



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

Fact Sheet – THE VIEWSHEDS OF MCAGCC

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

The Project Fact Sheets offer a focused way to provide easily accessible, wide-spread distribution of Project information. They augment the regular updating of Project public documents carried on MCAGCC's Proposed Land Acquisition Study webpage. Please see the other Project documents on the Project website for an overview and key background information.

PROTECTING THE VIEWSHEDS OF MCAGCC

The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) is proud of its record of environmental resource protection, including for the viewsheds that enhance the quality of life for those living in the desert region. For example, MCAGCC has recently changed its lighting at *Mainside* to reduce the effect of these light sources on the night sky viewshed and manages construction in its ranges and operational areas to minimize effects on the desert region's viewsheds.

During preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Land Acquisition/ Airspace Establishment in Support of Large-Scale MAGTF Live Fire and Maneuver Training Project, the Department of the Navy will analyze potential impacts that the alternatives being studied might have on the desert region's viewsheds.



View over Mesquite Playa with MCAGCC *Mainside* in the mid-ground.

The Marine Corps is proud of its tradition of environmental stewardship, as well as of its good neighbor practices in the High Desert and is committed to continuing both. In this respect, we will continue to manage MCAGCC in the manner that we have – to minimize viewshed impacts consistent with our operational and training requirements.

For Further Information Please Contact

29 Palms Training/Land Airspace Acquisition Project

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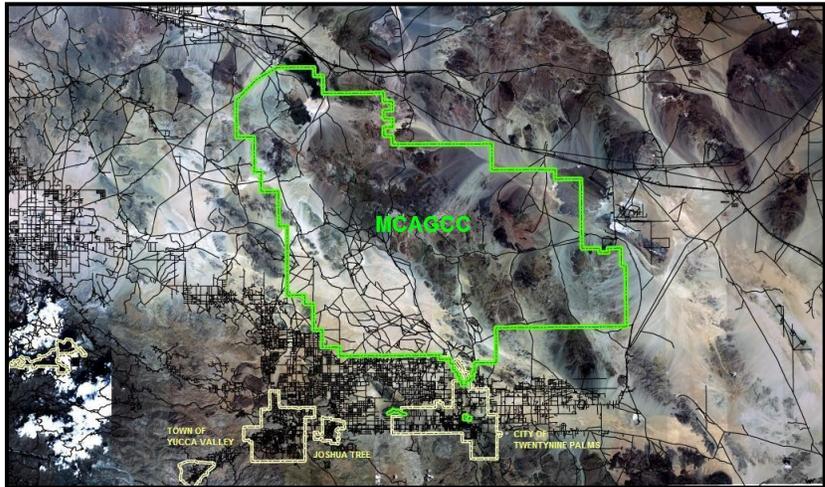
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People have been drawn to the southern Mojave Desert for diverse reasons. Native Americans first visited the scattered oases that dot the landscape to gather seasonally available food resources and resupply essential tool stone. Later, hard-rock miners came in search of rare metals. Early homesteaders arrived in search of new opportunities for life away from urban centers. People were and remain captivated by the stark and pristine beauty of the panoramic vistas, colorful granitic and volcanic landforms, and the vast undulating alluvial fans leading to sand dunes demarking the margins of scattered Pleistocene era playas.

The gradual habitation of the region eventually resulted in the establishment of communities such as Twentynine Palms, Joshua Tree, Yucca Valley, Landers, Wonder Valley, Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Ludlow and Amboy, as well as in the formation of roadways that connected these communities to each other, and to the urban centers beyond. Railroad corridors transect the area as well. These desert population centers, both large and small, have grown closer



Satellite photo showing MCAGCC and the communities of Twentynine Palms, Joshua Tree, Yucca Valley and Big Bear.

in proximity to the Department of Defense military training ranges that were established during World War II and afterwards, including what is now known as the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) at Twentynine Palms.

Population growth near MCAGCC has largely concentrated along its southern margin. Likewise, the construction of infrastructure on the base has been almost completely contained within the southernmost five square miles of *Mainside*, nearest to the City of Twentynine Palms. The Marine Corps understands that the high scenic value of the desert necessitates our working, whenever possible, to preserve the existing character of the desert and the viewsheds it offers.

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The photos below and on the next page capture some of the viewsheds that remain available to MCAGCC’s neighbors and demonstrate how we attempt to protect those viewsheds, including the night sky that is a hallmark of living in the High Desert.

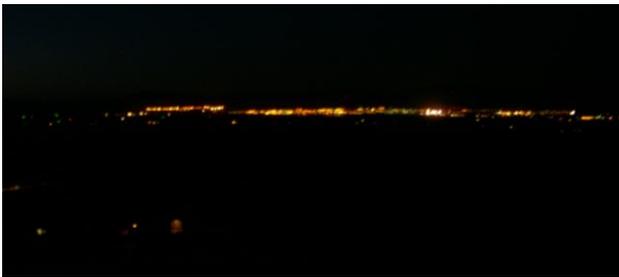


Looking northeast from State Hwy 62 towards *Mainside*



Looking easterly towards the CAMOUT structures from the east end of Reche Road in Landers.

The brilliantly clear night sky and celestial bodies visible to the unaided eye are a highly valued natural resource of the southern Mojave Desert. To protect this resource, MCAGCC has consciously implemented night-sky compliant architectural designs, to reduce the amount of light radiated into the night sky. This is further supported by an ongoing program to reduce the number of exterior lights and the replacement of older lamps with newer low wattage bulbs and downward cast fixtures.



View of MCAGCC *Mainside* at night



View of the City of Twentynine Palms at night.

MCAGCC works hard to preserve the training area for future generations and takes pride in its recognition as a conscientious steward of the land and its resources. This is reflected in ongoing efforts to minimize its impact on the viewshed enjoyed by neighboring communities and to maintain those high scenic values for the future.

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Despite its use for training, a great deal of MCAGCC has been maintained in a near pristine, undeveloped condition. Viewsheds from off-base locations appear just like the neighboring desert playas, dunes and mountains. Of course, there are roads, targets, communication towers and training facilities such as Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) structures, only two of which are distantly visible to the surrounding communities. Basic design elements and techniques are used to reduce visual impacts that result from range construction activities. Replicating form, line, color, and texture in harmony with surroundings is undertaken to minimize contrast with surrounding terrain and the resulting visual impacts.



The Black Top Training Area along MCAGCC's northern border is maintained in near pristine condition.



The near pristine desert landscape of the Lead Mountain Training Area is located along MCAGCC's eastern border.



This photo of the CAMOUT during its earlier construction shows how the facility is painted to blend into the viewshed – like the completed structures to the right of the photo. The other red and gray buildings under construction when this photo was taken were also painted to blend into the viewshed.



Looking towards the Bullion Mountains.

MCAGCC will continue its proud record of environmental stewardship with any lands for which it is responsible, including doing what it can, whenever possible, to preserve its splendid viewsheds.

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