EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background: The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (BCBP) is preparing Environmental analysis to construct a headquarters facility in the Rio Grande Valley. This Environmental Assessment was prepared to analyze alternatives and address their potential project impacts to the environment.

Alternatives Considered: The project consists of construction of a new office complex in Edinburg to replace the McAllen Sector Headquarters. Current and future missions of the BCBP and the U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) require more space and modernized facilities. The preferred alternative is on a 28-acre undeveloped tract donated by the City of Edinburg. The Edinburg tract was chosen by the USBP using a selection process. The primary criteria in the selection included a site location adjacent to a major expressway. Therefore, this was the only site that met the primary criteria. This location will allow for expansion to accommodate an increase in personnel to 2000, and with associated equipment and supplies. The complex will contain buildings for Administrative Services, Management, Enforcement, a dog kennel and an exercise facility. Also considered was the No-Action Alternative, whereby the property would not be developed for the Sector Headquarters.

Environmental Impacts of Proposed Alternatives:

Land Use. Historically, the 28-acre tract has been used for agriculture. By gifting the land to the BCBP, the City of Edinburg sees use of the land for a new Headquarters facility as more beneficial than it's current use. Therefore impacts associated with the proposed actions will have beneficial effects on the land and local economy.

Water Resources. There are no reliable aquifers in the region to be impacted by drilling water wells. Storm water retention ponds will be constructed to capture water and allowed to percolate into the soils for recharging the shallow groundwater zone. No wetlands were identified on or adjacent to the property. The tract is located in the 500-year flood plain. Proposed actions would not change baseline conditions in the flood plain. These actions are not expected to have a significant effect on water resources.

Air Quality. Short-term impacts associated with the proposed action will be due to emissions from construction equipment and particulates from clearing and grading. Anticipated temporary air emissions occurring during construction over a 24-hour period are VOC, CO NOx, SOx, and PM_{10}. Future air emissions expected to be generated at the site relevant to commuting personnel include exhaust emissions

(VOCs, CO, and NOx) and PM_{10}. Both sort-term and future emissions are not expected to have a significant effect on the McAllen-Edinburg-Mission metropolitan region, and no mitigation is required.

Biological Resources. Proposed construction will take place on 28 acres of previously disturbed land, providing little diversity for wildlife habitat. Based on available information and consultation with the USFWS, the proposed action will have no impact to listed species of Hidalgo County. No mitigation is required relative to vegetation and wildlife.

Socioeconomic Resources. Construction of the McAllen Sector Headquarters will not have a significant effect on the Edinburg demographics, housing and economy. Fully staffing the Headquarters could have a significant effect on the socioeconomic resources if the additional 526 agents relocate to the Edinburg area.

Infrastructures and Utilities. Daily potable water consumption by a fully staffed Headquarters would result in less than one percent of the current total daily usage of Edinburg. In 1998 the city wastewater treatment system was only operating at about 60% of its design capacity. Local energy is supplied by three different companies and power lines are adjacent to the property. Natural gas is also available. Transportation resources are readily available; the property is adjacent to a major highway, air water, bus and rail service are available in Edinburg or within a 65-mile radius. The City infrastructure and utilities are adequate enough to support additional agents and families without mitigation.

Hazardous Materials and Waste. A Phase I Site Assessment was conducted for the property in August 2002 prior to title transfer. No hazardous materials will be used or stored at the Headquarters, with the exception of ordinance that will be stored in a separate building. Assuming 2000 agents generate 3 pounds of waste per day, the DHS will have to contract with the City waste department or a private waste contractor to dispose of 6000 pounds of waste per day at the local waste disposal facility.

Cultural Resources. The project property and adjacent land is disturbed ground and surveys confirm there are no cultural resources in the area.

Noise. Short-term elevated noise levels will occur for approximately 24 months while the facility is being constructed. Construction will be limited to daytime and not affect nearby subdivisions during prime time hours. Routine office operations in the Headquarters facility will be insignificant and is not expected to cause any adverse impact on the surrounding environment.

Earth Resources. Adverse effects to the soils, physiography and geology of the property will not occur as the area is on previously disturbed land. An NRCS

rating for the Farmland Protection Policy Act resulted in a low score and requires no further consideration.

Aesthetic and Visual Resources. An aesthetically pleasing facility design is proposed and significant distance to the nearest neighborhood will minimize the view of encroachment of commercial development.

Coastal Zone Management. The project site is not located within the jurisdiction of the Coastal Management Zone.

Summary: In view of mission requirements and that the preferred alternative will have no significant impacts to human health and the environment, the proposed alternative is the preferred alternative.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AGST	above ground storage tank
ANSI	American National Standards Institute
AQCR	air quality control region
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAAA	Clean Air Act Amendments
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CO	carbon monoxide
CO_2	carbon dioxide
CWA	Clean Water Act
dB	decibel
dBA	A-weighted sound level
DNL	daynight average sound level
EA	environmental assessment
EIS	environmental impact statement
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FONSI	finding of no significant impact
GCAS	Gulf Coast Aquifer System

HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
HTRW	Hazardous, Toxic, and Radioactive Waste
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
KV	kilovolt
Lb	pound
LDGV	light duty gasoline vehicle
LDGT	light duty gasoline truck
L_{eq}	equivalent sound level
L_{max}	maximum sound level
L_p	sound pressure level
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NO_2	nitrogen dioxide
NO_x	nitrogen oxides
O_3	ozone
Pb	lead
PM_{10}	particulate matter equal to or less than 10 microns in aerodynamic diameter
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
SARA	Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act
SEL	sound exposure level
SIP	state implementation plan
SO_2	sulfur dioxide

SO_x	sulfur oxides
TCEQ	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
TPWD	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Tpy	tons per year
TSCA	Toxic Substances Control Act
TSP	total suspended particulate
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
VOC	volatile organic compounds

SECTION 1
PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) has increased the number of authorized agents for this sector of the border. Current facilities are inadequate to handle the additional USBP agents. Increased illegal immigration, smuggling and terrorist activities have raised a need for increased border security. Therefore, Congress has given the USBP a mandate to secure borders against the illegal activity and the new USBP Sector Headquarters (HQ), with additional agents, is considered a matter of National Security.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (BCBP) and the USBP proposes to construct a new office complex in Edinburg to replace the McAllen Sector Headquarters. The need for the proposed action is for the USBP to expand and upgrade their office facility to meet current and future missions. The location in Edinburg will allow for expansion and will accommodate an increase in personnel, equipment and supplies.

The BCBP recognizes the need and value of updating its facilities inventory. Building and operational needs, as well as long-range alternatives and options have been reviewed. The BCBP has established strategies to reach these objectives, and has created estimates and schedules to forecast costs and priorities for implementation of these plans. The construction of a new headquarters in Edinburg is an immediate need of the USBP.

1.2 LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed USBP Sector Headquarters is located in Edinburg, Hidalgo County in south Texas. The proposed facility would be on a 28 acre undeveloped rural agriculture land located at the southeast corner of the intersection of State Highway 281 and East Trenton Road. Figure 1-1 is a map showing the location of the proposed action.

1.3 APPLICABLE REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

This EA was prepared 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. 94-83. 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 CCEQ (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508). Numerous other federal and state laws regulate activities that may affect the environment. Table 1-1 lists pertinent environmental regulations applicable to the proposed action.

Table 1-1
Applicable Environmental Statutes and Regulations

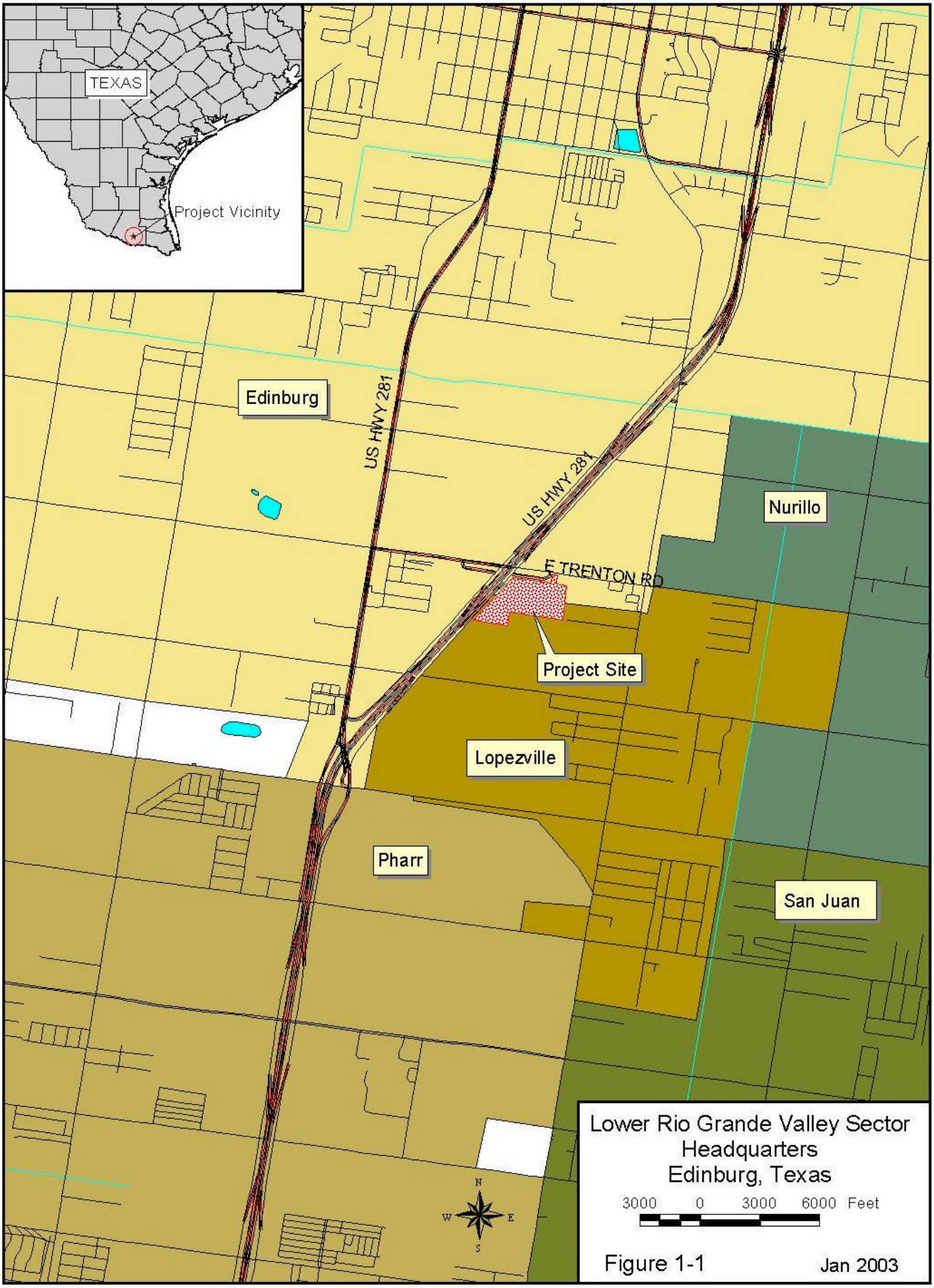
Federal Statutes
Archaeological and Historic Preservations Act
Clean Air Act, as amended
Clean Water Act, as amended
Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
Endangered Species Act, as amended
Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendment
Migratory Bird Treaty Act
National Historic Preservation Act, as amended
National Environmental Policy Act
Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
Noise Control Act
Executive Orders and Memorandums
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)
State Statues, 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
Texas Storm Water Permits for Construction Activities

1.4 DECISION TO BE MADE

The USBP must decide among the following possible actions:

- Construct an USBP Headquarters complex on 28 acres of vacant agricultural land comprising office space for 2000 personnel, a facility maintenance building, a supply warehouse, dog kennel, a weapons and ammunition storage building; or

- Take no action and continue to operate from the Sector Headquarters facility located adjacent to the McAllen Airport (no-action alternative).


TEXAS
Project Vicinity
Edinburg
US HWY 281
US HWY 281
E TRENTON RD
Nurillo
Project Site
Lopezville
Pharr
San Juan
N
W
E
S
Lower Rio Grande Valley Sector
Headquarters
Edinburg, Texas
3000 0 3000 6000 Feet
Figure 1-1
Jan 2003

SECTION 2

PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

2.1 HISTORY OF THE FORMULATION OF ALTERNATIVES

The existing Headquarters is located in McAllen, adjacent to the airport. This facility has no expansion capability and is too small to accommodate additional agents being assigned to the station. In the search for a site to build a new facility, the U.S. Border Patrol investigated several properties throughout the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The Edinburg tract was chosen by the USBP using a selection process. The following Texas cities were considered in the selection process: Mission, McAllen, Edinburg, Alamo, Donna, Weslaco, Mercedes, La Feria, and Pharr. Each site was evaluated based on numerical rankings (see Appendix A) and the final site selected was based on the highest numerical value. The primary selection criteria included a site location adjacent to a major expressway. The site selection for the Headquarters facility was also based on the property being owned by the City of Edinburg and was offered as a donation to the USBP by the City. Therefore, this was the only site that met the primary criteria. This location can allow for expansion to accommodate an increase in personnel to 2000, and with associated equipment and supplies. Also considered was the No-Action Alternative, whereby the property would not be developed for the Sector Headquarters.

2.2 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The BCBP proposes to construct a Headquarters office complex to accommodate an increase in USBP agents and take the place of the aging structure located adjacent to the McAllen airport. The new Complex would insure adequate facilities for 2000 USBP personnel to complete its current and future mission requirements. The Headquarters Complex occupies 28 acres of land gifted to the BCBP from the City of Edinburg. The Complex contains office buildings for Administrative Services, Management, Enforcement and an exercise facility. Other structures are for electronics, facility maintenance, a supply warehouse, a day-use dog kennel, and weapons and munitions storage. The proposed Complex would not support firing ranges, fuel tanks and vehicle maintenance shops and wash racks. The complex grounds are to be landscaped, and parking areas would be paved with asphalt. A retention pond would be constructed for storm water runoff and groundwater recharge. A security fence would surround the Complex (See figure 2-1).

2.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the no-action alternative, the Headquarters facility would not be constructed. The USBP would continue to operate from the existing facility adjacent to the McAllen airport. However, expansion of administrative and operations support necessary to the

USBP mission would not be feasible at the existing facility. The existing facility was not designed to accommodate the mission-required number of agents that will result from implementation of the USBP Long Range Master Plan. This facility cannot be expanded to meet operational requirements.

AGRICULTURAL

TRENTON ROAD

TXDOT RIGHT OF WAY FOR
FUTURE HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT

AGRICULTURAL

U.S. HWY 281

SINGLE FAMILY
RESIDENTIAL /
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
TO THE EAST

COMMUNICATIONS ADDITION (OPTION 1)

ENFORCEMENT

MANAGEMENT

MANAGEMENT

SUPPORT SERVICES

ELECTRONICS

FACILITY MAINTENANCE

EXTRA STORAGE

SUPPLY WAREHOUSE

WEAPONS/ AMMUNITION

ARCHIVES

EXTRA STORAGE

STAFF PARKING

ASSET FORFEITURE (OPTION 3)

TRAINING

CHAINLINK FENCE

306.09'

EXISTING NATURAL
GAS WELL/PLANT

227.57'

192.11'

330.49'

PROJECT 1

PROJECT 2

PROJECT 3

SINGLE FAMILY
RESIDENTIAL

AGRICULTURAL

SECTION 3

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes the existing environmental media that could be affected by, or could affect the proposed and the no-action alternatives at Edinburg. Within this context, only those specific components relevant to the potential impacts are described in detail.

3.2 LAND USE

The proposed land is an undeveloped 28-acre tract located at the southeast corner of State Highway 281 and East Trenton Road. Surrounding land use is agricultural with some rural residences. Adjacent land use consist of: East Trenton Road, an overhead power line, telephone line and agricultural land borders the northern boundary; a 16 inch irrigation line in a 65 foot canal right-of-way, irrigation drain and standpipe, and undeveloped land with some residential structures on the east side; agricultural land and a fenced 2-acre gas well site are on the south side; and SH 281, an overhead power line, and agricultural land on the west side. Not adjacent to the property but within 1600 feet is an elementary school. The proposed location has access to electrical and telephone utilities, as well as municipal water and sewer. Hidalgo County has a 40-foot road easement and the Hidalgo County Irrigation District has a 12-inch drain line easement through the property. Two six inch tile drains cross the property.

3.3 WATER RESOURCES

3.3.1 Groundwater

The major aquifer in the area is the Gulf Coast Aquifer System (GCAS). The GCAS is a complex network of interbedded sediments that have been segregated into four generally recognized water-producing formations. Aggregately, these formations form a large leaky artesian aquifer system, the GCAS, which provides groundwater for agricultural, industrial, and municipal uses. The Chicot aquifer, which is the upper or down-dip most component of the GCAS, outcrops within the eastern half of the Nueces-Rio Grande Coastal Basin and is hydrologically interconnected with the underlying by Evangeline aquifer in the western portion of the Chicot outcrop zone (TWDB, 1979). The Evangeline aquifer outcrops in the western portion of the coastal basin and is underlain by the Burkeville confining unit. The thickness of fresh to slightly saline water within the aquifer ranges from less than 200 feet near the coast to more than 400 feet in the southern portion of the basin north of Edinburg (TWC, 1963).

3.3.2 Wetlands and Surface Water

Potential wetlands were not observed on the site during the site visit in June 1999. Natural drainage patterns would send rainfall runoff to the south and east. However,

Parcel A
Site of Proposed
Rio Grande Valley USBP Sector HQ
Edinburg, Texas
Figure 3-1

natural drainage of the area has been severely altered as land was converted to agricultural use. Rainfall runoff from the proposed site may by in any direction as the

3.3.2 Wetlands and Surface Water

Potential wetlands were not observed on the site during the site visit in June 1999. Natural drainage patterns would send rainfall runoff to the south and east. However, natural drainage of the area has been severely altered as land was converted to agricultural use. Rainfall runoff from the proposed site may by in any direction as the site has little topographic relief.

3.3.3 Floodplains

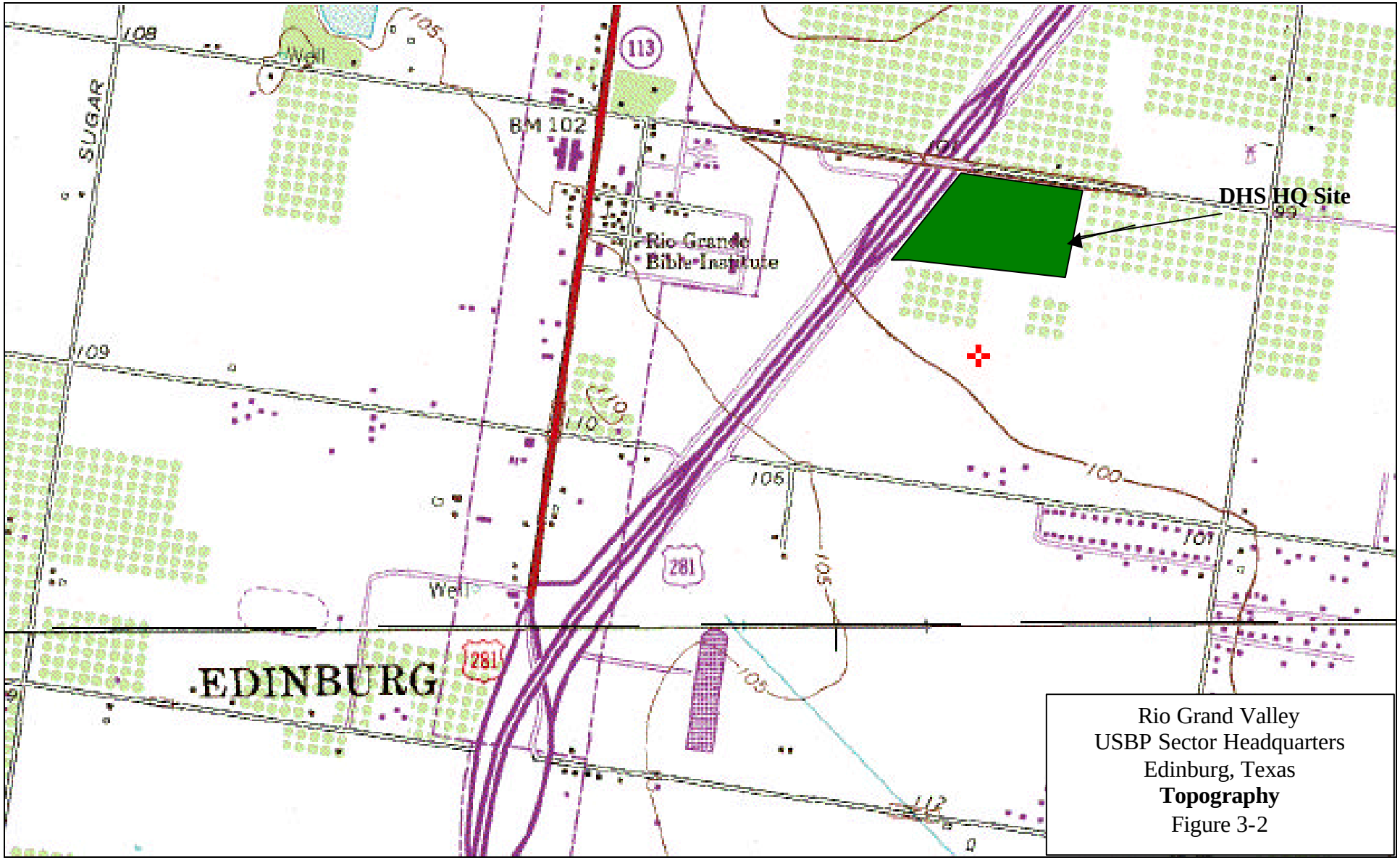
A 100-year flood plain is defined as a flood level that occurs with an average frequency of once in 100 years at a designated location, although it may occur any year, even two years in a row. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is responsible for implementation and management of the National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

According to FEMA maps, two zone maps rate the proposed tract. The City of Edinburg Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) places the northern quarter of the tract in Zone X (FEMA 2000), a designation given to areas in the 500-year flood plain. The Hidalgo County, Texas FIRM places the remainder of the tract in Zone B (FEMA 1982), also in the 500-year flood plain.

3.4 Air Quality

3.4.1 Air Pollutants and Regulations

The Clean Air Act (CAA), as amended in 1977 and 1990, provides the basis for regulating air pollution to the atmosphere. Different provisions of the CAA apply depending on where a source is located, which pollutants are being emitted, and in what amounts. The CAA required USEPA to establish ambient ceilings for certain criteria pollutants. The ceilings were based on the latest scientific information regarding the effects a pollutant may have on public health or welfare. Subsequently, USEPA promulgated regulations that set national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS). Two classes of standards were established: primary and secondary. Primary standards define levels of air quality necessary, with an adequate margin of safety, to protect public health, including the health of “sensitive” populations such as asthmatics, children, and the elderly. Secondary standards define levels of air quality necessary to protect public



Rio Grand Valley
USBP Sector Headquarters
Edinburg, Texas
Topography
Figure 3-2

welfare (e.g., decreased visibility; damage to animals, crops, vegetation, wildlife, and buildings) from any known or anticipated adverse effects of a pollutant. Air quality standards are currently in place for six pollutants or "criteria" pollutants: carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), ozone (O_3), sulfur oxides (SO_X, measured as sulfur dioxide [SO_2]), lead (Pb), and particulate matter (PM).

3.4.2 Regional Air Quality

The fundamental method by which USEPA tracks compliance with the NAAQS is the designation of a particular region as "attainment" or "nonattainment." Based on the NAAQS, each state is divided into three types of areas for each of the criteria pollutants:

1) those that are in compliance with the NAAQS (attainment),
2) those that do not meet the ambient air quality standards (nonattainment), and
3) those areas where a determination of attainment/nonattainment cannot be made due to a lack of monitoring data (unclassifiable – treated as attainment until proven otherwise).

The proposed USBP site is located in Hidalgo County within the USEPA's Brownsville-Laredo Intrastate Air Quality Control Region (AQCR). This region is one of a nationwide system of AQCRs established by the EPA for air quality planning purposes (40 CFR part 81) and is designated as AQCR No 213. The Brownsville-Laredo Intrastate AQCR includes the counties of Cameron, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Starr, Webb, Willacy, and Zapata. The whole AQCR 213 is designated by the USEPA as being in attainment for all criteria pollutants i.e. as meeting NAAQS (EPA AirData).

3.4.3 Baseline Air Emissions

An air emissions inventory is an estimate of total mass emissions of pollutants generated from a source or sources over a period of time, typically a year. The quantity of air pollutants is generally measured in pounds (lbs) per year or tons per year (tpy). Emission sources may be categorized as either mobile or stationary emission sources. The 1999 areas sources air emissions and point source air emissions summary for AQCR 213 are presented in Table 3-2 (TCEQ).

3.4.4 Meteorology

The proposed USBP headquarters will be located in Edinburg, Hidalgo County, Texas. Hidalgo County is situated within the South Texas Triangle, which is formed by the Rio Grande River, the Nueces River, and the Gulf of Mexico. Hidalgo County has hot summers and mild winters. In summer, the average temperature is 85 degrees Fahrenheit and the average daily maximum temperature is 97 degrees Fahrenheit. Winter is characterized by an average temperature of 58 degrees Fahrenheit and an average daily minimum temperature of 45 degrees Fahrenheit. Of the daylight hours available in each

Table 3-1

	HIDALGO COUNTY AIR EMISSIONS INVENTORY - 1999													
	AREA SOURCE EMISSIONS (TONS PER YEAR)							POINT SOURCE EMISSIONS (TONS PER YEAR)						
	CO	NH3	NOX	PM10	PM2.5	SO2	VOC	CO	NH3	NOX	PM10	PM2.5	SO2	VOC
01-Fuel Comb. Elec. Util.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	340	13	1697	2	2	3	33
02-Fuel Comb. Industrial	17	10	78	6	2	210	1	2003	1	476	158	90	1	218
03-Fuel Comb. Other	148	2	367	20	19	40	33	4.00E-02	0	2.10E-01	3.00E-02	3.00E-02	0	1.00E-02
06-Petroleum & Related Industries	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,826	225	0	216	1.30E-01	1.00E-01	0	52
07-Other Industrial Processes	-	-	-	29	1	-	-	0	0	0	4.70E-01	1.80E-01	0	0
08-Solvent Utilization	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,045	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
09-Storage & Transport	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,083	0	0	0	0	0	0	128
10-Waste Disposal & Recycling	2,103	63	63	553	510	17	775	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11-Highway Vehicles	83,360	387	12,811	517	411	541	9,873	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12-Off-Highway	23,426	8	7,107	414	380	871	1,943	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14-Miscellaneous	1	1,943	0	62,406	10,570	-	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	109,055	2,413	20,426	63,945	11,893	1,679	24,626	2,568	14	2,389	161	92	4	434

	HIDALGO COUNTY AIR EMISSIONS INVENTORY - 1999 AREA SOURCE + POINT SOURCE EMISSIONS (TONS PER YEAR)						
	CO	NH3	NOX	PM10	PM2.5	SO2	VOC
01-Fuel Comb. Elec. Util.	340	13	1,697	2	2	3	33
02-Fuel Comb. Industrial	2,020	11	554	164	92	211	219
03-Fuel Comb. Other	148	2	367	20	19	40	33
06-Petroleum & Related Industries	225	-	216	0.1	0.1	-	3,878
07-Other Industrial Processes	-	-	-	29	1	-	-
08-Solvent Utilization	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,048
09-Storage & Transport	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,211
10-Waste Disposal & Recycling	2,103	63	63	553	510	17	775
11-Highway Vehicles	83,360	387	12,811	517	411	541	9,873
12-Off-Highway	23,426	8	7,107	414	380	871	1,943
14-Miscellaneous	1	1,943	0.04	62,406	10,570	-	47
TOTAL	111,623	2,427	22,815	64,106	11,985	1,683	25,060

Source: US EPA AirData: Access to Air Pollution Data (www.epa.gov/air/data)
* US EPA - AirData NET Tier Report

season, the sun shines 75 percent of the time in summer and 50 percent of the time in winter. Hidalgo County receives roughly 26 inches of precipitation mostly in the form of rainfall; snowfall is rare. Of this, the heaviest usually occurs in late spring and early fall. The prevailing wind is from the southeast. Average relative humidity of 60 percent in mid-afternoon is replaced by higher humidity at night with an average of 90 percent at dawn (SCS, 1993).

3.5 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

3.5.1 Vegetation

A visual site inspection to determine the existing vegetation types located on the proposed project site was conducted in March 2002. The site had been recently cleared of vegetation and graded. Remnants of burn piles on the site and vegetation in the surrounding area, indicated that the site was predominately vegetated by mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*). The agricultural land use in the region surrounding Edinburg is primarily comprised of cultivated cover crops and grasslands associated with crop rotations and grazing land. Mesquite-granjeno park vegetation is locally intermixed with the agricultural land. This vegetation is found extensively to the north, east, and west of Edinburg. Mesquite-granjeno park vegetation is, in part, composed of mesquite, granjeno (*Celtis pallida*), bluewood (*Condalia hookeri*), lotebush (*Ziziphus obtusifolia*), coyotillo (*Karwinskia humboldtiana*), guayacan (*Porlieria angustifolia*), Texas colubrina (*Colubrina texensis*), tasajillo (*Opuntia leptocaulis*), Texas pricklypear (*O. lindheimeri*), single-spike paspalum (*Paspalum monostachyum*), purple three-awn (*Aristida purpurea*), tumble lovegrass (*Eragrostis sessilispica*), bullnettle (*Cnidosocolus texanus*), croton (*Croton* spp.), and silver-leaf nightshade (*Solanum elaeagnifolium*) (TPWD, 1984). Elements of the mesquite-granjeno park association were observed in early growth stages at the site during the visual site inspection.

3.5.2 Wildlife

Hidalgo County is located within the Rio Grande Plain of south Texas. The fauna representative of this region is characterized as semi-tropical, with some tropical species at the northern limit of their ranges and, additionally, some Chihuahuan desert species. This region was once open grassland with a scattering of shrubs, low trees and wooded flood plains along rivers. Overgrazing, the suppression of prairie fires and other changes in land use patterns have transformed most of the grasslands into a thorn forest, covered with subtropical shrubs and trees.

Wildlife common in this region of south Texas include Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*), eastern mole (*Scalopus aquaticus*), northern yellow bat (*Lasiurus intermedius*), nine-banded armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*), black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*), eastern fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger*), Attwater's pocket gopher (*Geomys attwateri*), hispid pocket mouse (*Chaetodipus hispidus*), Gulf Coast kangaroo

rat (*Dipodomys compactus*), American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), great-tailed grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*), crested caracara (*Polyborus plancus*), Harris' hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus*), turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*), morning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), western kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*), scissor-tailed flycatcher (*T. forficutus*), tiger salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*), green toad (*Bufo debilis*), Texas toad (*Bufo speciosus*), Berlandier's tortoise (*Gopherus berlandieri*), Texas horned lizard (*Phrynosoma cornutum*), Texas spiny lizard (*Scloporus olivaceus*), Texas spotted whiptail (*Cnemidophorus gularis*), Texas rat snake (*Elaphe obsoleta*), common king snake (*Lampropeltis getulus*), and rattlesnake (*Crotalus* spp.),

A very limited amount of wildlife was observed in the vicinity of the site during the June 1999 visual site inspection and included great-tailed grackle, turkey vulture, and crested caracara.

3.5.3 Threatened and Endangered Species

3.5.3.1 Federally Listed

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 and 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) are responsible for implementing the ESA within the continental United States. A total of six federally listed species occur or potentially occur within Hidalgo County. All six species are listed as endangered and are listed in Table 3-3.

Table 3-2
Federal Listed Species and Texas Special Status Species Potentially Occurring in Hidalgo County, Texas

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status*	
		Federal	State
MAMMALS			
Coues' Rice Rat	*Oryzomys couesi*	-	T
Ocelot	*Felis paradalis*	E	E
Jaguarundi	*Felis jaguarundi*	E	E
Jaguar	*Panthera onca*	-	E
Southern Yellow Bat	*Lasiurus ega*	-	T
White-nosed Coati	*Nasua narica*	-	T
BIRDS			
Brownsville Common Yellowthroat	*Geothlypis trichas insperata*	-	T
White-tailed Hawk	*Buteo albicudatus*	-	T
Northern Aplomado Falcon	*Falco femoralis septentrionalis*	E	E
Common Black Hawk	*Buteogallus anthracinus*	-	T
Gray Hawk	*Buteo nitidus*	-	T
Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy Owl	*Glaucidium brasilianum cactorm*	-	T
Interior Least Tern	*Sterna antillarum athalassos*	-	E
Northern Beardless Tyrannulet	*Camptostoma imberbe*	-	T
Reddish Egret	*Egretta rufescens*	-	T
Rose-throated Becard	*Pachyramphus aglaiae*	-	T

Tropical Parula	*Parula pitiayuma*	-	T
White-faced Ibis	*Plegadis chihi*	-	T
Wood Stork	*Mycteria Americana*	-	T
Zone-tailed Hawk	*Buteo albonotatus*	-	T
REPTILES			
Reticulate Collared Lizard	*Crotaphytus reticulates*	-	T
Indigo Snake	*Drymarchon corais*	-	T
Texas Tortoise	*Gopherus berlandieri*	-	T
Texas Horned Toad	*Phrynosoma cornutum*	-	T
Black Striped Snake	*Coniophanes imperialis*	-	T
Northern Cat-eyed Snake	*Leptodeira septentrionalis*	-	T
Speckled Racer	*Drymobius margaritiferus*	-	T
AMPHIBIANS			
Black Spotted Newt	*Notophthalmus meridionalis*	-	T
Mexican Tree Frog	*Smilisca baudinii*	-	T
Sheep Frog	*Hypopachus variolosus*	-	T
South Texas Siren	*Siren* sp. 1	-	T
White-lipped Frog	*Leptodactylus labialis*	-	T
FISH			
Bluntnose Shiner	*Notropis simus*	-	T
River Goby	*Awaous tajasica*	-	T
PLANTS			

Star Cactus	*Astrophytum asterias*	E	E
Texas Ayenia	*Ayenia limitaris*	E	E
Walker's Manioc	Manihot walkerae	E	E

*E - listed as endangered T - listed as threatened
E/SA - listed as endangered by similarity of appearance
TPWD, Special Species List, Hidalgo County, Texas, April 4, 1998

Mammals

Ocelot habitat consists of dense chaparral thickets, mesquite-thorn scrub and live oak mottes, avoiding open areas. Ocelots breed and raise their young from June through November (TP&W, 2002). Ocelots hunt at night and spend the day resting in brush so thick that the only way a person can move through it is by crawling. Ocelots live within an area (home range) of about 1 to 4 square miles. Females prepare a den for their kittens in thick brush. Mothers leave at night to hunt, but spend each day with their kittens at the den. The kittens begin hunting with their mother when they are about 3 months old. They stay with her until they are about a year old. Ocelots are endangered because their habitat (the thick brush where they live) has been cleared for farming and growth of cities. About 30 to 35 ocelots live in the shrublands remaining at or near the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge near Brownsville, Texas. Ocelots are 30-41 inches long and weigh 15-30 lbs. Their diet consists of rabbits, small rodents, and birds (TPWD, MTO). The Ocelot are listed as endangered.

Habitat of the jaguarundi is thick brush lands, preferably near water. Unconfirmed jaguarundi sightings in Hidalgo County include Bentsen-Rio Grande State Park, Santa Ana NWR, Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR, Cimarron County Country Club, Wimberly Ranch and the Anacua Unit of the TPWD Las Palomas Wildlife Management Area (Prieto, 1990; Benn, 1997). The young are born twice a year in March and August, following a six-month gestation period. Jaguarundis move in a quick weasel-like manner. Their coat is a solid color; either rusty-brown or charcoal gray. Jaguarundis hunt during early morning and evening. They hunt mostly on the ground, but also climb trees easily. Jaguarundis have been seen springing into the air to capture prey. Historical accounts from Mexico suggest that Jaguarundis are also good swimmers and enter the water freely. They are solitary (live alone) except during the mating season of November and December. Jaguarundis are endangered because the dense brush that provides habitat has been cleared for farming or for the growth of cities. Jaguarundis still exist in Mexico, but they are now very rare in Texas. Jaguarundis are slightly larger than a domestic cat (8-16 lbs.). Birds, rabbits, and small rodents (TPWD, MTO). The Jaguarundis are listed as endangered.

Birds

Northern Aplomado Falcon. Typical northern aplomado falcon habitat is open rangeland and tropical savannah (Hector, 1983). This species was exterminated as a breeding bird in Texas and the U.S. The last breeding record was for Deming, New Mexico, in 1952 (Oberholser, 1974). Since 1985, captive-bred aplomado falcons have been reintroduced at the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge and other areas in Texas. The first active nest since 1941 was observed near Brownsville. Known nesting pairs in the Brownsville area are all located east of the project area in the coastal prairie.

Plants

Habitat for the Star Cactus is gravelly saline clays or loams over Catahoula and Frio formations, on gentle slopes and flats in grasslands or shrublands. Plants typically flower in May. Star cactus is a flat to low dome-shaped, spineless cactus that blooms from March through May and fruits from April through June in the wild. It historically occurred in Cameron, Starr and Hidalgo Counties in Texas and in Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas states in Mexico. In Texas, it is now limited to one site along a creek drainage in Starr County. This species may be cultivated from seed if given the appropriate sandy medium. Loss of habitat also threatens this species. Root plowing and other mechanical and chemical brush control practices as well as conversion of habitat to agricultural fields and urbanization have played roles in the decline of this species. It is thought that known sites in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties have been eliminated as a result of habitat conversion. The plant is two to six inches in diameter and less than two and a half inches tall. Yellow flowers about two to three and a half inches across with an orange throat. Fruit a one half inch long oval berry covered with dense hairs (TPWD, MTO).

Texas ayenia occurs in dense brush on alluvial soils in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties. This species is a 2-foot tall shrub with simple alternate pubescent leaves and small greenish to cream or pink flowers. The fruit is small and round with 5 parts and covered with short, curved prickles.

Walker's manioc grows around the periphery of native brush in sandy loam soils and caliche cuestas. Plants generally flower from April to September (TP&W, 2002). Male and female flowers are separate, but on the same plant. Male flowers are white, and about ½ inch long. They are located above the 3/8-inch long female flowers. The fruit is a dry, globular capsule about ½ inch long. This profusely branching perennial herb may be up to 6 feet tall with five-lobed leaves. Walker's manioc is a member of the spurge family (Euphorbiaceae) and is in the same genus as cassava (*Manihot esculenta*), an important source of starch and a staple food for peoples of the tropics worldwide. The importance of Walker's manioc as a genetic resource highlights the need to protect this species. The root of Walker's manioc, much smaller than that of cassava, measures about 4 inches long and is shaped like a carrot. Until recently, it was believed that this species was

represented in the U. S. by a single individual, outside of cultivation. Several populations are now known from far south Texas and adjacent Mexico.

Much of the native brush habitat in the historical range of Walker's manioc has been cleared for agriculture, urbanization, or improved pasture. It has been estimated that 90% of the native brush in the Lower Rio Grande Valley has been converted to other land uses.

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 of threatened. No designated critical habitat was defined within the proposed project site, and there is no designated critical habitat in the Edinburg area.

3.5.3.3 State Listed

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), Wildlife Diversity Section, 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 the federal government may be listed by the state as threatened and endangered. The state does not have the authority at this time to list invertebrates. The state lists 8 endangered species and 29 threatened species as occurring or potentially occurring in Hidalgo County (see Table 3-3).

3.5.3.4 Survey Results

A site inspection of the proposed project site was conducted in February of 2002. Site survey methodology involved walking the perimeter of the project site and random pedestrian transects throughout the site. No federally listed or state-listed endangered, threatened, or candidate species were observed within the proposed project site, which is an open field. There is no habitat for threatened or endangered species and no threatened or endangered species were recorded during the site visit. Although the site might provide some habitat for rodents, jackrabbits and songbirds, generally there is little wildlife habitat located on this site.

3.6 SOCIOECONOMIC RESOURCES

Hidalgo County is located in south Texas. The City of Edinburg is located in the southeastern area of Hidalgo County and serves as the county seat. Edinburg is located in the Rio Grande Valley, 65 miles west of the Gulf of Mexico and only 20 miles north of the Mexico Boarder.

3.6.1 Demography

The Bureau of the Census records indicates that the population of Hidalgo County was 569,463 in 2000. The population of Edinburg was 48,465 in 2000. Approximately 77% of the population in Hidalgo County is White, 0.5% Black, 0.4% American Indian, 0.6% Asian and 18% other. Approximately 88% of the population is listed as Hispanic. These percentages are based on the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000. In some cases the percentages from the Bureau will total more than 100, for this reason: In the forms used by the Bureau, residents were asked to classify themselves according to race as “White”; “Black”, “American Indian”; “Eskimo”; “Asian”; and “Other”. Those people that the Bureau asked who were considered “Hispanic” were asked to respond to another question. Hispanic people can be of any race, thus their numbers are also included in the basic racial categories (Census, 2000).

3.6.2 Housing

The majority of the housing in Edinburg consists of single-family dwellings, which makes up 84% of the housing. Non-family households (householder living alone) makes up16% of the housing (EEDC).

3.6.3 Economy

The economy in Hidalgo County is based primarily on oil and gas production, agriculture and cattle operations. Nature tourism is a growing enterprise. Edinburg has two industrial parks; one located on Hwy 281 in the southeast section of town and one located at the Edinburg International Airport. Various businesses at the parks include

manufacturing, tool and die, medical, textbooks, and telecommunications equipment distribution, and scientific measurement services (EEDC).

3.7 INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

3.7.1 Water Supply

The City of Edinburg's sole water source is the Rio Grande River. The City currently operates a 10 million gallons per day (mgd) water treatment plant. Over the past five years, the City's water treatment plant has delivered treated water at an average daily rate of approximately 5.0 mgd. However, during the hottest months of May through October, the daily delivery rate has reached levels as high as 7.02 mgd, or 70% of rated capacity. During these periods of high demand, the City's depletion of stored water causes low water pressure and low delivery rates throughout the community. The City distribution system is also interconnected with the City by the North Alamo Water Supply (NAWSC) Co. and the Sharyland Water Supply Co (SWSC). The maximum amount of water than can be diverted are .71 MGD from the NAWSC and 1.25 MGD from the SWSC.

The Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) approved a grant to the City of Edinburg (City) to construct an emergency waterline interconnection with the City of McAllen. The funding for this project comes from a law signed by Governor Bush in 1999 for water utilities that receive their water supplies through irrigation districts that are at risk for exhausting their supplies. The emergency interconnection will allow the City to establish a back-up source of water during peak use hours for its residents with a maximum daily volume of 2.0 mgd of treated potable water. The waterline will be located on the north right-of-way on Trenton Road, approximately ½ mile west of McColl Road in Edinburg (EEDC).

3.7.2 Wastewater Treatment

City operated, the Edinburg Wastewater Treatment Plant has a 5.3 MGD design flow with 6.7 MGD peak flow capabilities. Treated effluent is pumped to a holding pond that is used for irrigating the Edinburg Municipal Park. The holding pond has an overflow pipe that discharges into a ditch and eventually flows into the Arroyo Colorado, then into the Laguna Madre (EEDC).

3.7.3 Storm Water Management

The Legislature of the State of Texas has in the Texas Water Code, § 16.315, delegated the responsibility of local governmental units to adopt regulations designed to minimize flood losses. The City building codes require new developments include an onsite storm water retention pond to mitigate pollution and flooding from storm water runoff. Captured rainwater is allowed to percolate through the soils and recharge the shallow groundwater table. Size of the retention pond is based on a ratio of impervious ground

cover to be constructed, including roofs, sidewalks and parking lots (City of Edinburg Code of Ordinances).

3.7.4 Energy

Energy sources for the City of Edinburg are natural gas and electricity. Natural gas is supplied by the Southern Union Gas Company. Electrical sources are the American Electric Power/Central Power & Light Company, Magic Valley Cooperative, and Duke Energy Hidalgo, LLP (EEDC).

3.7.5 Solid Waste Management

Solid waste is disposed at the City of Edinburg landfill and at the Edinburg Recycling Center.

3.7.6 Transportation

Major highways traversing Edinburg are Interstate 69 and US 281. Nearby highways are US 77 and US 83. The majority of the roads in Edinburg are paved, and some smaller thoroughfares within Edinburg and outlying county roads are unimproved gravel. Ports of Entry to the areas near Edinburg are the Mexico International Bridge (McAllen-Hidalgo / Reynosa Bridge), the Pharr Bridge, and the Anzalduas Bridge.

Air transportation is provided by the Edinburg International Airport, and the McAllen Miller International Airport. Bus service providers are the Valley Transit and Greyhound Bus Lines. Rail service is provided by the Rio Valley Railroad and Southern Pacific. The nearest deepwater port is the Port of Brownsville, a distance of 64.7 miles.

3.8 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND WASTE

3.8.1 Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials are those substances defined by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), as amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA), and the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). Hazardous wastes are defined by the Solid Waste Disposal Act as amended by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), which was further amended by the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments. In general, both hazardous materials and hazardous wastes include substances that, because of their quantity, concentration, physical, chemical, or infectious characteristics, may present substantial danger to public health or welfare or to the environment when released or otherwise improperly managed.

Hazardous materials currently managed by the USBP include fuel for the patrol vehicles and various materials confiscated from detainees. Controlled substances collected by the

USBP agents are transferred to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Vehicle fueling and maintenance will be conducted at an offsite facility after the proposed Headquarters office complex is constructed.

3.8.2 Hazardous Waste

Unless otherwise exempted by CERCLA regulations, RCRA Subtitle C (40 CFR Parts 260 through 270) regulations are administered by the TCEQ and are applicable to the management of hazardous wastes. Hazardous waste must be handled, stored, transported, disposed, or recycled in accordance with these regulations.

Some minor amounts of solvents and rags are used during routine maintenance of firearms and vehicle maintenance. A Hazardous, Toxic, and Radioactive Waste (HTRW) assessment was conducted for the subject property in March 2002 (Appendix d). The results of the HTRW assessment did not indicate the presence of hazardous waste generators or disposal facilities on or adjacent to the property.

3.9 CULTURAL RESOURCES

A cultural resource survey of the proposed project area was conducted by a Galveston District Staff Archaeologist in March 2002. At the time of the survey the property had been recently plowed. No shovel tests were conducted because of the excellent ground visibility. The terrain is flat with sandy soils. The entire project area was surveyed. No historic or prehistoric cultural material was identified. It's considered unlikely that prehistoric sites are present because of the upland nature of the property. No further cultural resource work is recommended.

3.10 NOISE

3.10.1 Noise Descriptors

Noise is most often defined as unwanted sound. Sound levels are easily measured, but the variability is subjective and physical response to sound complicates the analysis of its impact on people. Sound intensity decreases with increasing distance from the source due to dissipation of sound energy over an increasing area. In addition, the atmosphere absorbs a portion of the sound energy and provides attenuation. These factors must be considered while estimating sound levels from the proposed action.

Sound pressure level (L_p) can vary over a wide range of amplitude. The decibel (dB) is the standard unit for measuring the amplitude of sound because it accounts for the large variations in amplitude and reflects the way people perceive change in sound amplitude. The wide variations in amplitude and the variability in the human perseverance of sound complicate the impact analysis. Table 3-3 presents the subjective effect of changes in sound level.

Table 3-3 Subjective Effects of Changes in Sound Pressure Levels (Source : Bies and Hansen, 1988)

Change in Sound Level (dB)	Apparent Loudness
3	Just perceptible
5	Clearly noticeable
10	Half or twice as loud
20	Much quieter or louder

Community noise levels usually change continuously during the day. However, community noise exhibits a daily, weekly and yearly pattern. Several descriptors have been developed to compare noise levels over different time periods. One descriptor is the equivalent sound level (L_{eq}). The L_{eq} is the equivalent steady state A-weighted sound level that would contain the same acoustical energy as the time varying A-weighted sound level during the same interval level.

3.10.2 Noise Criteria and Regulations

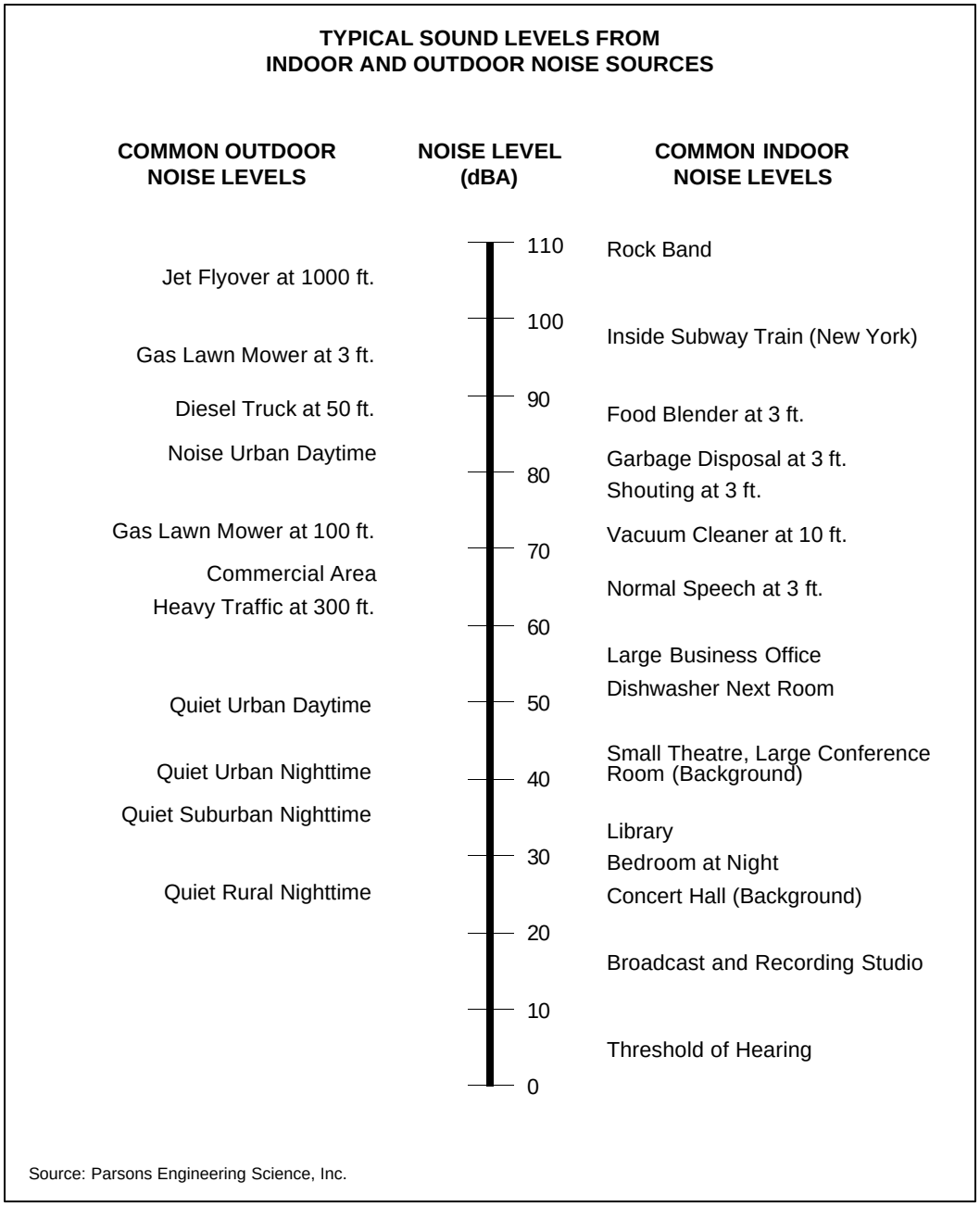
Although sound levels are subjective, federal and local governments have established noise guidelines and regulations for the purpose of protecting citizens from potential hearing damage and from various other adverse physiological, psychological, and social effects associated with noise.

The Federal Interagency Committee on Urban Noise developed land use compatibility guidelines for noise in terms of day-night average sound level (DNL) metered in decibels (dB) (USDOT, 1980). In general, residential units and other noise-sensitive land uses are "clearly unacceptable" in area where the noise exposure exceeds DNL 75 dB; "normally unacceptable" in regions exposed to noise between DNL 65 to 75 dB; and "normally acceptable" in areas exposed to noise where the DNL is 65 dB or less. An impact would be considered significant if the federal action increased substantially the ambient noise levels for adjoining areas with noise sensitive uses.

3.10.3 Effects of Noise Exposure

Several social surveys have been conducted to determine people's reaction to their noise environment as a function of DNL occurring outside their homes. Guidelines have been developed for individual land uses based upon the information collected in these surveys and from information concerning activity interference. For various land uses, the level of acceptability of the noise environment is dependent upon the activity conducted and the type of building construction (for indoor activities).

Figure 3-3 Typical A-Weighted Noise Levels



Source: Parsons Engineering Science, Inc.

Annoyance. When high noise is experienced inside or outside residences, as may occur from demolishing of building or operation of construction equipment, a feeling of annoyance may result. The noise may even interfere with the performance of various activities such as conversation, TV watching ,etc. The degree to which there is annoyance and/or activity interference depends on the magnitude of intruding noise, the frequency with which it occurs, and the time of day of occurrence. In response to the Noise Control Act of 1972, which directed the USEPA to establish a recommended measure to describe community noise, DNL was selected as the unit of measure to be used to predict annoyance from noise exposure.

Table 3-4 presents the results of over a dozen studies of transportation modes, including airport operations, investigating the relationship between noise and annoyance levels. This relationship has been recommended by the USEPA (USEPA, 1982), re-evaluated (Fidell et.al., 1988), and updated (Finegold et. Al., 1992) for use in describing people's reaction to semi-continuous (transportation) noise. These data are shown to provide a perspective on the level of annoyance that might be anticipated. For example, 12 to 22 percent of persons exposed DNL of 65 to 70 dB would be highly annoyed by the noise.

Table 3-4 Theoretical Percentage of Population Highly Annoyed by Noise Exposure (Source: ICON, 1992)

DNL Intervals in dB	Percentage of Persons Highly Annoyed
65-70	12-22
70-75	22-36
75-80	36-54

Hearing Loss. Hearing loss is measured in decibels and refers to a permanent auditory threshold shift of an individual's hearing. The USEPA (USEPA, 1974) has recommended a limiting daily equivalent energy value of L_{eq} of 70 dBA to protect against hearing impairment over a period of 40 years. This daily energy average would translate into a DNL value of approximately 75 dB or less (USEPA, 1974). The potential for hearing loss involves direct exposure, on a regular, continuing long-term basis, to DNL levels above 75 dB. The Federal Interagency Committee on Urban Noise states that hearing loss due to Noise: 1) may begin to occur in people exposed to long-term noise at or above a DNL level of 75 dB; 2) will not likely occur in people exposed to noise between a DNL of 70 to 75 dB; and 3) will not occur in people exposed to noise less than a DNL of 70 dB (USDOT, 1988).

3.10.4 Baseline Noise

Based on the land use, the proposed area and its surrounding sites are rural. The primary use of land is agriculture. Agricultural operations, such as equipment use and vehicles used during operation, are the primary source of noise. In addition, traffic on the Hwy 281 generates noise. As mentioned earlier, the noise level varies depending on the

activity. The project site is currently estimated to have a DNL noise level ranging from 20-60 dB (Figure 3-1).

3.11 EARTH RESOURCES

3.11.1 Physiography and Geology

The site is located in the South Texas Plains vegetation area, which features grasses, mesquite, live oak, and chaparral. The elevation ranges from 40 to 200 feet. The basin exhibits a dry sub-humid and sub-tropical climate with an annual rainfall of about 23 inches (EEDC 2001). According to the Handbook of Texas Hidalgo County has temperatures that range from an average low of 47 degrees Fahrenheit in January to an average high of 96 degrees Fahrenheit in July; the average annual temperature is 73 degrees Fahrenheit.

The northern section of Hidalgo County is comprised of sand sheet deposits with sparse grasses, and physical properties, which include extensive relict aeolian deposits with stabilized sand dunes. Interspersed throughout the sand sheet deposits, are clay dune and clay sand dune aeolian deposits. The clay dune deposits are typically light gray and calcareous, formed by conglomerations of clay, silt, and sand. The deposits form lengthwise along intermittently wet basins at a height of 5 – 30 feet. Moving south through Hidalgo County, the Pliocene Epoch is visible in the Goliad Formation, which has a maximum depth of 180 meters, or 600 feet. The Formation is exposed in central and southwestern Hidalgo County, and manifested as fluvial deposits composed of clay, sand, sandstone, caliche, chert, limestone, and dark siliceous granules and pebbles in a caliche matrix (Bureau of Economic Geology 1976).

Continuing south, the Lissie Formation on the eastern edge of the Goliad formation in central Hidalgo County is manifested as a Late and an Early Epoch. The Epoch ends at 18,000 years B.P., and includes at least fourteen continental glacial advances that were interspersed by warmer periods. The Lissie Formation consists of gray to brown to pale yellow clay, silt, sand, siliceous gravel, and sandy caliche. Within the Lissie Formation are pockets of stabilized sand dune deposits characterized by dense live-oak mottes and scrub(BEG).

Moving further south in Hidalgo County, the Late Pleistocene era Beaumont Formation is exposed as matrices of clay, silt, sand and gravels ranging in depth to 900 feet. In this portion of Hidalgo County, the topography is the result of stabilized sand dune deposits created from eolian activity, combined with floodplain deposits of mud, sand, and silt Aspects of the resulting topography are distinct features of the Rio Grande Delta such as long, narrow, meandering oxbow lakes and abandoned channels of the Rio Grande referred to as “resacas”. On the Rio Grande itself, the alluvium is typified by alluvium and floodplain deposits that are either predominantly mud, or predominantly silt and sand (BEG)

3.11.2 Soils

Hidalgo County has thirteen different soil units within its borders, and in some areas limestone lies within forty inches of the surface. The northern part of the county has sandy and light loamy soils over deep reddish or mottled, clayey subsoils. Examples of these soils include: Nueces-Sarita, Delmita-Randado, Delfina-Hebronville-Comitas, and Willacy-Delfina-Hargill soil types (SCS 1981).

Central Hidalgo County is characterized by increasingly clayey soils that are deep, moderately permeable soils that typically have a dark brown or dark grayish brown fine sandy loam surface layer. To the east in central Hidalgo County, soil types mainly consist of Hidalgo soils, a dominant, nearly level, gently sloping loamy soil found in uplands (SCS 1981).

In the eastern portion of the county Raymondville-Mercedes, a nearly level loamy and clayey upland soil, is the dominant type. Raymondville-Mercedes is a deep, slowly to very slowly permeable soil with a gray clay or gray clay loam surface layer. In western Hidalgo County, McAllen-Brennan upland soils are present. Theses soils are deep, moderately permeable light brownish gray to dark brown fine sandy loam on the surface followed by dense clay sub-surface.

The southern part of the county has moderately deep to deep loamy surfaces over clayey subsoils. The surface soils are represented by Harlingen-Runn-Reynosa, and pocket of Pits-Jimenez-Quemado in southwest corner of the county. Harlingen-Runn-Reynosa soils are deep, slowly to moderately draining grayish brown clay, silty clay or silty clay loam on terraces. Along the Rio Grande brown to red clays occur as the Rio Grande-Matamoras soil type.

Soils at the proposed site are classified as Hidalgo sandy clay loam with a 0 to 1 per cent slope. The soil is well drained, surface runoff is slow, and permeability is moderate. The hazards of water erosion and soils blowing are slight.

3.12 Aesthetic and Visual Resources

The proposed property is barren, undeveloped agricultural land in a rural setting next to a major highway. The topography is flat and sightline is uninterrupted except by distant trees, structures and highway traffic.

3.13 Coastal Zone Management

The proposed property is not within the boundaries of the Coastal Management Zone. This authority is not applicable (GLO).

SECTION 4
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section provides the scientific and analytical basis for comparing the environmental consequences of the proposed action and the no-action alternative. The information used to analyze impacts includes site surveys, literature review, and previous environmental documents.

4.2 LAND USE

4.2.1 Proposed Action

The proposed action includes the construction of new buildings for the Headquarters complex and vehicle parking areas on the property. The activities and land uses associated with the proposed action are different from historical land use, which was generally agriculture. However, by gifting the property to the DHS, the City of Edinburg sees that use of the land for a new Headquarters office facility is more beneficial than it's current use. Therefore the impact on land use associated with the proposed action is considered beneficial.

4.2.2 No-Action Alternative

The site would not be affected under the no-action alternative.

4.2.3 Mitigative Action

No negative effects on land use in the area are be anticipated under the proposed action. Therefore, no mitigative actions are required.

4.3 WATER RESOURCES

4.3.1 Groundwater
4.3.1.1 Proposed action

No aquifers will be affected as no water wells will be drilled to supply the facility with water. Storm water retention ponds will be constructed as permanent features. Captured water will be allowed to percolate into the soil, recharging the shallow groundwater zone.

4.3.1.2 No-Action Alternative

There will be no change from the baseline condition.

4.3.1.3 Mitigative Measures

No adverse effects to groundwater are anticipated in the vicinity of Edinburg under the proposed action. Therefore, no mitigative actions are required.

4.3.2 Wetlands and Surface Water

4.3.2.1 Proposed Action

Impervious cover (including buildings and parking facilities) resulting from the proposed action will account for a small percent of the total area of the property and is not considered to be a significant impact. In addition there will be a runoff catchment and recharge basin, which will assist in controlling pollutants from rainfall runoff. The size of the basin will be based on a percentage of the impervious cover, as specified in the City of Edinburg Ordinance. To further reduce potential surface water contamination during construction, best management practices such as rock berms, silt fences, and single point construction entries will minimize erosion. Therefore, surface water quality impacts will be minimal. No wetlands were identified on or adjacent to the property, and as such, no impacts to wetlands are anticipated as a result of the proposed action.

4.3.2.2 No-Action Alternative

There is no change from the baseline condition under the no-action alternative.

4.3.2.3 Mitigative Measures

With best management controls utilized during construction and measures, which can be considered mitigative, are built into the site plan as permanent features, no adverse effects to surface water or wetlands are anticipated at the site under the proposed action. Therefore, no mitigative actions are required.

4.3.3 Floodplains

4.3.3.1 Proposed Action

The site is located within the 500-year flood plain. Therefore no impacts to flood plains are anticipated under the proposed action.

4.3.2.2 No-Action Alternative There would be no change from the baseline condition under the no-action alternative.

4.3.2.1 Mitigative Measures

The site is located within the 500-year flood plain and will have no negative affect on the flood plain. Therefore, no mitigative actions will be required.

4.4 AIR QUALITY

4.4.1 Proposed Action

Air pollutant emissions are expected to result from the construction activities associated with the proposed Headquarters office project and from future site operations. Short-term impacts associated with the proposed action will be due to emissions from use of construction equipment and particulates from clearing and grading. Adjacent to US Hwy 281, the site is readily accessible, reducing vehicular traffic and minimizing increased emissions in the City and outlying areas. Construction of the Headquarters facility in Edinburg will involve site preparation activities such as clearing and grading, asphalt and concrete paving activities, and finally construction of the new buildings. Temporary air pollutant emissions from the construction, which would occur over the period of 24 months, would consist of VOC, CO, NOx, SOx, and PM_{10} emissions.

During the future operations of the proposed Headquarters air pollutant emissions sources would include vehicular traffic emissions generated primarily by permanent personnel commuting to and from office each workday and secondarily by visitors to the complex. Emissions would be similar to the surrounding area as the property is located adjacent to a major highway but would increase temporarily two to three times a day based on personnel shift changes.

The future air pollutant emissions expected to be generated at the site and relevant to commuting to and from work include exhaust emissions (VOCs, CO, and NO_x), and particulate emissions (expressed as PM_{10}). Particulate emissions from paved or unpaved roads are due to direct exhaust from vehicles and resuspension of loose material/dust on the road surface.

In light of the above presented information about the air emissions expected as a result of the actions at the proposed Edinburg Headquarters the following paragraphs describe the probable consequences of that action on the air quality of the McAllen-Edinburg-Mission Metropolitan Intrastate Air Quality Control Region. The increases in the air pollutant emissions are expected to be mainly associated with construction of the proposed office complex, estimated to take 24 months. The short-term increase in emissions will decrease and change to emissions associated with office facility traffic after construction is finished.

The emissions resulting from the proposed construction activities at the site are very minor, will occur only temporary during the 24 months of construction operations and are considered not to have an adverse impact on the region's air quality.

Table 4-1. Air Pollutant Emissions Associated with Construction Activities

POLLUTANT	CO (TPY)	VOC (TPY)	NO_X (TPY)	SO_X (TPY)	PM_{10} (TPY)
Site Preparation/ Ground Disturbance	-	-	-	-	11.37
New Building Construction	0.7	0.12	1.60	0.17	0.11
Asphalt Paving Operations	0.7	0.03	0.11	0.01	0.03
Concrete Paving Operations	0.13	0.02	0.30	0.03	0.02
Total Construction Emissions	1.53	0.17	2.01	0.21	11.53
Baseline Emissions	111,623	25,060	22,815	1,683	64,106
Change from Baseline (%)	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001

The total emissions associated with the proposed activities at the future site are expected to have minimal impacts on the McAllen-Edinburg-Mission Metropolitan Intrastate Region's AQCR No 213.

4.4.2 No-Action Alternative

The no-action alternative would entail continuing operation of the current McAllen Sector Headquarters. The new office in Edinburg will not be built and, as such, there would be no new emissions from the no-action alternative. Air pollutants from the ongoing McAllen office activities would continue at the present levels and there would be no change from the baseline air quality conditions. Emissions associated with agriculture would continue at the proposed Edinburg site.

4.4.3 Mitigative Measures

For these reasons, the requirements of General Conformity under the Clean Air Act, 40 CFR Part 93 are not applicable to this project/action because total direct and indirect emissions from this project/action have been estimated at *de minimis* levels and are below the conformity threshold value established at 40 CFR Part 93.153(b). Therefore, no mitigative actions are required.

4.5 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

An impact to biological resources is considered significant if the proposed action impacts a threatened or endangered species, substantially diminishes habitat for a plant or animal species, substantially diminishes a regionally or locally important plant or animal species, interferes substantially with wildlife movement or reproductive behavior, and/or results in a substantial infusion of exotic plant or animal species.

4.5.1 Vegetation

4.5.1.1 Proposed Action

The proposed construction will take place on approximately 28 acres of an open area that was previously used for agriculture purposes. Previous disturbances to the proposed project site (i.e., row crops and grazing) and adjacent development in the area surrounding the site, further reduce the significance of potential impacts to the local vegetation community. Therefore, no significant impacts to vegetation will occur under the proposed action.

4.5.1.2 No-Action Alternative

Site vegetation will continue to be altered as long as the land is used for crop production. Vegetation in the project area would continue as described for the baseline condition.

4.5.1.3 Mitigative Measures

No mitigative actions are required.

4.5.2 Wildlife

4.5.2.1 Proposed Action

Approximately 28 acres of previously disturbed agricultural land will be removed as potential wildlife habitat. This is not considered a significant amount of habitat loss in an area of expanding development. Previous disturbances to the proposed project site (i.e., clearing and grading) and adjacent residential development in the area around the site further reduce the significance of potential impacts to the local wildlife community. Therefore, no significant impacts to wildlife will occur under the proposed action.

4.5.2.2 No-Action Alternative

Wildlife in the project area will continue as described for the baseline condition. Therefore, there would be no change to the wildlife and no wildlife impacts.

4.5.2.3 Mitigative Measures

No mitigative actions will be required.

4.5.3 Threatened and Endangered Species

4.5.3.1 Proposed Action

Correspondence from the TPWS and the USFWS has identified 29 threatened species and 6 endangered species that have the potential to occur in the vicinity of the proposed action site. The USFWS has determined the proposed action will have no impact to the listed species of Hidalgo County (Appendix B). Based on the best data currently available, no federal or state listed species or protect natural plant communities exist at the proposed action site. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts to threatened and endangered species would occur under the proposed action.

4.5.3.2 No-Action Alternative

Under the no-action alternative wildlife and vegetation in the project area would continue as described for the baseline condition. Therefore, there would be no change to the wildlife and vegetation and no wildlife and vegetation impacts.

4.5.3.3 Mitigative Measures

No mitigation will be required by either actions.

4.6 SOCIOECONOMIC RESOURCES

4.6.1 Demography

4.6.1.1 Proposed Action

It is anticipated that the 1474 agents currently working at the McAllen Sector Headquarters will be transferred to the new Edinburg office. The new Edinburg Headquarters is designed for a maximum of 2000 agents. For those already working in McAllen, a commute of about nine miles to a new location in Edinburg would most likely not cause personnel to relocate.

Construction activities associated with the proposed action will have no direct, indirect, or induced impacts on population. The proposed construction is considered minor compared to overall construction activity in Hidalgo County. The direct and indirect impacts from construction are insufficient to affect population and will have no impact on migration in or out of the area. In the future, fully staffing the Headquarters could affect the Edinburg and general area demography if the additional 526 agents relocate to this area.

4.6.1.2 No-Action Alternative

There would be no change from the baseline condition.

4.6.1.3 Mitigative Measures

No mitigation will required.

4.6.2 Housing

4.6.2.1 Proposed Action

Agents currently stationed in McAllen could easily commute the nine miles to McAllen or neighboring cities and are not expected to readily impact the local housing market. However, the proposed action is expected to impact housing resources directly and indirectly as the Edinburg DHS Headquarters increases the number of agents from 1474 to a maximum of 2000.

4.6.2.2 No-Action Alternative

There would be no change from the baseline condition.

4.6.2.3 Mitigative Measures

A surge in demand for housing would stimulate the housing market and economy and is considered a positive impact. As such, no mitigative actions would be required.

4.6.3 Economy

4.6.3.1 Proposed Action

Direct expenditures of the proposed construction activity will have short-term direct, indirect, and induced impacts on employment, income, and sales within Hidalgo County. The construction activity will result in beneficial impacts. The increase in the number of agents, and the need for additional resources and services at the facility would have beneficial long-term impacts to the local economy and personal income.

4.6.3.2 No-Action Alternative

There would be no change from the baseline condition.

4.6.3.3 Mitigative Measures

The action is seen as having positive impacts. Therefore, no mitigation is required.

4.6.3.4 Environmental Justice and Protection of Children EO 12898

In compliance with Executive Order (EO) 12898, Federal Action to Address Environmental Justice (EJ) in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, an analysis has been performed to determine whether the proposed project will have disproportionate adverse impacts on minority or low-income population groups within the project area. The EO requires that minority and low-income populations do not receive disproportionately adverse human health or environmental impacts, and requires that representatives from minority or low-income populations, who could be affected by the project, be involved in the community participation and public involvement process.

The data used in this study to determine potential for disproportionate impacts to low income and/or minority populations within the study area is based on the 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census (USBOC) state, county, census tract, and block level data for ethnicity and income. Ethnicity and poverty were examined at the Census block level within Nueces County. The tract in the City of Edinburg that encompasses the project area is Census Tract 238, an area of 9.99 square miles. In terms of ethnicity, the total population within the tract is 12,542, of which 53 percent are White, 46% are Hispanic or Latino, and 1 percent Other. Furthermore, the project site is located on city-owned land, and would not displace or affect minority or low-income populations. While there is no commercial, public or residential development adjacent to the proposed site, each of these developments can be found in this tract. Construction of the office complex would be similar to other nearby development and will not cause adverse human health or environmental impacts.

4.7 INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

4.7.1 Water Supply

4.7.1.1 Proposed Action

The proposed action will ultimately result in an increase of 2000 agents. Additional water consumption will result in about 20 gallon per agent per day or a total of 40,000 gallons per day. This would result in less than one percent of the current total daily usage of 5.0 MG in Edinburg. Water supplies are also adequate for the number of families of agents that may locate in Edinburg.

4.7.1.2 No-Action Alternative

There would be no change from the baseline condition. Construction of the proposed emergency waterline interconnection with the City of McAllen would assure adequate water supplies and would be built regardless as to whether or not the USBP Headquarters is constructed.

4.7.1.3 Mitigative Measures

No mitigative actions will required.

4.7.2 Wastewater Treatment

4.7.2.1 Proposed Action

As a result of the proposed action, a maximum of 2000 agents would be stationed at the facility. Based on approximately 20 gallons per day of wastewater generated by each agent the total wastewater generated would be 40,000 gallons per day. The average daily volume of treated wastewater for 1997-1998 was 3.2 MG. This increase is well with in the Edinburg wastewater treatment plant that has a design flow of 5.3 MGD.

4.7.2.2 No-Action Alternative

There would be no change from the baseline condition.

4.7.2.3 Mitigative Measures

The wastewater treatment plant has sufficient capacity for the estimated additional load. Although the population increase due to families relocating with the agents is unknown and as such, additional loading due to the population increase cannot be estimated, the wastewater treatment plant has sufficient loading capacity. Therefore, no mitigative actions are required.

4.7.3 Storm Water Management

4.7.3.1 Proposed Action

The total amount of impervious cover will increase at the site and storm water runoff will increase as a result of the proposed action. The additional amount of impervious cover will account for a very small increase in the amount of cover in the vicinity of the site. Therefore, the increase in impervious cover and storm water runoff will be minor when compared to that which currently exists in the vicinity.

Erosion control techniques will be used by the contractors to minimize erosion during construction. The construction site will have silt fences, hay bales, and other erosion control features down gradient. The rate of runoff from the construction site will be retarded and controlled mechanically. Diversion ditches will be constructed to retard and divert runoff to protected drainage courses. The contractor will ensure a storm water pollution prevention plan is completed before initiating activities. Therefore, project site runoff is not expected to impact storm water management.

4.7.3.2 No-Action Alternative

There would be no change from the baseline condition.

4.7.3.3 Mitigative Measures

Erosion controls will be implemented during the estimated 24 months of construction and a storm water retention cachment will be built as a permanent feature. No other mitigative actions would be required.

4.7.4 Energy

4.7.4.1 Proposed Action

Sufficient energy is available for the DHS facility and operations. Electricity is supplied by three different companies and power lines are adjacent to the proposed property. Natural gas is available, if needed.

4.7.4.2 No-Action Alternative

There would be no change from the baseline condition.

4.7.4.3 Mitigative Measures

No mitigative actions are required.

4.7.5 Solid Waste Management

4.7.5.1 Proposed Action

The proposed action would result in the need to set up a waste management program to support a maximum of 2000 agents in an office setting. Assuming each person generates 3 pounds of waste per day, the waste program would have to manage 6000 pounds of waste per day. If municipal waste transport is not available, the USBP would need to enter into a contract for waste transport and disposal.

4.7.5.2 No-Action Alternative

There would be no change from the baseline condition.

4.7.5.3 Mitigative Measures

Implantation of a recycling program could minimize the amount of waste that will need to be contracted for disposal and minimize associated landfill fees. No other mitigative actions would be required.

4.7.6 Transportation

4.7.6.1 Proposed Action

Under the proposed action 2000 agents would be stationed at the facility. It is assumed the majority of the agents would commute to work from neighboring communities, increasing traffic along the major corridors and thoroughfares. The proposed site of is located on Trenton Road and US Hwy 281. The location provides good vehicle access to the site and would not increase traffic through the City proper or through neighborhoods. Air, water, bus and rail service are available in Edinburg or within a 65-mile radius. Therefore, no adverse impacts to transportation are anticipated.

4.7.6.2 No-Action Alternative

There would be no change from the baseline condition.

4.7.6.3 Mitigative Measures

With all forms of transportation available and paved roads to the site, no mitigative actions are required.

4.8 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND WASTE

4.8.1 Hazardous Materials

4.8.1.1 Proposed Action

It is assumed the Headquarters office complex will not need supplies that contain hazardous materials. Some solvents used for cleaning weapons may be stored at less than reportable quantities in the Weapons and Ammunition building. Hazardous controlled substances seized as a result of the USBP operations would be given to the appropriate law enforcement agency for storage and or disposal and not accumulated on site.

4.8.1.2 No-Action Alternative

There would be no change from the baseline condition.

4.8.1.3 Mitigative Measures

No mitigative actions are required.

4.8.2 Hazardous Waste

4.8.2.1 Proposed Action

No hazardous wastes will be generated at the office complex.

4.8.2.2 No-Action Alternative

There would be no change from the baseline condition.

4.8.2.3 Mitigative Measures

No mitigative actions are required.

4.9 CULTURAL RESOURCES

4.9.1 Proposed Action

The project site and area are disturbed ground and survey verified there are no cultural resources in the project area. As such, there are no impacts to this resource resulting from the proposed action.

4.9.2 No-Action Alternative

There would be no change from the baseline condition.

4.9.3 Mitigative Measures

No mitigative measures are required.

4.10 NOISE

4.10.1 Proposed Action

The noise that is generated by the proposed action will result from approximately 24 months of construction activities, and noise generated during routine operation of the facility after construction. The primary noise from construction activities will be generated by vehicles and equipment involved in site clearing and grading, foundation preparation, facility construction, and finish work. Noise from construction activities will be limited to daytime hours and will not affect nearby subdivisions during prime time hours. Major sources of routine noise for ambient sound levels due to the proposed action include increased vehicle traffic at staff shift changes, and any sound generated due to operation of the Headquarters facility. There are no commercial establishments, day care facility, hospitals, nursing homes, church, or recreational activities located within a radius of 1600 ft. from the proposed site. One elementary school is located east

of the property, within 1600 feet. Also, noise levels diminish with the distance from the construction or work zone. The estimated increase in noise level to the baseline noise is insignificant and is not expected to cause any adverse impact on the surrounding environment.

4.10.2 No-Action Alternative

Under the no-action alternative, ambient noise levels would be unchanged.

4.10.3 Mitigative Measures

Noise levels would temporarily increase during construction. Mitigation measures are not required for either the proposed or alternate action.

4.11 EARTH RESOURCES

4.11.1 Physiography and Geology

4.11.1.1 Proposed Action

Construction activity as a result of the proposed action would occur within an area previously disturbed and modified. Therefore, adverse impacts to physiography and geology would not occur.

4.11.1.2 No-Action Alternative

There would be no change from the baseline condition.

4.11.1.3 Mitigative Measures

No mitigative actions will be required.

4.11.2 Soils

4.11.2.1 Proposed Action

Soils at the proposed site have previously been disturbed or modified. Earthwork would be planned and conducted in such a manner as to minimize the exposure of unprotected soils. Soil stabilization to prevent erosion would only require minimal controls as the proposed project site has a 0 to 1 percent slope. Best management practices such as rock berms, silt fences, and single point construction entries would minimize erosion during construction. Side slopes can be protected immediately upon completion of grading utilizing accelerated growth of permanent vegetation, temporary vegetation, mulching, or netting, installation of grass and other landscaping would be reestablished in the disturbed areas immediately after construction is completed, thereby reducing the

potential for erosion. Therefore, adverse effects to soils would be minimal. Since the proposed tract contains Important Farmland as defined by the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA), a Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form (Form AD-1006) was submitted to the Soil Survey Section of the USDA-NRCS for evaluation. The rating resulted in a score below 160, and therefore requires no further consideration. A copy of the form and coordination letter is included in Appendix B.

4.11.2.2 No-Action Alternative

There would be no change from the baseline condition.

4.11.2.3 Mitigative Measures

Implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan utilizing best management practices during construction will mitigate wind and storm water erosion, and disturbed soils will be stabilized using vegetation following construction.

4.12 ASTHETICS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

4.12.1 Proposed Action

The proposed office complex features aesthetics in the form of an open-air design with office buildings set around a courtyard with landscaping throughout the property. The design will be compatible with the closest structure, the elementary school. Residents of a nearby neighborhood may view the complex as an encroachment of commercial property, but the complex will be well over 1600 feet from the neighborhood.

4.12.2 No-Action Alternative

There would be no change from the baseline condition.

4.12.3 Mitigative Measures

No mitigative actions are required.

4.13 COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

Not applicable.

4.14 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

4.14.1 Unavoidable Adverse Environmental Impacts

Unavoidable impacts that would result from the implementation of the proposed action are an increase noise and air emissions due to construction and normal operation of the

Headquarters facility. The impacts due to construction are short-term and are not considered significant. Air emissions caused by vehicular traffic during normal office operations are not considered significant.

4.14.2 Irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources

The irreversible commitment of resources that would result from implementation of the proposed action include the consumption of material resources, energy resources, and human resources.

Material resources used for the proposed action include building materials, concrete for building foundations, driveways, and sidewalks, asphalt for streets and parking lots, and various other materials. The materials that would be consumed are not in short supply and are readily available from suppliers in the region. Use of these materials won't limit other unrelated construction activities, and therefore, would not be considered significant.

Energy resources will be irretrievably lost. These include products such as gasoline and diesel fuel, natural gas, and electricity. During construction, gasoline and diesel fuel will be used for operation of the construction equipment and other vehicles. Natural gas, electricity, and gasoline will be used after the USBP headquarters is completed. Consumption of these energy resources will not place a significant demand on their availability in the region. Therefore, no significant impacts are expected.

The use of human resources for construction is considered an irretrievable loss, only in that it will preclude such personnel from engaging in other work activities. However, the use of human resources for the proposed action represents employment opportunities, and is considered beneficial.

The proposed facility site is not located next to a subdivision, church or other public facility. An elementary school is located within 1600 feet of the site, but is not adjacent to it. Changes in land use for the facility are not considered negative, significant or adverse.

4.15 HEALTH AND HUMAN SAFETY

Health and safety concerns during construction include physical dangers associated with operation of heavy equipment, exposure to fuel, solvents, and paints, and adverse climate conditions. Safety issues during normal operations of the Headquarters would pertain to office safety issues, vehicular traffic and ammunition storage and firearms cleaning. No extraordinary health and safety issues are anticipated.

4.16 PERMITS/REGULATORY AUTHORIZATIONS

Permits and other authorizations required for construction may include a temporary Storm Water Permit for Construction Activities (Clean Water Act, Section 402(p)) and

local construction permits. The City of Edinburg requires new development include storm water retention ponds to mitigate flooding and surface water pollution associated with runoff. Detention pond sizing is relative to the square foot of impervious material to be constructed.

4.17 SUSTAINABILITY AND GREENING

Consistent with section 6002©(1) of RCRA (42 U.S.C. 6962©(1)), activities and operations of the executive branch shall be conducted in an environmentally responsible manner, and waste reduction and recycling opportunities shall be utilized to the maximum extent practicable, consistent with economic efficiency. Consistent with section 6002©(2) of RCRA (42 U.S.C. 6962©(2)), agencies that generate energy from fossil fuel in systems that have the technical capacity of using energy or fuels derived from solid waste as a primary or supplementary fuel shall use such capability to the maximum extent practicable (Exec. Order No. 12780, 56 FR 56289).

The DHS has not developed a sustainability and greening program at the time of this writing.

4.18 ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS/MITIGATION

There are no wetlands, endangered species, or historic resources on the property proposed for construction of the Headquarters office complex. Therefore, environmental mitigation efforts are not required.

4.19 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Some of the cumulative impacts due to past, existing and reasonably foreseeable future projects, along with the proposed project were found to produce an overall beneficial impact in the form of socioeconomic growth for the area, both directly and indirectly. Negative cumulative impacts relative to increases in air pollution and noise levels are deemed insignificant overall.

SECTION 5
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This section presents the list of individuals and agencies consulted in the preparation of this EA.

FEDERAL AGENCIES

Immigration and Naturalization Service

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Natural Resource Conservation Service

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

COUNTY AGENCIES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

City of Edinburg

Coastal Coordination Council, Texas General Land Office

Congressmen

State Senator District 20, Carlos F. Truan's Office

SECTION 6
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SECTION 7
LIST OF PREPARERS

Name	Degree	Professional Discipline	Years of Experience
Morten, Kristy USACE, Galveston	B.S., Biology	Environmental Specialist	24
Rund, Natalie USACE, Galveston	B.A., Maritime Study	Environmental Protection Specialist	2
Hunt, Shane USACE, Galveston	B.S., Marine Biology	Biologist	1
Briggs, Bruce USACE, Galveston	Masters, Architecture	Architect	29
Adekanbi, Joshua USACE, Galveston	B.S., Engineering	Civil Engineer	18
DeMarcay, Gary USACE, Galveston	M.A., Anthropology	Archeologist	30
Gable, Mark BCBP, HQ			20
Feeney, Kevin BCBP, HQ			30
Verwer, Eric			15

APPENDIX A

U.S. BORDER PATROL,

MCALLEN SECTOR HEADQUARTER'S SITE PROPOSALS

AND REVIEW MEETING

APPENDIX B

INTERAGENCY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING CORRESPONDENCE

APPENDIX C

ACT OF DONATION AND SPECIAL WARRANTY DEED

APPENDIX D

PROPOSED MCALLEN INS SECTOR HEADQUARTERS, EDINBURG, TEXAS, PHASE I SITE ASSESSMENT, AUGUST 2002