

4.3 Socioeconomics

4.3.1 Approach to Analysis

The focus of this socioeconomic analysis is on potential changes to economic and social conditions on the island of Tinian with implementation of the Proposed Action. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used. Due to the need to maintain flexibility in scheduling proposed training throughout the year, the USMC is unable to estimate the number of days or specific locations of where temporary access controls would occur on an annual basis, and thus a quantitative analysis of specific economic impacts (e.g., potential gain or loss in revenue, amount of additional commuter flights to and from Tinian, number of hotel rooms) would be speculative. Specific information on future hiring or expenditures (e.g., job titles, salary, construction costs) is also not available at this stage of the planning process. Potential economic expenditures from the limited and distributed nature of the construction projects that are proposed to occur over a 10- to 15-year period would be similarly speculative, and thus are addressed qualitatively. Where appropriate, the analysis also identifies where effects could extend more broadly to the CNMI region. The available published data was supplemented by interviews with CNMI government and local agencies.

Specifically, the analysis considers potential impacts to population and demographics; economic activities including shipping, tourism, commercial ranching, fishing, and agriculture; and subsistence activities. Population change alone is generally not viewed as either an adverse or a beneficial impact, but the underlying effect of population change is often noted for its influence on other aspects of socioeconomics. Thus, impacts on social cohesion and public services, namely healthcare and public safety, are also assessed. These economic and social elements were chosen for analysis due to their importance to the local economy and the social fabric on Tinian and within the CNMI at large.

Tourism and commercial ranching or agriculture are important economic activities on the island. Fishing continues to be a way of life and a source of subsistence and revenue for many residents of the CNMI (National Marine Fisheries Service 2018; Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council 2023), along with harvesting of land-based natural resources. Many of these resources are found within the Military Lease Area and off the coast of Tinian. Changes in the ability of residents to access the Military Lease Area and the nearshore as a result of the Proposed Action could result in socioeconomic impacts.

The potential impacts from training and construction-related noise to the human environment are discussed in Section 4.8 Noise. Impacts related to air quality are discussed in Section 4.9 and public health and safety impacts from training and construction activities are addressed in Section 4.10.

4.3.2 No Action Alternative

Military training has a decades-long history in the Military Lease Area on Tinian. In recent years, training events have included large and medium events (e.g., Valiant Shield and Cope North) and smaller events. In addition to the service members, training and environmental monitors would arrive at the beginning of events and depart from Tinian when the events are completed.

Access restrictions are generally few and center around North Field, with closure of the taxiway between runways Able and Baker and the two ends of runway Baker. No one is permitted to enter

runway Baker during aviation operations and airdrops. Military camping is conducted on the existing concrete open area north of runway Able, called the North Ramp. The important features in the North Field National Historic Landmark remain open for tourism, including runway Able (M. Cruz, Joint Region Marianas, Personal Communication, 2024).

During training events under the No Action Alternative, the public would maintain the ability to access the Military Lease Area, and Tinian residents would be able continue to conduct commercial ranching activities and gather resources when access restrictions are not required for the safety of the public and the military. Activities in the nearshore area (e.g., fishing) would have no restrictions except in proximity to the two ends of runway Baker while aviation operations are occurring during training. Training events under the No Action Alternative would be conducted at the same tempos as evaluated in previous NEPA documents (DON 2010a, 2015b) and associated consultations and authorizations. With the closure of the USAGM transmitting station on Tinian, USAGM would remove its physical improvements and equipment and restore the site to its previous condition; thus, the site would revert to DON control. Military training would occur within the 300-acre fenced area that was formerly a no training area, and public access in this area would be restored, including shore fishing along Lamanibot Bay from Puntan Lamanibot Sanhilo (Sanhilo) to Puntan Lamanibot Papa.

Construction associated with the U.S. Air Force Divert project (U.S. Air Force 2016, 2020) would continue until complete, estimated by 2026, with the associated short-term direct beneficial impacts to the local economy along with short-term impacts on housing and public services from the construction personnel. After that time, the new infrastructure and facilities at TNI would be used for military divert operations, humanitarian assistance staging, exercises, and other aircraft support activities, which would continue at a similar tempo to the existing training that occurs on Tinian.

Additionally, projects under the U.S. Air Force's Agile Combat Employment program would also continue, which would include the clearance of vegetation and restoration of the runway and other engineered surfaces at North Field. These projects are scheduled to receive funding through fiscal year 2025 and the North Field runways and surrounding area would have the appearance of a working airfield, allowing easier ground and aircraft access to better maintained surfaces with less dense jungle vegetation in and around the immediate runway areas. Improved access to cultural sites in the Military Lease Area, especially related to the North Field National Historic Landmark, would provide a modest benefit to tourism and local residents who would access the area for subsistence practices and enable social cohesion from these practices. Thus, there would be a modest benefit to tourism from improved roadway conditions and setting for those visiting the Military Lease Area, specifically the North Field Historic Landmark, under the No Action Alternative.

For the reasons described, there would be less than significant long-term impacts to socioeconomics under the No Action Alternative.

4.3.3 Alternative 1

4.3.3.1 Training

Population and Demographic Changes

Under Alternative 1, small, medium, and large training events throughout the year would cause short-term and temporary population increases. The number of personnel participating would vary as shown in Table 2.1-1. Large events would be the least frequent on Tinian, occurring approximately 2 to 4 times per year for approximately 2 to 4 weeks at a time (e.g., Valiant Shield) with up to 1,000 service members involved in training on Tinian at any one time. Small and medium events would likely occur more frequently, could overlap, and involve up to 250 personnel.

In the long-term, the hiring of 30 to 50 personnel to manage training events and operate and maintain the facilities and infrastructure in the Military Lease Area (e.g., repair targets and maintain vegetation), could result in a less than significant increase in population, although the USMC intends to hire locally for these permanent positions, wherever possible, based on labor availability and contracting requirements. Hiring would be phased over the approximate 10 to 15-year period as construction projects are completed and the training infrastructure becomes operational, to include the Base Camp, communications system, live-fire ranges, and Landing Zones. Initially, however, approximately 2-5 positions may be filled on a rotating basis by Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz Range Control staff or other federal civilians.

It is anticipated there would be a locally available labor pool of approximately 28 people on Tinian that formerly would have supported the USAGM facilities on Tinian. The USAGM site on Saipan had a small number of full time staff as well, who could also potentially present a locally knowledgeable labor force to support the Range Control towers at the Saipan site. The local economy would experience a modest benefit from the employment related to Range Control and maintenance operations, regardless of whether local or off-island labor is hired. Should local residents be hired, the implementation of CJMT training and the operation of the Base Camp are not expected to induce additional demand for housing or public services. If off-island labor is hired, it would occur gradually over time as the infrastructure in the Military Lease Area becomes operational. During larger or medium training events when additional staff are needed for a short period of time, additional staff could be provided on a temporary basis to support specific needs. Thus, potential long-term impacts to Tinian's housing supply or school enrollment would be less than significant due to the anticipated gradual or phased nature of the hiring.

Effects on Economic Activities in the Military Lease Area

Under Alternative 1, military training would continue to be conducted within the Military Lease Area on Tinian and training activity would increase over the No Action Alternative, by approximately 15 percent. Due to the need to maintain flexibility in scheduling proposed training throughout the year, any quantitative estimates on the number of days or specific locations of closures would be highly speculative in nature. The USMC is committed to ensuring the community can continue to access the Military Lease Area safely while allowing training requirements to be met, to the extent feasible. Depending on the type of training being conducted and the location where training is occurring within the Military Lease Area, residents and others could experience temporary access restrictions in the Military Lease Area and surrounding waters.

These temporary access restrictions could affect members of the community recreating within the Military Lease Area or individuals that depend on the resources available in the Military Lease Area for subsistence gathering and hunting to barter or trade (DON 2018). Under Alternative 1, restrictions on public access to the Military Lease Area would be instituted only when necessary to protect public safety (e.g., provide safe separation from aircraft, military vehicles, or specific hazardous training activities).

The total area affected, location, and duration of access restrictions on any given day would vary and be determined by the type of training scheduled. An important variable that would affect the amount, location, and duration of public access restrictions in the Military Lease Area under Alternative 1 would be the size of the training events. Larger training events could result in public access restrictions to multiple and adjacent smaller training areas at one time and multiple full days, while medium and smaller events could restrict access to one training area or may require no access restrictions. Timing of these access restrictions could range from hours within one day to multiple full days, depending on training requirement needs. It is possible that members of the public could expect to see service members moving through an area on foot, military vehicles parked on access paths, military aircraft flying overhead, or hear noise related to training (e.g., aircraft and weapons firing) when training events are scheduled in the Military Lease Area.

New live-fire training would only occur at the Multi-Purpose Maneuver Range and Explosives Training Range, in addition to the limited small arms training that currently occurs using steel bullet traps within existing structures. As described in Section 4.1.3, for safety purposes when these two ranges are being used for live-fire training, the public would be temporarily restricted from accessing land and ocean areas encompassed by the surface danger zones. Live-fire training events may occur during the daytime or at night. The activation of these surface danger zones would affect economic activities requiring access to the Military Lease Area or any area within a surface danger zone including tourism, shore fishing, and boats fishing or transiting in the waters north of Tinian. The activation of surface danger zones over land at the Multi-Purpose Maneuver Range or the Explosives Training Range would not completely restrict access to Tinian's tourist areas in the North Field National Historic Landmark. Additionally, Range Control would coordinate with local officials regarding the flight schedules for the Tinian and Saipan airports to avoid firing and explosions at live-fire ranges during these times and thus would avoid impacts to commercial air travel during live-fire training.

The portion of the surface danger zone for the Multi-Purpose Maneuver Range that extends over the ocean waters to the northwest of Tinian would result in short-term, temporary restrictions on boat traffic and fishing in that area as long as live-fire training is occurring (Figure 4.1-1). As a result, boat transits from Saipan to the west side of Tinian may incur increased fuel use and travel time to avoid the surface danger zone, as described in Section 4.1.3.1. This restriction could result in fishers choosing to fish in less ideal locations during time of closure or boaters having to transit further north and west of Tinian.

To minimize the potential for adverse impacts on fishing and boating, the USMC has identified three surface danger zones based on the types of ammunition that would be used during live-fire training. It is anticipated that the smallest surface danger zone would be the one activated the most by the military. As described in Section 4.1.3 Public Access, the surface danger zones extend approximately 1 to 4 miles from the northern tip of Tinian. Fishers or boaters would be required

to shift by approximately 2 to 4 miles to avoid this area when the surface danger zone is activated, but potential impacts such as distances, travel times, and associated costs would vary depending on the typical routes and speeds used by a given vessel and the objective of the trip (e.g., recreational boating, transiting between islands, or fishing in a target location within the surface danger zones). A fisher or boater traveling from Saipan's Sugar Dock to the Port of Tinian's boat ramp may typically take approximately 1 hour to travel around 17 nautical miles at a speed of 15 knots when traveling close to the western coast of Tinian. When the largest surface danger zone is active, this trip could involve an additional distance of 10 miles and approximately 40 minutes to travel around the boundary of the surface danger zone, instead of straight through the area, to reach the same location at the same speed. However, when the smallest surface danger zone is activated, the travel distance and time remains fairly similar to existing conditions, requiring only 1 to 2 additional miles and a minimal difference in travel time. While Range Control would activate the smallest surface danger zone most frequently (refer to Section 4.1.3.1 Public Access) and the restrictions would only occur while live-fire training is occurring, the effects of the additional travel time or costs may be potentially significant to fishers and boaters.

Under Alternative 1 the military would not train in areas currently fenced and occupied by cattle. However, noise produced by aircraft approaching Landing Zones and detonations at the Explosives Training Range would occur intermittently during the year and would be audible in the areas where cattle have been known to graze (refer to Section 4.8.1 Approach to Analysis for a description of the noise modeling and metrics used for the impact analysis). Of these activities, explosives use at the Explosives Training Range is anticipated to produce the highest noise levels, generating single event peak sound levels of between 115 and 130 decibels that extend over areas where cattle may be present (refer to Section 4.8 Noise and Appendix J, *Noise Study*). Use of explosives would typically occur during large or medium training events and include approximately 20 charges of 1.25 pounds net explosive weight. When using the largest charge training would involve only one detonation per event, and this would occur 2 to 4 times per year.

As described in Appendix J, *Noise Study*, Attachment 1 (refer to Section 1.3.12.1 Domestic Animals), many studies have concluded that there is no evidence that aircraft overflights affect feed intake, growth, or production rates in domestic animals, and that cattle are able to adjust their behavior to changes in ambient noise levels. Noises above 90 decibels may cause a startle response, freezing (i.e., becoming temporarily stationary), and fleeing from the sound source. However, exposures to sound levels above 90 decibels from impulsive noise would be brief, lasting only for a fraction of a second per charge.

Training in the Military Lease Area where ranching most often occurs would not change the amount of land currently available to ranchers. The USMC would provide access to water for active ranchers to provide water for ranching needs at tank dispensing sites. Allowing additional access to water in these locations would provide a benefit, and may minimize the distance some ranchers may need to travel to obtain water, which would present a modest savings in time and money.

Other impacts from the proposed training may occur beyond access restrictions to the Military Lease Area, such as intermittent and temporary disturbance to subsistence activities. Noise from training events may cause hunted species to temporarily relocate but they would return once the noise has ceased (refer to potential impacts to Terrestrial Wildlife in Section 4.4.3.2 Biological

Resources). This would be most likely to occur during medium or large events, which would occur less frequently throughout the year than small training events. As a result, the subsistence resources may be temporarily less available or more difficult to locate.

In summary, the size of a training event would largely dictate the amount, duration, and locations where public access may be restricted in the Military Lease Area under Alternative 1. Larger training events, which would occur only 2 to 4 times per year for 2 to 4 weeks at a time, would result in more access restrictions than medium or small events. Range Control would provide advanced notification of access restrictions related to training to the public and schedule training so that certain areas of the Military Lease Area can remain safely open for tourism, commercial ranching and agriculture, fishing, and subsistence activities while training is occurring. Safety and informational signage would also be posted in San Jose. In addition to communication efforts, the USMC would work with the Marianas Visitors Authority to promote travel opportunities to CNMI for service members living in Guam and Japan. Temporary activation of surface danger zones north of Tinian could significantly affect fishing and boating. However, this initial determination relies on limited data, primarily information gathered through personal communications. The USMC is therefore requesting public input to help refine this assessment. The Final EIS would reflect any revisions based on this input. All other socioeconomic impacts from Alternative 1 are anticipated to be less than significant.

Impacts on Other Economic Activities on Tinian

New employment opportunities and the acquisition of supplies required to operate and maintain the Military Lease Area Range Complex would provide a modest benefit to Tinian's economy. Spending would likely include payments to the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation for electrical and communications infrastructure, the purchase of fuel from local distributors for non-tactical vehicles, and local purchase of goods and supplies for vegetative control and other facilities maintenance-type activities, where permissible under federal government contracting requirements. In addition, as service members and supporting personnel are arriving to or departing from the CNMI during training events, they would have the opportunity to recreate in San Jose and spend money in town at shops and restaurants. This spending would have an indirect beneficial impact generated by training throughout the year, although it would, in turn, likely provide a benefit to the economy of Tinian and the supply chains throughout the CNMI.

In addition, there could be impacts to the availability of air transportation to the island and hotel rooms on Tinian during larger training events. During training, participating service members would arrive on the island by military transport and would camp within the Base Camp or in training areas for the duration of the event. However, there may be a limited number of personnel who arrive on-island to support certain training events (i.e., federal civilian employees, rotating Range Control personnel from Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz). These personnel may take commercial air taxi flights, which would increase the demand on the number of flights that travel to Tinian on those days they arrive and depart. These personnel would stay in local hotel accommodations during their visit, which would reduce the number of hotel rooms available to tourists when this occurs. However, training events would not be scheduled during the previously identified important local events to avoid undue pressure on hotel and car rental services. Thus, rental of local hotel rooms and vehicles would result in a beneficial impact to economic activity.

To minimize impacts to economic activities from training events, Range Control would provide notification to the public in advance of access restrictions related to training, and schedule training so that areas of the Military Lease Area can remain safely open to the public while training is occurring. Range Control would coordinate with the CNMI and Municipality of Tinian to ensure transparent scheduling of training events and ongoing communication with the public about temporary access restrictions. The USMC would utilize adaptive management to review how well the Range Control process is working, including the effectiveness of public notification methods, and would make adjustments as needed. Therefore, there would be a less than significant impact to economic activities as a result of training under Alternative 1.

Public Services

The USMC would coordinate with the CNMI and Municipality of Tinian regarding fire, police, and emergency response services. Coordination could include mutual aid agreements or memoranda. Mutual aid agreements could also help coordinate increased security for both the military and Tinian residents. Once utilities are installed, water trucks and hydrants would be located at the Base Camp (and, when necessary, pre-staged in the Military Lease Area) and at the live-fire ranges to supply water to extinguish fires. The existing rainwater catchment system at the USAGM Tinian site would continue to be utilized for fire protection. In addition, a Range Wildland Fire Management Plan would be developed. The plan would incorporate fire access roads and a firebreaks around the edges of the ranges as wildfire management measures. Prior to any live-fire training taking place during the dry season an assessment of moisture content would occur, in accordance with the requirements to be established in the Wildland Fire Management Plan. Live-fire activities would only be conducted after the fire danger rating has been confirmed by Range Control.

Military personnel training on Tinian should have little to no impact on the capacity of Tinian public health services because training units would provide medical and first aid capabilities via medics for each training event, with serious medical emergencies evacuated off island for care. The training unit would coordinate response and communications as part of training event planning. The USMC would contact U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam joint rescue sub-center or the CNMI Emergency Operations Center in the event of an emergency.

There would be at most 30 to 50 new permanent staff required to support Range Control. As described previously, hiring would be phased over the 10 to 15-year period as construction projects are completed and initially approximately 2-5 positions may be filled on a rotating basis by Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz Range Control staff or other federal civilians. The USMC intends to hire locally to fill Range Control positions, wherever possible, based on labor availability and contracting requirements. With the phased increase in population, availability of medics that would be on-island to accompany each training unit, and evacuation plans for serious medical events, there would be less than significant impacts public health services under Alternative 1.

4.3.3.2 Construction

Population and Demographic Changes

Under Alternative 1, the reuse and modification of equipment and facilities at the USAGM site on Saipan would not require new construction or vegetation clearing and there would be less than significant impacts from construction at that location. On Tinian, construction of training ranges

and support facilities would require an average of 50 workers per year beginning in 2026 and lasting for 10 to 15 years in phases. With this schedule, construction related to Alternative 1 would likely begin as the construction for the U.S. Air Force Divert Project is scheduled to conclude. Wherever possible, the USMC would prefer to hire locally for these temporary construction positions on the island. As a result, it is estimated that 20-30 percent of construction employees would likely be Tinian residents, which is similar to the numbers seen with the U.S. Air Force Divert project. Construction contractors would be expected to utilize local worker to the maximum extent practicable; use of non-immigrant foreign labor is generally not authorized unless efforts to recruit locally and in the U.S. are unsuccessful. However, because Tinian is anticipated to continue having a limited construction workforce into the future, and because it is very difficult to attract workers from the U.S. mainland to the CNMI, it is likely that most of the remaining construction workforce would be foreign workers on nonimmigrant H-2B visas as long as statutory authority for such use remains available. The current authority for H-2B construction workers in the CNMI expires at the end of 2029. As mentioned above, the U.S. Air Force Divert Project is scheduled to be complete by 2026 and Alternative 1 would be implemented in a phased approach. So, there is a possibility that construction workers could transition to work on Alternative 1 construction after the U.S. Air Force Divert Project is complete.

As mentioned above, the closure of the USAGM site has likely increased the available local workforce by approximately 28 people on Tinian. Additionally, utilization of the former USAGM site for the Base Camp would create minimal construction impacts since it is already developed, has facilities and infrastructure that could be reused and modified versus requiring new construction, and would require no additional clearing of vegetation, which may limit the number of construction staff that would need to be hired from off-island to construct those project elements. Vegetation maintenance and other restoration projects at North Field by the U.S. Air Force Agile Combat Employment Program is also anticipated to be ongoing through at least 2025, but this program has relied on service member labor to complete the majority of the work in its initial phases and that would be anticipated to continue.

Ideally all construction workers would be local to the CNMI. However, based on the recent U.S. Air Force's Divert project, a portion of the workforce would likely be migrant workers that would temporarily reside on Tinian when construction projects occur. Due to the intermittent and phased nature of construction under Alternative 1, up to 40 construction workers would reside in local hotels or longer-term rental lodging, such as the four dormitory-style accommodations (known as the "Triple J Dormitories") that have been used by the U.S. Air Force Divert project's construction personnel, instead of renting residential properties and relocating family members to the island during construction periods. The Triple J Dormitories can accommodate approximately 40 people (or around 10 people per dormitory building) with shared amenities, such as bathroom and laundry facilities, recreation, and food preparation areas (CNMI Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality 2023; Black Micro Corporation, Personal Communication, 2023). If this workforce-type rental housing is utilized, then the approximately 40 off-island workers needed for construction under Alternative 1 would result in less than significant impacts to housing availability on Tinian. With regard to the migrant workforce, it is anticipated that most of their income would be remitted outside the CNMI, and would likely have limited activity in the local economy for food and daily support requirements. They would also have opportunities to spend time and money in town at

shops and restaurants. As a result, the influx or continuation of available construction jobs and slight increase in activity on Tinian would provide a modest economic benefit to the CNMI.

Economic Activities

While construction is underway, the demand for flights and port traffic from Saipan would increase temporarily to accommodate additional workers and construction equipment and supplies. The movement of goods through the Port of Tinian and TNI would create an economic benefit for Tinian during the construction period. Additionally, as described above, assuming the off-island construction workers are able to reside in the dormitory buildings instead of other local hotel accommodations typically used by tourists or other short-term visitors to Tinian, there would be a less than significant impact to the availability of hotel rooms on the island during the construction period.

Construction would result in an increase in noise, equipment and materials that may be visible to tourists or members of the public, and increases in vehicles transporting construction workers from their lodging to work sites on roads outside of and within the Military Lease Area. Both these impacts would be temporary and would be concentrated within specific areas of the Military Lease Area based on the project (refer to Section 2.1.11 Construction Phasing). To address the increase in construction vehicles on deteriorating local roads, DoD would work to improve road conditions for key routes within the Military Lease Area. This effort would also subsequently improve travel conditions to and from tourism and commercial ranching sites. Construction workers may also increase the number of visitors to popular tourism sites and beaches over this same time period during off-work times. Over the 10 to 15-year construction period there would be temporary and localized impacts in specific locations throughout the Military Lease Area where construction projects would occur (i.e., the Multi-Purpose Maneuver Range and surface Radar Towers, Explosives Training Range, utilities interconnections outside the Base Camp).

For safety during construction, local residents and visitors may be restricted from accessing the immediate area where construction is occurring or may choose to avoid areas where construction activities may be heard or seen. Noise and visual disturbance from construction activities may be present near agricultural areas or areas where subsistence activities occur. However, these effects would be localized and would last only until the construction project is complete. Impacts to cattle would be similar to those described for training. Namely, cattle and wildlife would be anticipated to adjust behavior to these temporary changes in their environment and return to the areas when construction is complete. As construction is anticipated to be limited to land-based work, there would be no impacts areas where commercial fishing or proposed aquaculture would occur. Therefore, there would be a less than significant impact to economic activities from construction under Alternative 1.

Public Services

As described for training under Alternative 1, the USMC would coordinate with the CNMI and Municipality of Tinian regarding fire, police, and emergency response services. If this coordination results in mutual aid agreements between the military and local community that are established to support training, there may be a modest increase in availability of emergency services on Tinian. While the construction workforce would rely on Tinian fire, police, and emergency services, the construction contractor would be required to have safety and emergency plans per guidelines set

forth by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (e.g., project-specific Health and Safety Plan and Accident Prevention Plan). These plans would specify where the contractor would take their staff if an injury occurred that could not be treated on Tinian. As the construction contractor would be required to plan for and potentially augment services with staff hired to support construction, impacts to public services are anticipated to be less than significant.

While new or continued construction worker populations on the island would slightly decrease Tinian's police response staff to population ratio (12 officers per 1,000 residents), the ratio on Tinian far exceeds the average in the U.S. (2 per 1,000 residents). The amount of construction workers would vary over the 10-year construction period, and the phasing of the construction projects would help lessen potential strain on emergency staff capacity. The relatively small number of construction workers that would be needed on island at one time would not exceed the capacity of available public services and would result in less than significant impacts to public services.

4.3.4 Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, training would continue and increase over the No Action Alternative by 5 percent. Socioeconomic impacts under Alternative 2 would be similar to those described under Alternative 1. As described above, impacts to population and demographics and public services are not influenced by training tempo and thus would be the same as described for Alternative 1. Impacts to economic activity under Alternative 2 would be similar to Alternative 1, primarily resulting from temporary restrictions to public access within the Military Lease Area. However, throughout the year, public access would remain unrestricted in the Military Lease Area where it could safely occur concurrent with the type of training scheduled, as determined by Range Control. The impacts consider the number of training areas involved, the duration of time restrictions would be in place, and whether live-fire training is occurring that would affect access to the in-water area north of Tinian. The same measures would be in place as described under Alternative 1 to minimize these impacts on economic activity, and there would be a modest economic benefit to the CNMI from additional jobs resulting from both training and construction. Therefore, there would be less than significant impacts to socioeconomics under Alternative 2.

4.4 Biological Resources

4.4.1 Approach to Analysis

The focus of this biological resource analysis is on the impacts that proposed training events and construction may have on terrestrial and marine resources. Terrestrial resources includes terrestrial vegetation, wildlife, and special status species, and marine resources includes marine communities and marine special status species. Factors used to assess potential impacts to biological resources include: (1) the type of resource (i.e., legal, commercial, recreational, ecological, or scientific); (2) the proportion of the resource that would be affected relative to its occurrence in the region; (3) the sensitivity of the resource to proposed activities; and (4) the duration or ecological ramifications of the impact(s).

Impacts to biological resources would be significant if there would be: fragmentation or permanent loss of a terrestrial or marine community to a level that would alter the overall biological function of the community in the region; if there would be physical loss of or exclusion of a species from required habitat, a significant decrease in productivity of native wildlife populations, or a