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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS AIR COMBAT COMMAND
LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, VIRGINIA

JUN 3 2008

The Honorable Jon Tester
United States Senator
Granite Tower
222 N 32nd St, Suite 101
Billings, MT 59101

Dear Senator Tester:

The United States Air Force (USAF) is in the process of preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to assess the potential environmental consequences of a proposal to expand and enhance the existing Powder River Complex (PRC) near Ellsworth Air Force Base (AFB) SD. The proposal would create the Powder River Training Complex (PRTC). The PRTC would more effectively use limited resources and finite flying hours by providing locally the realistic training needed by B-1 and B-52 aircrews flying from Ellsworth AFB SD and Minot AFB ND, respectively. This airspace proposal addresses the training and other limitations affecting the existing PRC training assets as they are currently configured.

The proposed action would restructure and reconfigure the existing Powder River Military Operations Areas (MOAs) and associated Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspaces (ATCAAs). The PRTC proposal would establish two air refueling routes, create additional low altitude MOA (500 feet Above Ground Level [AGL] up to, but not including, 18,000 feet above Mean Sea Level [MSL]) and high-altitude ATCAA (18,000-60,000 MSL) combinations in portions of South Dakota, North Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana. The proposal would support additional ground-based assets to simulate threats and an increase in aircraft training flights, permit the use of training chaff and flares, and authorize supersonic flight above 10,000 AGL. Three action alternatives and a no-action alternative have currently been identified for analysis and are discussed in the attached meeting brochure (Atch 1). All or portions of the following locations have the potential to be affected by the proposal's overhead training airspace due to one or more of the alternatives: **Montana**—Crow and Northern Cheyenne Reservations and the counties of Big Horn, Carter, Custer, Fallon, Powder River, Rosebud, Treasure, and Yellowstone; **North Dakota**—Standing Rock Reservation and Adams, Billings, Bowman, Golden Valley, Grant, Hettinger, Morton, Sioux, Slope, and Stark counties; **South Dakota**—Standing Rock and Cheyenne River Reservations, and Butte, Corson, Harding, Lawrence, Meade, Pennington, Perkins, Ziebach counties; and **Wyoming**: Campbell, Crook, Sheridan, and Weston counties.

The Air Force is committed to community outreach. Recognizing that open communication of issues is a critical element of the EIS process, the Air Force will host public meetings in communities underlying and/or adjacent to the proposed airspace (Atch 2). Community meetings are also being coordinated on each Native American Reservation. Meetings with public, agency, and Native American stakeholders during this scoping process will help identify the full range of reasonable alternatives, potential impacts, and key issues to be considered in the environmental impact analysis process.

Global Power For America

The scoping meetings will be in an open-house format, during which Air Force representatives will describe the proposed action and alternatives, explain the National Environmental Policy Act, outline opportunities for public involvement, and answer questions about the proposal. The public meetings will be held from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., and interested parties are welcome to come at any time information will be provided throughout the duration of the open house. The Air Force will publish notices of EIS preparation and upcoming public scoping meetings in local newspapers.

Public and agency comments received during the meetings, as well as written comments received by the Air Force during the scoping period and throughout the environmental process, will be considered in the preparation of the EIS. The Air Force will accept comments at any time during the environmental process; however, to ensure the Air Force has sufficient time to consider public input in the preparation of the Draft EIS, comments should be submitted to Ms. Linda DeVine, HQ ACC/A7PP, 129 Andrews Street, Rm 317, Langley AFB VA 23665-2769, by August 4, 2008.

If you any specific questions about this proposal, please contact Ms. Linda DeVine at (757) 764-9434 or via e-mail at acc.prtc@langley.af.mil. Thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



ROBERT J. STAIB
Colonel, USAF
Acting Director of Installations and Mission Support (A7)

Attachments:

1. Scoping Meeting Brochure
2. Flyer

The National Environmental Policy Act guides the PRTC EIS.

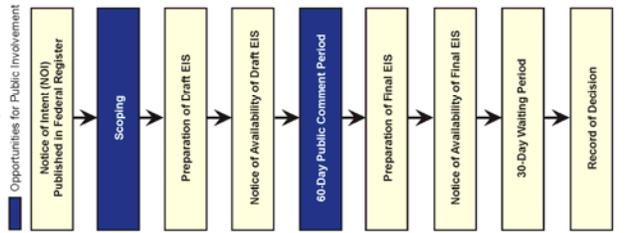
NEPA requires federal decision makers to consider potential environmental consequences of proposed actions and reasonable alternatives, including a No-Action Alternative in an EIS. The EIS complies with environmental regulations and documents potential impacts to the natural and human environment.

Resources initially identified for analysis in the EIS include (but are not limited to) the following:

- **Airspace Operations**
Airspace, Noise, Air Quality, and Safety (ground and air)
- **Natural Resources**
Physical and Biological Resources
- **Cultural Resources**
Cultural, Native American, Traditional, and Historic Resources
- **Human Resources**
Land Use, Quality of Life, Socioeconomics, and Environmental Justice



The EIS Process Timeline



Your input is essential to the environmental analysis process!

Providing Comments

To provide comments, please fill out a comment sheet. Please give your comments to an Air Force representative or place it in the comment box. Comment forms, or your own letter, may also be mailed to:

Ms. Linda DeVine
HQ ACCIA7PP
129 Andrews Street, Room 317
Langley AFB, VA 23665-2769

To ensure your comments are considered in the Draft EIS, please submit your comments before August 4, 2008.

Public comments on this Draft EIS are requested pursuant to the NEPA, 42 USC 4321, et seq. All written comments received during the comment period will be made available to the public and considered during EIS preparation. Your provision of private address information with your comment is voluntary. Your private address information will not be released in the EIS or for any other purpose, unless required by law. However, your private address information may be used to complete the mailing list for EIS distribution. Failure to provide such information will result in your name not being included on the distribution list.



Scoping Meetings for the Powder River Training Complex (PRTC) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Welcome!

The United States Air Force is conducting scoping meetings for the PRTC EIS. The Air Force is preparing an EIS to determine the potential environmental consequences of a proposal to expand the Powder River Complex to create the PRTC. The PRTC would allow for more effective use of limited resources and finite flying hours by providing, locally, the realistic training needed by B-1 and B-52 aircrews flying from Ellsworth and Minot AFBs. The options being analyzed could:

- 1 Restructure and reconfigure the existing PRC Military Operations Areas (MOAs) and associated Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspace (ATCAA) and add new MOA/ATCAA airspace with a floor of 500 feet above ground level (AGL).
- 2 Increase sortie-operations (aircraft training) in the new and modified training airspace.
- 3 Support additional ground-based simulated threat emitters under the MOAs.
- 4 Authorize use of training chaff and flares throughout the new and modified airspace.
- 5 Permit supersonic flight above 10,000 feet AGL.



Scoping meetings provide the public an opportunity to learn about the proposed PRTC and provide input into this environmental impact analysis process. The scoping process helps us identify and address community-specific issues and concerns regarding the proposed airspace use.

Meeting Agenda

- Open House.....4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
- View video presentation
 - Visit information booths
 - Discuss proposal with Air Force personnel
 - Submit written comments

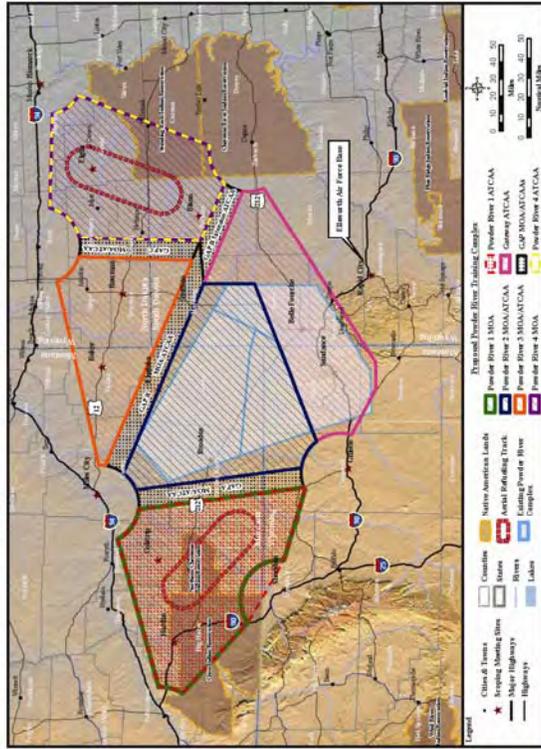
The Air Force is committed to community outreach and will consider your input to determine the scope of the issues to be addressed and to help identify the significant environmental issues to be analyzed in depth. Your involvement and input are vital to help us focus the environmental analysis.



Why is the PRTC Needed?

- Aircrews need adequately sized, configured, and available airspace to train as they fight during worldwide deployment.
- Increasing training in local airspace optimizes the limited amount of training hours allocated.
- Reducing commute time to remote training ranges like Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR) reduces fuel consumption.
- Use of chaff and flares allows aircrews to deploy defensive countermeasures as they would in combat.
- Supersonic training assists aircrews to train for show of force and for quick reaction to enemy threats in combat.
- More effectively use limited resources and finite flying hours.

Proposed Alternative A Airspace Changes



The proposed action would make the following modifications to the existing PRC.

Create PRTC Airspace: create new low altitude (500 feet AGL - 17,999 feet MSL) MOA airspace and new high altitude (18,000 - 60,000 feet MSL) ATCAA airspace and restructure and reconfigure the existing PRC MOAs and ATCAAs.

Increase Flight Operations: increase number, frequency and variety of sortie-operations.

Employ Large Force Exercises (LFE): use entire proposed PRTC for LFEs of 4 to more than 20 aircraft during scheduled exercises (typically once a quarter).

Support Training Transmitters: support additional ground based simulated emitters under the MOAs.

Permit Supersonic Flight: authorize above 10,000 feet AGL within the proposed PRTC.

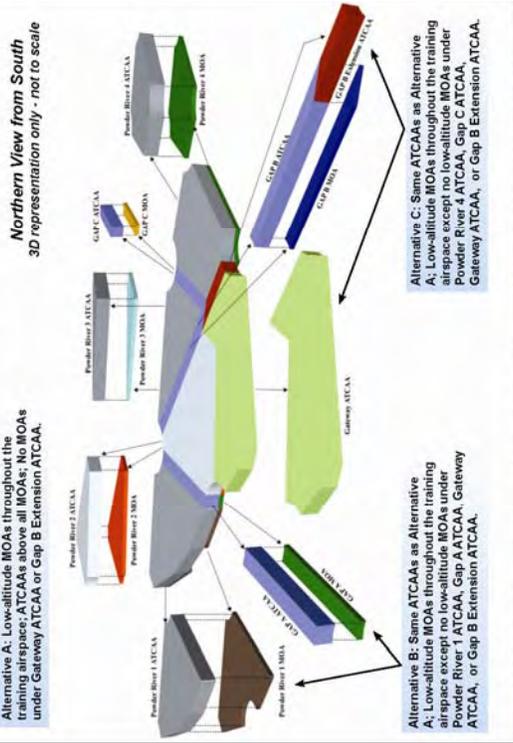
Authorize Defensive Countermeasures: allow training chaff and flare deployment throughout the proposed PRTC.

Alternative A

Under Alternative A, training aircraft in high-altitude ATCAAs would overfly approximately 37,800 square miles and training aircraft in low-altitude MOAs, under the ATCAAs, would overfly approximately 31,700 square miles.

- Expand existing Powder River A/B MOAs and rename expanded airspace - Powder River 2 MOA (500 feet AGL to 17,999 feet MSL).
- Establish Powder River 1, 3, and 4 MOAs (500 feet AGL to 17,999 feet MSL).
- Combine and modify existing Crossbow and Powder River 1 ATCAAs to overlie Powder River 2 MOA and rename the ATCAAs - Powder River 2 ATCAA.
- Modify the Gateway ATCAA to lie adjacent to Powder River 2 ATCAA.
- Create the Powder River 1, 3, and 4 ATCAAs to connect/correspond with underlying MOAs.
- Establish Gap MOAs and ATCAAs between the Powder River 1, 2, 3, and 4 MOA/ATCAAs.

Proposed Action: Create Powder River Training Complex (PRTC)



Alternative A: Low-altitude MOAs throughout the training airspace; ATCAAs above all MOAs; No MOAs under Gateway ATCAA or Gap B Extension ATCAA.

Northern View from South
3D representation only - not to scale

Alternative B: Same ATCAAs as Alternative A; Low-altitude MOAs throughout the training airspace except no low-altitude MOAs under Powder River 1 ATCAA, Gap A ATCAA, Gateway ATCAA, or Gap B Extension ATCAA.

Alternative C: Same ATCAAs as Alternative A; Low-altitude MOAs throughout the training airspace except no low-altitude MOAs under Powder River 4 ATCAA, Gap C ATCAA, Gateway ATCAA, or Gap B Extension ATCAA.

All or portions of the following Reservations/counties have the potential of being affected by the training airspace under one or more of the alternatives:
Montana: Crow and Northern Cheyenne Reservations and the counties of Big Horn, Carter, Custer, Fallon, Powder River, Rosebud, Treasure, and Yellowstone; North Dakota: Standing Rock Reservation and Adams, Billings, Bowman, Golden Valley, Grant, Hettinger, Morton, Sioux, Slope, and Stark counties; South Dakota: Standing Rock and Cheyenne River Reservations, and Butte, Corson, Harding, Lawrence, Meade, Pennington, Perkins, and Ziebach counties; and Wyoming: Campbell, Crook, Sheridan, and Weston counties.

Alternative A Continued

- Configuration of the MOAs matches their corresponding and overlying ATCAAs, except Powder River 1 MOA.
- Locate two aerial refueling tracks (one each in Powder River 1 and 4 ATCAA).

Alternative B

Same as Alternative A except no low-altitude MOAs under proposed Powder River 1 or proposed Gap A ATCAA. Training aircraft in high-altitude ATCAAs would overfly approximately 37,800 square miles and training aircraft in low-altitude MOAs, under the ATCAAs, would overfly approximately 22,800 square miles.

Alternative C

Same as Alternative A except no low-altitude MOAs under proposed Powder River 4 or proposed Gap C ATCAA. Training aircraft in high-altitude ATCAAs would overfly approximately 37,800 square miles and training aircraft in low-altitude MOAs, under the ATCAAs, would overfly approximately 24,500 square miles.

No-Action Alternative

Training aircraft would continue to train in the existing PRC and to overfly parts or all of the following counties: Montana: Carter, Custer, Powder River, South Dakota: Butte, Custer, Harding, Lawrence, Meade, Pennington, Wyoming: Campbell, Crook, Weston.

Training aircraft in high-altitude ATCAAs would continue to overfly approximately 14,100 square miles and training aircraft in low-altitude MOAs, under the ATCAAs, would continue to overfly approximately 3,900 square miles.



Please Attend!

**Scoping Meetings for the Powder River Training Complex (PRTC)
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**

Ellsworth Air Force Base (AFB), South Dakota proposes to modify their training airspace.



Please attend a public scoping meeting to:

- Learn more about the proposal
- Provide community-specific input
- Be included on our mailing list



Public Scoping Meetings

Open House 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Public invited to attend at any time. Information will be available throughout.

South Dakota

Rapid City
Monday, June 16, 2008
Rapid City Public Library
610 Quincy Street

Belle Fourche
Tuesday, June 17, 2008
Community Center
(Dakota Room)
1111 National Street

Buffalo
Monday, July 14, 2008
Harding County Memorial
Recreation Center
West Allison Street

Bison
Tuesday, July 15, 2008
Bison School Cafeteria
200 East Carr Street

Wyoming

Sundance
Wednesday, June 18, 2008
Crook County Public Library
414 East Main Street

Gillette
Thursday, June 19, 2008
Campbell County
Fire Department
106 Rohan Avenue

Sheridan
Friday, June 20, 2008
Sheridan Senior Center
North Entrance
211 Smith Street

Montana

Hardin
Monday, June 23
Hardin Chamber of Commerce
10 E. Railroad Street

Colstrip
Tuesday, June 24, 2008
Isabel Bills Community
Learning Center,
520 Poplar Drive

Miles City
Wednesday, June 25, 2008
Miles Community College
2715 Dickinson

Ekalaka
Thursday, June 26, 2008
St. Joan of Arc Parish Hall
Church Street

Broadus
Friday, June 27, 2008
Powder River County District
High School
500 North Trautman

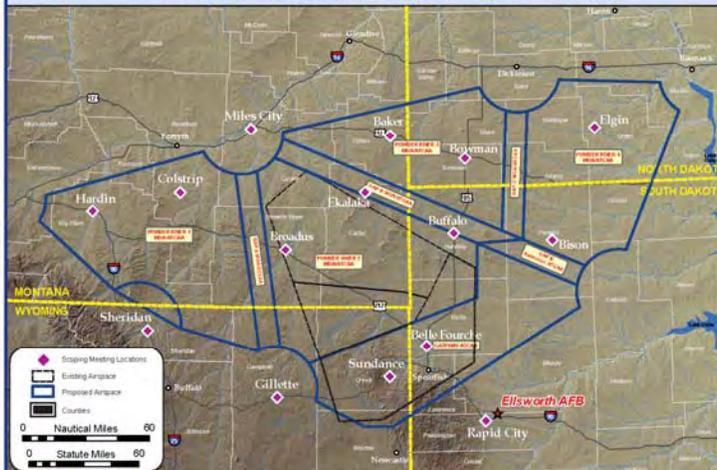
Baker
Tuesday, July 8, 2008
Baker High School
1015 South Third Street West

North Dakota

Bowman
Wednesday, July 9, 2008
City Hall Meeting Room
101 1st Street Southwest

Elgin
Thursday, July 10, 2008
Elgin Community Center
305 North Main Street

Ellsworth AFB Proposed Airspace Expansion Area



For more information about the meeting contact:

28th Bomb Wing
Ellsworth AFB, Public Affairs
(605) 385-5056

Send comments to:

Ms. Linda DeVine
EIS Project Manager
HQ ACC/A7PP
129 Andrews Street, Room 317
Langley AFB, VA 23665-2769

For additional information visit our website at www.acplanning.org

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1951 Junction
Sturgis, SD 57785

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City of Rapid City
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Rapid City, SD 57701

Dave Schneider
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Belle Fourche, SD 57717

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Washburn, ND 58577

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Elgin, ND 58533

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Dunn Center, ND 58626

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Richard Zarr
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Beach, ND

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