

1 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] §4321 *et seq.*) is the basic charter for environmental planning within the United States. It requires federal decision makers to inform themselves and the public of the environmental consequences of proposed actions that may significantly affect the environment and to consider those consequences in determining courses of action. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a public document that provides a detailed assessment of the potential effects that a major federal action may have on the quality of the human environment.¹

The United States (U.S.) Department of the Navy (Navy) prepared this Final EIS (hereafter referred to as “EIS”) to assess the potential environmental effects associated with ongoing and proposed Navy training activities (described in detail in Chapter 2, Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives) within the Fallon Range Training Complex (FRTC) and associated airspace in Nevada (Figure 1-1). The Navy is the lead agency for this EIS pursuant to 40 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) §1501.5 and §1508.5. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is a cooperating agency pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §1501.6 and §1508.5. This EIS was prepared in compliance with NEPA (42 U.S.C. §4321 *et seq.*), Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (Title 40 C.F.R. §§1500–1508), and Navy Procedures for Implementing NEPA (32 C.F.R. §775).

The Navy’s mission is to organize, train, and equip combat-ready naval forces capable of winning wars, deterring aggression, and maintaining freedom of the seas. This mission is mandated by federal law (10 U.S.C. §5062), which ensures the readiness of the United States’ naval forces.² The Navy executes this responsibility by establishing and executing training programs, and ensuring naval forces have access to the ranges, operating areas, and airspace needed to develop and maintain skills for conducting naval activities.

The primary mission of the FRTC is to support Navy and U.S. Marine Corps tactical training by providing the most realistic strike and integrated air warfare training available, conducting Tactical Development and Evaluation (TAC D&E), maintaining and operating facilities, and providing services and equipment to support the U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Atlantic, Nevada National Guard, and joint and international forces air and ground training requirements. The FRTC serves as a national range complex, as all Continental United States (CONUS)-based Carrier Air Wings complete their pre-deployment air wing training at Naval Air Station (NAS) Fallon, utilizing the FRTC. It is important to note that aircraft arriving and departing from NAS Fallon do not all train in the FRTC, nor do all aircraft using the FRTC originate from NAS Fallon. The FRTC serves as the premier regional training range complex for a variety of military units and military training activities, including Pacific Fleet forces conducting unit level, integrated, and sustainment phases of strike and air warfare training exercises. Research, Development, Acquisition, Test, and Evaluation activities are also supported provided they do not conflict with the FRTC’s primary mission.

¹ According to Council on Environmental Quality Regulation 40 C.F.R. §1508.14, the “Human Environment” shall be interpreted comprehensively to include the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with that environment.

² Title 10 U.S.C. §5062 provides: “The Navy shall be organized, trained, and equipped primarily for prompt and sustained combat incident to operations at sea. It is responsible for the preparation of naval forces necessary for the effective prosecution of war except as otherwise assigned and, in accordance with integrated joint mobilization plans, for the expansion of the peacetime components of the Navy to meet the needs of war.”

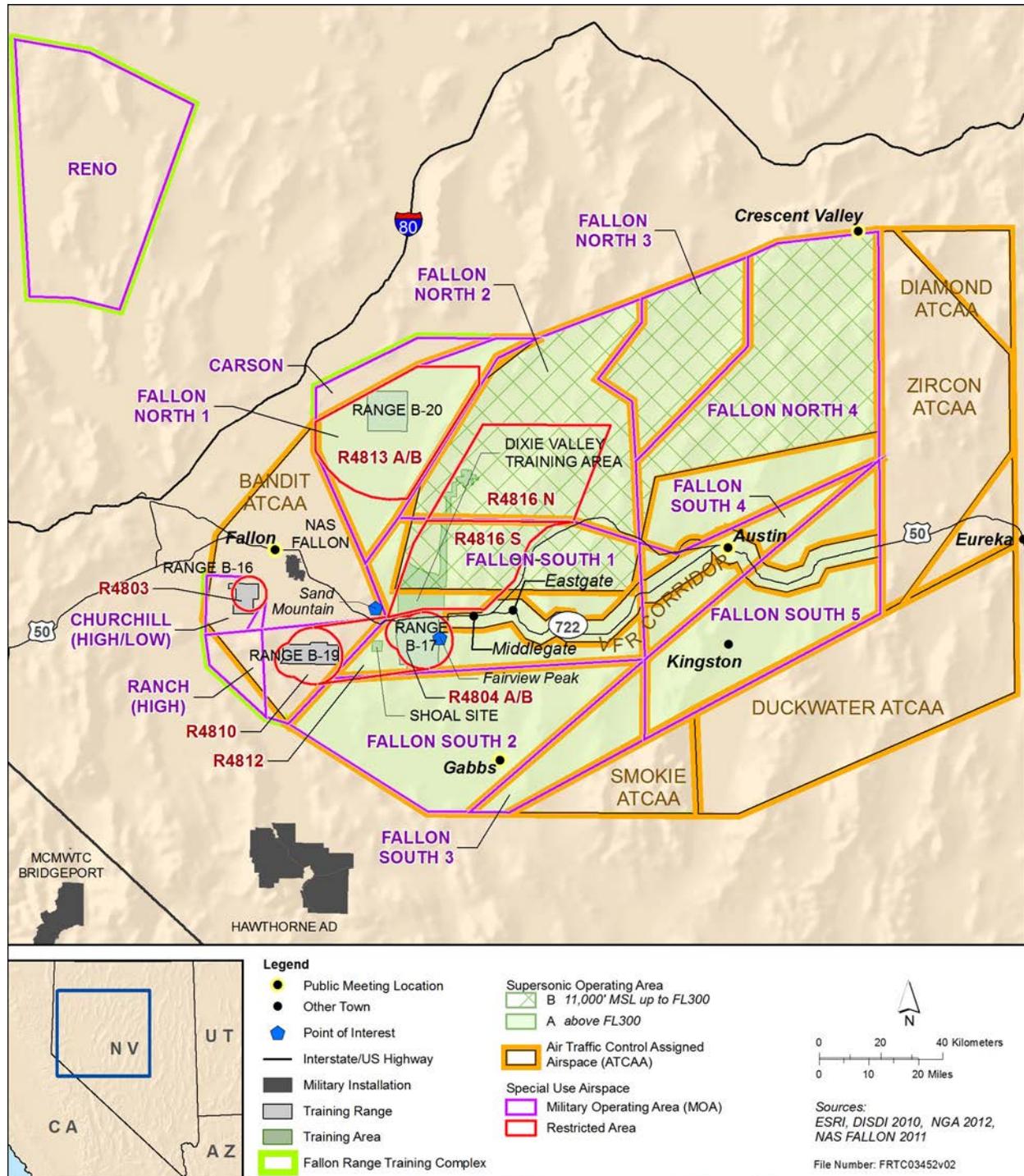


Figure 1-1: Fallon Range Training Complex and Surrounding Bases

As described in Chapter 2 (Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives), the Proposed Action is needed to ensure the continued vitality and viability of the FRTC as an essential training resource. The Proposed Action would result in critical and necessary increases in training activities, range facilities, and range infrastructure selectively focused to achieve and maintain a state of military readiness commensurate with the Navy national defense mission.

Information contained in this EIS will help Navy decision makers determine the scope and level of future military readiness activities at the FRTC. To support an informed decision, the EIS identifies objectives and criteria for military (hereafter referred to as “Service[s]”) training activities at the FRTC. The core of the EIS is the development and analysis of different alternatives for achieving these objectives. Criteria set forth in Section 2.3.2 (Alternatives Development) provide the basis for the statement of the Proposed Action and alternatives and selection of alternatives for further analysis, as well as analyses of the environmental effects of the Proposed Action and alternatives (Chapter 3, Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences). Chapter 2 (Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives) also discusses alternatives that were considered but eliminated because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action or were not practical or feasible from a technical or economic standpoint.

1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide sustainable and modern airspace, range, maneuver areas, training facilities, and range infrastructure and resources to fully support training activities occurring on the FRTC in accordance with the assigned roles and missions for the Naval Aviation Warfighting Development Center (NAWDC), formerly known as the Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center (NSAWC).

The Proposed Action is needed to achieve and maintain military readiness by using the FRTC to support and conduct military readiness activities. In this regard, FRTC furthers the Navy’s execution of its roles and responsibilities under 10 U.S.C. §5062. To comply with its Title 10 (10 U.S.C. §5062) mandates, the Navy needs to:

- maintain current levels of military readiness by enhancing training at the FRTC,
- accommodate possible future increases in training activities at the FRTC,
- accommodate training activities associated with force structure changes, and
- maintain the long-term viability of the FRTC as a military training and testing range.³

The Navy has developed alternatives pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §1502.14, which are discussed in Chapter 2 (Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives), based on this statement of the purpose and need.

1.3 BACKGROUND

1.3.1 HISTORY OF THE FALLON RANGE TRAINING COMPLEX

NAS Fallon began as a U.S. Army airfield in 1942 and was subsequently commissioned as a Naval Auxiliary Air Station in 1944. The Bravo (B)-20 training range was added in 1943. Training ranges B-16, B-17, and B-19 were established in 1951. NAS Fallon formally established the FRTC in 1977 to provide integrated Special Use Airspace (SUA) and training range facilities for air warfare training. The Naval Strike Warfare Center (NSWC), also known as “Strike U,” was based at NAS Fallon in 1984 to be the primary authority for integrated strike warfare (STW) tactical development and training. In 1985, a Tactical Aircrew Training System was implemented at NAS Fallon to provide squadrons, carrier air wings, and students from NSWC with graphic displays of their missions. In 1996, the NSAWC was formed with the consolidation of three commands into a single command structure, joining Strike U with the Navy

³ The Proposed Action also serves to allow the Air Wing Fallon training program to maintain accreditation and certification as a Joint National Training Capability program

Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN) and the Carrier Airborne Early Warning Weapons School (TOPDOME), both of which relocated from NAS Miramar, California, as a result of a Base Realignment and Closure decision in 1993. In 2015, the title of NSAWC was updated to NAWDC.

1.3.2 THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE FALLON RANGE TRAINING COMPLEX

The FRTC has the highest utilization rates of all Navy range complexes for aviation training. The climate offers ideal air training opportunities year round, with an average 355 days a year in which the airspace ceiling is 3,000 feet (ft.) or higher and visibility is 3 nautical miles (nm) or greater for at least 50 percent of each day. The FRTC, with NAS Fallon, is the only naval training complex that can support, house, and train an entire carrier air wing (upward of 60 aircraft and support crews) for advanced integrated STW, electronic warfare (EW), and air warfare (AW) training. The FRTC's unique attributes include collocation with NAWDC, overland supersonic capability (where aircraft can exceed Mach 1, or the speed of sound), a sophisticated threat Integrated Air Defense System, Tactical Combat Training System (TCTS) range, multiple target types, high-altitude weapons training, and on-site adversary (opposition forces) aircraft. These training areas and ranges provide the space necessary to conduct controlled and safe training scenarios representative of those that the military's men and women would have to face in actual combat.

The FRTC provides joint integrated training opportunities, which are vital to advanced-level carrier air wing training and includes support to Air Force, Marine Corps, and National Guard units; support for other mission areas and TAC D&E (including military Unmanned Aircraft System [UAS] [both armed and unarmed] and other intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms); and support for proposed training activities of other services and government agencies.

1.3.2.1 Location and Description of the Fallon Range Training Complex

The FRTC is located in northern Nevada and spans multiple county jurisdictions, from Elko County to the east and Washoe County to the west (see Figure 1-1). The FRTC consists of SUA (detailed descriptions are provided in Section 2.2.1, Special Use Airspace); land training ranges (four air-to-ground training ranges [B-16, B-17, B-19, and B-20], the Shoal Site, and the Dixie Valley Training Area [DVTA]; see Section 2.2.2, Training Ranges, for detailed descriptions); air, simulated sea, fixed and mobile land targets; control facilities; threat EW and surface-to-air missile systems and emulators; and instrumentation facilities. Highway 50 bisects the FRTC and is the main east-west transportation route through the complex.

The complex encompasses approximately 230,000 acres (ac.) (approximately 93,078 hectares) of training land and 12,256 square nautical miles (nm²) of airspace. The FRTC airspace overlies large parts of Churchill, Lander, and Eureka Counties as well as small portions of Pershing County in the north, Nye County in the south, Mineral County in the southwest, and Lyon County in the west fall under the FRTC boundary. Most of the land area under the FRTC airspace consists of vast open tracts of land scattered in some places with private irrigated agricultural land parcels (Section 3.6, Land Use and Recreation, provides additional information on land use in the Study Area).

The major training components of the FRTC include:

- SUA providing designated airspace for specific training activities. Most SUA usage is established for military and government use but may be accessed for commercial or general aviation use when not reserved for utilization by military or government. Detailed descriptions are provided in Section 2.2.1 (Special Use Airspace). SUA available at the FRTC includes Military Operations

Areas (MOAs), Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspaces (ATCAAs), supersonic operating areas, restricted areas, NAWDC working areas, close air support airspace, training ranges, and training areas.

- Extensive instrumentation capability for real-time scoring and feedback as well as post-mission debrief capability. Aviation tracking systems include the TCTS and Link-16. Scoring systems include Weapons Impact Scoring System, strafe scoring, and laser-capable ranges with video camera and acoustic scoring capability.
- Target facilities that support aviation training events. Land targets include laser, strafe, scored bull's-eye, and tactical targets and military operations in urban terrain targets. Target areas on land are separated sufficiently to allow simultaneous operations over multiple target sets.
- A small arms training range located on training range B-19 includes a pistol/shotgun range, a boresight zero range, an automated-record fire range, and a rifle/machine gun range.

1.3.2.2 Training Supported

The Navy's training cycle, the Fleet Readiness Training Plan (F RTP), ensures that naval forces achieve and maintain the capabilities to carry out the requirements of combatant commanders. The F RTP formalizes the traditional Navy building block approach to training in a way that brings the strike groups to the required level of combat readiness earlier in the training cycle and sustains that readiness for a longer period of time. Training proceeds on a continuum, advancing through four phases: (1) maintenance, (2) basic training, (3) integrated/advanced training, and (4) sustainment. Training activities at the FRTC involve unit-level events, coordinated events, and major exercises. This is commonly referred to by the military as the "crawl, walk, run" approach to training. Unit level events are typically of relatively short duration, involve few participants, and are focused on individual and team training within a unit. Coordinated events are typically conducted by several participants of the same type (e.g., two or more air platforms) or several participants of different types working together on the same mission (e.g., a helicopter and an F-18). During major exercises, the number of participants varies and more than one type of training event is conducted.

These activities also allow Navy personnel to build on their experiences in training in a joint (multiservice) environment. Any training that is joint in nature or augments joint training is invaluable, as most conflicts tend to be fought jointly and the ability of the individual Services to work cohesively together while maximizing each Service's own unique capabilities can be the difference between success and failure.

Navy training activities focus on achieving proficiency in each of several functional areas. The functional areas, known as Primary Mission Areas, supported by the FRTC are: AW, STW, EW, Expeditionary Warfare (EXW), and Naval Special Warfare (NSW).

The FRTC hosts coordinated events that includes the following activities:

- Strike Fighter Advanced Readiness Program is designed to develop, refresh, and elevate individual aircrew and squadron proficiency in current strike fighter tactics.
- Strike Fighter Tactics Instructor Course trains pilots in air-to-air and air-to-ground advanced tactical, hardware, and threat training in the strike fighter aircraft.
- Seahawk Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course trains pilots and aircrew in skills and techniques required for advanced performance as weapons and tactics instructors.

- Advanced Mission Commander Course is a rigorous course of instruction designed to train combat information center officers and instructor aircraft plane commanders in the proper employment of an airborne early warning aircraft and joint command and control operations.
- Hawkeye Advanced Readiness Program elevates individual aircrew and squadron proficiency in command and control and ensures tactical standardization in an airborne early warning aircraft.
- Rotary Wing Weapons School Strike Syllabus tailors training to helicopter anti-submarine squadron light and helicopter maritime strike squadron crewmembers.
- Electronic Warfare Advanced Readiness Program develops proficiency in current EW and suppression of enemy air defenses tactics.
- Growler Tactics Instructor Course trains aircrew in the art of advanced electronic attack in an EW aircraft.
- Carrier Air Wing Events ensures the air wing is fully capable to execute power projection warfare in any theater of operations.
- Desert Rescue Large Force Exercise is a joint, multi-national Combat Search and Rescue event.
- Long Range Strike (Joint Task Force Exercise/Composite Training Unit Exercise) allows aircraft to engage in air-to-air warfare, encounter EW threats, strike targets, and refueling.

The training areas that these activities occur in are designed to provide the most realistic training in the most relevant environments, replicating to the best extent possible the stresses of warfare. Typically, they also provide instrumentation that captures the performance of tactics and equipment in order to provide the feedback and assessment that are essential for constructive criticism of personnel and equipment. The live-fire portion of training helps to assess the operator's or unit's ability under stress to place munitions on target with the required level of precision.

1.4 THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

1.4.1 THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

When an agency decides to prepare an EIS, the first step in the NEPA process is to conduct public scoping. Public scoping is initiated with the preparation and publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) to develop the EIS. Scoping is an early and open process for developing the "scope," or range of issues to be addressed in the EIS, and for identifying significant issues related to a Proposed Action. The NOI provides an overview of the Proposed Action, describes the scope of the EIS, and announces public scoping meetings. The NOI for this project was published in the *Federal Register* on May 28, 2013 (78 Federal Register [FR] 31909; Appendix A, Federal Register Notices), and throughout May 2013 in four local newspapers (*Lahontan Valley News*, *Battle Mountain Bugle*, *Nevada Appeal*, and *Reno Gazette-Journal*), which cover Fallon, Fernley, Lahontan Valley, and the general western Nevada region as well as the major metropolitan centers of Reno and Carson City, Nevada. The NOI and newspaper notices included information about comment procedures, the project website address (www.FRTCEIS.com), a list of information repositories (public libraries), the dates and locations of the scoping meetings, and the duration of the public scoping period.

The scoping meetings for this EIS were held in Fallon, Crescent Valley, Gabbs, and Austin, Nevada from June 10 through 13, 2013. Comments from the public, as well as from agencies and public interest groups (such as the State Historic Preservation Officer [SHPO] and non-governmental organizations), including comments regarding the development of alternatives, have been considered in the preparation of this EIS. Public comments received during the scoping process are categorized and summarized in Table 1-1 and Table 1-2. This summary is not intended to provide a complete listing, but to show the range of comments (see Appendix F, Public Participation, for more detail).

Table 1-1: Public Scoping Comment Summary

| Category | Discussion Topic/Summary of Concern |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Description of the Proposed Action | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions regarding whether training could be located/conducted elsewhere • General support for conducting activities under the Proposed Action • Questions regarding private testing of UASs at the FRTC • Notification of activities, including supersonic areas • Concerns regarding impacts from live-fire training exercises, including potential for wildfires, noise impacts to wildlife, soil and water contamination, and safety risk from unexploded military munitions |
| Noise | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns over noise associated with training activities and sonic booms from aircraft activities affecting humans, as well as wildlife (sage grouse) • Concerns regarding health effects from aircraft noise |
| Cultural | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns that Pony Express stations ruins and the fragile adobe ruins at Fort Churchill could be adversely impacted by vibrations generated by overflights and other activities |
| Mitigation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns regarding continuance of flood water mitigation for Churchill County and the City of Fallon on B-16 |
| Other current studies (JLUS) | <p>Current JLUS identified numerous concerns that should be addressed in this EIS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bird and wildlife strike hazards • Concern over size/use of B-17 • Noise • Supersonic flight operations • Flight tracks traversing sensitive wildlife habitat or areas with animal populations • Sage grouse is a candidate for designation as threatened and endangered species • Concerns about air quality • Concern about fuel dumping • Protection of cultural resources • Cultural resources coordination process • Accessing cultural resources by Native Americans |

Notes: (1) The Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) is a cooperative land use planning effort conducted as a joint venture between an active military installation, surrounding cities and counties, state and federal agencies, and other affected stakeholders.

(2) B = Bravo, EIS = Environmental Impact Statement, FRTC = Fallon Range Training Complex, JLUS = Joint Land Use Study, UAS = Unmanned Aircraft System.

Subsequent to the scoping process, the Draft EIS was prepared to assess the potential effects of the Proposed Action and Alternatives on the environment. A Notice of Availability for the Draft EIS was published in the *Federal Register*, and notices were placed in the aforementioned newspapers announcing the availability of the Draft EIS. The 45-day public comment period on the Draft EIS began with the issuance of the Notice of Availability and a Notice of Public Meetings in the Federal Register on January 23, 2015 (80 FR 3570; Appendix A, Federal Register Notices) and concluded on March 9, 2015 (so as not to end on a Sunday). The Navy made every effort to notify the public to ensure maximum public participation during the public comment period, including using letters to local, state, tribal, and federal officials and agencies; postcards; press releases; and newspaper display advertisements. A public meeting was advertised and held on February 19, 2015, to receive public comments on the Draft EIS. This Final EIS includes responses to the 11 public, tribal, and agency comment letters (containing 53 unique comments) received on the Draft EIS (Table F.3-2, F.3-3, and F.3-4 provide a listing of all comments received on the Draft EIS and the Navy's response in Appendix F, Public Participation). Responses to public comments may take various forms as necessary, including correction of data, clarifications of and modifications to analytical approaches, and inclusion of additional data or analyses. A 30-day waiting period will follow the issuance of this Final EIS.

Finally, after consideration of the administrative record, a Record of Decision (ROD) will be signed by the Secretary of the Navy. The ROD will document the Navy’s final decision on the Proposed Action, the rationale behind that decision, and any commitments to mitigation and monitoring. A *Notice of Availability of the Record of Decision* will be published in the *Federal Register*, and the ROD will be distributed to agencies and interested parties, and posted on the FRTC EIS website (www.FRTCEIS.com). The ROD will also be announced in local newspapers.

Table 1-2: Categorization of Public Scoping Comment by Resource Area

| Resource Issues | Comments¹ |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Description of the Proposed Action | 7 |
| Noise | 7 |
| Wildlife | 6 |
| Cultural | 5 |
| Public Health and Safety | 4 |
| Mitigation | 2 |
| Soils | 1 |
| Water Quality | 1 |
| Air Quality | 1 |
| Other | 1 |
| COMMENT TOTALS | 35 |

¹ Comment totals do not reflect total number of comments from individuals, as some comment responses contained comments on more than one resource area.

1.4.2 GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS

As part of this EIS process and in accordance with Executive Order (EO) 13175, *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*, the Navy has invited Government-to-Government consultations with the following Native American Tribes: the Battle Mountain Shoshone Tribe, Duckwater Shoshone Tribe, Elko Shoshone Tribe, Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe, Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada, Lovelock Paiute, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, South Fork Shoshone, Te-Moak Tribe, Walker River Paiute Tribe, Winnemucca Paiute Tribe, Yerington Paiute Tribe, and Yomba Shoshone Tribe. In accordance with 36 C.F.R. 800, regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470f), as amended and regulations implementing NEPA (40 C.F.R. §1508.8), consultation has been ongoing throughout the Navy’s development of this EIS. The Navy has solicited comments from Native American tribes potentially affected by the project by letter, phone, and e-mail and has received both written and oral responses. As is required by 36 C.F.R. 800 and as is appropriate, the Navy will continue to actively engage the tribes in Government-to-Government consultations until the end of the project.

1.4.3 ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 established protection over and conservation of threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend (16 U.S.C. §1531 *et seq.*). An “endangered” species is a species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range, while a “threatened” species is one that is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or in a significant portion of its range. The USFWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) jointly administer the ESA and are also responsible for the listing of species

(designating a species as either threatened or endangered). The USFWS has primary management responsibility for terrestrial and freshwater species, while NMFS has primary responsibility for marine species and anadromous fish species (species that migrate from saltwater to freshwater to spawn). The ESA provided for the designation of geographic areas as critical habitat for threatened or endangered species.

The ESA requires federal agencies, in consultation with the USFWS and NMFS, to ensure that actions they authorize, fund, or carry out are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any threatened or endangered species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat of such species. Under Section 9, the ESA prohibits the take of endangered or threatened species within the United States. The ESA broadly defines “take” to include “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect.” Under Section 7 of the ESA, “jeopardize” means to engage in any action that would be expected to reduce appreciably the likelihood of survival and recovery of a listed species by reducing its reproduction, numbers, or distribution.

The Navy utilized pre-existing survey data on NAS Fallon-administered lands and the USFWS’ Information, Planning, and Conservation System to query ESA-listed species underneath FRTC airspace for analysis. Three species of fish were identified in the FRTC Study Area. One is listed as endangered (cui-ui [*Chasmistes cujus*]), and the other two are threatened (Lahontan cutthroat trout [*Onchoryhncus clarkia henshawi*] and Railroad Valley springfish [*Crenichtys nevadae*]). Additionally, the query returned one species of bird listed as a candidate species (greater sage grouse [*Centrocercus urophasianus*]), one amphibian listed as a candidate species (Columbia spotted frog [*Rana luteiventris*]), and one conifer listed as a candidate species (whitebark pine [*Pinus albicaulis*]). Since the time of the query, the USFWS has determined that the Bi-State population of greater sage-grouse does not require the protection of the ESA (80 FR 22827). None of the avian, mammalian, or plant species found on lands administered by NAS Fallon are currently listed or proposed for listing under the ESA, nor is there any critical habitat for ESA-listed species. Section 3.5 (Biological Resources) describes the currently listed species that may occur at the FRTC.

1.4.4 OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS CONSIDERED

The Navy must comply with a variety of other federal environmental laws, regulations, and EOs, which are detailed in their respective resource sections in this EIS. These include (among other applicable laws and regulations):

- Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 C.F.R. §§1500–1508)
- Department of the Navy Procedures for Implementing NEPA (32 C.F.R. §775)
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. §§703–712)
- Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. §§668–668d)
- Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. §§7401 *et seq.*)
- Clean Air Act General Conformity Rule (40 C.F.R. §93[B])
- Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. §§1251–1387)
- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (42 U.S.C. §§6901–6908a)
- The Sikes Act of 1960 (16 U.S.C. §§670a–670o, as amended by the Sikes Act Improvement Act of 1997, Pub. L. No. 105-85)
- National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. §470 *et seq.*)
- Archeological Resources Protection Act (16 U.S.C. §§470aa–mm)

- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 U.S.C. §§3001–3013)
- American Indian Religious Freedom Act (42 U.S.C. §1996)
- Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act Title (42 U.S.C. §11001 *et seq.*)
- Farmland Protection Policy Act (25 U.S.C. §1539 *et seq.*)
- Plant Protection Act (7 U.S.C. §§7701–7786)
- Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act (Public Law 92-195)
- EO 11990, *Protection of Wetlands*
- EO 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*
- EO 13007, *Indian Sacred Sites*
- EO 13045, *Protection of Children From Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks* (62 FR 19885)
- EO 13175, *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*
- EO 13423, *Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management*
- EO 13112, *Invasive Species*
- EO 13693, *Planning for Federal Sustainability in the Next Decade*

1.5 RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS

The progression of NEPA documentation for Navy activities has developed from planning individual range complex exercises and testing events, to theater assessment planning that spans multiple years and covers multiple range complexes. The following documents are referenced in this EIS where appropriate:

- *Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for NAS Fallon*, March 2006 (U.S. Department of the Navy 2014)
- *Final Legislative EIS for Withdrawal of Public Lands for Range Safety and Training Purposes*, May 1998
- *Final Legislative EIS for the Renewal of the B-20 Land Withdrawal*, December 1998
- *Final EIS, Proposed Fallon Training Range Complex Requirements*, January 2000. A ROD was also prepared by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for airspace changes proposed in this EIS.
- *Environmental Assessment for Proposed Addition of Training Activities and Range Enhancements at Naval Air Station Fallon on Training Range Bravo-16, Churchill County, Nevada*, September 2014
- *Environmental Assessment for Airfield Operations at Naval Air Station Fallon*, August 2013

1.5.1 FINAL LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR WITHDRAWAL OF PUBLIC LANDS FOR RANGE SAFETY AND TRAINING PURPOSES – MAY 1998

In this Legislative EIS, the Navy proposed to withdraw federally administered land within the FRTC to facilitate and improve the realistic operational and strategic combat training conducted there and to provide public safety buffers. All lands proposed for withdrawal at the time were being administered by the BLM, Bureau of Reclamation, or the Department of Energy (DOE). The focus was on the FRTC ranges B-16, B-17, B-19, the Shoal Site, and Dixie Valley. The land withdrawal renewal for B-20 was evaluated in a separate Legislative EIS (see below). Besides the No Action Alternative, three action alternatives were evaluated in detail in the Legislative EIS. These alternatives proposed to withdraw between 127,365 and 189,080 ac. (51,542.8 and 76,518 ha) of public land that would then be placed into two categories

related to future public access, Categories A and B. Category A lands would be managed by the Navy and closed to public access. Category B lands would include all other withdrawn lands and would be open for public use. Identified impacts of the withdrawal included the closure of public access and potential effects to mining, visual resources, and recreation from development of small sites and from integrated air and ground training activities. Mitigation measures were provided to reduce the level of impact (Alternative 2 of the EIS included two fixed 5.7 acre EW sites on public lands in Edwards Creek and Gabbs Valleys. The size of these two sites were reduced to 3.0 acres each to decrease the area of surface disturbance on public lands). The ROD, released on April 10, 2010, announced the plan to implement the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 2) of the EIS, as modified.

1.5.2 FINAL LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE BRAVO-20 LAND WITHDRAWAL – DECEMBER 1998

This Legislative EIS supported the Congressional reauthorization of the withdrawal of public lands comprising B-20. Withdrawal of these public lands was previously reauthorized in November 1986 under the Military Lands Withdrawal Act (MLWA) of 1986 (Public Law 99-606). Under the proposed action, the Navy reapplied for the renewal of 21,576 ac. (8,731.5 ha) of withdrawn land and continue to use B-20 for training operations consistent with those currently conducted and as specified in Section 1(a)(2)(A) and (B) of PL 99-606. Under the proposed action, there were no increases in aircraft operations.

This EIS analyzed the potential environmental impacts from the Preferred Alternative and the No Action Alternative on land use, biological resources, geology and soils, water resources, cultural resources, environmental justice and socioeconomics, air quality, noise, mineral resources, livestock and wild horse management, recreation and visual resources, public health and safety, and transportation. The EIS also evaluated the potential cumulative effects of the continued use of other existing and proposed NAS Fallon and other Department of Defense (DoD) and DOE land withdrawal and airspace actions. As presented in the analysis of the EIS, the Proposed Action would not result in any significant impacts. Withdrawal of these public lands was reauthorized in October 1999 under the MLWA of 1999 (Public Law 106-65).

1.5.3 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT, PROPOSED FALLON TRAINING RANGE COMPLEX REQUIREMENTS – JANUARY 2000

In 1998, NSAWC conducted an evaluation (resulting in a Training Requirements Document) of the training assets at NAS Fallon and compared these capabilities against Navy tactical aviation training objectives. The purpose was to determine whether these assets necessitated any changes in the training environment at the FRTC to meet current training requirements. The Training Requirements Document assessed and reported current and future training needs and operational requirements for NAS Fallon and outlined changes necessary to both update and consolidate Navy training on public and Navy-administered lands and update existing airspace parameters overlying these lands.

Under the Proposed Action evaluated in the EIS, the Navy proposed to develop EW sites on public and Navy-administered lands, four tracking instrumentation subsystem remote sites on public lands, fiber optic cable routes from the air station to the B-16 and B-19 training ranges, and helicopter gunnery ranges on B-17 and B-19. The Navy also proposed to use Navy-administered lands in Dixie Valley for close air support training, revise the operating hours of the Reno MOA, and raise the ceiling of restricted area airspace to allow for high-altitude weapons delivery training at B-17 and B-20. Actions on public lands required rights-of-way from the BLM. Because actions were going to occur on lands administered by both the Navy and the BLM Carson City and Battle Mountain Field Offices, the Navy and the BLM prepared the EIS as joint lead agencies.

The EIS analyzed the potential environmental impacts from the proposed action, three alternatives to the Proposed Action, and the No Action Alternative. No significant impacts were identified from any of the alternatives analyzed. The ROD, released on April 14, 2000, announced the decision to implement the preferred alternative, Alternative 2, for the Proposed FRTC Requirements at NAS Fallon, Nevada.

1.5.4 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED ADDITION OF TRAINING ACTIVITIES AND RANGE ENHANCEMENTS AT NAVAL AIR STATION FALLON ON TRAINING RANGE BRAVO-16, CHURCHILL COUNTY, NEVADA, SEPTEMBER 2014

The Navy proposed to provide additional training activities and training enhancements to the existing Tactical Ground Mobility platform and air/ground inter-operability training conducted at B-16 of NAS Fallon since 2008. The Proposed Action was to improve the B-16 training range to meet Navy and joint training requirements by: (1) closing to public entry two portions of B-16 that are currently open to the public and installing a new fence around these areas; (2) installing rail-mounted moving target systems for live fire training; (3) developing and operating a semi-prepared expedient landing zone for C-130 aircraft; (4) developing and operating a launch and recovery area for unarmed, UAS training; (5) re-routing the primary access road to the Drop Zone to accommodate the new C-130 aircraft and UAS operations; (6) installing a new range tower within the Drop Zone; (7) installing visual cueing items, including relocatable habitat units (RHUs); and (8) establishing two free maneuver areas in the southwestern and northwestern portions of B-16. Implementing the Proposed Action allowed for efficient training or primary use of the space for NSWC over other ground training groups.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluated the environmental consequences of the two action alternatives and a No Action Alternative. Both action alternatives would have provided additional training activities and training enhancements and improved the B-16 training range to meet Navy and joint training requirements. Potential environmental impacts were analyzed for air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, land use, noise, public health and safety, public services and utilities, socioeconomics, transportation and traffic, visual resources, and water resources and hydrology. As described in the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) dated September 29, 2014, the Proposed Action, as described above, was selected for implementation over the other two alternatives as it best met the purpose and need for the project and would not result in significant impacts to the human or natural environment.

1.5.5 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR AIRFIELD OPERATIONS AT NAVAL AIR STATION FALLON, AUGUST 2013

The EA evaluated the potential for environmental impacts from the U.S. Navy Proposed Action to support and conduct airfield operations at NAS Fallon. The Proposed Action was to maintain current/baseline airfield operations, conduct airfield operations with new types of aircraft, and increase airfield operations to support future potential training conditions. At the time, airfield operations at NAS Fallon supported advanced tactical training events by Carrier Air Wings (CVWs) and other aviation units. As aircraft transitions occur, CVWs and other aviation units would arrive at NAS Fallon to participate in training events with newer aircraft, such as the F-35C Lightning II, EA-18G Growler, and RQ-7B Shadow. The Navy would progressively transition from aging aircraft to newer aircraft beginning in 2015, with the transition to be completed by 2028. Training courses with F-35C would begin in 2017. Proposed facility development required to support aircraft missions at NAS Fallon would include space for aircraft maintenance, crew and equipment, administration, training, and a UAS runway and staging area. This EA was focused on airfield operations only and did not include analysis of training activities in the FRTC

because aircraft arriving and departing from NAS Fallon do not all train in the FRTC, nor do all aircraft using the FRTC originate from NAS Fallon.

Potential environmental impacts were analyzed for airfields and airspace, noise, air quality, land use, socioeconomics and environmental justice, safety, ground traffic and transportation, cultural resources, biological resources, geological resources, water resources, and hazardous materials and wastes. As described in the FONSI dated August 19, 2013, the Proposed Action as described above would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. The FONSI indicated that impacts to cultural resources required mitigation to reduce significance. Particularly, one archaeological site (26CH1963) is located within the proposed new hangar's parking apron and is unevaluated and being treated as eligible for listing under the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). In letters dated June 14 and July 29, 2013, the Nevada SHPO concurred with the Navy's determination that the proposed undertaking will pose an adverse effect to 26CH1963. Depending on what is found through testing which is still ongoing and if it is determined eligible, NAS Fallon, in consultation with Nevada SHPO and appropriate Native American tribes, will negotiate a MOA to develop plans and processes for minimizing and mitigating the impact, including but not limited to data recovery. Under the NHPA, resolution of an adverse effect through execution of an MOA will reduce impacts to below a level of significance under NEPA; therefore, there would be no significant impacts to cultural resources.

This Page Intentionally Left Blank