Cannon AFB Low Altitude Training Draft Environmental Assessment Update Brief

Col. Larry Munz
Vice Commander
27th Special Operations Wing
Overview

- Purpose and Need
- Special Operations Aircraft
- The NEPA Process
- Alternatives Considered
- Low Level Training Area Description
- No Action Alternative
- Public Comment Methods
- Summary of Comments
- Summary
The purpose of the Proposed Action is to establish an adequate training area for 27 SOW aircrews that meets special operations low altitude training requirements.

27 SOW requires training space that enables them to train as they are expected to fly and to prepare for worldwide deployment.

Training space must...

- be an adequately-sized area
- overlay appropriate types of terrain
- generally lack large population centers
- be reasonably close to Cannon AFB
- be capable of efficiently supporting effective, challenging, realistic training for C-130 and CV-22 low-level missions

Large Geographic Area = Less Concentrated Impact
Special Operations aircrews must...

- avoid detection – we deliberately avoid populated areas
- be able to fly at low altitudes in mountainous terrain
  - train to the performance characteristics of the aircraft
  - understand aircraft limitations
- train to develop complex crew coordination procedures
- Special Operations missions require intensive pre-mission planning
  - avoid threats and detection
  - consider the performance of the aircraft in challenging terrain
MC-130J Combat Shadow II
The NEPA Process is working

- Public scoping meetings in October 2010
  - *This feedback has already significantly influenced the proposal*
- Public comment period September 7 to November 5, 2011
- Public and agency comments will influence the final decision
- Final decision will be made at the command level of Headquarters AFSOC
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Requires opportunities for public input
- Requires federal agencies to analyze potential environmental consequences of the Proposed Action and alternatives prior to decision making.
- NEPA’s goal is to make better, more informed decisions
Alternatives Considered

- The original proposed action released September 2010
- The original alternative released September 2010
- Utilization of existing local low altitude training areas
- *Current proposed action – revised training area map*
- New and expanded MOAs and MTRs
- Use of existing test and training areas
- Increased use of simulators
- Relocation of 27 SOW aircraft to other locations
- *No action alternative*

Public input helped define these alternatives and shaped the revised proposed action
Proposed Action: Low Altitude Training Area

The Proposed Action…

- would meet the purpose and need of the low altitude training area.

- identifies a low altitude training area in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado.

- would include mountainous terrain for realistic training and enough overall area so training replicates actual missions.

- There would be a maximum of three training missions per night from Cannon AFB. No location would be overflown more than once per night.
Low Altitude Training Area

- 60,700 square mile area
- Minimum altitude of 300 feet AGL
  - About 10% of flying time would be spent at 300-500 feet AGL
  - 40% at 500-999 feet AGL
  - 50% at 1,000-3,000 feet AGL
- Maximum three flights per night
- Maximum 688 flights annually
- Most would occur Monday through Friday after dark
- No location overflown more than once per night
- Aircraft must follow FAA regulations at all times
No Action Alternative

- The No Action Alternative consists of 27 SOW training using existing Military Training Routes (MTRs) and Military Operations Areas (MOAs) and restricted areas.

- This existing airspace and its use is described in the 2007 Air Force Special Operations Command Assets Beddown at Cannon Air Force Base New Mexico Environmental Impact Statement.

- 27 SOW aircrews would continue to conduct low altitude training in accordance with Air Force and FAA rules.

Small Geographic Area = More Concentrated Impact
Forum Locations
Community Forum Format

6:00   Doors Open, Informal Q&A
6:15   Introduction and Ground Rules
6:20   27 SOW Briefing
6:35   Break for Q&A Session
7:05   Formal Public Comment Session
9:00   Wrap-up
Public Comment Period – September 7 to November 5

To submit a comment…

- Complete a comment card tonight
- Email the 27 SOW at 27SOW.PA.NEPA@cannon.af.mil
- Send comments via mail or fax to:

  27 SOW Public Affairs
  110 E. Sextant Ave., Suite 1150
  Cannon AFB N.M., 88103
  Phone: 575-784-4131
  Fax: 575-784-7412

PLEASE NOTE: Please include your name and address with your comments. This info will be compiled in a mailing list for distributing future information regarding this EA. Names and addresses will not be published in the EA. However, by including this info, it will become part of the EA public record.
## Forum Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Start Time</th>
<th>End Time</th>
<th>Number of Attendees</th>
<th>Number of Public Speakers</th>
<th>Written Comments Received</th>
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Comments Received Summary

- Around 1,500 individual comments sent directly to 27 SOW
  - Mail/Fax/Email
- Community Forums
  - Around 300 comments received – spoken/written
- 50+ Agency Comments
  - Cities/Counties
  - Federal/State/Local Agencies
  - Special Interest Groups
- Tribal Comments
Comments submitted during the 2011 public comment period will be considered to evaluate the validity of analysis and need for supplemental analysis.

The Final EA will be a collaborative effort – public comments, along with consultations with State Historic Preservation Officers, Tribal Governments and Federal Agencies, will be used in the next few weeks to help create Final EA.

Final EA could result in:
- FONSI – proceed with proposed action
- No Action Alternative – use existing MTRs and MOAs
- Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement

The 27 SOW welcomes public, government, agency and tribal feedback