

Mountain Home Air Force Base (AFB), Idaho PUBLIC HEARING FOR DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS) HEARING BEGINS AT 5:00 PM MOUNTAIN TIME (JULY 26 & 29); 5:00 PM PACIFIC/6:00 PM MOUNTAIN TIME (July 28) PLEASE STAND BY

Mountain Home Air Force Base

Webpage: https://www.mountainhomeafbairspaceeis.com

Integrity - Service - Excellence

Thank You for Participating in this Public Hearing





- You will have an opportunity to verbally comment on the Proposed Action and alternatives and the environmental analysis from the Draft EIS.
- > If you wish to speak, please fill out a white speaker card.
- > You may also submit written comments here tonight or via the project website at https://www.mountainhomeafbairspaceeis.com.
- You can also mail written comments to:

Mountain Home AFB Airspace Optimization EIS c/o Leidos 2109 Air Park Road SE #200 Albuquerque, NM 87106

- ➤ To be considered in the Final EIS, all substantive comments should be received online or postmarked by no later than August 23, 2021.
- > All substantive comments received, regardless of format, will be given full and equal consideration and will become part of the official administrative record.

Welcome and Introductions



- Participants:
 - Lt Col Elijah Brown– Military Judge/Hearing Officer
 - Lt Col Christopher Russell Commander, 366 Operations Support Squadron
 - Col Jamaal Mays Deputy Commander of Support
 - Mountain Home AFB Staff
 - Air Combat Command Operations Staff
 - Ms. Robin Divine EIS Project Manager from the Air Force Civil Engineer Center, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Division
 - Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Cooperating Agency

Project Webpage: https://www.mountainhomeafbairspaceeis.com

Public Hearing Agenda



- Part 1: Department of Air Force (Air Force) Formal Presentation
 - Describes the purpose and need for the Proposed Action.
 - Describes the Proposed Action and alternatives.
 - Summarizes the anticipated environmental consequences identified in EIS Chapter 3.
- 10-minute break
- Part 2: Formal Public Comments on the Draft EIS
 - Statements are for the record.
 - All verbal comments are being transcribed by a court reporter.
 - Your substantive comments and clarifying questions help the Air Force make an informed decision.

How Your Substantive Comments and Clarifying Questions Help



- Substantive comments and/or clarifying questions are typically defined as, but not limited to:
 - o Comments may challenge the Draft EIS as being factually or analytically incorrect.
 - Comments may identify impacts not analyzed.
 - o Comments may Identify reasonable alternatives not included in the Draft EIS.
 - o Comments may Identify feasible mitigations not considered by the Air Force.
 - Comments may offer differences in interpretations of information, such as interpretations of significance, or technical conclusions.
 - Clarifying questions may be about the EIS process or the proposed action or alternatives.
- Your substantive comments and clarifying questions, written or verbal, received during the public comment period will be given full and equal consideration in the preparation of the Final EIS.
- > The Draft EIS public comment period began with the publication of the Notice of Availability on July 9, 2021, and will close on August 23, 2021.
- To be considered in the Final EIS, comments must be received online or postmarked by August 23, 2021.

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Public Hearing Format



- You were invited in the Notice of Availability, in the newspaper announcements, and at the beginning of this hearing to register to make a public comment on the Draft EIS.
- > Speakers will be called on to speak, with elected officials (federal, state, local) first, followed by members of the general public in the order the speaker forms were received.
- > When called on to speak, please clearly state and spell your name and any affiliation.
- > All oral comments will be transcribed and included in the EIS.
- Please limit comments to the allotted time (3 minutes).
- > You will be notified that you have 30 seconds remaining.
- You will be notified that you have used up your allotted time.
- > We will close the hearing before 8:00 p.m upon verifying that all who desire to speak have been heard and there are no more registered speakers.

Mountain Home AFB Welcome



366th Fighter Wing Commander Rick Goodman









- Federal law that requires agencies to identify and consider the environmental consequences of implementing the proposed airspace changes.
- The analysis of environmental consequences is presented, which accomplishes the following objectives:
 - Identifies and describes the affected environment and evaluates the potential environmental consequences of reasonable alternatives.
 - Identifies environmental permits and specific mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, or reduce adverse environmental impacts, if required.
- NEPA requires a rigorous process to be followed prior to making a final decision, including consideration of substantive comments on the Draft EIS.
- The NEPA process concludes with a Record of Decision (ROD) that identifies which alternative is selected and outlines any mitigation measures required.



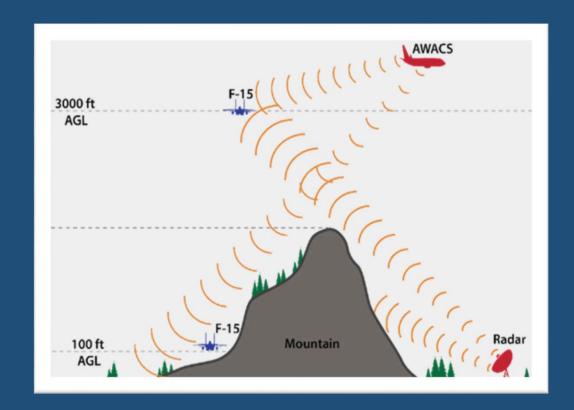


- Recent combat experience has highlighted the deficiency in training currently conducted in the existing Special Use Airspace associated with Mountain Home AFB.
- The Special Use Airspace, as currently configured, is not adequate for aircrews to learn to protect themselves from the advanced threats they are experiencing in real-world conflicts.
- Air Force tactics, techniques, and procedures must adapt based on changing technologies and enemy capabilities.
- Four Military Operations Areas (MOAs), Paradise North and South and Owyhee and Jarbidge South MOAs, are not adequate due to their medium-altitude floors and high supersonic floors, which make it impossible to train at lower altitudes in the manner that advanced real-world threats require. Also, the supersonic floors of the Jarbidge North and Owyhee North MOAs are not adequate.

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Background of the Proposed Action

- Because of the technological advancements in surface-to-air missile capabilities and the procurement of such advanced systems by existing and potential adversaries, F-15E aircrew face increasingly capable threats.
- The F-15E does not possess the stealth characteristics or abilities of newer fighters, and advancements in adversary surface-to-air weaponry make training for this type of engagement critical.

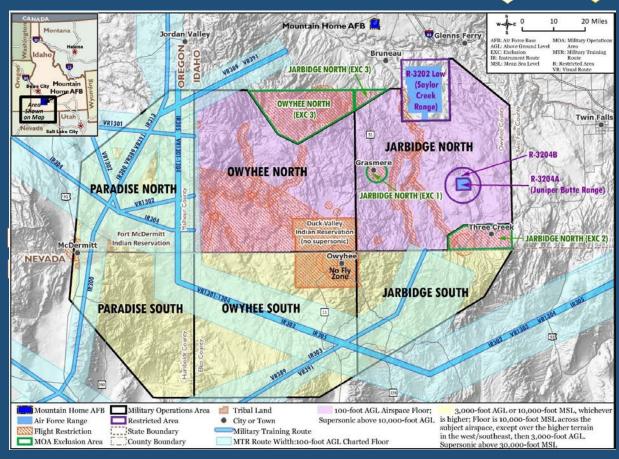


Existing Military Operations Areas (MOAs) and Operational Altitudes





- ➤ Low-Altitude Operational Floors:
 The Jarbidge North and Owyhee
 North MOAs have operational
 floors at 100 feet above ground
 level (AGL). The other four MOAs
 (Jarbidge South, Owyhee South,
 Paradise North, and Paradise South)
 have operational floors at 10,000
 feet mean sea level (MSL) or 3,000
 feet AGL, whichever is higher.
- North and Owyhee North MOAs, supersonic aircraft flights above 10,000 feet AGL are permitted; the other four MOAs have a 30,000-foot MSL supersonic floor. No supersonic flights are allowed where Owyhee North and Owyhee South MOAs overlie the Duck Valley Indian Reservation.



Existing Airspace Over Mountain Home AFB

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action



- > The Air Force's <u>purpose</u> of the Proposed Action is to:
 - Provide a more realistic and regularly accessible training airspace to enable aircrews to counter and defeat technologically advanced air and ground threats. Modifying the existing airspace would optimize the current training environment to ensure readiness and increase survivability by:
 - Providing low-altitude airspace floors that support realistic low-altitude training certification and currency training.
 - Providing consistent low-altitude floors for low-altitude operations at or below 500 feet AGL in mountainous areas to support terrain masking from opposing threats.
 - Providing lower and consistent supersonic altitudes so aircrew could realistically train in evasive maneuvers down to altitudes of 5,000 feet AGL.
 - o Allow training for current combat environment. Limitations on the use of current airspace do not allow for training that reflects the current combat environment. The modified airspace would permit aircrew to build proficiency in low-altitude tactics and RADAR masking using mountainous terrain for survival in a highly contested environment. The ability for an aircrew to turn altitudes into speed allows a supersonic exit from surface-to-air and air-to-air threats. Maintaining supersonic speed in training translates to survivability in combat.

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

(continued)





- The Air Force's need for the Proposed Action is to:
 - Achieve rapid response to threats. Aircrews need realistic training in airspace that would allow them to fly fast and low. Two airspace features are needed to allow for repetitive and realistic aircrew training:
 - A consistent low-altitude floor across the six airspace MOAs, and
 - A consistent supersonic floor. The consistent supersonic floor would allow aircrews to replicate realistic escapes and focus on training proficiencies. Consistent low-altitude floors permit aircrews to focus on the maneuvers required to complete a mission and avoid a threat.

Proposed Alternatives



- No Action Alternative
 - $_{\circ}$ NEPA requires that the analysis in the EIS must include a "No Action Alternative."
 - Represents the baseline for the analysis, against which decision makers can compare the magnitude of potential environmental effects resulting from the action alternatives.
 - There would be no changes to existing airspace under the No Action Alternative.

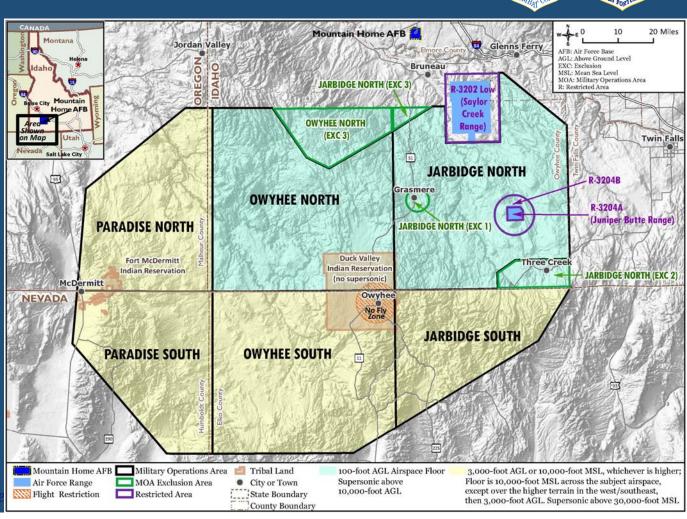
Proposed Action would be combination of five alternatives

- o Three alternatives for low-altitude training:
 - Alternative 1 100 Feet AGL Low-Altitude Non-Supersonic Floor
 - Alternative 2 300 Feet AGL Low-Altitude Non-Supersonic Floor
 - Alternative 3 500 Feet AGL Low-Altitude Non-Supersonic Floor
- Two alternatives with supersonic floors of 5,000 or 10,000 feet AGL
 - Alternative A 5,000 Feet AGL Supersonic Floor
 - Alternative B 10,000 Feet AGL Supersonic Floor

No Action Alternative



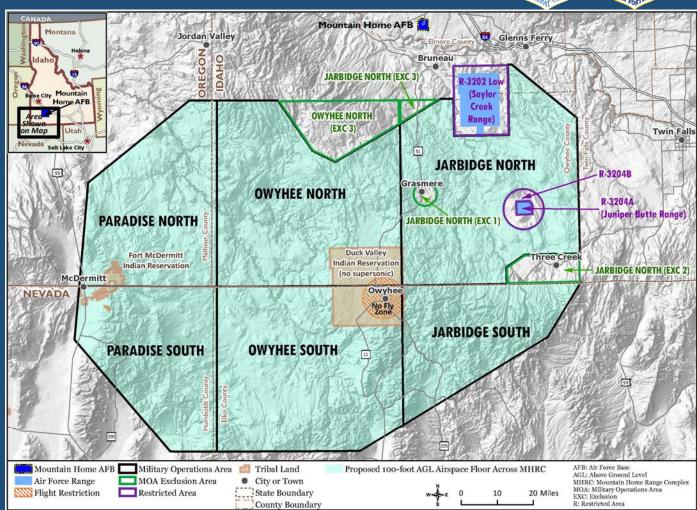
- Operational floors would remain at 100 feet AGL in the Owyhee North and Jarbidge North MOAs and 10,000 feet MSL or 3,000 feet AGL (whichever is higher) in the Paradise North, Paradise South, Owyhee South, and Jarbidge South MOAs.
- Supersonic flights would continue to occur in the Owyhee North and Jarbidge North MOAs or Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspaces above 10,000 feet AGL and would remain at or above 30,000 feet MSL over the other four MOAs.
- No supersonic flights would occur over the Duck Valley Indian Reservation.



Alternative 1 – 100 Feet AGL Low Altitude



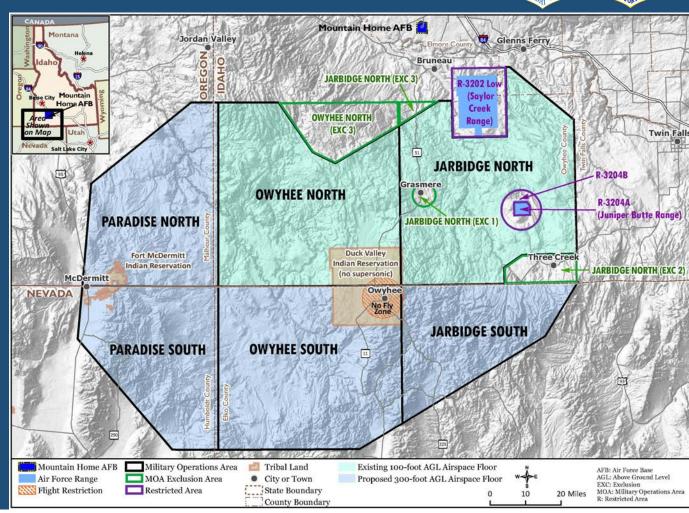
- Operational floors of Paradise North, Paradise South, Owyhee South, and Jarbidge South MOAs, would change to 100 feet AGL from 10,000 feet MSL or 3,000 feet AGL, whichever is higher.
- ➤ The lower operational floors may also result in the capability to conduct more large-scale exercises. To account for this in the analysis, other users' activities in the Special Use Airspace are projected to increase by 5 percent over the baseline.



Alternative 2 – 300 Feet AGL Low Altitude



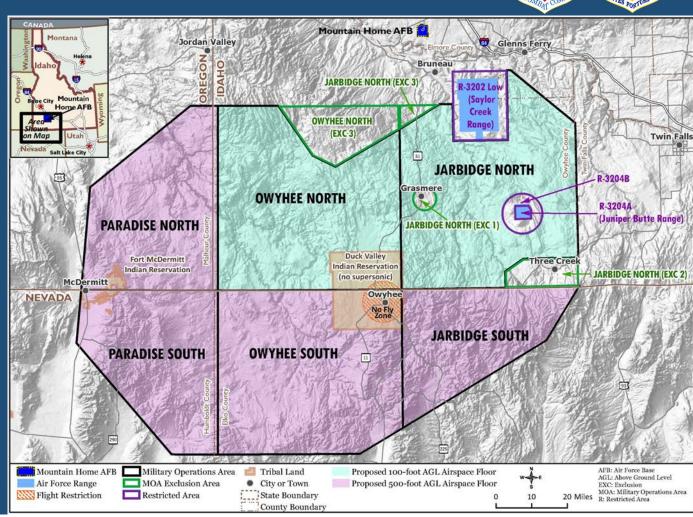
- ➤ Operational floors of Paradise North, Paradise South, Owyhee South, and Jarbidge South MOAs, would change to 300 feet AGL from 10,000 feet MSL or 3,000 feet AGL, whichever is higher.
- ➤ Owyhee North and Jarbidge North MOAs would maintain a 100-foot AGL operational floor for conducting low-altitude training.
- The lower operational floors may also result in the capability to conduct more large-scale exercises. To account for this in the analysis, other users' activities in the Special Use Airspace are projected to increase by 5 percent over the baseline.



Alternative 3 - 500 Feet AGL Low Altitude



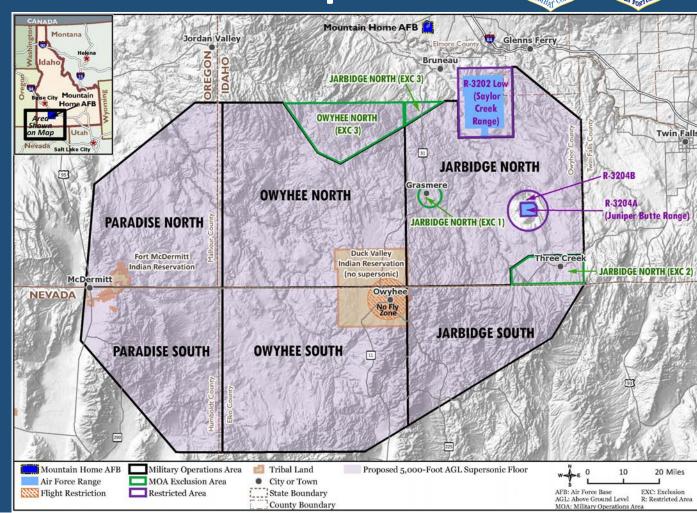
- ➤ Operational floors of Paradise North, Paradise South, Owyhee South, and Jarbidge South MOAs, would change to 500 feet AGL from 10,000 feet MSL or 3,000 feet AGL, whichever is higher.
- ➤ Owyhee North and Jarbidge North MOAs would maintain a 100-foot AGL operational floor for conducting low-altitude training.
- The lower operational floors may also result in the capability to conduct more large-scale exercises. To account for this in the analysis, other users' activities in the Special Use Airspace are projected to increase by 5 percent over the baseline.



Alternative A – 5,000 Feet AGL Supersonic



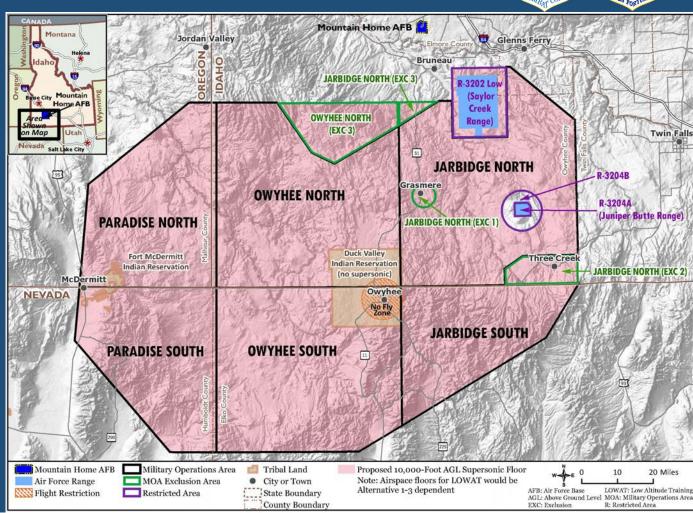
- ➤ In the Paradise North, Paradise South, Owyhee South, and Jarbidge South MOAs, the existing supersonic floor of 30,000 feet MSL would change to 5,000 feet AGL.
- ➤ In the Owyhee North and Jarbidge North MOAs (including R-3202 and R-3204), the existing supersonic floor of 10,000 feet AGL would become 5,000 feet AGL.
- Supersonic operations would continue to be prohibited over the Duck Valley Indian Reservation.



Alternative B – 10,000 Feet AGL Supersonic



- ➤ In the Paradise North, Paradise South, Owyhee South, and Jarbidge South MOAs, the existing supersonic floor of 30,000 feet MSL would change to 10,000 feet AGL.
- In the Owyhee North and Jarbidge North MOAs (including R-3202 and R-3204), the existing supersonic floor of 10,000 feet AGL would remain as it is currently.
- Supersonic operations would continue to be prohibited over the Duck Valley Indian Reservation.



Environmental Resources Analyzed



- Airspace Operations and Management
- Acoustic Environment (Noise)
- Land Use and Management (includes Wilderness)
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Health and Safety
- Aesthetics and Visual Resources
- Air Quality

- Socioeconomics
- Environmental Justice
- Resources not carried forward for detailed analysis:
 - Infrastructure
 - Department of Transportation Section 4(f)
 - o Farmlands
 - Hazardous Materials and Waste
 - o Water Resources, Floodplains and Wetlands
 - Coastal Zone and Coastal Resources
 - Soils and Geology
 - Natural Resource Consumption and Energy Supply



- Airspace Operations and Management
 - Alternatives 1 through 3 and Alternatives A and B would have no adverse impacts on the low-density airport and airspace uses by civil aviation in this region.
- Acoustic Environment (Noise)
 - o For Alternatives 1 through 3, people residing within the area of interest (less than 1 person per square mile on average) would experience noise levels compatible with residential land uses in accordance with Department of Defense and FAA guidelines. Potential impacts would be limited to an increased likelihood of annoyance due to more frequent low-altitude and/or sudden onset overflight noise.
 - Under Alternative 1, subsonic noise levels would increase by as much as 13.5 decibels (dB) onset adjusted day-night level (L_{dnmr}) (12.5 dB day-night level [DNL]), for an end state as high as 61.5 dB L_{dnmr} (60.5 dB DNL). In the MOAs where floors would be lowered, less than 7 hours per year of training time would occur between 100 and 300 feet AGL. This usage pattern would be consistent with the small fraction of total training time in the same altitude band in Mountain Home Range Complex MOAs that already have 100-foot AGL floors (i.e., Jarbidge North, Owyhee North). The highest expected maximum sound level (L_{max}) would increase to 139 dB L_{max}, matching levels currently experienced beneath Jarbidge North, Owyhee North, and Military Training Routes. Direct overflight at the lowest altitude would be experienced infrequently, with aircraft at any given point on the ground for less than 1 second per year on average.



- Acoustic Environment (Noise) continued
 - Alternative 2 subsonic noise levels would increase by as much as 12.5 dB L_{dnmr} (12 dB DNL), for an end state as high as 60.5 dB L_{dnmr} (60 dB DNL). In the MOAs where floors would be lowered, less than 18 hours per year of training time would occur between 300 and 500 feet AGL. The highest expected L_{max} would increase to 129 dB L_{max}, slightly less than levels currently experienced beneath Jarbidge North, Owyhee North, and Military Training Routes. This highest noise level would be experienced infrequently, with aircraft overhead at any given point on the ground for less than 2 seconds per year on average.
 - Under Alternative 3, subsonic noise levels would increase by as much as 12 dB L_{dnmr} (11.5 dB DNL), for an end state as high as 60 dB L_{dnmr} (60 dB DNL). In any of those MOAs with lowered floors, no more than 183.1 hours per year of training time would occur between 500 and 1,000 feet AGL. The highest expected L_{max} would increase to 124 dB L_{max} , slightly less than levels currently beneath Jarbidge North, Owyhee North, and Military Training Routes. This highest noise level would be experienced infrequently, with aircraft overhead at any given point on the ground for less than 2 minutes per year on average.



- Acoustic Environment (Noise) Alternatives A & B
 - ONL (CDNL) to as high as 53 dB CDNL beneath certain MOAs while remaining the same in other MOAs. The intensity of sonic booms generated by F-15E straight and level flight at Mach 1.2 at 5,000 feet AGL would be 7.7 pounds per square foot (psf) whereas the boom created by the same maneuver at 10,000 feet AGL would be 4.4 psf and at 25,000 feet AGL would be 1.9 psf.
 - Alternative B: Supersonic noise levels would increase by as much as 3 dB CDNL to as high as 50 dB CDNL beneath Paradise North and Owyhee South. CDNL beneath Paradise South and Jarbidge South would remain the same, while CDNL beneath Owyhee North and Jarbidge North would decrease slightly as a result of expected shifts in training to other Special Use Airspace. The intensity of sonic booms generated by F-15E straight and level flight at Mach 1.2 at 10,000 feet AGL would be 4.4 psf.



- Land Use and Management (includes Wilderness)
 - Under Alternative 1 through 3 there would be impacts to land use where the subsonic floor would be lowered, with the scope of impact relative to the floor altitude (i.e., the lower the floor, the higher degree of impact). Remote settlements and isolated homesteads would incur moderate-to-high impacts from increases in time-averaged noise levels ranging from 7.0 to 13.5 dB L_{dnmr} (7 to 12.5 dB DNL) and low-level overflights (although there will be a low number of occurrences at any given location).
 - There would be moderate impacts from increase noise levels to Wild and Scenic Rivers and Nationwide Rivers Inventory rivers under Jarbidge South, Owyhee South, Paradise North, and Paradise South MOAs with Alternative 3 providing the least impact.
 - There would be moderate impacts on recreational experiences in Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas,
 and Wild and Scenic Rivers from changes in noise and low-level overflights.
 - There would be moderate-to-substantial impacts from noise and overflights on dispersed recreation (e.g., hiking, hunting, fishing) outside of specially managed areas and moderate impacts to recreational sites (campgrounds, parks) and Recreation Management Areas, where visitation is higher and concentrated.
 - There would be potentially substantial impacts from startling low-level overflights on precision sports that require a high degree of concentration. Overall, impacts on recreation would be moderate to substantial.





- Land Use and Management (includes Wilderness) Alternatives A & B
 - Land Use: Under both alternatives the overall noise, exposure of 47 dB CDNL and higher would be compatible with ranching, cattle grazing, mining, agriculture, and other uses.
 - o There would be a low probability of disruption to field workers' tasks from the startle effect associated with sonic booms.
 - Wilderness: Operations under these alternatives would affect solitude or recreation. The impact of sonic booms on recreational resources and visitors using these resources (such as special recreation areas, parks, reservoirs, hiking and camping areas) is low to moderate. The impact on recreational values in wilderness areas is moderate.



Biological Resources

- For Alternatives 1 through 3, animals beneath the lowered airspace would be expected to be temporarily more sensitive to aircraft noise due to lower previous exposure.
- Although individual animals may be affected by aircraft noise, there would not be any population- or community-level impacts. Moderate impacts to individual animals may occur in the form of startle responses or mild physiological effects, but such impacts would be of a short duration and animals typically exhibit continually decreasing responses to noise exposure. Federally listed species within the area of interest are not likely to be adversely affected.
- Seasonal flight restrictions would reduce potential noise impacts to some special status species, such as the greater sage-grouse and bighorn sheep, under portions of some of the MOAs.
- Occasional bird aircraft strikes may occur but would be minimized by measures described in the Bird/Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) Plan.
- There is no evidence of chaff and flare residual materials or chaff fibers affecting wildlife or domestic animals through ingestion, inhalation, or direct body contact. The potential for fire as a result of Air Force activity is minimal and is not considered a significant risk to wildlife habitat. There would be no habitat impacts under these alternatives
- The Air Force is in consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



- Biological Resources Alternative A and B
 - Overall, although individual animals may be affected by noise and sonic booms associated with supersonic flight, there would not be any population- or community-level impacts. Federally listed species within the area of interest would not likely be adversely affected; thus, these alternatives would not result in significant impacts to biological resources.



Cultural Resources

- o Under all alternatives there would be no adverse effects to archaeological or architectural resources.
- The Air Force is currently in consultation with Tribal Communities to assess potential impacts to traditional cultural properties. No traditional cultural properties or sacred sites have been identified to date.
- Current overflight restrictions over the Duck Valley Indian Reservation and sensitive cultural sites in Idaho would continue.
- Consultation with federally recognized tribes and State Historic Preservation Officers in Idaho, Nevada, and Oregon are underway.

Health and Safety

- Under Alternatives 1 through 3 there would be the potential for an increase in BASH incidents, due to the slight increase in flight activity below 1,000 feet AGL. Also a slight increase in overall flight activity for Alternatives 1 through 3 and Alternatives A and B may result in a potential increase in aircraft mishaps.
- The use of chaff and flares would continue under current restrictions and procedures, and no significant impacts would occur.
- The Air Force would continue to provide for the safe joint use of this airspace.



- Aesthetics and Visual Resources
 - Impacts on visual resources for all alternatives would be minor in most areas, with potential indirect impacts to naturalness and solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation qualities in Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, and Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Air Quality

 Under all alternatives, there would be a minor increase in criteria pollutant emissions from operations below 3,000 feet AGL and in greenhouse gases.
 These increases would not exceed the Prevention of Significant Deterioration permitting threshold of 250 tons per year. There would be no adverse impacts to air quality under any of the alternatives.



Socioeconomics

o There would be minimal adverse economic impacts based on the potential impacts to airspace management, the acoustic environment (noise), and land use under Alternatives 1 through 3 and Alternatives A and B.

Environmental Justice

- Under each alternative, aircraft noise would not exceed 65 dB L_{dnmr} or 62 dB CDNL beneath the MOAs that make up Mountain Home Range Complex but would result in increases in noise to residential areas located under the affected area of concern where low overflights would occur.
- There would be potential for disproportionately high and adverse impacts to minority and low-income populations in Humboldt County, Nevada, including portions of the Fort McDermitt Indian Reservation, due to noise under the alternatives. Continued communication and coordination between the Air Force and the tribes during the EIS process would minimize potential adverse impacts.
- o McDermitt Elementary, Junior High, and High School, located in Humboldt County, could be impacted by infrequent low-level overflights, which may temporarily disrupt learning. The disruption of speech in a classroom is a primary concern due to adverse effects on children's learning ability and may pose a disproportionate health and safety risk to children. Mitigation such as an avoidance distance, which would minimize this potential impact, may be considered in the Final EIS and ROD.

Mountain Home AFB Airspace Optimization EIS Anticipated Milestone Schedule





Break



- We will now take a 10-minute break.
- > After the break, verbal comments will be heard.
- If you wish to speak, please fill out a white speaker card. If you did not get one of these and want to speak, please raise your hand, and one of the staff will give you a speaker form.

Public Hearing Comment Procedures



- > Individuals who have registered to speak will be called in the order in which they registered, with elected officials given the opportunity to speak first.
- When called on to speak, please clearly state and spell your first and last name and identify any group or agency you are representing.
- Please limit comments to the allotted time you will be notified when you have 30 seconds remaining and at the end of your allotted time.
- All verbal comments and testimony will be heard and will be recorded, transcribed, and included in the Final EIS.
 - o Your name will be included along with your comments. Personal home addresses and phone numbers will not be published in the Final EIS, in accordance with Privacy Act provisions.

Public Hearing Comment Procedures

(continued)

- Once all registered speakers have had an opportunity to speak, and if there is time remaining:
 - Anyone who has not spoken will have an opportunity to do so.
 - Anyone who has spoken may have the opportunity to speak again.
- Once we have reached the end of the scheduled meeting time and there are no more speakers who wish to make a verbal comment, the hearing will be adjourned.
- If you do not wish to speak, or would like to add to your comment later, you can submit your comments by one of the other methods.

Commenting on the Draft EIS



- > Ways to submit comments:
 - Provide verbal comments during this hearing, which will be recorded by a court reporter.
 - Submit written comments via the project website at https//www.mountainhomeafbairspaceeis.com.
 - o Mail written comments to: Mountain Home AFB Airspace Optimization EIS

c/o Leidos

2109 Air Park Road SE #200

Albuquerque, NM 87106

- ➤ To be considered in the Final EIS, all substantive comments should be received online or postmarked by no later than August 23, 2021.
- All substantive comments received, regardless of format, will be given full and equal consideration and will become part of the official administrative record.

Thank You



- Thank you for your participation in tonight's hearing and in the Air Force's NEPA Process.
- ➤ This project and your input are important to the Air Force.
- ➤ The slides/presentation used during the Draft EIS Public Hearings are on the project webpage: https://www.mountainhomeafbairspaceeis.com.
- > The Air Force invites you to visit and submit comments at: https://www.mountainhomeafbairspaceeis.com.
- > This hearing is adjourned.