



**Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command (MAGTFTC)
Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC)
Twentynine Palms, CA**

**Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment in Support of
Training**



Project Update Notice #34 September 2025

Marine Corps Continues to Seek Special Use Airspace (SUA) to Support Scalable Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training in Newly Acquired Training Lands at MCAGCC

- The Fiscal Year 2014 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) expanded the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center's training ranges to accommodate congressionally mandated large-scale Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) training requirements. The authorization was in alignment with the Preferred Alternative selected in the Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (2012), considering a wide range of environmental factors and stakeholder inputs. At this time, the decision to expand the matching airspace was deferred so that the Department of the Navy could continue to coordinate with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to develop a proposal that would result in airspace modifications that could meet Marine Corps training requirements while also minimizing impacts to users of the National Airspace System (NAS).
- Since the 2012 EIS, 2013 Record of Decision, and 2014 NDAA, Marine Corps training requirements have continued to evolve as new weapons systems and aircraft platforms have been developed. Airspace at the Combat Center has become increasingly congested, requiring additional lateral separation to enhance training flexibility and safety.
- The Marine Corps has continued to coordinate with the FAA, as well as national, regional and local airspace stakeholders, throughout the development of its original permanent SUA proposal submission to the FAA in 2014, proposals for interim solutions (Controlled Firing Area, temporary SUA), and subsequent proposals for permanent SUA to support ongoing training operations.
- On March 6, 2019, the Marine Corps published a Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA)/Notice of Availability and Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives (DOPAA). The DOPAA detailed the intention of the USMC to establish new permanent SUA areas, and to modify the lateral boundaries, component sectors, and/or altitude limits within existing SUA areas, to support ongoing daily training activities at the Combat Center. This publication also solicited public input, providing an opportunity to review and comment on the Proposed Action. Comments received during this period were used to support analysis and development of Alternatives in the Draft EA.
- The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide permanent SUA above and adjacent to the Combat Center to support current and future training activities 365 days per year. The Proposed Action is needed to increase safety while adequately supporting the training operations conducted in accordance with MCO 3502.6, Marine Corps Force Generation Process; U.S. Marine Corps' Force Design 2030 (March 2020, with annual updates); and Combat Center Order 3500.16A, Service Level Training Exercise Order (May 14, 2020).
- In 2025, the Marine Corps submitted a revised airspace proposal to the FAA for permanent SUA to support scalable MAGTF level combined-arms training and exercises year-round. The Marine Corps permanent SUA proposal was developed through years of collaboration with the FAA and stakeholders.
 - ✓ *The Environmental Assessment analyzes environmental impacts for up to 365 days of activation per year (Alternative 1). However, the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2, and the current airspace proposal with the FAA, would result in activation of R-2509 and Johnson Valley MOA for a maximum of up to 60 days per calendar year, as well as limited times of use for Turtle Low MOA, and CAX MOA (40 days per year). The airspace establishment would be subject to a 1-year utilization study. This will allow the FAA and the Marine Corps to gather data from times of activation and evaluate impacts to the NAS, which would inform requests for increased airspace usage in the future.*
 - ✓ *The Marine Corps would only activate the newly established airspace when needed for training and return the airspace to the FAA once scheduled training is complete as required by FAA Joint Order 7400.2P.*

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Under Alternative 2, many of the 60 days per year authorized over Johnson Valley would coincide with times when the Johnson Valley Shared Use Area is already pre-scheduled for military training.

- ✓ *Even on days of activation, these airspace changes would not limit typical recreation activities or safety in Johnson Valley. The Marine Corps proposal with the FAA acknowledges the Shared Use dynamic of the Johnson Valley Shared Use Area. When the area is closed to the public for military training (up to two, thirty-day periods per year), the airspace floor would be established at the surface to support military training. When the Shared Use Area is open for public recreation and on the occasion the R-2509 is activated, the airspace floor would be established at a height compatible with all recreation activities – recreational drones, low-flights for filming/events, model rocketry, etc. The public will not need to track the status of the airspace or ask for any permissions to use airspace associated with typical recreation activities.*
 - ✓ *Establishment of Permanent SUA would not impact rapid medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) access in Johnson Valley at any time. We understand that minutes can be critical when saving lives; when needed, MEDEVAC flights will be granted expedited access through restricted airspace during medical emergencies. Safety is always priority; the Marine Corps is prepared to suspend training activities to facilitate safe and efficient passage for emergency aircraft.*
 - ✓ *The Marine Corps continues to coordinate directly with BLM to understand the full range of recreation activities in the Shared Use Area, both permitted and non-permitted. The Marine Corps will coordinate with BLM and event organizers to determine event altitude requirements for events like King of the Hammers. If the event requires airspace access higher than the restricted area floor when the Shared Use Area is open to the public, the Marine Corps will collaborate with the Bureau of Land Management for necessary coordination on a case-by-case basis.*
- The proposed airspace changes would not impact the public's access to the Johnson Valley Shared Use Area. The Marine Corps remains fully committed to honoring the principles established in the 2012 Land Expansion and Airspace Establishment EIS, 2013 Record of Decision, and 2014 NDAA. These principles actively guided the proposal's development. Closures of the Johnson Valley Shared Use will remain limited to up to two, 30-day periods per year. The Marine Corps has a track record of closing the area for only the duration needed to conduct large-scale training events, reflecting our commitment to maximum public recreation in Johnson Valley.

Draft Environmental Assessment Available for Public Review

- On August 1, 2025, the Marine Corps published the Draft EA for Permanent Special Use Airspace Establishment at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center for public review and comments. The Draft EA examines two Alternatives for establishment of new and modification of existing SUA at the Combat Center, and a No-Action Alternative.

The proposed action is to establish new permanent SUA areas and to modify the lateral boundaries, component sectors, and/or altitude limits within existing SUA areas to support ongoing daily training activities at the Combat Center. Both action alternatives would allow the Combat Center to support ongoing daily training activities 365 days per year.

- **Alternative 1:** Similar to what was proposed in the 2012 Final EIS, Alternative 1 would establish new Permanent SUA (R-2509, Johnson Valley MOA/Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspace (ATCAA), Sundance ATCAA, CAX MOA/ATCAA, and Turtle Low MOA) within the same footprint as presented in the 2012 EIS.

Alternative 1 would also modify existing airspace at the Combat Center (Bristol MOA/ATCAA and Sundance MOA).
- **Alternative 2 (Preferred Alternative):** Alternative 2 would establish new permanent SUA (R-2509, Johnson Valley MOA, Sundance ATCAA, CAX MOA, and Turtle Low MOA) and modify existing SUA (Bristol MOA/ATCAA and Sundance MOA).

Alternative 2 airspace configurations would differ from Alternative 1 in the following ways:
– Limiting altitudes to 16,000 feet MSL in R-2509C and Johnson Valley MOA.

- Not creating a Johnson Valley ATCAA or CAX ATCAA.
- Limiting altitudes in Bristol ATCAA to Flight Level (FL)220 (same as existing airspace) and not dividing into Bristol North ATCAA and Bristol South ATCAA.
- Modifying the southern boundary of Sundance ATCAA.

Under Alternative 2, the Marine Corps would only activate R-2509 up to 60 days per year.

- **No-Action Alternative:** The No-Action Alternative would result in no changes to the Combat Center's existing airspace. It represents existing conditions.
- Public comments on the Draft EA that were submitted during the comment period will be addressed and considered in the Final EA.
- The Final EA will provide the FAA the required analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act to evaluate potential impacts from changes in airspace. While the Department of Defense or another proponent may initiate an airspace change, the FAA is the federal authority that establishes, modifies, or withdraws SUA in the NAS.

(see next pages for current airspace configurations, and configurations for Alternative 1 and 2)

Existing Airspace at the Combat Center

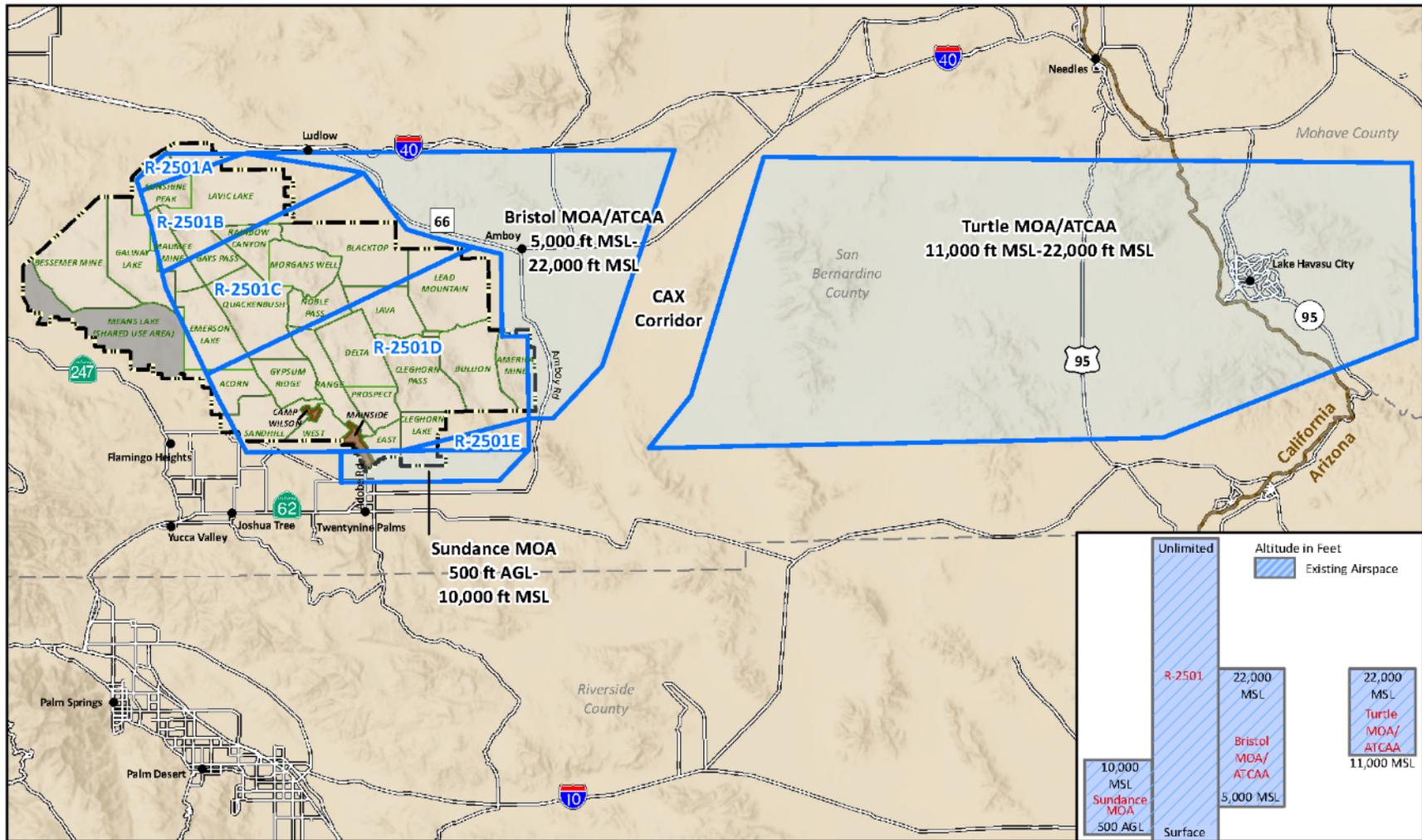
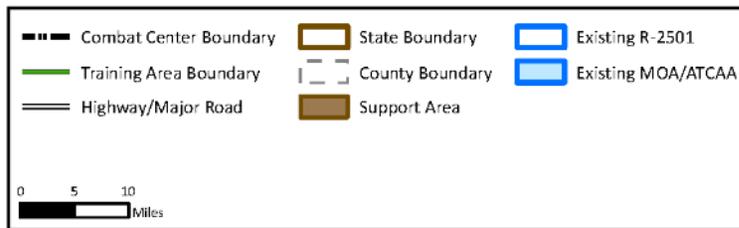


Figure 1-2. Existing Airspace Used to Support the Combat Center



Source: Combat Center 2016a, 2018; Esri 2017, 2024

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Alternative 1 Special Use Airspace

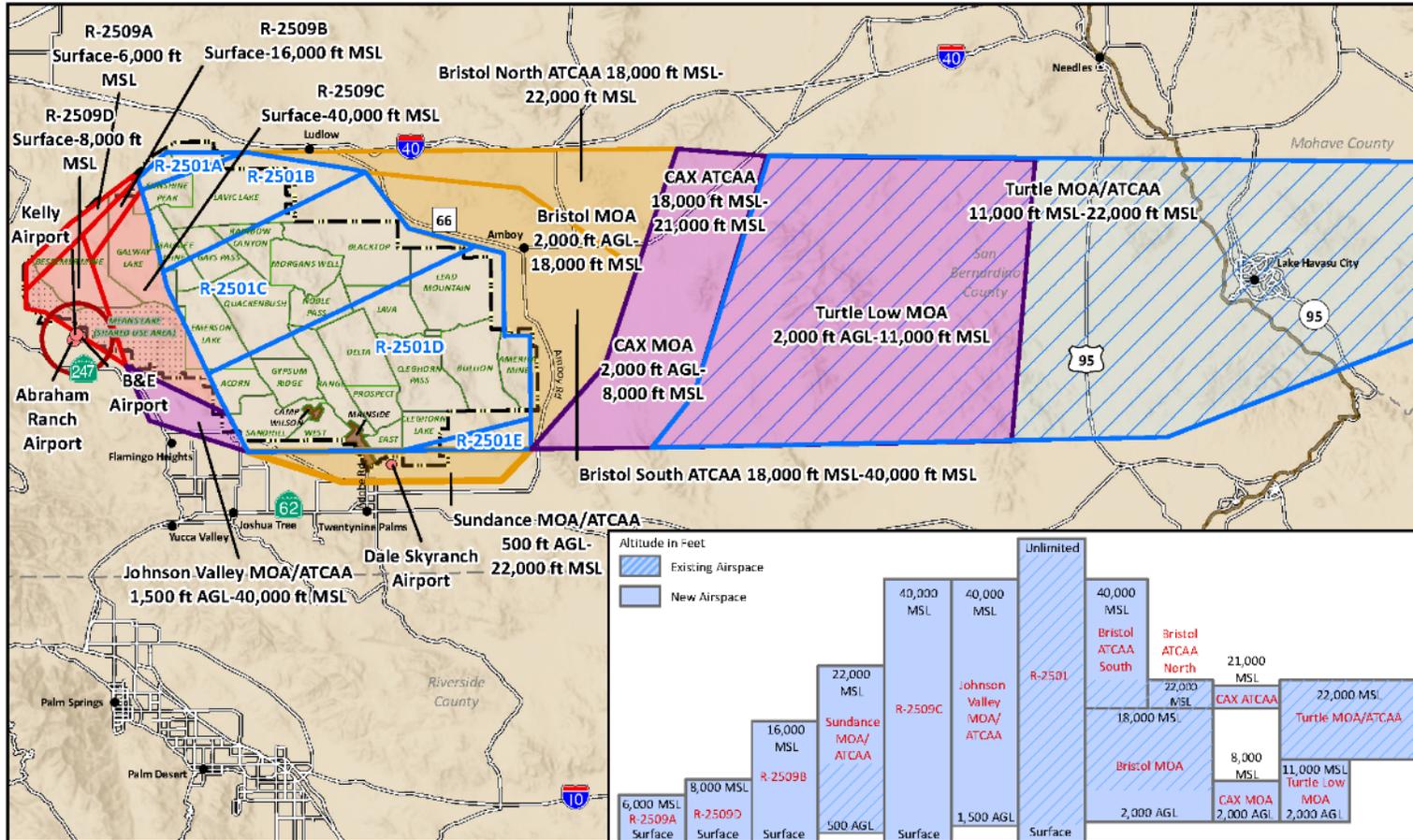
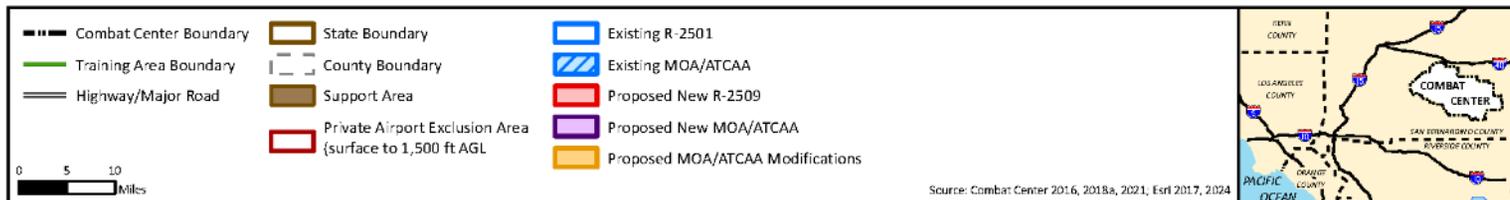


Figure 2-1. Special Use Airspace Under Alternative 1



Key Details

- Establishes new Permanent SUA
 - R-2509
 - Johnson Valley MOA/ATCAA,
 - Turtle Low MOA
 - Sundance ATCAA
- Modifies existing SUA
 - Bristol MOA/ATCAA
 - Sundance MOA
- Supports training 365 days per year
- FAA Los Angeles Air Route Traffic Control Center would remain controlling agency, with the Combat Center the using agency
- Supports ongoing training and large-scale exercises

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Comparison of Special Use Airspace under Action Alternatives and No-Action Alternative			
Special Use Airspace	No-Action Alternative (Existing Airspace)	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
R-2501	Surface to Unlimited	No change from 2025 No-Action Alternative	No change from 2025 No-Action Alternative
R-2509 A	Does not currently exist	Surface to 6,000 feet MSL	Same as Alternative 1
R-2509 B	Does not currently exist	Surface to 16,000 feet MSL	Same as Alternative 1
R-2509 C	Does not currently exist	Surface to 40,000 feet MSL	Surface to 16,000 feet MSL
R-2509 D	Does not currently exist	Surface to 8,000 feet above MSL ¹	Same as Alternative 1
Johnson Valley MOA	Does not currently exist	1,500 feet AGL to but not including FL180	1,500 feet AGL to 16,000 feet MSL
Johnson Valley ATCAA	Does not currently exist	FL180 to FL400	No change from 2025 No-Action Alternative
Bristol MOA	5,000 to but not including FL180	2,000 feet AGL to but not including FL180	Same as Alternative 1
Bristol ATCAA	FL180 to FL220	Subdivided into North/South ATCAAs	No change from 2025 No-Action Alternative
Bristol North ATCAA	Internal subdivision does not currently exist	FL180 to FL220	No change from 2025 No-Action Alternative
Bristol South ATCAA	Internal subdivision does not currently exist	FL180 to FL270/ FL180 to FL400 for LSEs	No change from 2025 No-Action Alternative
Sundance MOA	500 feet AGL to 10,000 feet above MSL	500 feet AGL to but not including FL180 ²	Same as Alternative 1
Sundance ATCAA	ATCAA designation does not currently exist	FL180 to FL220	Same as Alternative 1, but with eastern section of southern boundary adjusted
CAX MOA	Does not currently exist	2,000 feet AGL to 8,000 feet MSL	Same as Alternative 1
CAX ATCAA	Does not currently exist	FL180 to FL210	No change from 2025 No-Action Alternative
Turtle Low MOA	Turtle Low MOA does not currently exist	2,000 feet AGL to but not including 11,000 feet MSL	Same as Alternative 1

¹ For R-2509D, excluding airspace within a 3.4-nm radius of lat. 34°25'3.34"N., long. 116°36'52.12"W., which would be surface to 1,500 feet AGL to accommodate Abraham Ranch, Kelly, and B&E private airports.

² For Sundance MOA, excluding a 1-nm radius of the Dale Sky ranch Airport surface to 1,500 feet AGL and a 1-mile-wide corridor, extending from the center of the airport on a straight line south to the edge of the Sundance MOA.

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