



## Proposed Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment in Support of Large-Scale MAGTF Live Fire and Maneuver Training

Project Update Notice Number 16—July 25, 2013

Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command  
Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center  
Twentynine Palms, CA

*The Project Update Notices offer a focused way to provide easily accessible, wide-spread distribution of new Project information. They augment the regular updating of key Project public documents carried on MCAGCC's Land Acquisition Study webpage.*

*Please see these other Project documents for an overview and key background information.*

- **Modernizing MCAGCC to meet Marine Corps Training Requirements**
  - On February 11, 2013, the Department of the Navy issued its Record of Decision on the Marine Corps proposal to modernize the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) at Twentynine Palms to meet requirements for Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) sustained, combined-arms, live-fire and maneuver training.
  - The President submitted to Congress for enactment the Marine Corps/Navy request, the so-called Alternative 6 that was designed and refined in response to public comments to preserve important off-highway vehicle recreation in Johnson Valley while meeting Marine Corps training requirements.
- **Lieutenant General Richard P. Mills, the commanding general of Marine Corps Combat Development Command, submitted an article that appeared in the Desert Sun newspaper to provide the community and stakeholders with further information on Marine Corps training requirements and the basis for the Marine Corps request to modernize MCAGCC. The text of that opinion piece follows:**

"To combat 21st century threats, Marines must train as we fight. Realistic training prepares your Marines to accomplish their mission and return home safely. Congress is now considering legislation that will seriously impact the future ability of the Marine Corps to conduct realistic training — using 21st-century doctrine, tactics and weapon systems.

"President Obama submitted a proposal to Congress to expand our base at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms by about 168,000 acres. This proposal essentially provides the space required to train Marines for 21st-century threats. Although Twentynine Palms has served the Marine Corps well since the 1940s, it is now insufficient to properly train Marines and Marine Expeditionary Brigades with today's expanded-range precision weapons. More space is needed to conduct simultaneous air and ground live-fire and maneuver exercises, using all ordnance available to us, with up to 15,000 Marines.

"This type of large-scale training relies on classroom instruction and simulation-supported command post exercises that provide less-than-realistic training. The Marine Corps proposes addressing this training and readiness shortfall by expanding Twentynine Palms training areas. We have intensively studied our future warfighting requirements and concluded that such realistic large-scale training is essential to Marine Corps readiness and could only be conducted at an expanded Twentynine Palms.

"Our final proposal was developed with significant public input and designed to ensure public access to off-highway vehicle and other recreational uses in the Johnson Valley. Our proposal requests Congress designate an 86,000-acre recreation area in Johnson Valley to preserve the off-highway vehicle community's most heavily trafficked regions and allow organized races to continue.

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### For Further Information Please Contact

29Palms Training Land/Airspace Acquisition Project

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"Approximately 43,000 acres would be exclusive recreational use, while 43,000 acres of this area would be shared use, with Marine Corps use limited to two months of the year for its large-scale exercises. The remaining 10 months would be designated for exclusive recreational use.

"Our proposal also would establish an area of about 103,000 acres for exclusive military use, which will support critical training for smaller Marine units year round. The use of explosive military munitions during training within these 103,000 acres requires closure of the land to public access to ensure public safety. The final proposal to Congress was repeatedly modified in response to comments by the BLM, the OHV community and other stakeholders to provide for greater public access.

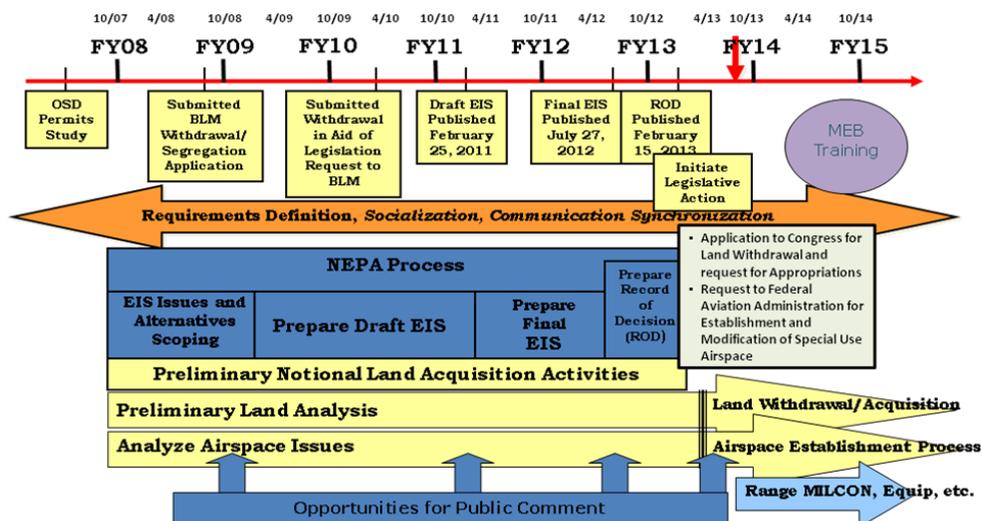
"The administration's expansion proposal allows for increased training and benefits to the local economy. Based on analysis from the final environmental impact statement, the expansion generates an additional 110 jobs, \$4 million in salaries and an additional \$7.5 million in regional sales. This revenue is in addition to the approximate \$600 million yearly workforce payroll, most of which is spent in the local area.

"The King of Hammers Race, the largest generator of economic activity associated with off-highway vehicle recreation in Johnson Valley constituting an estimated 15 percent of total yearly visitation, would continue under the proposal. Under the land expansion, the Marine Corps would also remain a good steward of the environment and would implement a comprehensive safety plan ensuring safe public access in the recreational area.

"Training Marines as they will fight is the best investment to ensure our continued success as the nation's premier crisis response force."

### ➤ Project Timeline:

- Congress is considering enactment of the President's public land withdrawal request for inclusion in the Fiscal Year 2014 National Defense Authorization Act, 2013
- FAA to initiate airspace rule making in 2013, including preparation of its own EIS
- Congress will also consider authorization and appropriations for non-federal land purchases in 2013 and 2014
- If Congress were to approve land withdrawal for military training and to authorize appropriations for non-federal land purchases, and if FAA were to approve Special Use Airspace establishment and modifications in 2013 or 2014:
  - The Marine Corps Training and Education Command/MCAGCC would undertake range preparations in 2013 and 2014
  - MCAGCC would commence MEB building block training in 2014
  - MCAGCC would undertake MEB sustained, combined-arms, live-fire and maneuver training in 2015



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