

## **Use of McKelligon Canyon by Fort Bliss Personnel for Training Purposes**

Because of recent and ongoing concerns regarding Fort Bliss personnel using McKelligon Canyon for training purposes and an upcoming agenda item calling for restrictions for military use of the canyon, on April 7, 2011 I called for a meeting to clarify the rules for the proper use of the canyon.

Invited to the meeting were: Ft. Bliss Garrison Commander Colonel Joseph. Simonelli, Lt. Col. Joseph Wucik, Command Sgt. Major William Green, Fort Bliss Police Chief Derrick Washington, Franklin Mountains State Park Superintendent Cesar Mendez, my Chief of Staff Sylvia Firth, the City Representative for McKelligon Canyon Carl Robinson, City Parks Director Nanette Smejkal, and Deputy City Manager for Quality of Life Debbie Hamlyn.

The following rules were agreed upon. Fort Bliss would submit their request in writing 72 hours in advance of any training operations to both the City Parks Department and the Franklin Mountain State Park offices. The written request would include the contact information for the Non-Commissioned Officer In Charge (NCOIC) and the type of training they would be conducting. Requests to use the canyon for overnight operations would need to be scheduled far in advance to assure that the canyon would be accessible. It was agreed that when marching on the canyon road, military personnel would move in single file columns so as not to impede traffic. When traveling off road, military personnel will stay on the established trails and carry out any litter generated while using the trails.

In as much as there are more than 24,000 troops stationed at Fort Bliss and that commands are subject to change, Fort Bliss has agreed to dispatch Military Police to the Canyon if violations of park rules are reported to the City or to the State Park. Violation of the rules by military personnel should be reported directly to Chief Derrick Washington.