

Path Forward

- ✓ **Published Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and began 90-day DEIS Public Comment Period, February 25 – May 26, 2011.**
 - ✓ **Public Comment Meetings April 12 (Joshua Tree), April 13 (Ontario) and April 14 (Victorville).**
 - ✓ **Published Final EIS, July 27, 2012.**
 - ✓ **Land withdrawal legislative process initiated, 2012.**
 - ✓ **Signed Record of Decision (ROD), February 11, 2013.**
- ⇒ **If Congress approves land withdrawal:**
- ◆ **prepare Resource Management Plan or amend existing Plan, 2013-2014.**
 - ◆ **Purchase non-federal lands at fair market value, 2013-2014.**
- ⇒ **Request that the FAA commence airspace proposal review processes to consider establishment and modification of Special Use Airspace, 2013 with goal to complete the process by 2014.**
- ◆ **Complete necessary training range improvements, 2014.**
 - ◆ **Implement and sustain required mitigation, 2014 and beyond.**
 - ◆ **Commence training, 2014; MEB training, 2015.**



Good Neighbor Pledge

The Marine Corps has studied reasonable alternatives for establishment or modification of Special Use Airspace near the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, CA as part of our effort to meet requirements for sustained, combined-arms, live-fire and maneuver Marine Expeditionary Brigade training. Throughout the process leading to a Record of Decision, stakeholders have had opportunities to comment on airspace issues.

The Marine Corps pledges to seek only that airspace needed to meet training requirements, and to operate any such airspace in a manner that releases it for use by all aircraft in the National Airspace System when it is not needed for training.

Throughout the FAA established processes, stakeholders will have additional opportunities to provide input on proposed actions that could meet the airspace requirement for sustained, combined-arms, live-fire maneuver Marine Expeditionary Brigade training.

We look forward to working with you throughout these processes, receiving your comments, and using them to develop the right plan to meet this Marine Corps training requirement, while we also do our part to help preserve the region's resources for generations to come.



**For Further Information Contact:
Proposed 29 Palms
Training Land and Airspace
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Proposal for Land Acquisition and Special Use Airspace Establishment in Support of Marine Expeditionary Brigade Sustained, Combined-Arms, Live-Fire and Maneuver Training



Airspace Facts

February 14, 2013

Why Training Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment at 29 Palms?

- ◆ Marines must “train as they fight” to respond immediately to any contingency around the globe. With the end of the Cold War, and from lessons learned from recent military operations, a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) is the Marine Corps’ primary contingency response force.
- ◆ MEB training requires range capability that can support sustained, combined-arms, live-fire and maneuver.
- ◆ A MEB is approximately 15,000 Marines, built around a brigade Ground Combat Element and a like-sized Air Combat Element. It also includes command and logistic elements.
- ◆ The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) is the Marine Corps’ center for combined-arms excellence. A Center for Naval Analyses study concluded that expanding MCAGCC is necessary to execute sustained, combined-arms, live-fire and maneuver MEB training.
- ◆ Ranges at MCAGCC and within the DoD inventory cannot support these MEB training requirements.
- ◆ The Marine Requirements Oversight Council validated the MEB training requirement and authorized action to pursue additional training land and airspace at MCAGCC.
- ◆ The Undersecretary of Defense approved a Department of Navy request to go forward with an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate alternatives, impacts from and mitigation for the acquisition of land and establishment of Special Use Airspace to meet the MEB training requirement.
- ◆ The EIS was developed in cooperation with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
- ◆ Several opportunities for public involvement have occurred throughout the EIS processes to date and will be available during the FAA processes as well.

Frequently Asked Questions

◆ How was public comment incorporated into the decision?

The Marine Corps prepared an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), studying a range of reasonable alternatives to meet Marine Corps MEB training requirements. The public had opportunities to comment on this study, including during scoping of the EIS, on the Draft EIS published on February 25, 2011 and on the Final EIS published on July 27, 2012.



The Marine Corps selected a preferred alternative — Alternative 6 — that was developed and further modified in response to public comments. It is the optimal alternative considering operation and environmental impact factors together. The Secretary of the Navy has signed a Record of Decision (ROD) based on the EIS — including public comments — cost, training and other factors.

◆ What happens next?

The Secretary of the Navy has submitted a withdrawal application to the Bureau of Land Management and will submit a proposal for lands in the Alternative 6 footprint to Congress and to the FAA to undertake its regular process to establish and modify Special Use Airspace. Congress and the FAA need to approve these requests.

◆ How would new airspace modification be implemented at MCAGCC?

The FAA will use their established process to determine if SUA will be added to the MCAGCC range complex and, if so, how much, what type and for what periods of time it may be used for military training.

◆ Why would MEB training require more airspace?

A MEB is a Marine Air Ground Task Force. To support MEB training, while also providing for public safety, the Marine Corps requires training airspace for its use of artillery, mortars,



ground-launched missiles, tank guns, machine guns, small arms weapons, and airborne weapons such as missiles and bombs. The FAA would ensure that air traffic is routed around MCAGCC during training activities that involve such weapons. Any Special Use Airspace established or modified would be managed, as it is now, and released for use by civil and commercial aviation when not needed for military training.

◆ Would this place any new requirements on commercial airline or civil aviation flights over or near MCAGCC?



Existing MCAGCC airspace impacts on commercial airline or civil aviation flights over or near MCAGCC might be extended

over any newly acquired training lands due to safety issues involved with live-fire training. The Marine Corps will work with the FAA and aviation stakeholders on issues examined in the FAA airspace proposal process.

◆ How does the public express its views of the project alternatives?

Over 42,000 public comments were received during scoping, and review of the Draft and Final EIS. All comments were analyzed and reviewed in preparing the ROD. In addition, the FAA will undertake a formal process to consider the establishment or modification of Special Use Airspace to meet this MEB training requirement. Public hearings and stakeholder involvement will occur during the FAA process and the FAA will also prepare an EIS during its processes.

◆ How long will it take to make a decision?

An application for withdrawal of federal lands for military training will be made to Congress and a request to FAA



to establish and modify SUA will be made to FAA. We expect Congress to act in 2013 and the airspace processes may be complete by 2014.