

Path Forward

- ✓ **Published Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and began 90-day DEIS Public Comment Period, February 25 – May 26, 2011.**

- ✓ **Published Final EIS, July 27, 2012.**
- ✓ **Office of the Secretary of the Navy signed Record of Decision (ROD), February 2013.**
- ✓ **Congress and the President enacted land withdrawal, December 2013.**
- ✓ **USMC/DON submit Special Use Airspace establishment / modification proposals to the FAA, April 2014**
- **FAA commences airspace proposal review processes to consider establishment and modification of Special Use Airspace, April 2014.**
- ◆ **Public comment periods held during FAA aeronautical and environmental review, 2014 - 2015.**
- ◆ **FAA complete Special Use Airspace aeronautical and environmental reviews, 2015.**

- ◆ **Complete necessary training range improvements, 2014 - 2015.**

- ◆ **Implement and sustain required mitigation, 2014 and beyond.**
- ◆ **Commence training in new range areas, 2014; commence 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 opportunities to provide input on proposals 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 Acquisition Project**



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Proposal for Special Use Airspace Establishment in Support of Marine Expeditionary Brigade Sustained, Combined-Arms, Live-Fire and Maneuver Training



Airspace Facts

June 2014

Why Special Use Airspace Establishment and Modification at Twentynine Palms?

- ◆ Marines must “train as they fight” to respond immediately to any global contingency. A Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) has become the Marine Corps’ primary contingency response force.
- ◆ The Marine Corps trains and fights as an integrated Air-Ground team. Marine Aviation is a key component of the MEB for assault support, anti-air warfare, offensive air support, electronic warfare, air command and control, and aerial reconnaissance.
- ◆ MEB training requires range capability that can support sustained, combined-arms, live-fire and maneuver for 48-72 hours for a MEB-sized force — including Special Use Airspace to support live fire from both aviation and ground based weapons systems.
- ◆ The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) is the Marine Corps center for combined-arms excellence and the only Department of Defense facility in the nation that had the potential, if it was expanded, to meet the requirements for MEB training.
- ◆ After a lengthy environmental study initiated after the Marine Requirements Oversight Council identified the need for MEB training and the Under Secretary of Defense approved the study going forward, the Office of the Secretary of the Navy issued a Record of Decision selecting a land and Special Use Airspace alternative to support MEB training.
- ◆ In December 2013, Congress and the President enacted land withdrawal to support MEB training.
- ◆ Subsequently, Marine Corps (USMC) and the Department of the Navy (DON) have submitted proposals for Special Use Airspace establishment and modification that would support MEB training at the reconfigured and expanded MCAGCC, while minimizing impacts to the National Airspace System.

◆ How was public comment incorporated into the decision?

The Marine Corps (USMC) prepared an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), studying a range of reasonable alternatives to meet USMC MEB training requirements. The public had many 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 signed a Record of Decision (ROD) based on the EIS — including public comments — cost, training and other factors. Congress approved a slightly modified land withdrawal/acquisition proposal, expanding MCAGCC to accommodate MEB training and the President signed the bill into law.



◆ What happens next?

USMC and DON have submitted proposals to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to modify current Special Use Airspace at MCAGCC and to establish new Special Use Airspace as well, to align with the new training land Congress added to MCAGCC. They will await the FAA to complete its review process.

◆ How will FAA decide the airspace request?

The FAA will use their established processes to determine if SUA will be added to or modified at 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 type of Marine Air Ground Task Force. To support MEB training, while also providing for public safety, the Marine Corps

Frequently Asked Questions

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 released for other users of the National Airspace System when not required 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. USMC 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, review of the Draft EIS, and review of the 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?

The request to the FAA to establish and modify SUA may be completed as early as 2015 or may take several



years. USMC will work with aviation stakeholders throughout the process of examining its airspace proposals, and after the process is completed.