



News Release

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Secretary of the Interior transfers jurisdiction of 65.74 acres of federal land to the Department of the Army in Arizona and New Mexico

Transfers will facilitate infrastructure construction, engineering of road network for border wall

WASHINGTON – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced today that the Secretary of the Interior has transferred a total of 65.74 acres of federal public lands in Arizona and New Mexico to the Department of the Army (Army). The transfers will facilitate installation of power and other utility infrastructure and engineering of the road network to provide access along the southern border with Mexico for border security purposes.

The Army requested transfer of these and other federal lands following [Presidential Proclamation 9844](#), issued by President Trump on February 15, 2019, which declared the situation at the southern border a humanitarian crisis that threatens core national security interests. The request followed the Defense Department [announcement](#) on September 4, 2019, to defer \$3.6 billion to fund 11 barrier projects at our southern border. In accordance with this proclamation and federal law, the land will be re-purposed for military construction projects.

“The BLM has made it a priority to work closely with the Departments of Homeland Security (DHS) and Defense (DOD) to help them avoid and minimize impacts on wildlife, natural and cultural resources that occur on the lands we manage along the border. Where impacts cannot be avoided, DHS and DOD have demonstrated their commitment to mitigating them,” said **BLM Deputy Director for Programs and Policy William Perry Pendley**. “These latest actions demonstrate that partnership.”

In September 2019, Secretary Bernhardt approved the transfer of approximately 560 acres of federal lands to the Army to build roughly 70 miles of border barriers. This included [228 acres in Yuma County, AZ](#) adjacent to the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge (CPNWR) for replacement of the existing vehicle barrier with a pedestrian barrier. It also included [43.32 acres in Hidalgo County, NM](#) for replacement of the existing vehicle barrier with a pedestrian barrier.

In June 2020, the Army determined that an additional 53 acres of federal lands in Yuma County will be needed in order to install power and other utility infrastructure and engineering of the road network to provide access to the Yuma Project 3 for border security purposes. These lands are located in the Roosevelt Reservation, a 60-foot strip of land lying parallel to the international boundary between the United States and Mexico.

The Army also determined that an additional 12.74 acres of public lands in Hidalgo County will be needed in order to install power and other utility infrastructure and engineering of the road network to provide access to the El Paso Project 8 for border security purposes. These lands are also located within a 60-foot strip of land lying contiguous and parallel to the international boundary between the United States and Mexico.

In addition to border security concerns, these transfers also respond to environmental impacts caused by unlawful border crossings. For example, the CPNWR is home to hundreds of sensitive and protected species of mammals, reptiles, and plants whose presence is necessary to maintain the ecological balance of the CPNWR. The Department of the Interior is committed to protecting multiple species that have been affected by land degradation and destruction caused by trash and the creation of trails. The border barrier is expected to reduce or eliminate these impacts.

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The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land located primarily in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. In fiscal year 2018, the diverse activities authorized on BLM-managed lands generated \$105 billion in economic output across the country. This economic activity supported 471,000 jobs and contributed substantial revenue to the U.S. Treasury and state governments, mostly through royalties on minerals.

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