

BEATTY ENCROACHMENT?

High Country News, in an article re-posted by Mother Jones magazine, managed to slip a mention of the refuge into an article on Mexico border policies:

"In southern Nevada, where the Mojave meets the Great Basin Desert, two US Fish and Wildlife Service law enforcement officers are responsible for patrolling the entire Desert National Wildlife Refuge complex. Their job comes with a diverse set of responsibilities: enforcing hunting and fishing regulations, stopping park vandalism and rescuing stranded visitors, among other things. At 1.6 million acres, this is the largest wildlife refuge in the country outside of Alaska, home to over 500 plant species and the desert bighorn sheep, Nevada's state animal. So why are these two officers being sent hundreds of miles away from the refuge on rotating missions to the US-Mexico Border?" (Rangers from Lake Mead National Recreation Area and Death Valley National Park were also sent to the border.)

Wild Sheep Foundation chair Brett Jefferson says the refuge—which also has tribal petroglyphs—was established to protect the bighorns, but it doesn't stop there:

"Desert bighorn are not the only species dependent upon these water installations. So are 67 other species of wildlife, including mountain lions, mule deer, birds and reptiles. Cutting off access to Alamo Road

would prevent proper management by wildlife professionals and conservationists."

One Renoite, Kirk Peterson, suggested in a letter to the editor of the Las Vegas Sun that the problem be taken over by Texas.

"About 6 percent of Nevada's land is used for national security," he wrote. "In Texas, that number is 0.3 percent. ... In the 1980s, West Texas was determined to be ideal for national security use, given that there was low or no significant impacts on mining, wildlife, native species, wildlife habitat or public recreation—all issues of significance in Nevada."

By the time of the deadline for public comments in March, more than 30,000 people had filed one.

The Nevada Legislature's resolution opposed more than just the reduction of the Refuge:

"The final legislative environmental impact statement also includes proposals that the United States Air Force designates as 'Alternative 3A' and 'Alternative 3A-1' to withdraw either 18,000 or 15,000 acres of land outside the Desert National Wildlife Refuge, but near the town of Beatty, for incorporation into the Nevada Test and Training Range, which would result in substantial encroachment on the town of Beatty and result in significant negative impacts to the local economy, including losses of revenue from existing and planned trails, ecotourism activities and mining."

The agreement allowing use of the Refuge by the military expires in two years. □

**"More space
is needed to
replicate threat
configurations."**

U.S. Air Force

Flag waving



A crane hovers over the Park Lane site at Plumb and Virginia, where work has been going on since early 2018. Construction of shopping, housing and office space is underway.

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