

Project Milestones

- ☑ **Published *Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)*, 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.**
- ☑ **Issued *Record of Decision (ROD)*, February 15, 2013.**
- ☑ **Congress and the President enact land withdrawal, December 2013, establishing BLM-USMC Resources Management Group (RMG).**
- ☑ **Congress appropriates funds to purchase non-federal lands at fair market value and make necessary training range improvements.**
- ☑ **USMC/DON submit proposals to FAA to establish / modify Special Use Airspace, April 2014**
- ⇒ **FAA undertakes airspace proposal review processes to consider establishment and modification of *Special Use Airspace*, 2014–2016.**
- ⇒ **In addition:**
 - ◆ **Implement RMG Public Outreach Plan, 2015.**
 - ◆ **Complete necessary training range improvements, 2014 – 2016.**
 - ◆ **Implement and sustain required mitigation, 2015 and beyond.**
 - ◆ **Commence training in some new range areas, 2015; undertake training in all of the new range areas, including shared Use Area, August 2016.**



Good Neighbor Pledge

To meet its National Military Strategy-required service-level training, the Marine Corps has studied reasonable training land acquisition and airspace establishment alternatives in the areas near the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms CA. The Marine Corps has sought only those lands and airspace needed for training and pledges to continue its tradition of outstanding stewardship of resources it manages. The Marine Corps is proud of this tradition, as well as of its good neighbor practices in the High Desert.

Throughout the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, stakeholders have had opportunities to review these alternatives, the completed studies that support NEPA compliance, and a Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement, and a Record of Decision. Congress has now provided for additional lands to meet these training resources necessary to train Marines as they must fight.

The Marine Corps looks forward to working with you to meet Marine Corps training requirements while also helping to preserve the region's resources for generations to come.



or Further
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Proposed 29 Palms
Training Land and
Airspace
Acquisition Project



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29 Palms Training Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment Project



Project Description

July 2015

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 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 was necessary to execute sustained, combined-arms, live-fire and maneuver MEB training.
- ◆ Ranges at MCAGCC and within the DoD inventory currently could not support these MEB training requirements before the expansion of MCAGCC.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ An EIS was developed in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
- ◆ Public involvement occurred throughout the multi-year EIS process, during which over 42,000 public comments were evaluated.

Frequently Asked Questions

◆ Is the base expansion a “done deal?”

Yes. After the Marine Corps prepared an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) studying a range of reasonable alternatives to meet Marine Corps MEB training requirements, the Secretary of the Navy issued a Record of Decision (ROD) selecting Alternative 6 — the Preferred Alternative — as the optimal alternative considering operational and environmental-impact factors together. The February 15, 2013 ROD was based on the EIS — including an evaluation of public comments — and costs, and



mission training requirements. Based on the ROD, the Department of the Navy submitted an application to Congress to withdraw public lands for military training. Congress reviewed the application and made slight modifications to it before submitting the withdrawal to the President for approval. The President signed the withdrawal into law on December 26, 2013, as part of the Fiscal Year 2014 National Defense Authorization Act.

◆ Will the Marines need more airspace?

Yes. MEB training requires training airspace to use artillery, mortars, ground-launched missiles, tank guns, machine guns, small arms weapons, and airborne weapons such as missiles and bombs. 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.



The Department of the Navy has submitted proposals to the Federal Aviation Administration to establish new and modify current Special Use Airspace (SUA) sufficient to support MEB training. The FAA has undertaken its review of these proposals and will consider public comments in its

evaluation of the proposals for SUA to support MEB training requirements. As now, the Marines will return SUA to the National Airspace System for use by other airspace stakeholders and is committed to being a good steward of this important national resource.

◆ What happened with public comments on the Draft and Final EIS, and the Preferred Alternative?



All of these comments were reviewed in establishing the ROD for the project, and Congress considered additional public comments in modifying the DON request for land withdrawal, to include increasing the size of the Shared Use Area that would be open for public recreation 10 months of each year when not being used for military training.

◆ Didn't the base have enough training land?

The military ranges at 29 Palms before expansion could not meet MEB critical training requirements.



Only 40% of the base was available for live-fire and maneuver training; 60% supported safety buffers, as well as area for infrastructure and for natural resources protection. The Marines will continue to be good stewards of lands it controls that contain important environmental and cultural resources.

◆ How will the Marines manage the Shared Use Area in Johnson Valley?

The Shared Use Area of 56,439 acres will be managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for recreation use 10 months of the year and by the Marine Corps during two months when it is used for military training. Congress also established a Resources Management Group (RMG), comprised of the BLM and the Marine Corps / DON.