

F-35A Training Basing

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT



SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

The U.S. Air Force has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to assess the potential environmental impacts of its proposal to establish a Pilot Training Center with F-35A training aircraft at one or more existing Air Force or Air National Guard installations within the continental United States. The Draft EIS presents potential environmental consequences for four basing alternatives: Boise Air Terminal Airport Air Guard Station (AGS), Holloman Air Force Base (AFB), Luke AFB and Tucson International Airport AGS.

This fact sheet includes a brief summary of the potential impacts on environmental resources from the proposal, specifically for Boise AGS. For information about environmental impacts on the other basing alternatives or for more detailed information about possible impacts from F-35A training at Boise AGS, please refer to the Draft EIS, available at www.F-35ATrainingEIS.com.

Boise Air Terminal Airport Air Guard Station (AGS)

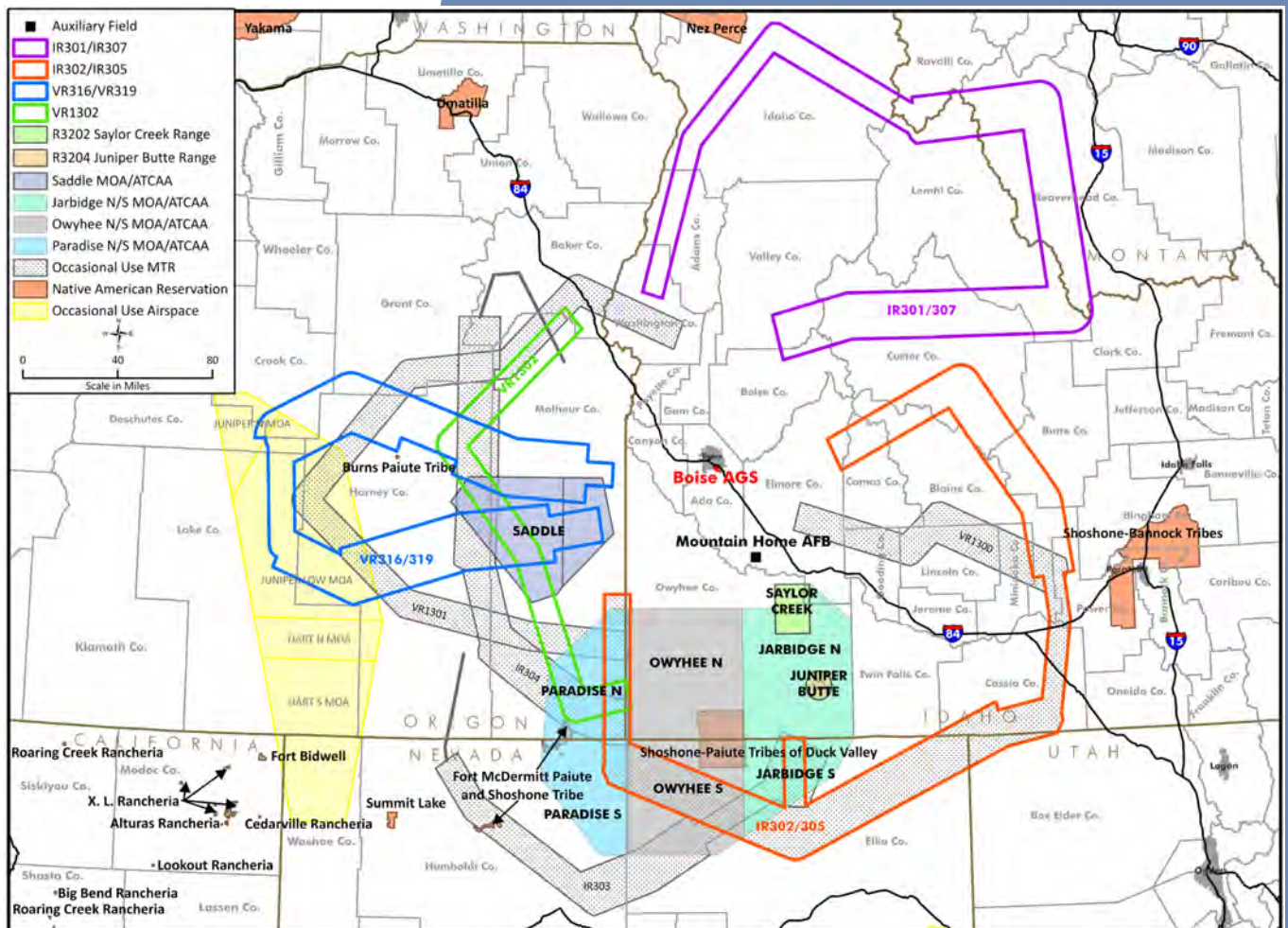
Boise AGS, or Gowen Field, is home to the 124th Fighter Wing of the Idaho Air National Guard along with the Army National Guard. Boise AGS (Figure 1), a military installation dating from World War II, consists of an exclusive-use military lease, totaling 576 acres of land, and a joint-use agreement between the City of Boise and the military, totaling 1,500 acres of land. Boise AGS covers the southern half of the Boise Air Terminal Airport and is operated as a joint military/civilian facility.

The 124th Fighter Wing includes 1,400 full- and part-time Airmen and supports the 190th Fighter Squadron, which operates and maintains the A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft. Currently, 18 A-10 aircraft are assigned to Boise AGS. Other aircraft that have been based at Boise AGS are the F-4 and C-130.

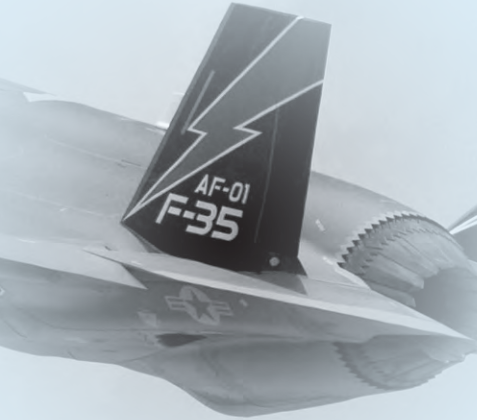
For more information about Boise AGS, please visit www.idaho.ang.af.mil.



Figure 1: Training Airspace and Ranges at Boise Air Guard Station



DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT



Environmental resource categories evaluated in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for each alternative installation include:

Aircraft Operations

- Airspace Management and Use
- Noise
- Air Quality
- Safety (ground, airfield and explosives)

Natural Resources

- Soils and Water (soils, surface water, floodplains and groundwater)
- Vegetation and Wildlife
- Wetlands and Aquatic Communities
- Threatened, Endangered and Special Status Species



Cultural and Traditional Resources

- Archaeological, Historic Architectural, Traditional and Native American Concerns

Human Resources

- Land Use and Recreation
- Socioeconomics
- Environmental Justice and Protection of Children

Community and Infrastructure

- Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Hazardous Materials and Waste

The Air Force analyzed potential environmental consequences associated with changes in personnel, construction or renovation of installation facilities, and training activities in existing military airspace, ranges and at Mountain Home Air Force Base (AFB), which would serve as an auxiliary airfield to support F-35A training aircraft based at Boise AGS. Environmental resources identified by the public and agencies and addressed in the Draft EIS are summarized here.

For more detailed information about the analysis of resources and potential environmental consequences, please refer to the Draft EIS at www.F-35ATrainingEIS.com.

The Air Force assessed basing up to 72 F-35A training aircraft at Boise AGS. The environmental analysis was conducted using the basing scenarios described in Table 1.

TABLE 1. BOISE AGS AIRCRAFT BASING SCENARIOS

Aircraft Scenario	F-35A*	A-10	Total Aircraft
Baseline Condition	0	18	18
B1	24	18	42
B2	48	0**	48
B3	72	0**	72

* All basing scenarios used increments of 24 aircraft.

** If more than 24 F-35A aircraft were selected for Boise AGS, the 18 A-10 aircraft currently stationed at Boise AGS would move to another installation.

Noise

Noise, defined as unwanted sound, could affect several resource areas. For more information on the methods used to assess and quantify noise impacts and detailed results, please see the Noise section in the Draft EIS (Chapter 4, Section BO 3.2 Noise). The Air Force would continue to adhere to all existing Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and local avoidance procedures, flight restrictions, scheduling adjustments and other practices designed to reduce aircraft noise.

Noise levels were analyzed at noise-sensitive locations, such as on- and off-installation schools, hospitals and places of worship. Under baseline (current) conditions, 142 off-installation residents are affected by noise levels greater than 65 decibel (dB) day-night average sound level (DNL). The analysis indicates that the number of off-installation residents affected by noise levels greater than 65 dB DNL would increase by approximately 3,000 to 10,000 people under the various basing scenarios.

A small percentage of F-35A aircraft operations would occur after 10:00 p.m. As a result, the likelihood of sleep disturbance, averaged among the locations studied, would increase by up to 5 percent under the basing scenarios.

The number of off-installation persons exposed to outdoor noise levels greater than 80 dB DNL would range from zero to 313 persons under Scenario B3. Continuous exposure to noise levels above 80 dB DNL could increase the risk of hearing loss.

At Mountain Home AFB, all training basing scenarios would increase by fewer than five people the number of off-installation residents affected by noise levels greater than 65 dB DNL.

Day-night average sound level (DNL) is a noise level, averaged over a 24-hour period, with an adjustment for late-night noises.

Sixty-five decibel DNL is a threshold above which certain land uses, such as residential, are not considered compatible by the Federal Aviation Administration or the Air Force without measures to ensure that interior noise level goals are met.

F-35A training operations would increase subsonic noise levels in areas under training airspace. Supersonic noise (created by aircraft exceeding the speed of sound) would increase by less than one sonic boom per day under airspace currently approved for supersonic training.

Noise impacts from inert munitions training at the Mountain Home Range Complex and live munitions training at the Utah Test and Training Range would be similar to existing conditions and are not expected to be significant.

Air Quality

Air quality is described by the concentrations of various air pollutants in the atmosphere. Emissions associated with construction and renovation activity would remain well below conformity thresholds and would not result in significant impacts.

Protective measures would continue to be implemented at Boise AGS including, but not limited to: limiting soil exposure for long periods of time during construction activities, employing dust control and soil retention practices, and employing, where feasible, construction equipment emission-control measures.

Under Basing Scenarios B1 and B2, operational emissions would not exceed applicable thresholds. Under Scenario B3, carbon monoxide emissions would exceed the threshold of 100 tons per year; the Air Force would therefore limit emissions so as not to contribute to an exceedance of air quality standards.

Safety

F-35A training aircraft operations would be conducted at the installation and in existing airspace in a manner similar to current operations. The Air Force anticipates no increase in safety risks associated with aircraft mishaps. Emergency and mishap response plans would be updated to include necessary procedures and response actions specific to the F-35A aircraft.

Ground Safety: Basing scenarios are not expected to create new or unique ground safety risks. All activities would continue to be conducted in accordance with applicable regulations, technical orders and standards. Construction, renovation or infrastructure improvements would comply with all regulations.

Airfield Safety: F-35A operations would not exceed 15 percent of the total joint operations at the airfield and would not result in impacts on airfield safety.

Explosives Safety: Ordnance would continue to be handled in accordance with Air Force and Department of Defense directives, and would not result in a greater safety risk. No significant impacts related to explosives safety are anticipated.

Airspace Safety: No increase in airspace safety risk is anticipated. Munitions and defensive flares would continue to be deployed in accordance with airspace and range procedures. Fuel dumping in emergency situations would be conducted in accordance with FAA procedures. Continued use of the Avian Hazard Advisory System, Bird Avoidance Model and pilot briefings would identify avoidance areas and minimize risks from bird-aircraft strikes.



Vegetation and Wildlife/Threatened, Endangered and Special Status Species

Construction and renovation would be confined to between 36 and 38 acres of previously disturbed areas of Boise AGS. Measures to control erosion and siltation would be included with project implementation. Revegetation of temporarily disturbed areas would minimize the potential for erosion and dust generation, and decrease the duration of temporary habitat loss. Surveys would be conducted before demolition and removal of abandoned buildings to determine if nesting birds or sensitive bat species are present.



the low percentage of time spent in low-level flight and current exposure of wildlife by other aircraft, no significant adverse effects on vegetation or wildlife from overflights, noise or other training actions are anticipated.

The potential for adverse effects of F-35A training on endangered, threatened or special status wildlife is minimal. Although it is possible for a federally listed wildlife species to exhibit a temporary response, it is unlikely that such a response would adversely affect the survival or fertility of the individual or population, or approach the level of “take” as defined in the Endangered Species Act.

No adverse effects on federally listed wildlife or special status species are anticipated from construction or aircraft operations.

Archaeological, Historic Architectural, Traditional and Native American Concerns

Consultations with Native American tribes are ongoing regarding airspace actions. National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation would take place regarding visual and other potential cultural impacts.

No long-term effects on vegetation, wildlife or federally listed plant species are anticipated.

As with current operations, low-level overflights and associated noise, sonic booms, munitions expenditures, flares and bird-aircraft collisions could impact biological resources. Based on



Land Use and Recreation

Construction is not expected to impact off-installation land uses. New or modified facilities would be designed and sited to be consistent with the installation master plan, airfield safety guidelines and related planning programs so that projected development would be compatible with surrounding land uses.



Operational noise levels in excess of 65 dB DNL would affect off-installation land uses. Under the basing scenarios, the number of acres above this threshold would increase by approximately 3,000 to 6,900 acres from baseline conditions, including some residential acreage.

New personnel would increase demand for public recreational amenities by 1 to 2 percent with minimal impact.

Residents and recreationists under the training airspace and at the auxiliary field may notice or be annoyed by the noise level increase. Subsonic and supersonic aircraft noise would increase, potentially affecting recreational users' enjoyment of the natural setting. F-35A pilots would comply with all existing restrictions on supersonic and subsonic flight.

Socioeconomics

Under the basing scenarios, between 2,188 to 2,635 direct, indirect and induced jobs are anticipated and could be filled by unemployed persons in Ada County. New jobs would increase local, state and federal tax revenues between \$10.22 million and \$26.53 million. The current housing market could accommodate additional personnel. An estimated increase of 661 to 1,715 school-aged children could require additional teachers.



Property value is defined by qualities of the property itself, surrounding properties and the local real estate market. Noise generated by F-35A operations could impact property values for properties experiencing noise levels in excess of 65 dB DNL, and residents may notice and respond to the noise level increase.

Environmental Justice and Protection of Children

Population characteristics under the expanded noise contours are not disproportionately minority or low-income. Noise levels under all basing scenarios have the potential to adversely impact schools and child care centers. Additional noise attenuation measures could be applied to impacted schools and child care centers to address potential adverse noise impacts. Current flight restrictions would continue.

Under the airspace, no disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations or children have been identified with the exception of populations beneath the Jarbidge North Military Operations Area/Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspace (see Figure 1).

F-35A flight training activities would take place in existing military airspace. No modifications to airspace would be required. Proposed training activities would be consistent with existing airspace operations and would comply with established range and land management plans.

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