

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
Department of the Navy

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR FALLON RANGE TRAINING COMPLEX-MODERNIZATION RANGE B-16 IMPROVEMENTS (EAXX-007-17-USN-1732565400)

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 42 United States Code section 4321 et seq.) and applicable federal NEPA implementing regulations in place at the time the Environmental Assessment (EA) was initiated, the Department of the Navy (Navy) gives notice that an EA has been prepared and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required for the Fallon Range Training Complex (FRTC)-Modernization Range B-16 Improvements in Western Nevada. The action will be implemented as set out in Alternative 1.

Proposed Action: Under the Proposed Action, the Navy would make the following infrastructure improvements at FRTC Training Range B-16 (hereafter Range B-16):

- Install approximately 33 miles of fencing along the Range B-16 expanded range boundary,
- Improve approximately 21 miles of existing routes,
- Update the Free Maneuver Area (FMA) and conduct ongoing/periodic ground-disturbing training activities on up to 4,890 acres within the FMA,
- Dead Camel Gravel Pit potential expansion of up to 4 acres,
- Restore well access in the vicinity of Building 612 or drill a new well in the area.

Purpose of and Need for the Proposed Action: The overarching purpose of any military force is to be able to successfully conduct combat operations in support of national policy and security objectives. Therefore, the purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide new, and improve existing, range infrastructure to support acceptably realistic air and ground training activities. The need for the Proposed Action is to ensure the Navy can train regularly and with sufficient realism to meet emergent and future threats.

With the implementation of the proposed infrastructure improvements, Range B-16 would be fully capable of supporting the aviation and ground training and readiness requirements for the missions assigned to the FRTC into the foreseeable future. In this regard, the Proposed Action fulfills the Navy's execution of its congressionally mandated roles and responsibilities under 10 United States Code section 8062 and 10 United States Code section 167.

Alternatives Considered: The 2020 FRTC Modernization Final EIS (hereby referred to as the 2020 FRTC EIS) discussed the need for the expansion of the FRTC and analyzed the anticipated environmental impacts of that action broadly, but anticipated that further analysis would be required for certain improvements and activities for which adequate information was not available during development of the EIS (e.g., concerning specific infrastructure locations and related ground disturbance). Because adequate information is now available concerning the specifics of the proposed infrastructure improvements at Range B-16, this is a follow-on NEPA action from the 2020 FRTC EIS. All infrastructure improvements need to be made within, and for the purposes of, the expanded Range B-16, and in conjunction with existing functions or locations (e.g., improvements to existing routes, evaluation of the Dead Camel Gravel Pit, restoration of well access, and fencing generally). Therefore, the EA analyzed the potential environmental impacts of the following alternatives:

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR FALLON RANGE TRAINING COMPLEX-MODERNIZATION RANGE B-16 IMPROVEMENTS (EAXX-007-17-USN-1732565400)

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action would not occur, and the infrastructure of Range B-16 would remain unchanged. The No Action Alternative would not meet the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action; however, as required by NEPA, the No Action Alternative is carried forward for analysis in the EA.

Alternative 1: Under Alternative 1, the Navy would make the following infrastructure improvements at Range B-16:

- Install approximately 33 miles of fencing along the Range B-16 expanded range boundary,
- Improve approximately 21 miles of existing routes,
- Update the FMA and conduct ongoing/periodic ground-disturbing training activities on up to 4,890 acres within the FMA,
- Dead Camel Gravel Pit potential expansion of up to 4 acres,
- Restore well access in the vicinity of Building 612 or drill a new well in the area.

Environmental Impacts: No significant direct, indirect, or cumulative environmental impacts would occur from implementing the Proposed Action. Certain environmental resources (marine resources, hazardous materials, traffic and infrastructure, land use and recreation, and public health and safety) were not analyzed in detail in the EA because implementation of the Proposed Action would not be likely to result in any potential environmental impacts on these resources, or impacts would be negligible. Potential environmental impacts on air quality, water resources, geology and soils, biological resources, cultural resources, and noise, are summarized here.

Air Quality: Under Alternative 1, the annual emissions resulting from the proposed infrastructure improvements would be well below the thresholds for concern for all pollutants because only small quantities of hazardous air pollutants would be emitted, with very low potential exposure and health risk. Additionally, there are no changes proposed to the types and tempo of training activities that would occur within the updated FMA, as previously analyzed in the 2015 Military Readiness Activities at FRTC EIS (hereby referred to as the 2015 FRTC EIS) and the 2020 FRTC EIS. Those documents concluded that there would be no significant impacts on air quality and greenhouse gases as a result of air- and ground-based training activities. Therefore, implementation of Alternative 1 would not result in significant impacts on air quality.

Water Resources: Under Alternative 1, the proposed infrastructure improvements would have a relatively small footprint and would result in a limited amount of disturbance within Range B-16, and Best Management Practices and a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan would be implemented to reduce or avoid potential impacts on water resources in the region. Additionally, there are no changes proposed to the types and tempo of training activities that would occur within the updated FMA, as previously analyzed in the 2015 FRTC EIS and the 2020 FRTC EIS. Those documents concluded that there would be no significant impacts on water resources as a result of air- and ground-based training activities. Therefore, implementation of Alternative 1 would not result in significant impacts on water resources.

Geology and Soils: Under Alternative 1, the proposed infrastructure improvements would have a relatively small footprint and would result in a limited amount of disturbance within Range B-16, and Best Management Practices would be implemented to reduce potential impacts of erosion. Additionally, there are no changes proposed to the types and tempo of training activities that would occur within the

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR FALLON RANGE TRAINING COMPLEX-MODERNIZATION RANGE B-16 IMPROVEMENTS (EAXX-007-17-USN-1732565400)

updated FMA, as previously analyzed in the 2015 FRTC EIS and the 2020 FRTC EIS. Those documents concluded that there would be no significant impacts on geological and soil resources as a result of air- and ground-based training activities. Therefore, implementation of Alternative 1 would not result in significant impacts on geological and soil resources.

Biological Resources: Under Alternative 1, potential impacts on biological resources as a result of the proposed infrastructure improvements would be similar to those analyzed in the 2020 FRTC EIS. By implementing the management measures listed in Table 3.4-4 of the FRTC-Modernization Range B-16 Improvements EA, potential impacts on biological resources would be avoided, minimized, and mitigated as appropriate.

Three special-status plant species (sand cholla [*Grusonia pulchella*], dune sunflower [*Helianthus deserticola*] and Nevada suncup [*Eremothera nevadensis*]) were observed within Range B-16. No other special-status plant species were observed within the areas of proposed ground-disturbing activities within Range B-16. Additionally, one narrowleaf milkweed individual was observed within Range B-16. There are also 31 bird, 2 reptile, and 9 mammal species that are considered special-status species that may be present in Range B-16. These special-status species could be exposed to noise and the presence of construction equipment and human activity, which may cause these species to temporarily avoid areas in the immediate vicinity. However, impacts on special-status species would be less than significant, and these impacts would be further minimized through implementation of the measures listed in Table 3.4-4 of the FRTC-Modernization Range B-16 Improvements EA.

Additionally, there are no changes proposed to the types and tempo of training activities that would occur within the updated FMA, as previously analyzed in the 2015 FRTC EIS and the 2020 FRTC EIS. Those documents concluded that there would be no significant impacts on biological resources as a result of air- and ground-based training activities. Therefore, implementation of Alternative 1 would not result in significant impacts on biological resources.

Cultural Resources: Under Alternative 1, ground-disturbing activities associated with the proposed infrastructure improvements and ongoing/periodic training activities would avoid affecting cultural resources to the maximum extent practicable, consistent with mission and safety requirements, and would be conducted in accordance with established consultation agreements with the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office and other consulting parties. All consultations with SHPO and the tribes are complete. In the event of post-review discovery of cultural resources or an inadvertent discovery under Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act during infrastructure improvement activities, activities in the immediate vicinity of the discovery would be suspended until an archaeologist could assess the potential significance of the resource(s) and actions to be taken in accordance with applicable legal requirements, as appropriate. By implementing these and the other management measures listed in Table 3.5-3 of the FRTC-Modernization Range B-16 Improvements EA, potential impacts on cultural resources resulting from infrastructure improvements would be avoided, minimized, or mitigated. Due to changes in the Range B-16 boundary and associated fence line as identified in the EA, the Navy is reconsulting with the State Historic Preservation Office and the Native American Tribes included in Table 3.5-1 of the EA in accordance with the 2011 Programmatic Agreement (PA), as amended in 2024. A new PA is currently under development to replace the existing PA.

Additionally, there are no changes proposed to the types and tempo of training activities that would occur within the updated FMA, as previously analyzed in the 2015 FRTC EIS and the 2020 FRTC EIS.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR FALLON RANGE TRAINING COMPLEX-MODERNIZATION RANGE B-16 IMPROVEMENTS (EAXX-007-17-USN-1732565400)

Those documents concluded that there would be no significant impacts on cultural resources as a result of air- and ground-based training activities. Therefore, implementation of Alternative 1 would result in less than significant impacts on cultural resources.

Noise: Under Alternative 1, noise levels generated by the proposed infrastructure activities could range from 74 to 89 A-weighted decibels at a distance of 50 feet. The nearest sensitive receptors in the vicinity of Range B-16 are residences approximately 1,400 feet east of the eastern edge of the range. At this distance, noise associated with the proposed infrastructure activities would be audible, but not high enough to meaningfully impact the day-night average sound level at this location. Additionally, there are no changes proposed to the types and tempo of training activities that would occur within the updated FMA, as previously analyzed in the 2015 FRTC EIS and 2020 FRTC EIS. Those documents concluded that there would be no significant noise-related impacts as a result of the air- and ground-based training activities. Therefore, the implementation of Alternative 1 would not result in significant impacts on the acoustic environment.

Cumulative Impacts: Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions that occur within or potentially impact resources analyzed at Range B-16 were included in the cumulative impact analysis in the FRTC-Modernization Range B-16 Improvements EA. These actions included the 2020 FRTC EIS; Department of Defense wind energy projects; the Stillwater, NV Hybrid Power Plant; the EA for Lone Tree Road Improvements; and the EA for Sand Canyon Road Realignment. Because impacts associated with the implementation of the Proposed Action would be less than significant and would not have the potential to meaningfully contribute to cumulative impacts, there would be no significant cumulative impacts on the resources analyzed in the EA when combined with the effects of these past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

Public Outreach: The Navy prepared a Draft EA to inform the public of the Proposed Action and to allow the opportunity for public review and comment. The Navy released the Draft EA for a 31-day public review period. On May 16, 2025, the Draft EA review period began with public notices in *The Reno-Gazette Journal*, *Lahontan Valley News*, and *Lyon County News Leader*. The notice described the Proposed Action, solicited public comments on the Draft EA, listed the dates of the public comment period, and announced that CD copies and hard copies of the Draft EA were available for review at public locations (Fernley Branch Library and Churchill County Library). A digital version of the Draft EA was also made available on the Navy Region Southwest website at <https://cnrsw.cnrc.navy.mil/Operations-and-Management/Environmental-Support/Public-Information-Access-to-Navy-Projects/>. The Draft EA review period yielded comments from individuals, government agencies, and federally recognized tribes. The comments, along with the Navy's responses to the comments, are in Appendix B (Public Comments and Responses) of the FRTC-Modernization Range B-16 Improvements EA.

As part of the EA process, the Navy has contacted the following federally recognized tribes regarding the Proposed Action: Duckwater Shoshone Tribe of the Duckwater Reservation, Nevada; Paiute-Shoshone Tribe of the Fallon Reservation and Colony, Nevada; Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribes of the Fort McDermitt Indian Reservation, Nevada and Oregon; Lovelock Paiute Tribe of the Lovelock Indian Colony, Nevada; Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe of the Pyramid Lake Reservation, Nevada; Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, Nevada; Summit Lake Paiute Tribe of Nevada; Te-Moak Tribe of Western Shoshone Indians of Nevada (Four Constituent Bands: Battle Mountain Band; Elko Band; South Fork Band; and


FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR FALLON RANGE TRAINING COMPLEX-MODERNIZATION RANGE B-16 IMPROVEMENTS (EAXX-007-17-USN-1732565400)

Wells Band); Walker River Paiute Tribe of the Walker River Reservation, Nevada; Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California (Carson Colony, Dresslerville Colony, Woodfords Community, Stewart Community, and Washoe Ranches); Winnemucca Indian Colony of Nevada; Yerington Paiute Tribe of the Yerington Colony and Campbell Ranch, Nevada; and Yomba Shoshone Tribe of the Yomba Reservation, Nevada.

Finding: Based on the analysis presented in the Final FRTC-Modernization Range B-16 Improvements EA, which has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of NEPA and applicable federal implementing regulations in place at the time of the EA's initiation, and in coordination with the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office and the previously mentioned federally recognized tribes, the Navy finds that implementation of the Proposed Action as set out in Alternative 1 will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an EIS will not be prepared.

Electronic copies of the Final FRTC-Modernization Range B-16 Improvements EA and Finding of No Significant Impact Statement are available on the Navy Region Southwest website at <https://cnrsw.cnmc.navy.mil/Operations-and-Management/Environmental-Support/Public-Information-Access-to-Navy-Projects/>, or by written request at the discretion of the Navy, sent to Attention: Amanda Peyton, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Southwest, 750 Pacific Highway, San Diego, CA 92132.

10CT 2025
Date



Rich Jarrett
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy
Commander, Navy Region Southwest