lizard, Texas tortoise, and Texas indigo snake.

3.6 Noise

Noise is defined as "unwanted sound" and in the context of protecting public health and welfare implies potential effects on people and, in general, on the environment. Under certain conditions, noise may cause hearing loss, interfere with human activities at home and work, and in various ways may affect people's health and well-being. Noise may also annoy, anger, awaken, and frustrate people. Therefore, different noise sources may combine to detract from the quality of life and/or have other effects on the environment (EPA 1978).

3.6.1 Noise Classification and Measurement

Noise is one of the major concerns associated with construction-related activities. There are three common classifications of noise: (1) general audible noise that is heard by humans; (2) special noise, such as sonic booms and artillery blasts, that can have a sound pressure or shock component; and (3) noise-induced vibration involving noise levels that can cause physical movement (e.g., vibration).

Each type of noise is typically measured by a different methodology. Audible noise is typically measured in A-weighted sound levels expressed in decibels (dBA). Special noise is usually measured in C-weighted levels expressed in decibels (dBC). Noise-induced vibration is measured in peak acceleration or root-mean-square acceleration of the structure which vibrates (National Research Council 1977).

The A-weighted sound level metric is the instantaneous measure of a single sound. The A-scale de-emphasizes the low- and high-frequency portions of the sound spectrum and provides a good approximation of the response of the average human ear. On the A-scale, 0 dBA represents the average least perceptible sound (e.g., gentle breathing), and 140 dBA represents the intensity at which the eardrum may rupture (e.g., jet engine at open throttle). Typical sound levels and the relative loudness of typical instantaneous noise sources in various environments are listed in Table 3-4. Typical single noise levels on the outskirts of the urban community of Laredo could range above 70 decibels (dB) due to vehicular traffic and construction activities.

The day-night sound level (L_{dn}) utilizes measurements taken from the A-scale to characterize the average sound levels throughout the day and night. The metric cumulative energy average, expressed in L_{dn}, has been found to correlate well statistically with aggregate community annoyance response. The L_{dn} is widely accepted by federal and local agencies as the primary measure for describing noise effect on communities. The L_{dn} has been shown to be an effective tool for noise impact analysis for over 15 years and is the noise assessment metric endorsed by the Federal Interagency Committee on Urban Noise (comprised of representatives from the EPA, Department of Defense [DOD], Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Transportation, and Veterans Administration), the National Academy of Sciences, the American National Standards Institute, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Acoustical Society of America, and the federal government. The L_{dn} is a 24-hour average sound level measurement. Nighttime emissions are weighted with a 10 dB penalty to account for increased community annoyance between the hours of 2200 and 0700 (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.). The project site on the outskirts of an urban environment is currently anticipated to have L_{dn} noise levels ranging from 40 to 60 dB (Figure 3-1).

3.6.2 Environmental Compliance

The Noise Control Act of 1972 (P.L. 92-574) directed the EPA to publish scientific information about the kind and extent of all identifiable effects of different qualities and quantities of noise. Congress also directed the EPA to define acceptable noise levels under various conditions which would protect public health and welfare with an adequate margin of safety. Federal agencies and members of the scientific community collaborated to publish a document (i.e., Levels Document) which completed this legal requirement (EPA 1978). Yearly L_{dn} values to protect public health and welfare are listed in Table 3-5.

Table 3-4
Sound Levels (dB) and Relative Loudness of Typical Noise Sources in Indoor and Outdoor Environments

dB(A)	Overall Level	Community Noise Levels (Outdoor)	Home and Industry Noise Levels (Indoor)	Subjective Loudness (Relative to 70 dB)
120	Uncomfortably loud	Military jet aircraft takeoff with afterburner from aircraft carrier at 50 ft (130)	Oxygen torch (121)	32 times as loud
110		Turbo-fan aircraft at takeoff power at 200 ft (118)	Riveting machine (110) Rock band (108-114)	16 times as loud
100	Very loud	Boeing 707 DC-8 at 6080 ft before landing (106) Jet flyover at 1000 ft (103) Bell J-2A helicopter at 100 ft (100)		8 times as loud
90		Boeing 737 DC-9 at 6080 ft before landing (97) Power mower (96) Motorcycle at 25 ft (90)	Newspaper press (97)	4 times as loud
80		Car wash at 20 ft (89) Prop plane flyover at 1000 ft (88) Diesel truck 40 mph at 50 ft (85) Diesel train 45 mph at 100 ft (83)	Food blender (88) Milling machine (85) Garbage disposal (80)	2 times as loud
70	Moderately loud	High urban ambient sound (80) Passenger car 65 mph at 25 ft (77) Freeway at 50 ft from pavement edge at 10 a.m. (76)	Living room music (76) TV-audio, vacuum cleaner (70)	70 dBA
60		Air conditioning unit at 100 ft (60)	Cash register at 10 ft (65-70) Electric typewriter at 10 ft (64) Dishwasher (rinse) at 10 ft (60) Conversation (60)	1/2 as loud
50	Quiet	Large transformers at 100 ft (50)		1/4 as loud
40		Bird calls (44) Lowest limit urban ambient sound (40)		
		dB Scale Interrupted		
10	Just audible			
0	Threshold of hearing			

dB = decibels
dBA = decibels on the A-weighted scale
a.m. = ante meridian (before noon)
ft = feet
mph = miles per hour
Source: Wyle Research Corporation 1992

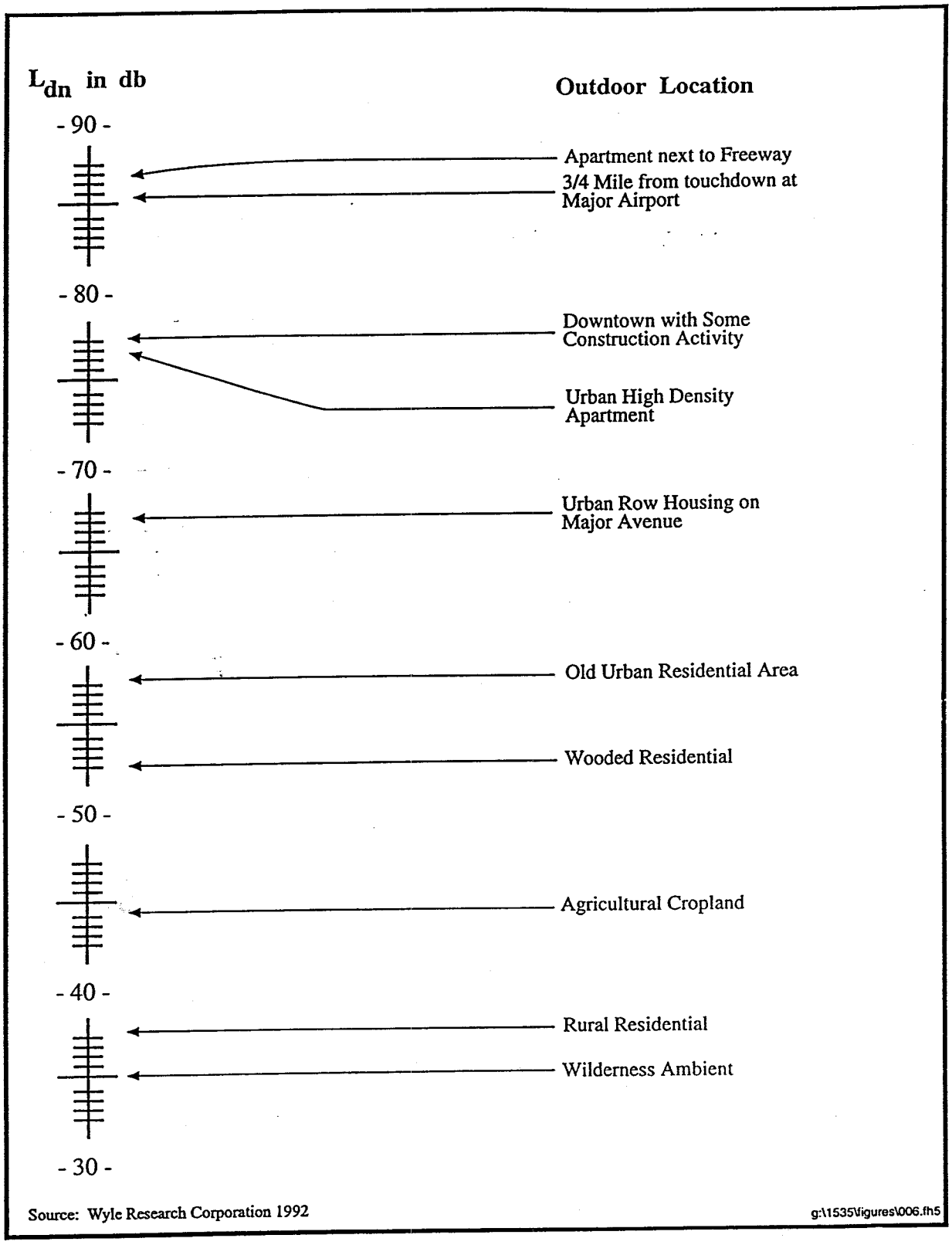

Figure 3-1. Typical Day-Night Noise Levels for Various Outdoor Environments.

Table 3-5
Yearly L_{dn} Values that Protect Public Health and Welfare with a Margin of Safety

Effect	Level	Area
Hearing	$L_{eq}(24) \leq 70$ dB	All areas (at the ear).
Outdoor Activity interference and annoyance	$L_{dn} \leq 55$ dB	Outdoors in residential area/L_{eq} farms and other outdoor areas where people spend widely varying amounts of time and other places in which quiet is a basis of use.
	$L_{eq}(24) \leq 55$ dB	Outdoor areas where people spend limited amounts of time, such as school yards, playgrounds, etc.
Indoor Activity interference and annoyance	$L_{dn} \leq 45$ dB	Indoor residential area.
	$L_{eq}(24) \leq 45$ dB	Other indoor areas with human activities such as schools, etc.

dB = decibels
L_{dn} = Day-night average noise level
L_{eq} = Equivalent sound level
Source: EPA 1978

3.7 Socioeconomics

The region of influence for socioeconomic resources for the proposed action is Webb County and the City of Laredo.

3.7.1 Population

Total population in Webb County was 180,011 as of January 1, 1997, as estimated by the Texas State Data Center (TSDC 1996). This represents a 35.1 percent increase since 1990. Similarly, the City of Laredo grew by 36.4 percent over the same period to reach a population of 167,628. Both rates are much higher than the overall Texas rate of growth of 13.8 percent during the 1990s. In 1990, the latest available data, there were 1,169 persons living in the Census block where the proposed action is located (Census Block Group 17.02:2). The Census block is located on the edge of the Laredo city limits and is primarily rural. The proposed project site is located in a light manufacturing zone and is near no housing developments.

The 1990 Census indicates that Webb County is largely white and Hispanic (U.S. Department of Commerce [USDC] 1996)[1]. Racially, Whites and the "Other Races" categories account for 70 and

[1] The U.S. Census defines an individual's characteristics from both a racial and place of origin basis. Race includes White, Black, American Indian, Asian or Pacific Islander, and "Other." "Other" includes categories such as multiracial, multiethnic, mixed, or interracial and can include those of Spanish/Hispanic origin. The term Hispanic refers to those who classify themselves as being of "Mexican, "Puerto Rican," "Cuban," or "other Spanish/Hispanic" origin. Origin generally refers to the ancestry or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors. Persons of Hispanic origin can be of any race.

94 percent of the residents, respectively. Blacks account for only 1 percent of the total population. Projections published by the TSDC indicate that the Hispanic population is expected to remain near these levels.

Except for the City of Laredo, the county is largely rural. Population density is approximately 44 persons per square mile.

3.7.2 Employment and Income

Total employment for Webb County in 1995 was 68,685, which represents an annual growth rate of 4.5 percent over total employment in 1990 (USDC 1997a). Employment in Webb County is concentrated in the retail trade, services, and government sectors, and represents 63 percent of total employment in 1995. The largest employment sector is retail trade which accounts for 22 percent of the total. Compared to national figures, the government sector in Webb County is larger than the national share of 15.0 percent, while the percentage of persons in the manufacturing industry in Webb County, 3.0 percent, is significantly less than the national average.

Total personal income for Webb County was $2.0 billion in 1995 (USDC 1997b). The leading sectors for income are the same as those of employment. Government, services, and retail trade produce 45 percent of the income in the region. The government sector is the largest income sector, accounting for 18 percent of income. Per capita personal income was $11,402 in 1995 which was significantly lower than the national average of $21,696 (USDC 1996).

3.7.3 Housing

The total number of housing units in Webb County in 1992 was 37,179. Of this total, 7.4 percent were vacant. The median value of a housing unit was $49,800; the median rent was $314 (USDC 1996). These median values are significantly lower than the figures for the United States and the State of Texas. The area surrounding the proposed project, Census Block Group 17.02:2, contained 540 housing units in 1990, of which 41 percent were vacant. The median value and median monthly rent were $55,000 and $279, respectively.

3.7.4 Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898 of February 11, 1994, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, provides that each federal agency shall identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States. Within Webb County are many areas with high concentrations of minority populations and below average income levels. The proposed site is not located near any minority or low-income populations. The nearest residential area is approximately one mile south of the proposed site.

3.8 Municipal Services

The project site is outside of, but adjacent to, the city limits of Laredo. Water and sewer service would be provided by the City of Laredo. Electricity would be provided by Central Power and Light. Trash pick-up and disposal would be provided by a private contractor. The city provides utility services to approximately 140,688 people (Ramos 1997). The city is not operating at capacity for the utility services that it provides and can expand these utility services in the project area (P. Martinez 1998).

3.9 Hazardous Waste

An environmental baseline survey (EBS) of the project site (which consisted of a site survey and a database search) was completed in March 1998. The EBS rated the site as a low risk for environmental contamination (USACE 1998). The database search followed the standard guidelines developed by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) in Document E 1527-97, *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Process,* to determine the presence of any facilities or potential sources of contamination on or in the vicinity of the project site.

The environmental databases were reviewed relative to the EBS and revealed that the property does not have any database sites located within one mile of the project site. The database search consisted of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Information System; State Superfund; National Priority List; Resource Conservation and Recovery Information System; Texas Petroleum Storage Tank Report; Texas Leaking Petroleum Storage Tank Report; Emergency Response Notification System; Texas Municipal Solid Waste Landfill Report; and the No Further Remedial Action Planned Report.

A site visit was conducted in January 1998 for the EBS. No evidence was observed that would indicate contamination or be of environmental concern regarding this property, and the site is considered a low environmental risk (USACE 1998).

3.10 Cultural Resources

3.10.1 Previous Cultural Resources Investigations

Three known archeological sites, 41WB361, 41WB377, and 41WB379, are located within a one-mile radius of the project area. The documented boundaries of one of these cultural properties, 41WB361, extend to within 150 meters (m) of the project area. The complete limits of the boundaries of site 41WB361, however, do not appear to have been fully demarcated during the original recording of the site; consequently, it was anticipated that part of this site might extend beyond the known site limits and into the project area.

Site 41WB361 was originally recorded by the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT), and a southwestern extension of the site, designated 41WB361A, was subsequently identified in 1993 in connection with the installation of a 12-inch sanitary sewer for the City of Laredo. As

previously documented, site 41WB361 extends across an approximate area of 67 ac, but the full extent of the boundaries of this site had apparently not been fully delimited when the site was originally recorded. In 1993, four shovel or auger tests were excavated in the 20-m-by-30-m portion of the site labeled 41WB361A. A cultural deposit extending to 20 centimeters (cm) below surface was identified, and several diagnostic artifacts were collected from the tests and from the modern ground surface.

Site 41WB361 was described as a disturbed prehistoric lithic workshop and open campsite containing evidence of occupations ranging from the Early Archaic to the Late Prehistoric periods. Temporally diagnostic projectile points recovered from the site include Matamoros, Tortugas, Abasolo, and Fresno types. A Clear Fork uniface was also identified, as well as quantities of burned sandstone and chert presumably indicative of disturbed hearth features.

3.10.2 Results of Cultural Resources Survey

An intensive pedestrian survey, augmented by shovel testing, was conducted in March 1998. The approximately 10-ac project area was traversed in 10-m transect intervals, and the modern ground surface was thoroughly inspected for cultural resources. Six shovel tests (measuring approximately 30-x-30 cm and excavated in 20-cm arbitrary levels) were excavated to a minimum depth of 40 cm, although most were excavated past 60 cm, and the soil screened through 6.4-millimeter (mm; ¼-in) hardware cloth.

The survey resulted in the identification of a newly recorded extension of a previously recorded archeological site (41WB361), which has been designated as 41WB361B, consisting of a low- to moderate-density scatter of lithic artifacts. A low knoll (approximately 30 m in diameter) consisting of the remnants of an old, eroding gravel terrace occupies the southeastern corner of the project area. A moderate-density scatter (roughly 11 to 20 artifacts per 25 m^2) of tested chert cobbles, cores, primary decortication flakes, and a small number of secondary flakes extends across the surface of this knoll. Artifact densities are markedly lower in the area immediately surrounding the knoll (approximately 5 to 10 artifacts per 25 m^2), and the artifact scatter grows increasingly more sparse toward the northern and western boundaries of the project area. Flakes are somewhat more common than cores further away from the knoll. Only one potentially diagnostic artifact was observed as a result of the survey; a slender, almost bi-pointed biface, manufactured from a light tan chert, bears some resemblance to a Lerma projectile point. Lerma points have been tentatively associated with the Paleo-Indian period in south Texas, although they are generally found in Archaic contexts (Turner and Hester 1985:145). No fire-cracked rock or any other indications of cultural features were observed during the survey.

Based on shovel tests, an 8-cm-deep cultural deposit was identified on the crest of the gravel knoll, and a 20-cm-deep deposit surrounds the base of the knoll. The artifact scatter throughout the rest of the project area is entirely surficial, with no associated cultural deposit. Based on the results of the survey, it appears that the prehistoric occupation within the project area was focused largely on the raw material resource represented by the eroding gravel knoll.

3.10.3 Summary of Cultural Resources Investigations

One cultural resources property was encountered as a result of the intensive cultural resources survey. This cultural property represents a previously unknown extension of a previously documented archeological site, 41WB361, and has been designated as 41WB361B, which appears to possess little contextual integrity. A gravel knoll in the southeastern corner of the subject property forms the apparent nucleus of prehistoric activity in this portion of site 41WB361, but this landform has undergone a great deal of deflation and only a thin layer of soil (8 cm) remains on the surface. The cultural deposit surrounding the knoll is somewhat deeper (20 cm); however, much of it may represent slopewash and redeposition of artifacts from the knoll itself. There does not appear to be any depth at all to the cultural deposit throughout the rest of the project area. Furthermore, only one potentially diagnostic artifact was observed in the project area, and no fire-cracked rock or other evidence of cultural features was encountered. It does not appear that the cultural resources present in the area of proposed impact for this project possess the potential to contribute significant information about the prehistoric past. The portion of site 41WB361 represented within the project area (41WB361B) is not, therefore, recommended as eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This chapter describes the potential impacts to the project area from the proposed action and the no action alternative. The information used to analyze impacts included site surveys, literature review, and previous environmental documents.

4.1 Proposed Action

4.1.1 Land Use

The proposed site is outside of, but adjacent to, the city limits of Laredo, and according to the City of Laredo Planning Department, the land use of the site is unclassified (Pena 1998). According to the Planning Department, the proposed action is compatible with the industrial zoning of the area west of the site (Pena 1998). There would be no significant impact to land use as a result of the proposed action.

4.1.2 Soils

Construction of permanent facilities (e.g., station building with a detention area, kennel, 2,500 sf of paved parking, and radio tower) would result in the disturbance of approximately 10 ac of soil. Exposure of subsurface soils during construction activities would potentially increase soil erosion and siltation off-site. Removal of vegetation may decrease soil stability and increase the potential for soil erosion. Impacts to soils from paving and landscaping would also affect wildlife since both cover and food would be eliminated by the loss of this wildlife habitat. Less than 0.0004 percent of the soils within Webb County would be disturbed by the proposed action, and this amount is considered insignificant.

A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) would be prepared and implemented for the proposed action. The SWPPP would contain specific construction and mitigation measures (e.g., silt fences, drainage swales, check dams, pipe slope drains, etc.) to reduce or eliminate runoff impacts during proposed construction activities and to reduce the potential for soil erosion after construction. Based on these preventive measures and the small disturbed acreage, soils in the project area would not be significantly affected by the proposed action.

4.1.3 Water Resources

4.1.3.1 Groundwater

Groundwater at the proposed site is located approximately 300 feet below the surface, and the soil has a moderate percolation rate. There is a layer of yellow sandstone bedrock between the surface and groundwater, and the bedrock could potentially slow the downward movement of water. Also, the high evaporation rate of surface water in the region would further prevent the potential migration of water from the surface to the groundwater. The proper handling and

disposal of petroleum products would potentially prevent the off-site travel of petroleum-based contaminants. Based on the contingency plans described previously, coupled with the distance from the surface to the groundwater, the high evaporation rate, and the layer of yellow sandstone bedrock between the surface and groundwater, the proposed action is not likely to impact the area groundwater.

4.1.3.2 Wetlands and Waters of the United States

Waters of the United States were not present on or adjacent to the proposed project site, and the nearest surface water feature is approximately 0.75 mile southwest of the site (SCS 1985). Therefore, Waters of the United States would not be impacted as a result of the proposed action.

Surface water resources (i.e., drainage channels, ponds) were not present within or adjacent to the proposed project site. Indirect impacts resulting from the proposed action could include increased erosion and subsequent sedimentation in downslope drainages. However, as previously discussed, a SWPPP would be prepared and implemented to prevent erosion and subsequent siltation of downslope drainages. Construction techniques would be implemented to prevent water from crossing disturbed areas and to remove sediment from runoff before it leaves the proposed project site. Wash waters and waste from construction activities would be processed, filtered, ponded, or similarly treated prior to their release. These construction and mitigation measures would prevent and/or alleviate any potential negative effects from erosion and subsequent sedimentation.

Although unlikely, direct and/or indirect effects upon surface water resources down-gradient from the proposed project area could result from spillage of hazardous materials (e.g., fuel spill). The contractor would implement protection techniques to prevent chemicals, fuels, oils, greases, bituminous materials, waste washings, herbicides, insecticides, and cement from entering the water supply. Any major spill would be contained by immediately constructing an earthen dike and applying an absorbent (i.e., granular, pillow, sock, etc.) to absorb and contain the spill. In addition, any major spill would be reported immediately to appropriate local, state, and federal agencies. If necessary, a hazardous materials site assessment would be conducted in order to identify potential problems, additional cleanup procedures, and mitigative measures. This would include disposal of the absorbent in accordance with all local, state, and federal regulations. All applicable local, state, and federal laws would be followed in the event of a spill. Based on these contingency plans, it is unlikely that a major spill would result in significant adverse effects to surface water resources down-gradient from the proposed project site.

4.1.3.3 Floodplains

The project site is not located within a floodplain area (FEMA 1982). Therefore, there would be no impacts to floodplains as a result of the proposed action.

4.1.4 Air Quality

The project area is designated as unclassified, but treated as being in attainment for the criteria pollutants (TNRCC 1997b, Butts 1998). Construction activities associated with the proposed project would produce pollutant emissions. Heavy equipment (e.g., large bulldozers; loaders; and concrete, dump, and spray trucks) used during construction would produce small amounts of hydrocarbons and exhaust fumes. Depending on wind speed and direction, people in the surrounding industrial communities and the nearby residential community and schools (approximately one mile south of the site) would occasionally be exposed to small amounts of these pollutants. Although some pollutant levels would increase during the proposed project, concentrations of pollutants in the area are not anticipated to reach non-attainment status due to the good dispersion conditions in the region during most of the year and the quality of air known to occur in the region.

Fugitive dust from proposed construction activities could cause temporary direct and indirect damage on surrounding plants. Watering of an area where there is potential for fugitive dust emissions would occur. This sprinkling would minimize adverse effects of dust. Dust suppression is allowed where extensive traffic occurs on non-paved areas, such as equipment parking and maintenance areas associated with construction activities. Also, stockpiled soil would be covered during construction activities to help prevent fugitive dust. Proper dust control should decrease the potential impacts of dust on the surrounding environment.

Emissions from the estimated 70 additional vehicles that would support new USBP personnel were not calculated. There would be an expected slight increase in criteria pollutants in the area as a result of these vehicles. However, the increased emissions are not anticipated to bring the area into non-attainment.

4.1.5 Biological Resources

4.1.5.1 Vegetation

The primary direct effect of the proposed action is the loss of vegetation and wildlife habitat. Approximately 10 ac of buffelgrass savanna would be removed from the project site as a result of the proposed action. This is not considered a significant amount of vegetation loss in an expanding suburban area. Previous disturbances to the proposed project site (i.e., exotic grasses and cattle) and adjacent development to the west further reduce the significance of potential impacts to the vegetation community.

4.1.5.2 Wildlife

The greatest impact to the wildlife communities would be the loss of habitat from the proposed action. Small mammals generally migrate away from disturbances such as grading. Some mobile animals may relocate to nearby areas of similar habitat; other slow or sedentary animals which utilize burrows (amphibians, lizards, and some small mammals) could be lost during construction.

Those species which are less tolerant to disturbances are more likely to be lost. This displacement and/or reduction in the number of animals is not expected to severely impact animal communities or the viability of any particular species due to the small area affected by the proposed action.

4.1.5.3 Threatened and Endangered Species

Federally designated critical habitat does not occur in the vicinity of Laredo. Potential impacts to the vegetation community would be insignificant due to previous disturbances to the proposed project site (i.e., invasion of exotic grasses and presence of cattle). No federally listed or state-listed protected species were observed, although suitable habitat does exist on-site for three state-listed threatened reptiles (see Table 3-3). The removal of approximately 10 ac of potential habitat, and any state-listed reptiles it may contain, would not contribute to the federal listing of these species due to the low number of individuals which could occur on the proposed project site. Therefore, there would be no effect to federally listed endangered, threatened, or candidate species from the proposed action.

4.1.6 Noise

Federal guidelines for noise assessments suggest three noise effect categories be evaluated: (1) short-term temporary noise level changes - defined as a change in the acoustical or vibrational environment which exists for six months, (2) long-term temporary noise level changes - defined as a change in the acoustical or vibrational environment which exists for longer than six months but less than 10 years, and (3) permanent noise level changes - defined as a change in the acoustical or vibrational environment which exists for longer than 10 years. Categories (1) and (3) would apply to the proposed project for the required construction and operation, respectively. The guidelines also recommend that the impacts be assessed for effects on speech and communications and on community annoyance (National Research Council 1977).

Noise levels within and adjacent to the project area would increase during the proposed construction activities. Construction activities (e.g., vehicular movements of construction equipment [dump trucks, graders, rollers, dozers], the use of hand construction equipment [hammers, saws, etc.], and utilization of equipment [generators], vehicles, etc.) would potentially result in short-term temporary noise impacts during the construction period in the project area.

Construction-related activities would involve short-term temporary noise level changes. The baseline noise level in the project area is expected to be approximately 40-60 dBA (i.e., rural to old urban residential ambient classification). Noise levels during construction activities are expected to range from approximately 62 to 96 dBA at 50 feet due to equipment motor noise, safety back-up bells, warning horns, and construction vehicles. This is a significant increase in the noise levels over most of the project area. However, since the proposed project area is presently adjacent to an industrial area, sparsely populated or only temporarily occupied by passing vehicular traffic, humans would not be significantly affected by the increase in noise levels throughout most of the project area.

Noise effects in the project area from the proposed action would not significantly affect humans over the long-term due to the discontinuous and temporary nature of the noise associated with the construction activities and the very low population density in the project area. Construction personnel would be exposed to noise levels of 90 dBA during the work day and would be required to wear ear protection in order to prevent hearing loss. Hearing loss can be either temporary threshold shift (TTS) or permanent threshold shift (PTS), both indicated by a shifting to a higher sound level of the ear's acuity to perceive sound. The EPA has set a noise level of 75 dBA for an 8-hour exposure and 70 dBA for a 24-hour exposure as the average noise level standard requisite to protect 96 percent of the population from greater than 5 dBA PTS.

With the addition of approximately 100 persons and 70 border patrol vehicles with sirens for the operational-related activities, permanent noise levels would range from 55-70 dBA (see Figure 3-1). The nearest sensitive noise receptor (a residential area) is approximately one mile south of the proposed location. This noise level would be in the acceptable range for the new facility and the surrounding community. Noise levels of 55 dBA are typically acceptable for residential, hospital, and special use areas; 60 dBA for motels, schools, church buildings, and parks; and 70 dBA for office buildings, theaters, and outdoor playgrounds (National Research Council 1977). These noise levels mean, for example, that persons can exist comfortably inside a residential structure if outside noise levels do not exceed 55 dBA. Most outdoor activities can be accomplished without any adverse impact when outdoor noise levels are at 55 dBA or less, but a minor adverse effect in understanding speech at a distance of approximately four feet does occur when outdoor levels approach decibels levels of 65 dBA or higher (e.g., sirens).

4.1.7 Socioeconomics

4.1.7.1 Population

Construction activities associated with the proposed action would have no direct, indirect, or induced impacts on population. The proposed construction is considered minor compared to overall construction activity within Webb County. The direct and indirect impacts from construction are insufficient to affect population and would have no impact on in- or out-migration in the area.

The change in operations at the facility would increase employment by approximately 100 persons. Given the average household size in Webb County, 3.81 persons per household, the maximum impact on population would be 381 persons. This represents less than 1 percent increase in city and county population and is well within normal population changes in Webb County and the City of Laredo. The population impacts would be insufficient to negatively impact community infrastructure or services such as streets, police, fire, and schools.

4.1.7.2 Employment and Income

Direct expenditures of the proposed construction activities would have short-term direct, indirect, and induced impacts on employment, income, and sales within Webb County. The action would

involve construction of a 30,500-sf station building, a 2,500-sf parking area and other amenities. While cost estimates have not been provided, costs of comparable projects indicate that the proposed action would be relatively small compared to annual construction activity within the county which totaled $62 million in 1995 (USDC 1996). Impacts would be beneficial.

The increase in operations would have beneficial long-term impacts on employment and income. The direct increase in employment and income from 100 new positions would represent 0.15 percent of area employment and income. Operations and construction would also have indirect and induced impacts on the area economy. These impacts occur as the direct jobs and income lead to more spending, income, and employment. For an economy like Laredo, the typical economic multipliers are in the 1.5 to 2.0 range. This implies that the total increase from operations in employment would be 150 to 200. Similarly, the increase in area sales and income would be 1.5 to 2.0 times the direct increase. These impacts would be a beneficial impact on the area economy.

4.1.7.3 Housing

The proposed action would impact housing resources directly and indirectly through two mechanisms. Any increase in population would also affect housing demand within the community. The maximum impact would involve an increase in 100 occupied housing units. Given the growth in housing resources during the 1990s and the number of available vacant units, this level of increase is not expected to significantly affect the price or availability of housing.

4.1.7.4 Environmental Justice

The project site is located in an area (Census Block Group 17.02:2) with similar levels of minority residents compared to overall county levels and lower than average levels of income (USDC 1992). In 1990, the project area had levels of household income and per capita income that were 0.93 and 0.77 times overall county levels. The proposed project site is near no neighborhoods and, since the proposed project is consistent with existing land use, should pose no environmental justice issues.

The proposed action is not expected to have significant negative impacts. Therefore, Executive Order 12898 is not considered relevant since "disproportionate impacts" cannot occur unless "high and adverse... environmental effects" are expected.

4.1.8 Municipal Services

The municipal services of water and sewer would be provided by the City of Laredo to the proposed location; electricity would be provided by Central Power and Light, and trash removal/disposal would be handled by a private contractor. The 100 new USBP personnel and the estimated 281 family members who would accompany them would consume approximately 43,200 gallons of water per day and generate 35,600 gallons of sewage each day (P. Martinez

1998). The city's municipal services have the capability to expand and would be able to handle the expected increase in demand as a result of the proposed action (Garcia 1998). Therefore, there would be no significant impacts to municipal services from the proposed action.

4.1.9 Hazardous Materials

Based on the information available in the EBS (USACE 1998), there are no environmental database sites located within one mile of the proposed location. The aboveground fuel tanks would be constructed and operated in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal regulations. All other hazardous materials would also be handled and disposed of in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal regulations. Spills of hazardous materials during construction activities would be contained and disposed of according to the spill response plan. The proper implementation of these laws and regulations would prevent significant deterioration of the property due to the use of hazardous materials.

4.1.10 Cultural Resources

A cultural resources survey of the project area was conducted in order to locate any cultural resources properties that would potentially be impacted by the proposed action. A low- to moderate-density scatter of prehistoric lithic artifacts was identified during the survey that appears to be associated with a previously documented cultural property, 41WB361. Because the boundaries of site 41WB361 had not been previously fully demarcated, it is likely that the artifact scatter observed within the project area represents a previously unknown, northeastern extension of site 41WB361. This newly recorded extension of site 41WB361 has been designated as 41WB361B in order to demonstrate its affiliation with the larger cultural entity.

Shovel testing on 41WB361B indicates that this part of site 41WB361 possesses only a shallow cultural deposit and retains little contextual integrity. As a result, 41WB361B is not recommended as eligible for inclusion in the NRHP, and no additional archeological work is recommended in connection with the proposed undertaking. The proposed action would not have any direct or cumulative impacts on any significant cultural resources.

4.2 No Action

Under the no action alternative, the proposed station would not be built, and there would be no change to land use, soils, water resources, noise, biological resources, hazardous materials, and cultural resources. However, as congressionally mandated, an additional 100 USBP personnel would still be stationed in Laredo. Approximately 281 family members would also accompany these personnel to Laredo. Approximately 70 additional vehicles would be needed to support the new personnel.

Air quality would be impacted due to the additional 70 vehicles needed to support the new personnel. Although some pollutant levels would increase as a result of the no action alternative, concentrations of pollutants are not expected to reach non-attainment status due to the good

dispersion conditions of the area during most of the year and the quality of air known to occur in the region.

The additional 100 USBP personnel and the estimated 281 family members would have minimal impacts on population or economics. The maximum potential increase of approximately 381 new people in the area would result in less than a 1 percent increase in population, the same as the proposed action. As noted above, the additional personnel would have positive but insignificant impacts on employment and income. Municipal services would be needed to support the new personnel and their families living in Laredo. The City of Laredo has the capacity to handle the increased demands on municipal services.

4.3 Cumulative Impacts

The assessment of cumulative impacts is addressed in NEPA by its reference to interrelationships of all components of the natural environment. The CEQ defined cumulative impact as the incremental impact of multiple present and future actions with individually minor but collectively significant effects. Cumulative impact can be concisely defined as the total effect of multiple land uses and developments, including their interrelationships, on the environment (Bain et al. 1986).

An analysis of each component of the affected environment was completed from the existing EA in order to identify which component would have cumulative impacts as a result of the past and proposed operations. This analysis revealed that land use, air quality, threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, and socioeconomic resources of past and proposed action areas would not be subjected to cumulative impacts due to the temporary nature of construction activities. Water and biological resources (i.e., vegetation and wildlife habitat) would be slightly to moderately affected cumulatively from past and proposed actions.

The primary cumulative effect of the past and proposed actions is the permanent loss of vegetation and associated wildlife habitat of moderate-to-good quality. Construction of the complex would increase the loss of vegetation, including buffelgrass savanna habitat, due to all past and proposed INS operations. This habitat loss would be insignificant (10 ac /1,500,000 ac = 0.0006 percent of Webb County wildlife habitat [Luna 1998]) due to the relatively small amount of development and the vast amount of remaining habitat within Webb County. Cumulative impacts to wildlife habitat would be insignificant.

If implemented, following a finding of no significant impact, the proposed action would result in the loss of approximately 10 ac of partially disturbed vegetation. Overall, a total of only about 1,200 ac of vegetation, mostly semi-desert grassland and desert scrub communities, have been removed by INS activities in Laredo since 1992. The 1,200 ac represent a loss of approximately 0.05 percent (1,200 ac / 2,211,358 ac = 0.054 percent Webb County land area) of the total land area and approximately 0.09 percent (1,200 ac / 1,500,000 ac = 0.054 percent of the wildlife habitat) in Webb County. Soil losses have been minimized through limiting the amount of area disturbed during the proposed action and using standard construction practices. Although the

amount of soils saved is not quantifiable, USBP operations have reduced extant erosion problems in numerous locations. Air emissions have been produced by vehicles and heavy equipment; however, these emissions have not resulted in significant cumulative impacts due to the short duration of the activities, the dispersion capabilities of the region, and the remote locations of most of the operations. Noise levels would increase temporarily during construction and would increase over the long-term with additional vehicles in operation. Since other industrial tracts to the west are undergoing construction, there would be temporary cumulative noise impacts in the project area which would be minimized due to the distance of the proposed location from sensitive noise receptors such as residences, schools, and hospitals (approximately one mile south of the project site). The USBP construction activities have had cumulative positive impacts on socioeconomic resources within the border area and the nation through reductions in illegal drug smuggling activities and, secondarily, through reductions in illegal immigration. Future impacts are anticipated to occur at a level consistent with past activities and would not result in significant adverse effects.

4.4 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

As a result of the proposed action, the following commitments would be considered irretrievable: approximately 10 ac of wildlife habitat would be developed; an undetermined amount of construction materials (steel, sand, asphalt, and concrete), although there is a small potential to recycle these materials at a later date; an undetermined amount of fossil fuels and electrical energy used during construction and operation of the facility; and an estimated total of 15 man-years of employment for construction of the facility and an additional annual total of 100 man-years during the facility operation.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN MEASURES

Should the proposed action be implemented, the following environmental design measures would be utilized.

- The construction contractor would prepare a SWPPP and file a Notice of Intent (NOI) prior to the start of construction activities in order to comply with the requirements of the NPDES program.
- During construction, potential erosion from soil disturbance would be reduced by the implementation of standard engineering practices such as silt fences and hay bales around the site perimeter.
- During construction, exposed soil would be frequently watered to minimize potential fugitive dust emissions. Stockpiled soil would be covered (with tarps, etc.) to prevent fugitive dust emissions.
- Unpaved areas would be landscaped where possible, using low water use landscaping techniques (i.e., xeriscape), in order to control soil erosion.
- All construction debris would be disposed of at an approved landfill site.
- Construction equipment would be inspected and maintained on a regular basis to prevent potential hazardous materials spills (e.g., fuels and oil). Spill kits would be provided for each construction vehicle, and a spill response plan would be developed and then implemented when necessary.
- Noise impacts to the community would be minimized by limiting "idle times" for construction vehicles and by routine vehicle maintenance. Construction activities would occur only during daylight hours.
- The aboveground fuel tanks would be built, permitted (by the construction contractor), and operated in accordance with all local, state, and federal regulations.
- All hazardous materials used in construction (i.e., solvents and cleaners) and operation (petroleum products) of the station would be handled and disposed of in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

6.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

6.1 Agency Coordination

This chapter discusses consultation and coordination that occurred during preparation of this document. This includes contacts made during development of the proposed action, elimination of alternatives, and writing of the EA. Copies of agency coordination letters are presented in Appendix A. Formal and informal coordination has been conducted with the following agencies:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE, Fort Worth District),
- Immigration and Naturalization Service and U.S. Border Patrol (INS and USBP),
- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO),
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS),
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD),
- City of Laredo Planning and Water Department Offices, and
- Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC), Monitoring Operations Division.

6.2 Public Information and Review

The draft version of this document is available for public review in the Laredo Public Library. In accordance with NEPA, a 30-day review period of the draft EA is provided via a Notice of Availability in the Laredo Morning Times newspaper. Public comments and responses to comments will be presented in Appendix B of the final document.

6.3 Distribution List

In order to solicit comments, the following persons or institutions have received a copy of the draft EA.

Name	Organization
Ms. Linda Ashe	USACE, Fort Worth
Ms. Shannon Breslin	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Austin
Mr. Blackstone Dilworth	Landowner, Laredo
Assistant Chief Patrol Agent Oscar H. Garza	USBP, Laredo
Mr. Raj Guntnur	City of Laredo, Engineer Office
Mr. Jim Herrick	USBP, Laredo
Ms. Debra Hood	INS, Washington, D.C.
Mr. Eric Verwers	INS, Fort Worth
Laredo Public Library	Laredo
Texas State Historic Preservation Officer	Texas State Historic Preservation Office, Austin
Ms. Pat Clemments	USFWS, Corpus Christi

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8.0 LIST OF PREPARERS

The following people were primarily responsible for preparing this EA.

NAME	DISCIPLINE/ EXPERTISE	EXPERIENCE	ROLE IN PREPARING EA
Ms. Linda Ashe U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District	Biology	3 years NEPA-EA studies	Contract Manager; EA review and coordination
Mr. Thomas Ball Geo-Marine, Inc.	Environmental Science	4 years NEPA-EA studies	Project Manager; Chapters 1, 2; Land Use, Soils, Groundwater, Air Quality, Hazardous Materials, and Municipal Services in Chapters 3 and 4
Mr. Chris Beacham Geo-Marine, Inc.	Socioeconomics	5 years economic analyses and NEPA-EA/EIS studies	Socioeconomics in Chapters 3 and 4
Assistant Chief Patrol Agent Oscar H. Garza, U.S. Border Patrol		USBP Laredo	EA review
Mr. Jim Herrick, U.S. Border Patrol		USBP Laredo	EA review
Ms. Debra J. Hood U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service		10 years Environmental Manager, INS Headquarters	EA review
Mr. Chris Ingram Geo-Marine, Inc.	Biology	20 years biological and NEPA-EA/EIS studies	EA review
Mr. Joseph Kaskey Geo-Marine, Inc.	Biology	24 years biological and NEPA-EA/EIS studies	Noise in Chapters 3 and 4
Mr. Jeffrey Owens Geo-Marine, Inc.	Archeology	3 years cultural resource management studies	Cultural Resources in Chapters 3 and 4
Mr. David Pitts Geo-Marine, Inc.	Biology/ Ecology	7 years NEPA-EA studies	Natural Resources, Surface Water, and Jurisdictional Waters of the U.S in Chapters 3 and 4
Mr. Eric Verwers U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Fort Worth	Biology	10 years environmental impact assessment for federal projects and 5 years wildlife restoration, Fort Worth District	EA review and coordination, and environmental design measures

NAME	DISCIPLINE/ EXPERTISE	EXPERIENCE	ROLE IN PREPARING EA
Dr. Dan Wilkinson Geo-Marine, Inc.	Botany	27 years biological studies and NEPA-EA studies	Program Manager

9.0 ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ac	=	acres
a.m.	=	ante meridian (before noon)
AQCR	=	Air Quality Control Region
ASTM	=	American Society for Testing and Materials
C	=	Candidate
CAA	=	Clean Air Act
CEQ	=	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	=	Code of Federal Regulations
cm	=	centimeters
CO	=	carbon monoxide
CWA	=	Clean Water Act
db	=	decibels
dBA	=	A-weighted sound levels expressed in decibels
dBC	=	C-weighted sound levels expressed in decibels
DOD	=	Department of Defense
E	=	Endangered
EA	=	Environmental Assessment
EBS	=	Environmental Baseline Survey
e.g.	=	exempli gratia (for example)
EPA	=	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	=	Endangered Species Act
et al.	=	et alii (and others)
etc.	=	et cetera (and other unspecified things)
F	=	Fahrenheit
Fed.	=	Federal
FEMA	=	Federal Emergency Management Agency
i.e.	=	id est (that is)
INS	=	Immigration and Naturalization Service
JTF-6	=	Joint Task Force Six
lbs	=	pounds
L_{dn}	=	day-night sound level
L_{eq}	=	Equivalent sound level
m	=	meters
mm	=	millimeter
mph	=	miles per hour
N/A	=	not applicable
NAAQS	=	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
ND	=	no data
NEPA	=	National Environmental Policy Act
NO_2	=	nitrogen dioxide
No.	=	Number
NOI	=	Notice of Intent

NPDES	=	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRHP	=	National Register of Historic Places
O_3	=	ozone
p	=	page
Pb	=	lead
P.L.	=	Public Law
PM_{10}	=	Particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter
ppb	=	parts per billion
ppm	=	parts per million
PTS	=	permanent threshold shift
SCS	=	Soil Conservation Service
sf	=	square foot
SHPO	=	State Historic Preservation Office
SO_2	=	sulfur dioxide
St.	=	State
SWPPP	=	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
T	=	Threatened
TNRCC	=	Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission
TPWD	=	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
TSDC	=	Texas State Data Center
TTS	=	temporary threshold shift
TXDOT	=	Texas Department of Transportation
$\mu g/m^3$	=	micrograms per cubic meter
USACE	=	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USBP	=	U.S. Border Patrol
U.S.C.	=	United States Code
USDC	=	U.S. Department of Commerce
USFWS	=	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Correspondence

APPENDIX A

Correspondence

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
FORT WORTH DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 17300
FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76102-0300

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF
Environmental Division

March 16, 1998

Subject: State List of Endangered and Threatened Species for Proposed Construction of U.S. Border Patrol Station in Laredo, Texas

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
Endangered Resources Branch
ATTN: Shannon Breslin
3000 IH-35 South, Suite 100
Austin, Texas 78704

Dear Ms. Breslin:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District, has been contracted by the U.S Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to conduct an Environmental Assessment for a proposed project in Laredo, Texas, which involves the construction of buildings and parking areas as a U.S. Border Patrol Station on an approximately 10-acre tract in north Laredo (see attached map). At this time, we would like to request a current list of state endangered, threatened, and species of special concern for Webb County, Texas. A copy of the draft Environmental Assessment will be forwarded to your office for review upon completion.

You may contact Ms. Linda Ashe, of my staff, at (817) 978-6382 if you should have any questions regarding this proposed action, or would like to schedule a site visit.

Sincerely,

Michael G Ensch
Chief, Environmental Division

Enclosure

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
FORT WORTH DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 17300
FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76102-0300

March 16, 1998

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF
Environmental Division

Subject: Federal List of Endangered, Threatened, Proposed, Candidate Species, and Species of Special Concern for Proposed Construction of U.S. Border Patrol Facility in Laredo, Texas

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Services Texas A & M University
C/o Corpus Christi State University
Campus Box 338
6300 Ocean Drive
Corpus Christi, Texas 78412

Dear Field Supervisor:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District, has been contracted by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to conduct an Environmental Assessment for a proposed project in Laredo, Texas, which involves the construction of buildings and parking areas as a U.S. Border Patrol Station on an approximately 10-acre tract in north Laredo (see attached map). At this time, we would like to request a current list of federal endangered, threatened, proposed, candidate species, and species of special concern for Webb County, Texas. A copy of the draft Environmental Assessment will be provided to your office for review upon completion.

You may contact Ms. Linda Ashe, of my staff, at (817) 978-6382 if you should have any questions regarding this proposed action, or would like to schedule a site visit.

Sincerely,

Michael G. Ensch
Chief, Environmental Division

Enclosure

United States Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Ecological Services - LRGV Suboffice
Phone: (956) 787-3079 Fax: (956) 782-0641
Rt. 2 Box 202-A
Alamo, TX 78516
April 8, 1998

Michael G. Ensch
Department of the Army
Fort Worth District, Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 17300
Fort Worth, Texas 76102-0300

ConsultationNo.2-11-98-I-170

Dear Mr. Ensch:

This responds to your letter dated March 16, 1998, requesting current information on species federally listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered occurring within Webb County, Texas. It is our understanding that the requested information is to be included in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment for the construction of buildings and parking areas as a U.S. Border Patrol Station on an approximately a 10-acre tract in North Laredo.

The following list provides current information on federally-listed species from Cameron county. For planning purposes, this list also includes Candidate species. Candidate species have no legal protection under the Endangered Species Act; however, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has substantial information on Candidate species to support their listing as threatened or endangered. Therefore, actions that might contribute to the listing of Candidate species should be avoided. A letter designation follows the species' name that represents the current federal status of the species. Within the list, the letters E, T, and C indicate Endangered, Threatened, and Candidate respectively.

Webb County

ashy dogweed (Thymophylla tephroleuca) - E
interior least tern (Sterna antillarum athalassos) - E
jaguarundi (Felis yagouaroundi) - E
Johnston's frankenia (Frankenia johnstonii) - E
ocelot (Felis pardalis) - E
mountain plover (Charadrius montanus) - C

With regard to wetland resources, Executive Order 11990 asserts that each agency shall provide leadership and take action to minimize the destruction, loss or degradation of wetlands, and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands in carrying out the agency's responsibilities. If floodplains are involved with proposed construction plans, please be advised that all involved federal agencies are required to comply with Executive Order 11988, regarding national policy on floodplain management. This mandate requires each federal agency to avoid long and short term impacts to the floodplain and to avoid direct or indirect support of floodplain development wherever there is a practicable alternative.

This letter is for general information only and does not constitute a review and clearance over potential effects to federally-listed species resulting from any specific project or activity. We appreciate the opportunity to provide pre-project planning information and look forward to providing any further assistance.

If you have any questions or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Ernesto Reyes at the address on this letterhead telephone extension 125.

Sincerely,

Thomas D. Serota

Thomas D. Serota
Field Supervisor

cc:
Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Corpus Christi, TX

END

GEO-MARINE, INC.
ENGINEERING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

April 23, 1998

Ms. Shannon Breslin
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Endangered Resources Branch
3000 IH-35, South, Suite 100
Austin, Texas 78704

Re: Environmental Assessment for the Proposed U.S. Border Patrol Laredo North Station, Laredo, Texas.

Dear Ms. Breslin:

Enclosed is one (1) copy of the Environmental Assessment for the above referenced project. You are invited to review the document. If you have any comments please send them to Ms. Linda Ashe at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District; Environmental Resources Branch; Room 13A18, 819 Taylor Street; Fort Worth, Texas, 76102-0300, by close of business Tuesday, May 26, 1998.

If you need additional assistance, please contact Ms. Ashe at (817) 978-6382.

Sincerely,

Dan L. Wilkinson, Ph.D.
Vice President, Environmental Division

TAB

Enclosures

Ref: # 1560-121

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

Currently available data and Endangered Resources Branch review of the activity as proposed indicate no anticipated negative impacts to rare species or natural communities.
Reviewed:
Date: 5/26/98

CORPORATE OFFICE
550 EAST FIFTEENTH STREET • PLANO, TEXAS 75074 • (972) 423-5480 • FAX (972) 422-2736 • EMAIL: gmi-pl@ix.netcom.com

APPENDIX B

Public Comments

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

George W. Bush • *Governor*
John L. Nau, III • *Chairman*
Curtis Tunnell • *Executive Director*

The State Agency for Historic Preservation

April 28, 1998

Michael Ensch
Chief, Planning Division
Dept. of the Army
Ft. Worth District, Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 17300
Fort Worth, Texas 76102-0300

Re: Draft Report: "A Cultural Resources Survey of 10 Acres Northeast of Laredo, Webb County, Texas" (COE, F2, F19)

Dear Mr. Ensch:

The Archeology Division is in receipt of the Draft Report for the above referenced project and your request for archeological review of the draft report. This office agrees with the recommendation that the portion of site 41WB361 represented within the proposed project area (41WB361B) is ineligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Therefore, the project should proceed without further consultation with this office.

Please have the author incorporate TxDOTs findings and recommendations from the original documentation of the site into the overview section of the final report (if available). What was known about the site context? What kind of disturbances were observed? Were NR eligibility recommendations made at that time?

Thank you for your assistance in the protection of our State's cultural resources, if you have any questions please contact Debra L. Beene (512) 463-5865, project reviewer of our staff.

Sincerely,

James E. Bruseth, Ph.D.
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

JEB/dlb

CC: Duane Peter, Geo-Marine, Inc.