

US Air Force Plans Low Elevation Supersonic Flights and Air Combat Training Over Tribal Lands in Arizona

The United States Air Force is proposing to modify ten existing Military Operations Areas (MOAs) that stretch across southern Arizona into southwest New Mexico as part of a plan to expand their Special Use Airspace across the southwest. The proposal will dramatically lower flight levels and increase training time. MOAs serve Luke and Davis-Monthan Air Force Bases and Morris Air National Guard Base. Four of these MOAs occur above tribal lands and will have impacts for the San Carlos Apache Tribe, the White Mountain Apache Tribe, and the Tohono O'odham Nation.

The Scoping Comment Deadline for the Air Force plan is March 4th, 2022

Proposed changes to military training in the Jackal and Outlaw MOAs over Apache lands

- Lower the vertical flight ceiling for low-level jet flight maneuvers from the current 3000 feet above ground level (AGL) to as low as 500 feet AGL in the Outlaw MOA and as low as 100 feet AGL across the Jackal MOA.
- Lower the supersonic jet flight ceiling from the current 30,000 feet to as low as 5,000 feet.
- Lower the use of chaff and flares from 3,000 feet AGL to 2,000 feet AGL
- Increase the hours of authorized use from the current times of 7am through 6pm (M-F), to the expanded hours of 6:00am to 10:00pm (M-F).



Significant Issues with Air Force Plan Affecting Tribal Communities

- Of the seven community meetings organized by the Air Force **NOT ONE MEETING IS PLANNED IN ANY TRIBAL COMMUNITY.**
- Proposed changes cover the majority of San Carlos Reservation lands and includes the airspace over Mount Graham.
- Fighter jet training maneuvers as low as 100 feet above ground level proposed for San Carlos Apache lands and supersonic flights as low as 5000 feet AGL will cause extreme noise and sonic booms above tribal communities and some of the Southwest's beloved wilderness areas and national monuments.
- Extreme noise from this training will undermine sacred places, impact wildlife and domestic animals, and degrade the quality of life that are the foundation of tourism, outdoor recreation and ranching economies in the region.
- The pressure wave generated by supersonic flights at 5,000 – 10,000 feet AGL can break glass, crack plaster, and collapse free standing walls.
- The release of chaff on San Carlos Apache lands pollutes the environment with aluminum-coated silica fibers used in evasive maneuvers.
- The proposal lowering the dropping of flares above San Carlos Apache lands, increases the risk of wildfire in areas already vulnerable to catastrophic wildfire and with limited resources for firefighting.
- The times for the use of airspace would be extended into the evening hours disturbing families and communities.

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Links

To **submit comments** to the Air Force during scoping: [EIS Comments](#)

For **more detail** on the Air Force plans for all 10 MOAs: [EIS Overview of Proposed Actions](#)

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