

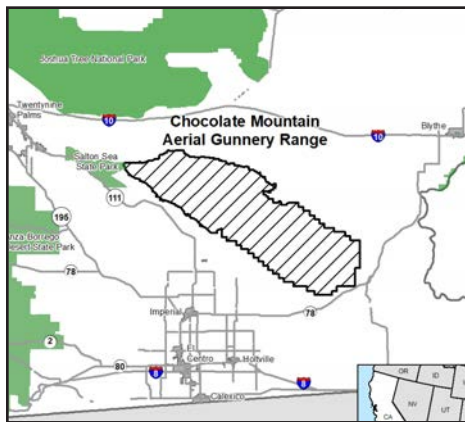


U.S. MARINE CORPS :

# CHOCOLATE MOUNTAIN AERIAL GUNNERY RANGE: CALIFORNIA



The Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range (CMAGR) is a 458,267-acre range location in southern California that supports United States Marine Corps training in mission essential tasks such as close air support missions, laser system operations, and air-to-ground bombing. Due to its large size and unique landscape, the CMAGR is able to support a myriad of mission types, making it a critical U.S. Marine Corps and DoD training asset. The CMAGR is managed by Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Yuma and includes Camp Billy Machen, which supports special operations forces training. To provide realistic



air-to-ground training, the CMAGR requires unobstructed air-to-ground approach corridors, a requirement that is threatened by incompatible development.

The area surrounding the CMAGR is experiencing rapid growth, resulting in the potential for incompatible residential and large-scale utilities development that may encroach upon

the CMAGR’s mission. Residential development near the range could create noise challenges and avoidance areas that restrict air-to-ground approach corridors into the range from all directions.

Air operations may also be impacted by vertical obstruction and radar interference created by wind turbines. By developing a buffer around the range, the CMAGR can protect its approach and departure corridors, prevent airspace obstructions, prevent noise complaints, and preserve and enhance desert tortoise habitat corridors. Mitigating these potential encroachment concerns will preserve the diverse mission capabilities of the CMAGR.

In addition to protecting the CMAGR mission, this project will also protect habitat for the Desert Tortoise, a federally listed species. Protecting this species off-range will also protect the mission on-range.

## BENEFIT SUMMARY

### COMMUNITY

- Protects habitat for endangered and threatened species
- Enhances existing regional planning efforts
- Mitigates against noise conflicts

### MILITARY

- Avoids or reduces operational work arounds that would otherwise limit training capacity
- Protects operations in existing airspace
- Increases operational safety



The Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range includes the aerial range depicted above with an AH-1W “Super Cobra” attack helicopter providing close air support (top) and the Camp Billy Machen desert warfare training facility during a live-fire ambush and reaction drill (bottom).

## KEY PARTNERS

- Friends of the Desert Mountains

## FAST FACTS THROUGH 30 SEP 2020

- » Acres preserved: **0**
- » Transactions conducted: **0**
- » Total funds expended: **0**
- » Project status: **Initiated**

## CONTACT

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