

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 Holloman AFB. For information about environmental impacts on the other basing alternatives or for more detailed information about possible impacts from F-35A training at Holloman AFB, please refer to the Draft EIS, available at www.F-35ATrainingEIS.com.

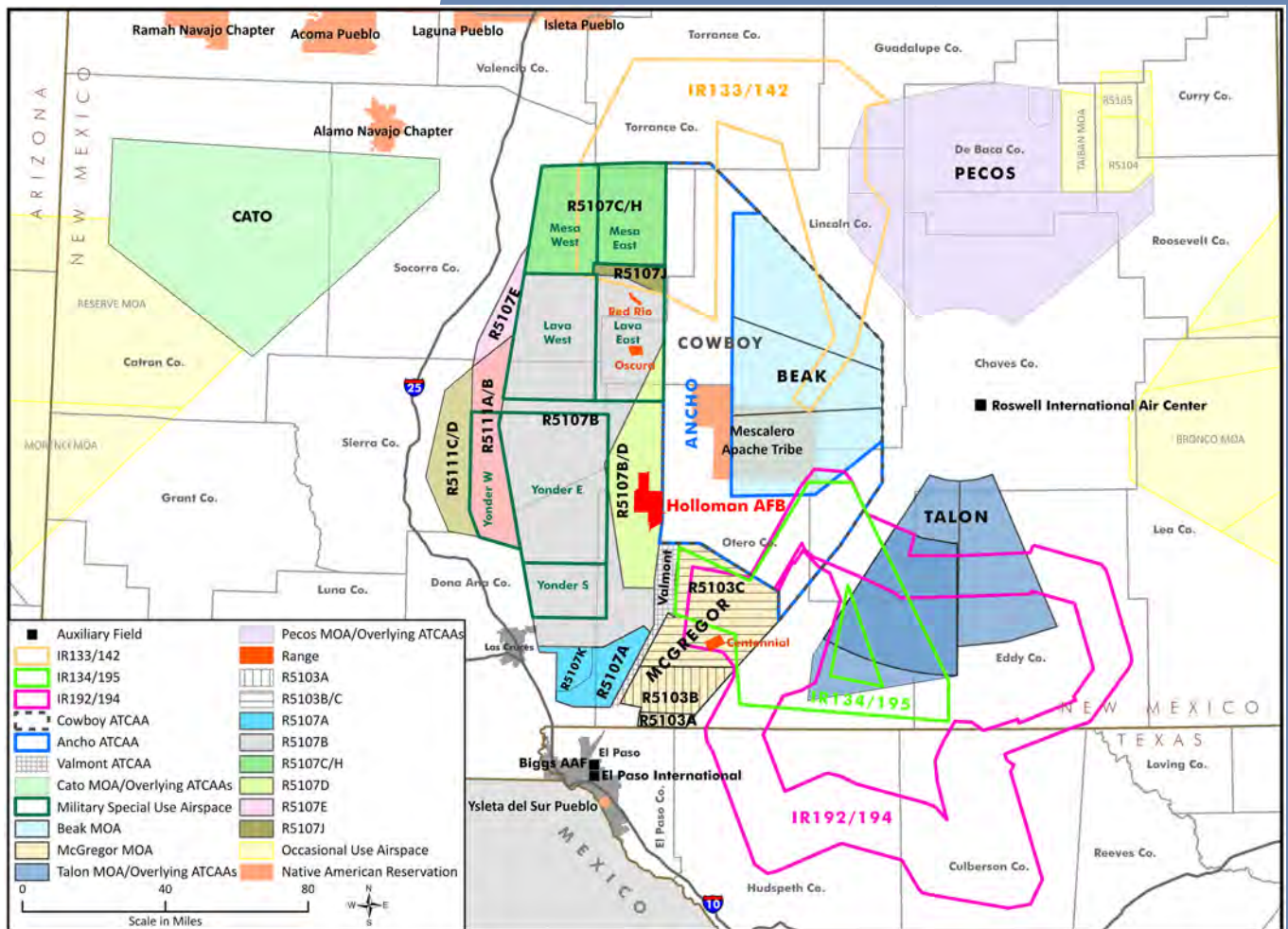
Holloman Air Force Base (AFB)

Holloman AFB, located near Alamogordo, New Mexico, covers 59,639 acres and supports approximately 21,000 active duty, reserve and National Guard personnel; retirees; Department of Defense civilians; and family members. The installation is home to the 49th Wing, German Air Force training and various test programs, including the world's longest rail test track. The MQ-9, MQ-1, QF-4, F-16, T-38A and Tornado aircraft operate from Holloman AFB. Between 1992 and 2008, Holloman AFB hosted the stealth F-117A aircraft, which was retired and replaced with the F-22 aircraft. In July 2010, the Air Force announced plans to consolidate the F-22 fleet to other installations. The basing of the F-16 training mission is scheduled for Holloman AFB following the departure of the F-22s.



For more information about Holloman AFB, please visit www.holloman.af.mil.

Figure 1: Training Airspace and Ranges at Holloman Air Force Base



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 base facilities, and training activities in existing military airspace, ranges and at auxiliary airfields to support F-35A training aircraft at Holloman AFB. 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 120 F-35A training aircraft at Holloman AFB. The environmental analysis was conducted using the basing scenarios described in Table 1.

TABLE 1. HOLLOMAN AFB AIRCRAFT BASING SCENARIOS

Aircraft Scenario	F-35A*	F-16**	Total Aircraft
Baseline Condition	0	50	50
H1W	24	50	74
H2W	48	50	98
H3W	72	50	122

Aircraft Scenario	F-35A*	F-16**	Total Aircraft
H1	24	0	24
H2	48	0	48
H3	72	0	72
H4	96	0	96
H5	120	0	120

* All basing scenarios used increments of 24 aircraft.

** Several other aircraft are based at Holloman AFB; these aircraft are not part of, nor changed by the Proposed Action.

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 HO 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 all basing scenarios except H1, the number of off-installation acres affected by noise would increase, although no additional residents would be affected. For Roswell International Air Center (RIAC), the number of residents affected by noise levels greater than 65 decibel (dB) day-night average sound level (DNL) would increase by an estimated 5 to 497 under the various basing scenarios. The number of off-installation residents near Biggs Army Airfield (AAF) and El Paso International Airport (EPIA) affected by sound levels

greater than 65 dB DNL would increase by an estimated 377 to 2,032 people under the various basing scenarios.

F-35A training operations would increase subsonic noise levels from zero to 11 dB DNL, depending on the basing scenario. Supersonic noise (created by aircraft exceeding the speed of sound) would decrease or increase by less than one sonic boom per day under airspace currently approved for supersonic training. Live and inert weapons training would be conducted at the Red Rio, Centennial and Oscura Ranges (see Figure 1), but no significant noise impacts from munitions training are expected.

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.

Air Quality

Air quality is described by the concentrations of various pollutants in the atmosphere. Emissions associated with construction activities would be temporary and would produce less than significant impacts on regional air quality. The Air Force would continue to implement protective measures, including employing dust control and soil retention practices during construction activities, and employing construction equipment emission control measures.

Projected operational emissions would increase primarily as a result of F-35A aircraft flights and personal vehicles commuting to and from Holloman AFB. Increases would not produce significant air quality impacts for the county or any localized area.

Safety

F-35A training aircraft operations would be conducted in existing airspace and 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. Construction, operations and maintenance procedures would continue to be conducted in accordance with applicable regulations, technical orders and standards.

Airfield Safety: With updates to emergency and mishap response plans, the Holloman AFB airfield safety conditions would be similar to existing conditions.



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 be deployed at approved ranges and airspaces. Measures to reduce the potential for wildland fire would continue to be implemented. 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 would occur on between 31 and 90 acres of previously disturbed land. 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 potential habitat loss.

Surveys would be conducted before demolition and removal of abandoned buildings to determine if nesting birds or sensitive bat species are present. No significant adverse effects on vegetation or wildlife are expected.



Wildlife species in the vicinity of Holloman AFB and under the existing training airspace are not expected to be adversely affected by changes in aircraft overflights or noise associated with F-35A aircraft, including sonic booms. Wildlife species on and near Holloman AFB live in an airfield environment and are currently exposed to regular takeoffs, landings and low-level overflights by military aircraft. Airspace noise levels would be similar to the existing noise environment.

There is minimal potential for adverse effects of F-35A training in the airspace and auxiliary airfields on endangered, threatened or special status wildlife. 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 affected individual or population, or approach the level of “take” as defined in the Endangered Species Act.

Archaeological, Historic Architectural, Traditional and Native American Concerns

Consultations would continue with Native American groups regarding airspace actions. National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation would take place regarding visual and other potential cultural consequences.

Land Use and Recreation

Land use or recreation impacts are expected to be minimal on surrounding communities and recreational amenities during construction and operations. 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 use. Noise levels in the vicinity of RIAC, EPIA and Biggs AAF would increase under all basing scenarios and potentially result in incompatible land uses near the auxiliary airfields.



Impacts on recreation may occur from increased operations, depending on the basing scenario. Recreational participants could experience noise and startle effects from aircraft overflights. However, noise levels at recreational locations would remain generally compatible with recreational land uses.

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.

Socioeconomics

In general, as the number of F-35A aircraft increases, there are greater increases in the number of jobs created, population and school-aged children, tax revenue from local, state and federal taxes, public services and housing needs. Only Basing Scenario H1 would result in a population decrease. Population increases with Scenarios H4 and H5 could result in a shortage of available housing and related services.

Property value is defined by qualities of the property itself, surrounding properties and the local real estate market. Training aircraft would not result in additional off-installation residents affected by noise levels greater than 65 dB DNL. No impacts on off-installation residents or properties are expected.



Environmental Justice and Protection of Children

No disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority or low-income populations are expected for those living in the areas surrounding Holloman AFB.

There is the potential for disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority or low-income populations in the vicinity of RIAC and in areas overflowed by Instrument Route 134/195 (see Figure 1). Some schools and childcare centers on Holloman AFB and in the vicinity of the EPIA and RIAC would be affected by elevated noise levels. Noise attenuation measures could be applied to impacted schools and child care centers to address potential adverse noise impacts.

**VISIT
WWW.F-35ATRANINGEIS.COM
FOR MORE PROJECT
INFORMATION OR TO
DOWNLOAD A COPY OF
THE DRAFT EIS.**

