

NEVADA TEST AND TRAINING RANGE



LAND WITHDRAWAL PROCESS AND LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

National Environmental Policy Act

What is the National Environmental Policy Act?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is our national charter for making informed decisions while considering environmental impacts. NEPA requires all federal agencies making a proposal that may significantly impact the environment to consider:

- ▶ A range of reasonable alternatives.
- ▶ Potential environmental or human health consequences.
- ▶ Public and government agency input.

What is a Legislative Environmental Impact Statement?

A Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) is different from a typical EIS in that there is no Record of Decision. The decision on the final action will be made by Congress and written into law. The LEIS is required under NEPA and must:

- ▶ Identify and describe the affected environment.
- ▶ Evaluate the potential environmental consequences from a range of reasonable alternatives.
- ▶ Identify environmental permits and specific mitigation measures to prevent or minimize environmental impacts, if required.

An LEIS is the detailed statement required by law to be included in a recommendation or report on a legislative proposal to Congress. It shall be considered part of the formal transmittal of a legislative proposal to Congress.



What is a Public Hearing?

NEPA and Air Force regulations require the opportunity for tribal, government, agency, and public participation throughout the environmental impact analysis process.

Public hearings are one of the most important time frames in the LEIS process. During public hearings, the Air Force is actively listening to Federal, state and local agencies, federally recognized tribes, and the public regarding their comments about the information provided in the LEIS. The public hearing phase provides opportunities to learn and comment on the project and provides the Air Force with the opportunity to identify issues of interest or concern to frame the environmental analysis and more effectively shape the range of alternatives to be considered that might not have been identified earlier in the LEIS process.

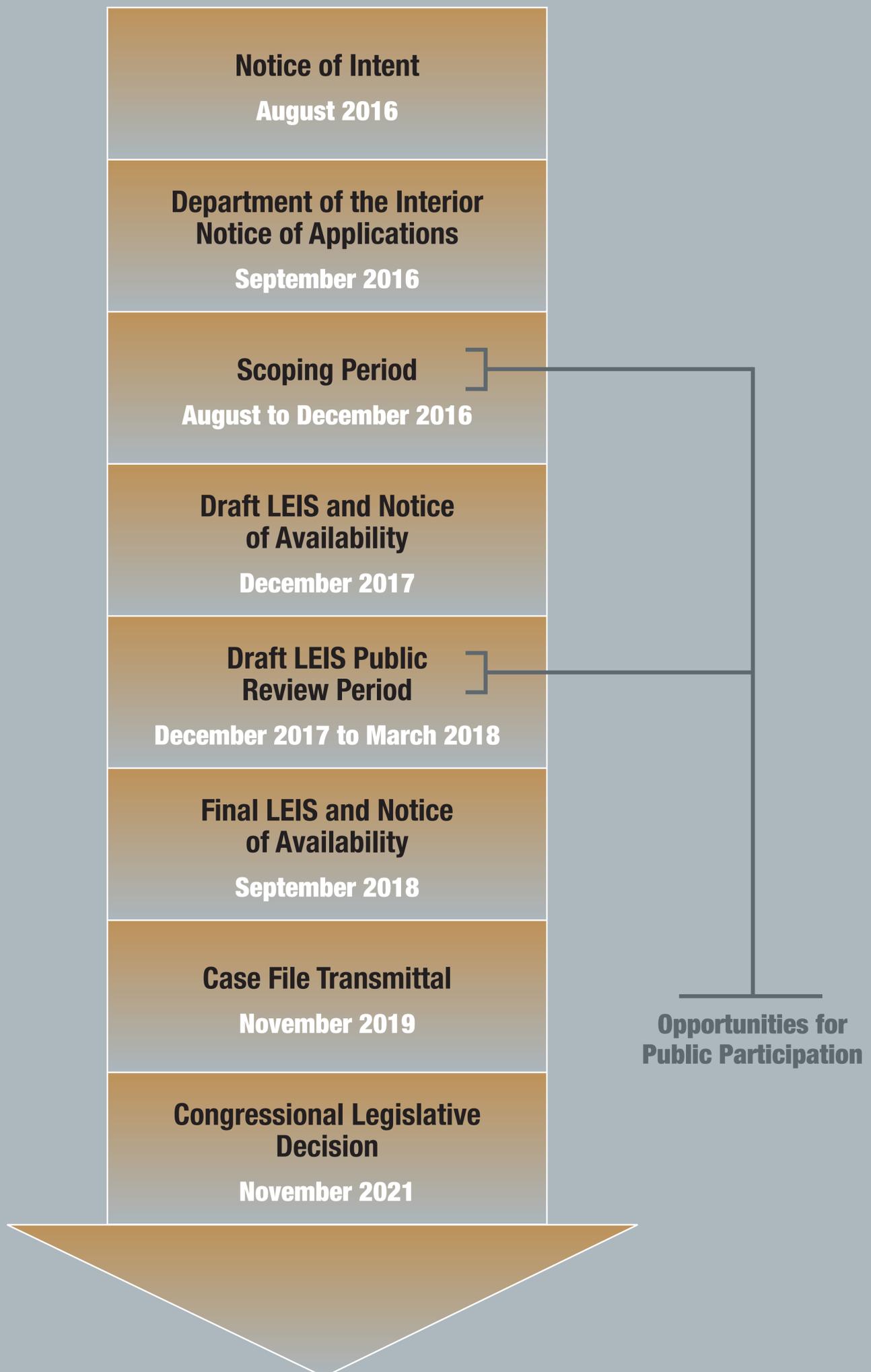
What is the Land Withdrawal Process?

- ▶ The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for the land withdrawal applications and will prepare a case file for the Department of the Interior to submit to Congress.
- ▶ The rules and procedures implementing the Department of the Interior's authority to process federal land withdrawal applications are found in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.
- ▶ The initial land withdrawal process includes pre-application consultations; application development and submittal as well as publication within the federal register; and preparation of a case file, to include an LEIS and recommendations. The case file will be based on input provided by the Air Force, including the LEIS.
- ▶ These meetings are also being held to help inform the Bureau of Land Management about the public's concerns regarding the Air Force's Land Withdrawal applications.





What is the Anticipated Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) Timeline?



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Proposed Alternatives 1 & 2

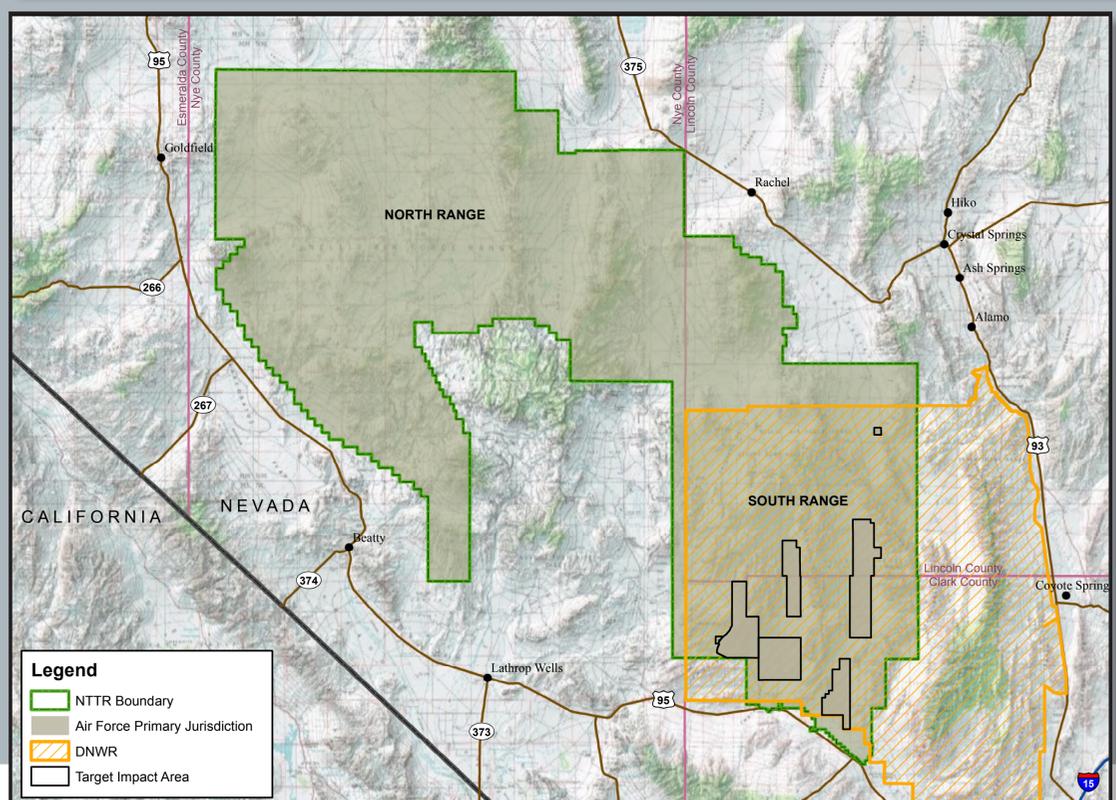
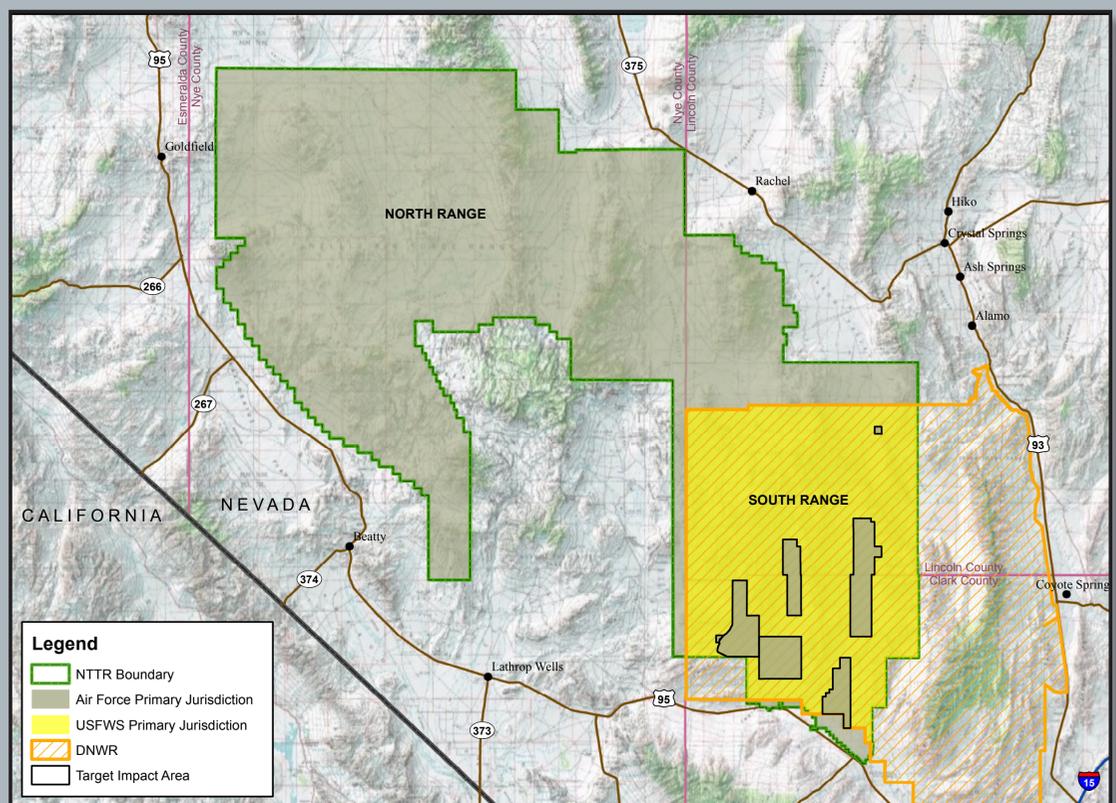
Proposed Alternative #1: Extend Existing Land Withdrawal and Management of the Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR), North and South Range

- ▶ No changes to current NTTR land boundary.
- ▶ North Range would support the majority of Major Combat Training Operations.
- ▶ Administrative management of the NTTR would continue with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service having primary jurisdiction in NTTR's South Range, except for areas below the 4,000 foot elevation which includes five target impact areas (approximately 112,000 acres).
- ▶ The area proposed for Wilderness located in the South Range would continue to be managed as Wilderness.
- ▶ Continue to provide “ready access” to North Range; access to the South Range would be limited to those areas less than 4,000 foot elevation and impact areas.
- ▶ Alternative would not fully meet the purpose and need.

Proposed Alternative 1

Proposed Alternative #2: Extend Existing Land Withdrawal and Provide Ready Access in the North and South Ranges

- ▶ No changes to current NTTR land boundary.
- ▶ Provide “ready access” for conducting military operations in the NTTR South Range.
 - This may involve management changes to areas proposed for Wilderness status, primary jurisdiction for who manages the lands, or development of future agreements or specific legislative provisions for military use.



Proposed Alternative 2

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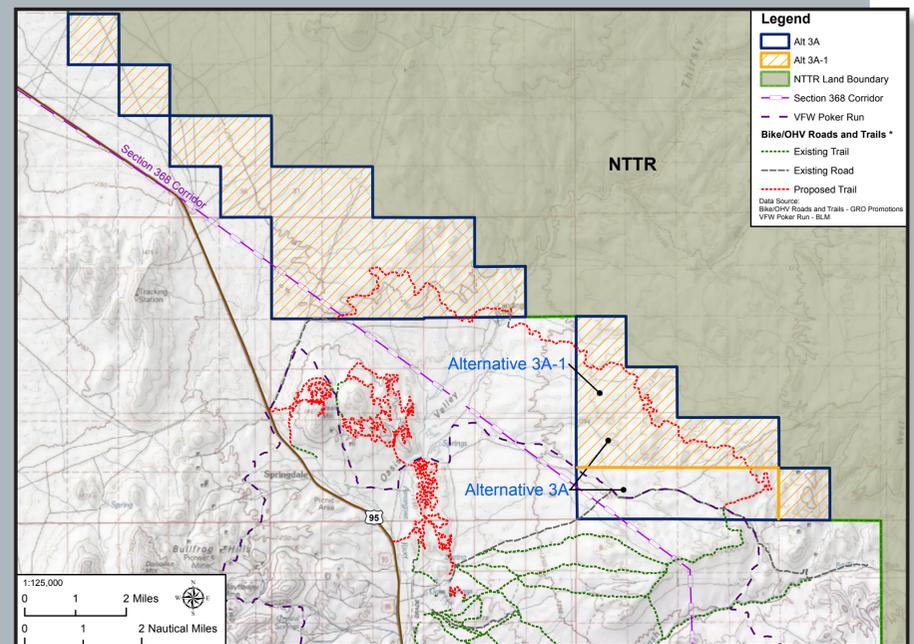
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Proposed Alternative #3 Expand Withdrawal of Public Lands for the NTTR

This proposed alternative includes the current NTTR boundary, plus various options for additional lands needed for operational requirements.

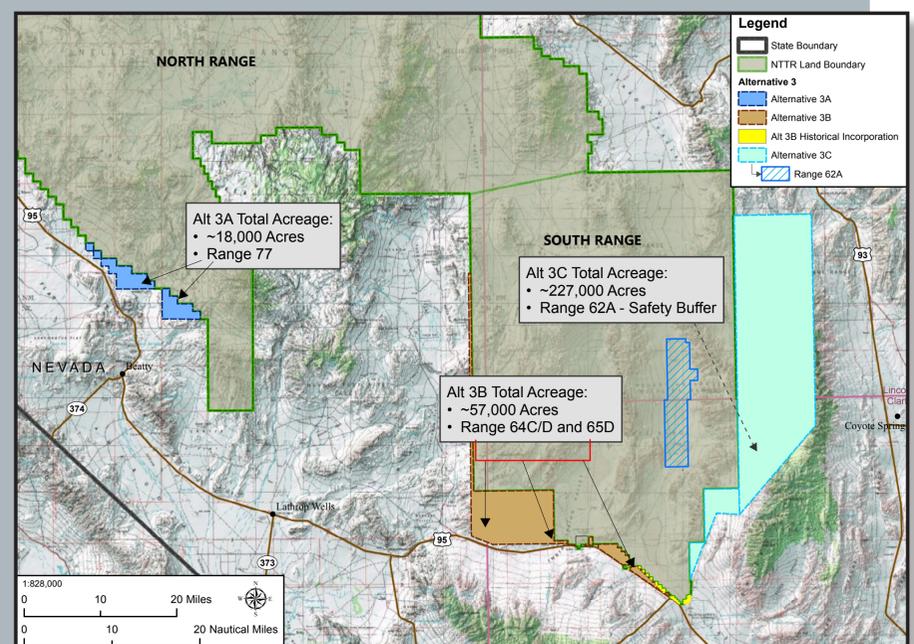
Four proposed sub-alternatives that include ready access:

- ▶ **Proposed Alternative 3A:
Range 77 – Electronic Combat (EC) South Withdrawal**
 - EC South area would be redesignated as “Range 77.”
 - Expand the NTTR boundary by approximately 18,000 acres to add a buffer to the safety footprint of Range 77.
 - No construction disturbance (except for perimeter fencing installation), munitions use, or emitter use would occur in this proposed withdrawal area.
- ▶ **Proposed Alternative 3A-1:
Amended Range 77 – EC South Withdrawal**
 - As a result of the public input process, the Air Force added an additional subalternative to Alternative 3A. Alternative 3A-1 was created in response to concerns raised by potential impacts to recreational and economic resources. The Air Force considered this public input and sought an option that would allow them to adjust target areas so the proposed expansion area could be reduced.
 - Alternative 3A-1 is approximately 15,400 acres.
- ▶ **Proposed Alternative 3B:
Enhance Operational Security and Safety
64C/D and 65D Expansion**
 - Expand the withdrawal by approximately 57,000 acres along the southeastern NTTR border.
 - No munitions use or emitter use would occur in this proposed withdrawal area.
- ▶ **Proposed Alternative 3C: Alamos Withdrawal**
 - Expand the withdrawal by approximately 227,000 acres of Desert National Wildlife Range (DNWR) under the Alamos airspace.
 - Provides safety buffers associated with target areas in existing South Range (Range 62A); no new target impact areas are proposed; however, blank munitions use, emitter use, and some construction would occur.



Alternative 3A-1 Location and Acreage 2-25

Alternative 3A-1 = approximately 15,400 acres
(approximately 2,600 acres removed from Alternative 3A)



Proposed Alternatives 3A, 3B and 3C

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Proposed Alternative #4 Establish the Period of Withdrawal

This proposed alternative includes three sub-alternatives based on the length of the new withdrawal period.

The new withdrawal period is anticipated to begin upon the expiration of the existing withdrawal period scheduled to end on November 6, 2021, but is subject to a subsequent act of Congress.

The length of each sub-alternative is denoted in its name:

- ▶ Alternative 4A – 20-Year Withdrawal Period
- ▶ Alternative 4B – 50-Year Withdrawal Period
- ▶ Alternative 4C – Indefinite Withdrawal Period



No Action Alternative

The National Environmental Policy Act requires the alternatives analysis in an Environmental Impact Statement to include a No Action Alternative.

The No Action Alternative:

- ▶ Provides a baseline against which decision makers can compare the magnitude of potential environmental effects of the action alternatives.
- ▶ Congress would exercise its constitutional authority to not take action to extend the withdrawal legislation in time to support expiration in November 2021.
- ▶ If Congress does not extend the withdrawal, the military would discontinue use of the lands, clean up lands from military activities, and return lands to the Department of the Interior.



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Potential Environmental Impacts Summary

Alternative 1 Impacts would be similar to baseline conditions, such as:

Noise

- ▶ Operational tempo is anticipated to remain similar to previous levels. Noise levels would remain below 65 decibels and one to five sonic booms would be generated in a given airspace region per day, which at this time are not considered to result in significant adverse impacts.

Socioeconomics

- ▶ Expenditures would be expected to continue at typical levels (approximately \$5.5 billion in 2015) though they may change over time as new technologies, aircraft, and military strategies are introduced. Economic impacts would be expected to be similar to current conditions.

Land Use

- ▶ Land use, land status, and access would remain unchanged, and existing military activities would continue on the withdrawn lands.
- ▶ Overlapping withdrawals of the NTTR and DNWR lands would remain, and special use areas would continue to be managed under the appropriate land management plans.

Cultural

- ▶ No direct physical impacts to resources are anticipated. Indirect visual or auditory impacts can potentially occur from aircraft or other vehicular operations. With the implementation of avoidance areas around specific cultural resources and scheduling of mission activities around tribal events, no adverse effects to cultural resources would be anticipated.
- ▶ Sensitive cultural resources have the potential to be physically impacted by munitions use or other ground disturbing activities. Mission activities would continue to occur only in previously approved areas and any new or proposed activities would be subjected to the Air Force's Environmental Impact Analysis Process process and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act prior to implementation.
- ▶ No adverse effects to sensitive cultural resources within the context of the National Historic Preservation Act would be anticipated from aircraft operations, munitions use, or other ground disturbing activities.

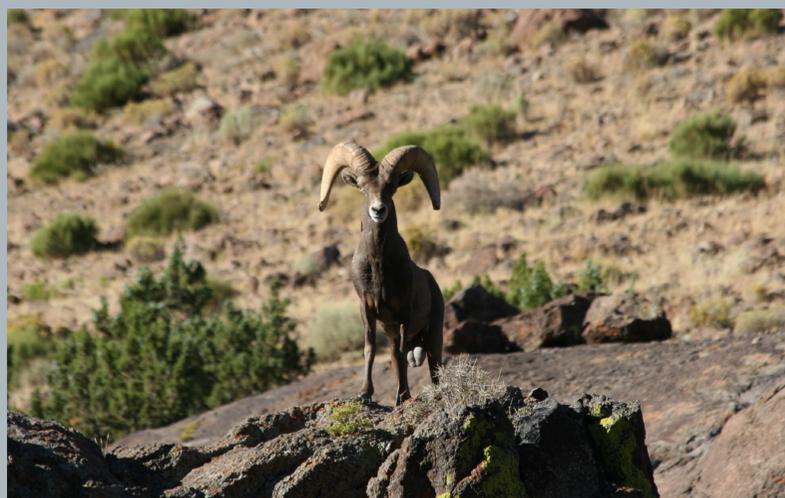


Biological

- ▶ Wildlife may be adversely impacted from noise associated with aircraft operations, munitions, and emitter operations. All activities potentially impacting protected species would be subject to Endangered Species Act requirements, and wildlife and natural resources would continue to be managed under current practices as required by the Sikes Act. No significant impacts are expected.

Wilderness

- ▶ No impacts to untrammeled, natural, and undeveloped qualities are anticipated.
- ▶ Solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation quality may continue to be adversely impacted from noise associated with aircraft operations, munitions use, and emitter operations. Impacts would be the same as current conditions.



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Potential Environmental Impacts Summary

Alternative 2 Impacts would be similar to Alternative 1 with the following exceptions:

Noise

- ▶ There would be minor noise impacts. Noise impacts are projected to increase by less than one decibel, and the number of sonic booms per day would be expected to increase by one sonic boom over Alternative 1. No significant impacts are anticipated.

Socioeconomics

- ▶ The economic increase associated with lodging and per diem for temporary military personnel associated with a 30 percent increase in aircraft operations under Alternative 2 is estimated to be \$67 million per year.

Land Use

- ▶ A legislative mechanism granting ready access to the DoD would be developed to update existing land use management. This may include no longer managing the areas proposed for Wilderness as wilderness in the South Range (see Wilderness section).
- ▶ Bighorn Sheep hunts would continue to be managed through NDOW.
- ▶ Ready access could introduce new threat emitter locations into areas previously unavailable in the South Range.
- ▶ Introduction of military training, in an otherwise untrammelled landscape could cause significant impacts to the visual characteristics in that area.

Cultural

- ▶ Auditory and visual effects from aircraft operations are similar to those described under Alternative 1, and no physical impacts to cultural resources are anticipated.
- ▶ Ready access for the South Range would result in increased potential for impacts to culturally sensitive resources as the Air Force expands military activities in these areas.
- ▶ The impacts to cultural resources from ground disturbance, emitter operations, and munitions use would be the same as discussed under Alternative 1 and culturally sensitive areas would be avoided to the extent practicable.



Biological

- ▶ Air operations would increase; however, impacts to biological resources (e.g., wildlife) from noise and aircraft strikes are not expected to appreciably increase over Alternative 1.
- ▶ Increased potential for direct impacts to biological resources could occur from an associated increase in use of existing target areas; construction and maintenance of new facilities, targets, or roads; placement of threat emitters; and increased ground training (including access by vehicles and personnel).
- ▶ Biological impacts resulting from ground disturbance would be localized and occur in only a small portion (approximately 11.5 acres) of the NTTR.

Wilderness

- ▶ Ready access may potentially reduce the land area managed as Wilderness within the DNWR by 590,000 acres (42 percent). Based on the amount of land remaining that possess Wilderness qualities in the region that would still be managed as Wilderness, Alternative 2 would not significantly reduce the opportunity to experience Wilderness.
- ▶ Solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation of surrounding areas with Wilderness characteristics may be adversely impacted from noise associated with increased aircraft operations, munitions use, and emitter operations. Increased air operations do not substantially increase noise levels, therefore impacts are not expected to appreciably increase over Alternative 1.





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Potential Environmental Impacts Summary

Alternative 3 Alternative 3 sub-alternatives must be selected in addition to Alternative 2. The following impacts are anticipated in addition to those described under Alternative 2.

	Land Use
Alternative 3A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land use impacts would result from limited access, which would affect one active mining claim and eliminate existing recreational uses within the area. Hunting would be allowed, but not during incompatible military activities. Impacts to the Bullfrog HMA are not expected but since fencing locations are not known at this time, the Air Force will need to perform site-specific NEPA analysis where fencing might overlap the HMA. No changes to visual resource management designations would occur. Changes made to limit access, such as fencing, are consistent with existing management objectives and visual characteristics. The landscape changes would not introduce new light sources. Impacts to natural night skies would not increase over Alternative 1 conditions. 
Alternative 3A-1	<p>Impacts would be similar to Alternative 3A with the following exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amount of land area to be withdrawn would be reduced and there would be a corresponding reduction in the scope of impact to land use and recreation impacts as compared to Alternative 3A. Impacts to 4.2-miles of the Trails-OV Transvaal Flats Trail System (Windmill Road), 0.24 miles of the Ridgeline Trail, and about 4 miles of the road/trail system that is used for OHV activities would not be impacted. 
Alternative 3B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hunting would be allowed, but not during incompatible military activities. Fencing and the need to secure the area for military operations would result in reduced public access. No changes to visual resource management designations would occur, and use would be consistent with existing management objectives; however, minor changes to the visual landscape including threat emitters, fencing, and ground disturbance associated with these activities will create dispersed modification. Therefore, minor impacts to the visual qualities and the visual resources of the area are anticipated.  
Alternative 3C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land use impacts could potentially be significant. Existing land use within the affected Desert National Wildlife Range (DNWR) area would go from a wildlife management and recreation area to a military training area. Fencing and the need to secure the area for military operations would result in reduced public access. Access to these areas would be considered and granted on a case-by-case basis when feasible. Hunting would be allowed, but not during incompatible military activities. Any development and infrastructure improvements could introduce permanent or persistent light-emitting sources that contribute to light pollution in the region, and therefore adversely impact natural night skies. Impacts to natural night skies would be worse over areas where persistent and permanent light sources are concentrated.

Cultural	Biological
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No munitions use or emitter operations would occur in these proposed withdrawal areas. Ground disturbance would occur from installation of fencing. This withdrawal areas would fall under the management requirements of the Nellis AFB Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan and additional compliance with NEPA and the National Historic Preservation Act would be required if areas of potential disturbance are anticipated within unsurveyed or sensitive areas. Alternative 3A would result in a reduced potential for the unauthorized vandalism or looting of cultural resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts to biological resources (e.g., wildlife) from noise and munitions use on targets within pre-existing target impact areas on the NTTR would be less than significant. Fencing has the potential to impact biological resources by removing native vegetation or special status plant species, fragmenting wildlife habitat, creating barriers for wildlife movement, causing injury to large mammals that run into or get caught in the fence, damming or altering streams, or creating corridors for weed dispersion. The level of impacts to biological resources from fencing may be adverse but could be avoided or minimized depending on the biological resources affected and implementation of associated mitigation measures. Environmental review and planning would be required prior to any construction or ground clearing, should this be proposed at a future date, which would avoid or reduce impacts to biological resources to neutral or less than significant. All activities potentially impacting protected species would be subject to Endangered Species Act requirements, and wildlife and natural resources would continue to be managed under Air Force management policies and practices as required by the Sikes Act.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts would be the same as Alternative 3A. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts would be the same as Alternative 3A.  
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts similar to those discussed for Alternative 3A.  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts similar to those discussed for Alternative 3A.  
<p>Impacts would be similar to Alternatives 3A, 3A-1, and 3B with the following exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No ground disturbing munitions use would occur within this withdrawal area (blanks may be used). Ground disturbance associated with troop movements, emitter placement, runway construction and fencing installation would occur. This area would fall under the management requirements of the Nellis AFB Integrated Cultural Resource Management Plan, and culturally sensitive areas would be avoided to the extent practicable. 	<p>Impacts would be similar to Alternatives 3A with the following exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts to biological resources (e.g., wildlife) from noise and aircraft strikes would be less than significant since these impacts can either be avoided or minimized through proper planning, monitoring and maintenance. Military ground operations are proposed in this area. Impacts would likely be site-specific, represent a small portion of the area within the Alternative 3C area, and avoided or reduced through proper planning, monitoring and maintenance. Fencing along the approximate 60 mile boundary would have adverse impacts to biological resources. These impacts would be less than significant and would be minimized through siting procedures and fence design selection.

Socioeconomics	Wilderness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The withdrawal of the additional acreage may have a potential impact on the PILT for Nye County of approximately \$6,400 annually. The current recreational uses of the land would likely be eliminated or available to the public on a limited basis or through specific agreements. Certain recreational uses, particularly bike trails and off-road racing routes may be impacted depending on the routes, which vary between years. Withdrawal expansion may impact the use of BLM'S proposed Section 368 energy corridor; however, BLM is currently revising their corridor proposal which will be available in 2018. The BLM Razorback grazing allotment would be reduced by about \$128,000. Additional expenditures from the new training configurations potentially could offset some of the resulting economic losses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Wilderness Areas, areas proposed for Wilderness, or Wilderness Study Areas occur within these expansion areas. Therefore no impacts to wilderness qualities would occur under this expansion.  
<p>Impacts would be similar to Alternative 3A with the following exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a result in the reduction of land area that would be withdrawn (2,592 acres) under Alternative 3A-1, there would be an estimated reduction of approximately \$5,500 annually in PILT allocation to Nye County as compared to Alternative 3A. One of the new proposed bike trails being developed would be impacted by the proposed expansion under Alternative 3A-1. The Best in The Desert's race route would not be impacted as compared to Alternative 3A. Economic impacts to the BLM Razorback grazing allotment would be the same as under Alternative 3A. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts would be the same as Alternative 3A. 
<p>Impacts would be similar to Alternative 3A with the following exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The withdrawal of the additional acreage may have a potential impact on the PILT for Nye County of \$3,600 annually. There are approximately 26,000 acres of BLM lands that are included in Alternative 3B that could be used for hiking and recreational activities. Loss of this area would have an value of approximately \$228,000. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> About 33,000 acres (2 percent) of areas proposed for Wilderness within the DNWR would be impacted. The level of existing impacts to solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation would increase from increased operations. Ground disturbance activities associated with perimeter fencing would impact the undeveloped quality of remaining areas proposed for Wilderness outside the NTTR boundary. Impacts would not substantially increase over current conditions because portions of this area have already been shown to be disturbed.
<p>Impacts would be similar to Alternative 3A/3B with the following exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estimated adverse recreational-use economic impact would be approximately \$2 million.  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 227,000 acres (16 percent) of proposed Wilderness within the DNWR would be impacted by this expansion. Impacts to solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation in surrounding Wilderness Areas, proposed Wilderness, and Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) would result from increased levels of aircraft operations, munitions use, and emitter operations. Noise levels would increase, but not substantially over baseline conditions. Ground disturbance activities associated with perimeter fencing would adversely impact the undeveloped quality of remaining proposed Wilderness outside the NTTR boundary. The change in land management as part of the Alamo withdrawal would change the area from "undeveloped" to one with human development and interference.

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Potential Environmental Impacts Summary

Alternative 4 The proposed withdrawal periods associated with Alternative 4 must be implemented in conjunction with one or more of the other alternatives or sub-alternatives.

Because Alternative 4 reflects periods of time, which do not in and of themselves cause specific impacts, it is not anticipated that any of the sub-alternatives (4A, 4B, or 4C) would result in significant impacts.

Socioeconomics

- ▶ It is assumed that economic indicators would increase at the national average of 2.2 percent annually, which has been the national average based on the last 17 years.

Cultural

- ▶ The time frame selection could potentially extend the impacts of whichever alternatives are selected.

Wilderness

- ▶ Selection of Alternative 1 would not result in changes to the management of areas proposed for Wilderness in the South Range. The length of the withdrawal period may result in an improvement of Wilderness characteristics in areas proposed for Wilderness.
- ▶ Selection and implementation of Alternative 2, 3B, and/or 3C in combination with sub-alternative 4 would reduce the total area either managed as or considered suitable for Areas proposed for Wilderness in southern Nevada.



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Potential Environmental Impacts Summary

No Action Alternative The No Action Alternative would result in the removal of Air Force activities from the NTTR.

Noise

- ▶ Noise associated with military activities would continue since the airspace overlying the current NTTR would be utilized for DoD activities. It is anticipated that operational tempo would decrease and noise from military operations would decrease overall.
- ▶ Future industrial activities such as mining and cleanup activities requiring heavy machinery use could be associated with increased noise overall and in areas where the public may be more significantly impacted.
- ▶ Depending on public use in these areas, activities such as vehicle operation, firearms use, and other recreational activities may contribute to noise levels that could impact other users and surrounding communities.
- ▶ Noise impacts may occur under the No Action Alternative, but significance cannot be determined at this time.

Socioeconomics

- ▶ The initial reduction in economic impact would be an estimated \$500.8 million, which includes \$138 million in payroll, \$340 million in expenditures, and \$21 million in job loss.
- ▶ The removal of all facilities and buildings is estimated to cost \$213 million.
- ▶ The cost for full decontamination would be about \$2.5 billion and would delay opening some of the NTTR land to public use by up to 18 years.
- ▶ The replacement costs of facilities on the NTTR are estimated at \$122 million and \$1.1 billion at Creech AFB.

Land Use

- ▶ Military land use restrictions would expire and land uses such as mining, mineral leasing, or livestock grazing could potentially be reintroduced into previously restricted areas.
- ▶ There could be increased recreational use of the former NTTR lands, but due to past activities and land use constraints (i.e., contamination) certain areas may continue to be restricted to the public.
- ▶ Current land use management objectives of BLM lands on the perimeter or the vicinity of the NTTR would continue and no changes in the land status of these adjacent lands would be expected.

Cultural

- ▶ The potential for the public to interact with known cultural resources, traditional properties or cultural landscapes would increase.
- ▶ Protected tribal resources could potentially be unprotected and open to potential damage from looting or vandalism. Appropriate environmental documentation and safeguards would be the responsibility of the federal agency (either BLM or USFWS).

Biological

- ▶ DoD/Air Force natural resource management requirements would cease.
- ▶ Access to the DNWR would be under the jurisdiction of the USFWS and would continue to be managed to preserve big horn sheep and other wildlife.
- ▶ Access to all other lands would be under the jurisdiction of the BLM and may eventually be opened for land uses (such as mining, geothermal leasing, or livestock grazing) after new management planning under FLPMA and NEPA regulations are completed.

Wilderness

- ▶ The absence of military operations at NTTR would likely improve qualities within Wilderness Areas, areas proposed for Wilderness, and WSAs in the southern Nevada region.

