

**Record of Decision**  
**for the Modernization and Enhancement of Ranges, Airspace,**  
**and Training Areas in the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC) in Alaska**

## **INTRODUCTION**

As joint war fighting doctrine has developed since the end of the Cold War and after September 11, 2001, as new weapons systems and platforms come on-line, and as joint context training has evolved, the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC), under its current configuration, can no longer fully meet the training and testing requirements for forces stationed in, and exercises occurring in and near, Alaska. The purpose of the JPARC proposed actions is to modernize and enhance JPARC in Alaska and to best support the military exercises in and near Alaska. JPARC modernizations and enhancements would enable realistic joint training and testing to support emerging technologies, respond to recent battlefield experiences, and train with tactics and new weapons systems to meet combat and national security needs.

Pursuant to guidance and philosophy found in DoD Directive 1322.18, *Military Training*, and in the Commander PACOM's Alaska Joint Training Program of Excellence, Alaskan Command (ALCOM), as the DoD's regional joint headquarters in Alaska, has coordinated with the Services to develop a strategy to identify joint training opportunities in Alaska, maximize the utilization of training resources, and improve joint context training at all levels. The *JPARC Modernization and Enhancement EIS* evaluated the potential environmental impacts for the reasonably foreseeable proposed projects associated with this strategy.

The *JPARC Master Plan* compiled all of the training and testing requirements for military units and DoD-sponsored exercises in the State of Alaska and provides a long-term 30-year strategy to coordinate and deconflict military range and airspace developments. Based on these requirements, the August 2011 *JPARC Master Plan* identified 21 distinct objectives for the modernization and enhancement of JPARC. The objectives were then developed into 19 independent actions, which fall into the categories of existing planning efforts, new actions, or potential future actions that require additional planning. These actions would fulfill capabilities needed by the multiple military units in the State of Alaska and the exercises they conduct but are in different stages of planning. The decision made in this ROD will be used to modify the existing Master Plan and will, consequently, provide updates in the continuum of the life of the JPARC.

The *JPARC Modernization and Enhancement EIS* considered and evaluated a total of 12 independent proposals. Six proposals were considered definitive as ripe for decision and are included in this ROD. The six definitive proposals that are the subject of this ROD include (1) Fox 3 Military Operating Area (MOA) Expansion and Paxon MOA Addition (Air Force), (2) Realistic Live Ordnance Delivery (Air Force), (3) Battle Area Complex (BAX) Restricted Area Addition (Army), (4) Expand Restricted Area R-2205, including the Digital Multi-Purpose Training Range (DMPTR) (Army), (5) Night Joint Training (Air Force), and (6) Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Access (Army).

The other six proposals were considered in a programmatic manner and are not yet ripe for decision. The *JPARC Modernization and Enhancement EIS* addressed these six proposals programmatically and cumulatively so that the proposal proponents may continue to proceed with further planning, programming, design, or funding acquisition. The Army and Air Force

plan to conduct follow-on National Environmental Policy Act analysis and evaluation that would be tiered from that EIS in additional environmental impact documents. The six programmatic proposals included (1) Enhanced Ground Maneuver Space (Army), (2) Tanana Flats Training Area (TFTA) Roadway Access (Army), (3) Joint Air-Ground Integration Complex (JAGIC) (Army), (4) Intermediate Staging Bases (ISBs) (Army), (5) Missile Live-Fire for AIM-9 and AIM-120 (Air Force), and (6) Joint Precision Airdrop System Drop Zones (JPADS) (Air Force).

This Record of Decision (ROD) provides the decision by the Army and Air Force, regarding the six definitive proposals evaluated in the Environmental Impact Statement for the Modernization and Enhancement of Ranges, Airspace, and Training Areas in the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex in Alaska (the JPARC Modernization and Enhancement EIS). This decision has been made in consideration of the information contained in the JPARC Modernization and Enhancement EIS, which was filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and made available to the public by a Notice of Availability in the Congressional Federal Register on June 28, 2013 (Federal Register Vol. 78, No. 125, June 28, 2013, pg. 38975).

This ROD:

- States the decision by the Army (Pages 3 and 20) and Air Force (Pages 3-4 and 21)
- Identifies and discusses the relevant factors considered in reaching the decision, including technical considerations, public review and Tribal and agency input (Page 4-5)
- Identifies the definitive proposals and alternatives considered by the Army and Air Force in reaching their decision and specifies the alternative considered to be environmentally preferable for each definitive proposal (Pages 5-8)
- Identifies the mitigations adopted for each definitive proposal and states whether all reasonable and practicable means to avoid, minimize, or mitigate significant adverse impacts from the alternatives selected have been adopted (Pages 10-19)

## DECISION

### The Army selects:

**Battle Area Complex (BAX) Restricted Area Addition** – Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)  
Alternative B was selected because the additional expansion encompasses both the BAX and Combined Arms Collective Training Facility (CACTF) military withdrawn lands under proposed restricted airspace, as opposed to Alternative A which only encompasses the BAX. Alternative B allows ground and air forces to work together enhancing joint use capabilities of the BAX and CACTF.

### **Restricted Area Expansion of R-2205, including the Digital Multi-Purpose Training Range (DMPTR)** – Proposed Action (Preferred Alternative)

The Proposed Action was selected because the expansion best provides the Army with an area of sufficient size to encompass hazardous activities, an increase of more-realistic training, and better support joint training initiatives.

### **Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Access** – Alternative A (Preferred Alternative)

Alternative A was selected because Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA)-established restricted air space best meets the rapidly expanding UAV technologies and employment practices and allows the Army to practice employing UAVs during training events. Alternative B only establishes temporary Certificates of Authorization for each corridor.

### The Air Force selects:

### **Fox 3 Military Operating Area (MOA) Expansion and New Paxon MOA** - Alternative E (Preferred Alternative)

Alternative E was selected because it addresses public comments and FAA concerns by moving the southern boundary approximately 20 nautical miles (NM) to the north, avoiding potential impacts from the larger proposed MOA in Alternative A, yet still meeting the Air Force's needs. Alternative E also aligns the southern boundary of the MOA with the existing Fox 3 Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspace boundary.

### **Realistic Live Ordnance Delivery** - Alternative A (Preferred Alternative)

Alternative A was selected because it meets long-range realistic live ordnance delivery training requirements for the Air Force while avoiding potential aviation impacts from the larger restricted area explored in Alternative B.

## Night Joint Training - Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)

Alternative B was selected because it provides the Air Force with optimum capability to conduct Major Flying Exercises (MFEs) during hours of darkness in March and October, and provides optimum flexibility by allowing routine night flying training operations during all months of the year. Alternative A limits the extended JPARC MOA operating hours to MFEs only during March and October. Undertaking night flying operations, during both MFEs and routine training, is a critical Air Force training requirement.

## BACKGROUND

The Army and Air Force organizations in Alaska responsible for the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Modernization and Enhancement of Ranges, Airspace, and Training Areas in the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex in Alaska (*JPARC Modernization and Enhancement EIS*) include U.S. Army Alaska (USARAK) and the 11th Air Force (11th AF), as coordinated by the Alaskan Command (ALCOM). ALCOM is a regional military command of the United States Armed Forces focusing on the State of Alaska and is a subunified command of the U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM).

The Department of Defense (DoD) Services include the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Coast Guard. JPARC provides a realistic training environment and allows the Services to train for full-spectrum engagements, ranging from individual skills to complex, and large-scale joint engagements. Each year, thousands of people from the Services; Federal, State and local agencies; allied nations; and nongovernmental organizations receive training in the JPARC.

JPARC consists of all air, land, and sea training capacity and assets in Alaska. JPARC is composed of the military land ranges, maritime training areas, and airspace that provide critical training and testing environment to the DoD Service units based in Alaska. Specifically, today, the JPARC is composed of approximately:

- 65,000 square miles of available airspace
- 2,490 square miles of land space with 1.5 million acres of maneuver land
- 42,000 square nautical miles (NM<sup>2</sup>) of sea and air space in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA)

This includes, but is not limited to, the ranges, training areas, restricted areas, and Military Operations Areas (MOAs) associated with Fort Greely; Fort Wainwright; Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER); Eielson Air Force Base (EAFB); Donnelly, Tanana Flats, Yukon, Gerstle

River, and Black Rapids Training Areas; and the U.S. Navy's Temporary Maritime Activities Area (TMAA) located in the GOA.

JPARC supports local training for USARAK; the 3rd Wing, 673<sup>rd</sup> Air Base Wing, and 354<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing of the Air Force; the Navy's Pacific Fleet; the Alaska Army and Air National Guards; the Coast Guard; and the Marine Reserves. It is home to Joint Chiefs of Staff exercises NORTHERN EDGE and RED FLAG-Alaska, two large-scale and critically important tactical-level field training exercises. JPARC also supports numerous Air Force units in their routine qualification training in conjunction with their deployment to Alaska to participate in RED FLAG-Alaska, the Army's Cold Regions Test Center and the U.S. Missile Defense Agency, along with other homeland defense missions and exercises such as Joint Chiefs of Staff exercise ARCTIC EDGE.

## **DESCRIPTION OF DEFINITIVE PROPOSALS AND ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The actions proposed to achieve the vision for Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC) are briefly described below and more thoroughly described in Chapter 2.0 of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). These actions are independent of each other and have standalone value for improving Army and Air Force training exercises.

**Fox 3 Military Operating Area (MOA) Expansion and New Paxon MOA:** The Air Force proposed to expand the existing Fox 3 MOA and establish a new, adjacent Paxon MOA to provide the vertical and horizontal airspace structure needed to better accommodate low-altitude threat and multi-axis aircraft training mission requirements during JPARC training exercises. The Air Force considered the following alternatives, as well as a No Action Alternative: **Alternative A** included the proposed expanded Fox 3 MOA and the proposed new Paxon MOA with both the high- and low-altitude MOAs. The Fox 3 MOA would be stratified into low (500 feet above ground level [AGL] up to but not including 5,000 feet AGL) and high (5,000 feet AGL up to but not including FL180) sectors, while the Paxon MOA would be stratified into low (500 feet AGL up to but not including 14,000 feet above mean sea level [MSL]) and high (14,000 feet MSL up to but not including FL180) sectors. The Paxon Low MOA is to be activated only for Major Flying Exercises (MFEs); these are limited to 60 days in a calendar year per the '97 Record of Decision (ROD) on the 1995 Alaska MOA EIS. **Alternative E (Preferred Alternative)** is the same as Alternative A, except the airspace structure for the Fox 3 MOA expansion coverage would be approximately 1.164 million acres (1,820 square miles) smaller in size, with the southern boundary moved approximately 20 nautical miles (NM) to the north.

**Realistic Live Ordnance Delivery (RLOD):** As the range and lethality of modern Air Force fighter aircraft and ordnance increase, so do the amounts of training area, training time, and airspace required to safely and effectively train with these weapons. The current ranges and restricted airspace of JPARC are not capable of supporting realistic training with modern and emerging aircraft and ordnance. The Air Force proposed to establish a realistic air and ground

training environment that would accommodate live ordnance delivery of modern and emerging fighter aircraft by considering the following alternatives, as well as a No Action Alternative: **Alternative A (Preferred Alternative)** proposed the use of existing targets in the Oklahoma Impact Area within Restricted Area 2202 (R-2202), with the expansion of this restricted airspace to the west to encompass the airspace and underlying lands for both live and inert ordnance delivery. **Alternative B** proposed that live ordnance delivery be conducted on existing targets in the Oklahoma Impact Area and that inert ordnance delivery be conducted in the Blair Lakes Impact Area, requiring a proposed new restricted area linking R-2211 and R-2202. This alternative proposed that the existing R-2202 be expanded to the west to encompass the weapons footprints, altitudes, and safety zones up to the unlimited ceiling of R-2202 D. The altitudes needed for RLOD would depend on the type of ordnance used and aircraft types and profiles delivering this ordnance. This proposed expansion would provide the optimum additional restricted airspace required to contain any hazardous conditions that may occur with the safety footprints for ordnance use within the impact areas. **Both Alternatives A and B** proposed temporary impact areas and targets for inert ordnance delivery within Donnelly Training Area (DTA). When only these inert targets are active, restricted areas outside of military lands would not be required and ground access restrictions would be limited to within the existing R-2202 restricted area in DTA.

**Battle Area Complex (BAX) Restricted Area Addition:** Use of the existing BAX Controlled Firing Area (CFA) is currently very constrained in terms of the types, levels, and intensity of training that can be undertaken. To fully support more realistic Army and joint training at the BAX, the action alternative proposed by the Army required the addition of new restricted area of sufficient size to provide the protective airspace required for the hazardous air and ground activities and weapons safety footprints to fully accommodate training. The two Army action alternatives proposed to establish a new restricted area over the BAX area within DTA-East, where 100 percent of the land is currently withdrawn by the military. Utilization of the expanded restricted airspace would be between about 106 to 242 days annually. The airspace could be active 12 hours per day, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. local time, Monday through Friday, and other times as required and stipulated by Notice to Airmen (NOTAM).

For each alternative, the airspace is proposed to be of sufficient area to encompass hazardous activities and weapons footprints for those types of munitions and ordnance to be used in this area. The Army considered the following alternatives, as well as a No Action Alternative: **Alternative A** proposed to establish restricted area over the BAX and the Combined Arms Collective Training Facility (CACTF) and to subdivide the restricted airspace into two sectors: R-XXXXA (north) and R-XXXXB (south). The new restricted airspace would be stratified into three altitude levels as follows: surface up to 5,999 feet MSL; 6,000 feet MSL up to 17,999 feet MSL; and 18,000 feet MSL up to FL220. The majority of BAX activities (approximately 60 percent of training) would occur in the lower-altitude layer (below 6,000 feet MSL). **Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)** proposed to establish a larger expanded restricted area over the BAX, the CACTF, and the CACTF CFA and to subdivide the restricted area into three sectors: R-XXXXA (north), R-XXXXB (center), and R-XXXXC (south) with the use of this airspace being the same as Alternative A. This proposed restricted area would be stratified into

three altitude levels as follows: surface up to 5,999 feet MSL; 6,000 feet MSL up to 14,999 feet MSL; and 15,000 feet MSL up to FL220.

**Restricted Area Expansion of R-2205, including the Digital Multi-Purpose Training Range (DMPTR):** This Army Proposed Action proposed to expand R-2205 to include the DMPTR area within the Yukon Training Area (YTA), as well as the airspace currently designated as the Combined Arms Live-Fire Exercise north and south CFAs that overlie the YTA and are used for small arms firing, artillery, ground-launched antitank guided missiles, and mortars (**Preferred Alternative**). The DMPTR is currently very constrained in terms of the types, levels, and intensity of training that can be undertaken. Restricted area is needed to be of sufficient size over these areas to provide the protective airspace required for the hazardous air and ground activities and weapons safety footprints to fully accommodate training. The restricted area would extend from the surface up to FL310, to support live-fire training (covering an area of 251,000 acres [392 square miles]). Currently the Yukon MOA overlies YTA. The restricted area would provide protective areas for the hazardous activities and weapons surface danger zones of sufficient size for the types of ordnance used within the area. The proposed action would subdivide the new restricted area into segmented blocks to integrate Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) into training. The military would only activate those subdivisions and altitudes needed to support individual UAV and other mission requirements, mostly at lower altitudes during short periods for UAV transit between segments. Utilization of the expanded restricted airspace is between about 200 to 300 days annually. The airspace could be active 12 hours per day, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. local time, Monday through Friday, and other times as required and stipulated by NOTAM. This proposal has potential effects on Eielson AFB air traffic operations and other air traffic in the region. Means for managing any new restricted airspace (R-2205) and associated air traffic requires processes to be outlined in procedures and agreements to permit use of the airspace.

**Night Joint Training:** Enemy forces frequently use the cover of darkness to hide their activity. Advanced night vision capabilities and equipment have been developed to support Air Force combat operations. Undertaking night flying operations, during both major joint flying exercises and routine training, is a critical training requirement. While night vision equipment capabilities have advanced, the available time to conduct such training has been reduced for the Air Force in Alaska due to the 2005 nationwide extension of daylight saving time into March and November. Currently, the JPARC MOAs close at 10:00 p.m., and due to the extension of daylight savings time, it is not dark enough prior to 10:00 p.m. during the months of October and March to conduct a night MFE. This Air Force proposal would extend the hours JPARC MOAs are available for use from 10 p.m. to midnight, allowing a two-week RED FLAG-Alaska with night joint training to occur in March or October.

During the RED FLAG-Alaska night portion, the live and inert munitions currently dropped during the evening training period would be dropped after 10:00 p.m. Routine training (Alternative B) could include night bombing training outside of the MFE construct. This is not a change in the numbers of munitions dropped, just a change in time of day. These munitions would typically be released in the existing Stuart Creek Impact Area within R-2205 in YTA and

the existing Oklahoma Impact Area in R-2202 in DTA-West. These areas are currently used by the Army for late-night munitions training.

The Air Force considered the following alternatives, as well as a No Action Alternative: **Alternative A** proposed to extend the JPARC MOAs operating hours to allow Air Force tactical flight operations until midnight and landing by 1:00 a.m., local time, during March and October for MFEs in Alaska. This would allow night training during these months from a minimum of 1.5 hours to a maximum of 2.5 hours for each exercise. **Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)** proposed to extend the JPARC MOAs operating hours to allow Air Force tactical flight operations until midnight and landing by 1:00 a.m., local time, during all months of the year for MFEs and also for all Air Force routine training purposes.

**Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Access:** UAVs have become critical aircraft in the conduct of reconnaissance, surveillance, and other activities; UAV access throughout the JPARC ranges and airspace is critical to enhance Army and Air Force training and exercises at JPARC. The following UAV corridors have been developed as individual, standalone proposed Army action alternatives: Eielson AFB to R-2211; Eielson AFB to R-2205; Allen Army Airfield to R-2202; R-2202 to R-2211; R-2205 to R-2202; Fort Wainwright to R-2211; and Fort Wainwright to R-2205. The Army considered the following alternatives, as well as a No Action Alternative: **Alternative A (Preferred Alternative)** would establish new restricted or other suitable airspace as determined by the FAA for each UAV corridor identified above; **Alternative B** would establish defined airspace having special operating provisions via a Certificate of Authorization for each UAV corridor identified above.

## ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVES

For each proposed action, the environmentally preferable alternative is considered to be the No Action Alternative. The No Action alternative constitutes the baseline conditions at each alternative location and would not substantially change existing environmental impacts.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public involvement accomplished by the Army and Air Force is discussed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (Public Scoping Summary: Volume 2 Appendix A and Public Hearing Summary: Volume 3 Appendix M). Public notices and meetings were accomplished as follows:

Notice of Intent (NOI), Federal Register, Vol. 75, No. 235, page 76444-46, December 8, 2010

Scoping period – December 8, 2010 to March 4, 2011



Scoping Meetings:

Anchorage, AK January 13, 2011  
Glennallen, AK January 18, 2011  
Delta Junction, AK January 19, 2011  
Fairbanks, AK January 20, 2011  
Healy, AK January 24, 2011  
Talkeetna, AK January 25, 2011  
Wasilla, AK January 26, 2011

Notice of Availability (NOA) of Draft EIS, Federal Register, Vol. 77, No. 62, page 19282, March 30, 2012

Public Comment Period – March 30, 2012 to July 9, 2012

Public Hearings:

Anchorage, AK May 11, 2012  
Palmer, AK May 14, 2012  
Glennallen, AK May 15-16, 2012  
Paxson, AK May 17, 2012  
Delta Junction, AK May 18, 2012  
Fairbanks, AK May 19, 2012  
Healy, AK May 21, 2012  
Talkeetna, AK May 22, 2012  
Wasilla, AK May 23, 2012

NOA of Final EIS, Federal Register, Vol. 78, No. 125, page 38975, June 28, 2013

## **CONSULTATION WITH ALASKA NATIVE TRIBES**

In compliance with the Department of Defense (DoD) American Indian and Alaska Native Policy and DoD Instruction 4710.02 “Interaction with Federally Recognized Tribes,” Government-to-Government (G2G) consultations with Federally Recognized Tribes occurred throughout the 2010-2013 period. Formal G2G consultation meetings were held on February 28, 2011 and November 27, 2012 with Tribal leaders and Alaska’s highest ranking military commanders. In addition, information was shared and consultations held with Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) Corporations.

## **MITIGATIONS AND MANAGEMENT ACTIONS**

Tables ES-2 - ES-7 of Volume 1 (pages 14 - 67) summarize the impacts for each definitive proposal by resource or impact area and the mitigation measures developed by the Army and Air Force to avoid, reduce, or provide management actions to mitigate significant adverse impacts.

For those resources where potential impacts have not been mitigated by avoidance (i.e. through project design), additional planned mitigations and management actions are summarized below:

### **ARMY**

#### **BATTLE AREA COMPLEX (BAX) RESTRICTED AREA**

##### **Airspace**

Pending the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) study of the preferred airspace proposal alternatives to determine specific impacts and mitigation measures to be taken to minimize any impacts on Visual Flight Rules (VFR) and Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) air traffic, other existing mitigations would continue to be relevant in addressing potential impacts of the airspace proposals.

##### **Biological Resources**

Maintain consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) with regard to compliance with Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act. As required, conduct bald and golden eagle nest surveys in other areas where airspace modification would occur over previously unsurveyed areas. Coordinate the results with USFWS.

Continue to monitor effects of military training including overflights on select wildlife species (especially herd animals, waterfowl, and raptors) and fisheries during critical seasons such as breeding, young-rearing, and migration. Use knowledge to develop and implement strategies to minimize disturbance to priority wildlife in existing and new Special Use Airspace (SUA) and restricted airspace. This would help natural resources and range managers to coordinate training schedules that minimize impacts on wildlife populations.

Continue pilot and soldier education for awareness of sensitive wildlife species habitats and seasonal behaviors utilizing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping and

discuss procedures to reduce disturbances and to increase safety by reducing potential for aircraft strikes.

Continue effort to conduct a detailed study to assess the impacts and effects of noise on wildlife, particularly key species such as caribou and bison, during critical life cycle seasons. Use information to include protection requirements within a noise management plan.

## **Cultural Resources**

Mitigations for impacts to cultural resources are established through National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 consultation pursuant to 36 CFR 800. In compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA the Army has completed consultation with the Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and complied with all requirements for consultation with potentially affected Alaska Native Tribes, Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) corporations, and Tribal government entities to identify historic properties that may be affected, including traditional cultural properties (TCPs), and develop management actions and mitigation measures to resolve any adverse effects, if required. It has been determined that significant adverse impacts to cultural resources and Alaska Native Tribes, ANSCA corporations, and Tribal government entities would not occur by the implementation of the BAX Restricted Area proposal.

Mitigation measures include the amendment of the existing BAX Surface Danger Zone (SDZ) Programmatic Agreement to include the known and as yet undiscovered archaeological sites in the expanded BAX SDZ footprint. Specific Programmatic Agreement requirements are to survey new areas of the amended BAX SDZ within a period of five years from the amended agreement (9/9/12); add any sites that are discovered to the BAX SDZ monitoring plan; produce an annual report to the Alaska SHPO; update the Archaeological Resource Protection Act tri-fold handout and develop a placard describing cultural resources on the BAX SDZ that will be presented in the form of, at a minimum, one poster displayed at Range Control, and one interpretive panel placard to be displayed at an information kiosk located at the BAX range; and develop a cultural resource awareness PowerPoint presentation to be given to Soldiers and contractors to increase knowledge of cultural resource concerns and responsible actions, and knowledge of Alaskan Native communities. All of the above mentioned requirements are either completed or in progress. Annual monitoring of archaeological sites within the BAX SDZ began in August of 2009 and will continue for 10 years from this date.

In accordance with AR 200-1, all NHPA Section 106 consultation has been completed. In the event that previously unrecorded or unevaluated cultural resources are encountered, the Army would manage these resources in accordance with the NHPA and other Federal and State laws, Air Force, and Department of Defense (DoD) regulations and instructions, and DoD American Indian and Alaska Native Policy.

## **Hazardous Materials/Biological Resources/Water Resources**

The Army may augment the effort for their existing program to identify possible munitions contamination at training areas on Donnelly Training Area (DTA)-East. This program initiates the collection of baseline data to determine the location, extent, and potential migration of munitions contamination in soils, surface water, and groundwater. Based on these preliminary results, a long-term monitoring program could be developed to assess cumulative impacts to the withdrawal lands from ongoing military activities. These results could identify areas needing restoration, activities that pose the greatest environmental threat, and the potential mitigation measures to be implemented. Extensive and expedient investigations may be conducted in those areas considered to be exposure pathways, such as streams.

### **Land Use – Access**

The Army will update information and maps available to the public on the U.S. Army Recreation Tracking System website to identify changes in public access restrictions for the expanded Army training activities within U.S. Army Garrison Fort Wainwright (USAG-FWA) training areas.

### **Land Use/Biological Resources**

The military will maintain an open dialogue with Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) and USFWS to assess current conditions and needed adjustments in locations or temporal restrictions to avoidances and procedures put in place by the Record of Decision (ROD) for this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

### **Land Use/Safety – Ground**

The Army will expand enforcement to control trespass in DTA-East for the expanded operations.

### **Safety – Flight Safety**

Maintain respective bird awareness programs to address potential bird and wildlife hazards that may exist.

### **Safety – Ground**

Continue fire management mitigations in accordance with current Army and USARAK regulations on the BAX.

## **Socioeconomics/Airspace**

Pursue manning and funding for any enhancements required to expand situational awareness for air traffic in and around training areas for general and military aviation. Complete an internal study to identify coverage gaps in new SUAs and restricted airspace. One possible alternative is the establishment of a U.S. Army Airspace Information Center.

## **Subsistence**

Continue consultation efforts with subsistence parties to determine current subsistence use levels and areas on USAG-FWA lands as input into scheduling. Continue Tribal consultation efforts with subsistence users about hunting and fishing programs on USAG-FWA land. Continue to use a newsletter to provide information to subsistence users about existing and new military activities and the changes in access for subsistence users. Continue research and cooperative studies with Tribes to address possible effects of Air Force and Army activities on subsistence resources both directly within USAG-FWA installation boundaries and those outlying resources that may also be affected by military activities on DTA- West, DTA- East, Yukon Training Area (YTA), and Tanana Flats Training Area (TFTA).

## **EXPAND RESTRICTED AREA R-2005, INCLUDING THE DIGITAL MULTI-PURPOSE TRAINING RANGE (DMPTR)**

### **Airspace**

Pending the FAA's study of the preferred airspace proposal alternatives to determine specific impacts and mitigation measures to be taken to minimize any impacts on VFR and IFR air traffic, other existing mitigations would continue to be relevant in addressing potential impacts of the airspace proposals.

### **Biological Resources**

Continue to monitor effects of military training including overflights on select wildlife species (especially herd animals, waterfowl, and raptors) and fisheries during critical seasons such as breeding, young-rearing, and migration. Use knowledge to develop and implement strategies to minimize disturbance to priority wildlife in existing and new SUAs and restricted airspace. This would help natural resources and range managers to coordinate training schedules that minimize impacts on wildlife populations.

Continue pilot and soldier education awareness of sensitive wildlife species habitats and seasonal behaviors utilizing GIS mapping and discuss procedures to reduce disturbances and to increase safety by reducing potential for aircraft strikes.

Continue effort to conduct a detailed study to assess the impacts and effects of noise on wildlife, particularly key species such as caribou and bison, during critical life cycle seasons. Use information to include protection requirements within a noise management plan.

### **Cultural Resources**

Mitigations for impacts to cultural resources are established through NHPA Section 106 consultation pursuant to 36 CFR 800. In compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA the Army has consulted with the Alaska SHPO and complied with all consultation requirements with potentially affected Alaska Native Tribes, ANCSA corporations, and Tribal government entities to identify historic properties that may be affected, including TCPs, and anticipates a determination of no historic properties adversely affected. Therefore, mitigations would not be applicable for this proposal.

In accordance with AR 200-1, all NHPA Section 106 consultation has been completed. In the event that previously unrecorded or unevaluated cultural resources are encountered, the Army would manage these resources in accordance with the NHPA and other Federal and state laws, Air Force, and DoD regulations and instructions, and DoD American Indian and Alaska Native Policy.

### **Hazardous Materials/Biological Resources**

The Army may augment the effort for their existing program to identify possible munitions contamination at impact areas on YTA. This program initiates the collection of baseline data to determine the location, extent, and potential migration of munitions contamination in soils, surface water, and groundwater. Based on these preliminary results, a long-term monitoring program could be developed to assess cumulative impacts to the withdrawal lands from ongoing military activities. These results could identify areas needing restoration, activities that pose the greatest environmental threat, and the potential mitigation measures to be implemented. Extensive and expedient investigations may be conducted in those areas considered to be exposure pathways, such as streams.

### **Land Use/Biological Resources**

The military will maintain an open dialogue with ADNR, BLM, ADFG, and USFWS to assess current conditions and needed adjustments in locations or temporal restrictions to avoidances and procedures put in place by the ROD for this EIS.

### **Land Use/Safety – Ground**

The Army would expand enforcement to control trespass in YTA for the expanded R-2205 activities.

### **Safety – Flight Safety**

Continue efforts to comply with the respective Service formal flight safety programs, outlined in directives/regulations with supplements, that dictate those aircrew responsibilities and practices aimed at operating all manned and unmanned aircraft safely in existing modified and new SUAs.

### **Subsistence**

Continue consultation efforts with subsistence parties to determine current subsistence use levels and areas on USAG-FWA lands as input into scheduling. Continue Tribal consultation efforts with subsistence users about hunting and fishing programs on USAG-FWA land. Continue to use a newsletter to provide information to subsistence users about existing and new military activities and the changes in access for subsistence users. Continue research and cooperative studies with Tribes to address possible effects of Air Force and Army activities on subsistence resources both directly within USAG-FWA installation boundaries and those outlying resources that may also be affected by military activities on DTA-West, DTA-East, YTA, and TFTA.

## **UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE (UAV) ACCESS**

### **Airspace**

Pending the FAA's study of the preferred airspace proposal alternatives to determine specific impacts and mitigation measures to be taken to minimize any impacts on VFR and IFR air traffic, other existing mitigations would continue to be relevant in addressing potential impacts of the airspace proposals.

### **Safety**

Conduct Sandhill Crane surveys during spring and fall migration periods.

### **Safety – Flight Safety**

Continue efforts to comply with the respective Service formal flight safety programs, outlined in directives/regulations with supplements, that dictate those aircrew responsibilities and practices aimed at operating all manned and unmanned aircraft safely in existing modified and new SUAs.

### **Subsistence**

Continue consultation efforts with subsistence parties to determine current subsistence use levels and areas on USAG-FWA lands as input into scheduling. Continue Tribal consultation efforts with subsistence users about hunting and fishing programs on USAG-

FWA land. Continue to use a newsletter to provide information to subsistence users about existing and new military activities and the changes in access for subsistence users. Continue research and cooperative studies with Tribes to address possible effects of Army activities on subsistence resources both directly within USAG-FWA installation boundaries and those outlying resources that may also be affected by military activities on DTA-West, DTA-East, YTA, and TFTA.

## **AIR FORCE**

### **FOX 3 MILITARY OPERATING AREA (MOA) EXPANSION AND NEW PAXON MOA**

#### **Airspace Management/Safety – Flight/Land Use – Access**

Continue Special Use Airspace Information Service (SUAIS) in all areas where radio coverage exists; this includes a majority of the area beneath the proposed Fox 3 and Paxon MOAs. The (SUAIS) Letter of Agreement (LOA) with the FAA will be updated to include current radio sites and any new MOAs to be covered by the system.

The effectiveness of this mitigation in maintaining a safe, usable airspace can be seen in today's northern MOAs, which have minimum altitudes even lower than proposed here. The Air Force safely shares large expanses of airspace with civilian aviation utilizing the communication network known as SUAIS. Proposed new, low MOAs already have large areas of SUAIS coverage that would enable safe, simultaneous use of these new airspaces by civil and military aircraft.

#### **Biological Resources**

Limit minimum altitude to 1,000 feet above ground level (AGL) in the new Fox 3 and Paxon MOAs from 15 March to 30 September (nesting season) to comply with the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Subject to available funding, the AF may coordinate with the USFWS to establish habitat models and/or conduct bald and golden eagle nest surveys to establish low flying (500 feet AGL) areas outside of eagle habitat during the nesting season (15 March to 30 September).

Modify existing LOA with ADFG to maintain avoidance areas over caribou and Dall sheep populations under the new MOAs during critical lifecycle periods. Coordination with wildlife agencies will continue to determine specifics including seasons and minimum overflight altitudes; location of herds is monitored/reported by ADFG.



### **Airspace Management/Safety – Flight/Biological Resources/Land Use – Management, Access, Recreation/Socioeconomics/Subsistence**

Extend the VFR flight corridor over the Richardson highway between Delta Junction and Glennallen to include the highway segment under the new Paxon MOA. The corridor laterally will be 3 miles on either side of the Richardson highway and vertically go from the surface up to 4,500 feet MSL. (The MOA would only go down to 5,000 feet MSL over the corridor to allow a 500-foot buffer.)

As an extra safety measure, designated VFR corridors are intended to be free of high speed Air Force aircraft, thereby allowing unimpeded flight by civilian aircraft. Corridors such as this have been used extensively for the safe transit of civilian aircraft where the military currently flies low in MOAs. This new corridor would continue to allow unimpeded VFR flights below the floor of the proposed Paxon Low MOA. An additional benefit of the VFR corridor is a reduced noise level over the Paxon Fish Hatchery from the higher flying military aircraft.

### **Biological Resources/Land Use – Management, Recreation**

For the period 15 May to 30 September, expand the Gulkana (west, middle, and north forks) and Delta National Wild and Scenic Rivers' (and others, as designated) Flight Avoidance Areas to include portions within new MOA boundaries using a 5-nautical mile buffer either side of the river centerline with 5,000 feet MSL minimum altitude. The river corridors will include their headwater lakes areas (Tangle Lakes and Dickey Lake).

### **Land Use – Management, Recreation/Socioeconomics**

Comply with flight avoidance areas established by the 11<sup>th</sup> Air Force Airspace and Range Team and listed in the 11<sup>th</sup> AF Airspace Handbook. Areas not specified by the ROD may be added, increased, decreased, or removed by the 11<sup>th</sup> Air Force Airspace and Range team as situations dictate (e.g., a mine and its air operations cease to exist).

## **REALISTIC LIVE ORDNANCE DELIVERY (RLOD)**

### **Land Use – Management, Access/Socioeconomics**

Comply with ADNR comments to avoid leasehold properties in the north and south corners of the proposed restricted area by adjusting the borders of the Alternative A airspace.

### **Safety – Ground/Land Use – Management**

Air Force will provide support to ADNR throughout the Special Use Designation (SUD) process. The Air Force will develop a Concept of Operation and an Access and Safety

Plan for the exclusive use of state land to support RLOD. The SUD will identify areas and dates of closure and will have to indicate which activities are affected. The Access Plan will provide the maximum public use to the ground evacuation areas, closing such areas for the minimum period of time necessary to conduct such operations. The Access Plan (updated annually) will identify areas and dates of closure and will indicate which activities are affected. It will describe roles and responsibilities for securing the area, ensuring it is evacuated, publishing and posting closure notices, signs and other media to advertise and alert public of the hazards, times, and locations.

### **Physical Resources/Water Resources**

All applicable conservation, monitoring, and management procedures currently followed by USAG-FWA in the management of R-2202 will be applicable to the Proposed Action, including measures for the protection of soils and permafrost, including but not limited to, the Fort Wainwright Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan and Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan and the monitoring guidelines of the Integrated Training Area Management Sustainable Range Awareness.

### **NIGHT JOINT TRAINING**

#### **Airspace Management/Safety – Flight/Biological Resources/Land Use – Management, Access, Recreation/Socioeconomics/Subsistence**

Extend the VFR flight corridor over the Richardson highway between Delta Junction and Glennallen to include the highway segment under the new Paxon MOA. The corridor laterally will be 3 miles on either side of the Richardson highway and vertically go from the surface up to 4,500 feet MSL. (The MOA would only go down to 5,000 feet MSL over the corridor to allow a 500-foot buffer.)

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#### **Biological Resources/Land Use – Management**

For the period of May 15 to September 30, expand the Gulkana (west, middle, and north forks) and Delta National Wild and Scenic Rivers' (and others, as designated) Flight Avoidance Areas to include portions within new MOA boundaries using a 5-nautical mile buffer either side of the river centerline with 5,000 feet MSL minimum altitude. The river corridors will include their headwater lakes areas (Tangle Lakes and Dickey Lake).

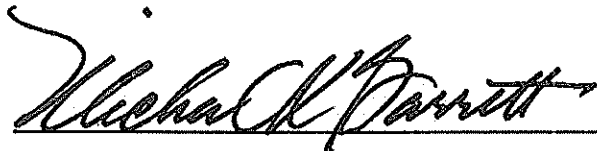
### **Land Use – Management, Recreation/Socioeconomics**

Comply with flight avoidance areas established by the 11<sup>th</sup> Air Force Airspace and Range Team and listed in the 11th AF Airspace Handbook. Areas not specified by the ROD may be added, increased, decreased, or removed by the 11<sup>th</sup> Air Force Airspace and Range team as situations dictate (e.g., a mine and its air operations cease to exist).

## ARMY DECISION

After consideration of relevant operational, environmental, economic and technical factors discussed in the Modernization and Enhancement of Ranges, Airspace, and Training Areas in the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex in Alaska Final Environmental Impact Statement, comments from the public, inputs from regulatory agencies, and other relevant factors, the Army has decided to implement Battle Area Complex Restricted Area Addition Alternative B (Preferred Alternative), Restricted Area Expansion of R-2205 including the Digital Multi-Purpose Training Range Proposed Action (Preferred Alternative), and Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Access Alternative A (Preferred Alternative).

This decision takes into account the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts from the alternatives. The Preferred Alternatives include all practicable means to avoid, minimize or mitigate environmental harm. Although mitigation measures and management actions are specified as part of this decision, particular mitigation measures and management actions could be modified by a subsequent decision after reexamination and reevaluation in any future environmental impact analyses of proposed Federal actions, including the programmatic actions identified above.



Major General Michael X. Garrett  
Commanding General, US Army Alaska

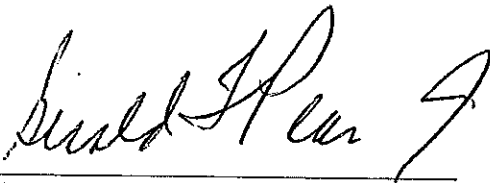
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## AIR FORCE DECISION

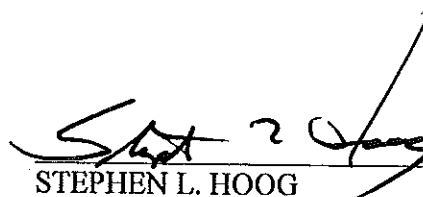
After consideration of relevant operational, environmental, economic and technical factors discussed in the Modernization and Enhancement of Ranges, Airspace, and Training Areas in the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex in Alaska Final Environmental Impact Statement, comments from the public, inputs from regulatory agencies, and other relevant factors, the Air Force has decided to implement Fox 3 Military Operating Area (MOA) Expansion and New Paxon MOA Alternative E (Preferred Alternative), Realistic Live Ordnance Delivery (Alternative A), and Night Joint Training Alternative B (Preferred Alternative).

This decision takes into account the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts from the alternatives. The Preferred Alternatives include all practicable means to avoid, minimize or mitigate environmental harm. Although mitigation measures and management actions are specified as part of this decision, particular mitigation measures and management actions could be modified by a subsequent decision after reexamination and reevaluation in any future environmental impact analyses of proposed Federal actions, including the programmatic actions identified above.

During the 30-day waiting period after the Notice of Availability was published for the Final EIS, additional comments from the local community and other government agencies were received. These comments have been considered in this decision making process. As part of that consideration, the Air Force will meet with ADFG to discuss appropriate modifications to the existing LOA and updates to the 11<sup>th</sup> AF Airspace Handbook.



GERALD F. PEASE, JR.  
Deputy Assistant Secretary of the  
Air Force (Environmental, Safety,  
& Occupational Health)



STEPHEN L. HOOG  
Lieutenant General, USAF  
Commander, Eleventh Air Force

6 Aug 2013

Date

6 Aug 2013

Date