



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMAND

22 Jan 2015

502d Air Base Wing
2080 Wilson Road
Joint Base San Antonio
JBSA-Fort Sam Houston TX 78234-7680

The Honorable Ivy Taylor and City Council Members
Mayor and Council Members of San Antonio
P.O. Box 839966
San Antonio TX 78283

Ref: Significance of San Antonio Edwards Aquifer Protection to Military in San Antonio

Dear Mayor Taylor and Council Members

In light of the upcoming decision on the Edwards Aquifer Protection Program, we wanted to convey how this program is important for the myriad of military missions across Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA).

JBSA includes the 85,000 personnel stationed on JBSA-Randolph, JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, JBSA-Camp Bullis, and JBSA-Lackland. For perspective on the scope and economic impact of our operations, please see the enclosed Texas Comptroller estimate of economic impact of the San Antonio military installations.

JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, JBSA-Lackland and JBSA-Randolph rely solely on the Edwards Aquifer for potable water. The City of San Antonio's Edwards Aquifer Protection Program's acquisition of land to be placed under preservation helps ensure the quantity and quality of the water in the aquifer. Long-term water supply is essential to sustain the military missions in San Antonio. We simply would be unable to successfully accomplish our military mission without a stable and adequate future water supply.

Additionally, lands acquired by the City of San Antonio help our installations in several other ways. The lands are placed under permanent conservation; therefore, the trees on those lands are protected. When the installations were established in the 19th and early 20th centuries (in 1845 the origins of Fort Sam Houston were established at Camp Almus near the Alamo, in 1906 the Leon Springs Military Reservation was established and later became Camp Bullis and Camp Stanley, Lackland AFB was created in 1942 from a portion of Kelly Field, and Randolph AFB which was dedicated in 1930), there was no development around them. However, now due to the growth of San Antonio and its surrounding communities, we are experiencing significant compatibility issues with new development.

Trees help lessen that impact. First, trees help JBSA-Camp Bullis, our 28,000 acre field training site on the northern outskirts of San Antonio from becoming a nesting location for the

endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCWA). The warblers trigger many restrictions on the camps under the federal Endangered Species Act and these restrictions will only increase if we are the "lone island of refuge." Next, trees help buffer light from development around all of our installations, which helps protect our night training missions and our use of Night Vision Goggles (NVGs). Trees can also help buffer noise coming from our installations, reducing noise complaints arising from our firing ranges and aviation activities. Additionally, the trees help the San Antonio area to be in attainment for EPA ozone standards. Ozone is a summertime pollutant and the biggest factor in ozone creation is temperature. The shade created by all trees reduces ozone by reducing the urban "heat island" effect. Nonattainment status would impact our ability to propose any new projects on our installations because of the required federal Clean Air Act conformity review. Please see attached maps which illustrate these issues.

Finally, the field training capability at JBSA-Camp Bullis is a critical national asset for Department of Defense-wide military training and is the primary reason why JBSA-Fort Sam Houston gained 12,000 personnel in Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) 2005. In 2009, a Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) was completed for JBSA-Camp Bullis. The City of San Antonio stepped forward and has implemented most of the JLUS recommendations. The City's implementation of the JBSA-Camp Bullis JLUS has mitigated many of the issues which otherwise would have been detrimental to our critically important field training missions.

For the above stated reasons, the City of San Antonio's Edwards Aquifer Protection program is of significant importance to our installations and the surrounding communities. The Edwards Aquifer is a vital natural resource which must be preserved.

We sincerely appreciate the City's efforts regarding each of JBSA's JLUS efforts and look forward to working closely with the City of San Antonio to preserve the Edwards Aquifer and other future JBSA military installation encroachment issues.

Sincerely



ROBERT D. LABRUTTA
Brigadier General, USAF
Commander, 502d Air Base Wing
& Joint Base San Antonio

Attachments:

1. Texas Comptroller Economic Impact Assessment on San Antonio Military Installations
2. Map of Model Golden-cheeked Warbler Habitat in Bexar and Surrounding Counties
3. Map of Military Light Overlay Around Camp Bullis from 2009 Joint Land Use Study
4. Map of Military Sound Overlay Around Camp Bullis from 2009 Joint Land Use Study
5. Map from TCEQ website Showing Multi-county Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) for Clean Air Act compliance (Ozone Attainment) in the San Antonio Area