

Fallon Range Training Complex Modernization Update – Spring 2021 (<https://frtcmodernization.com/Project-Updates>)

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (NDAA FY2021) was enacted into law on Jan. 1, 2021. The NDAA FY2021 extended the withdrawal of public lands currently comprising the Fallon Range Training Complex (FRTC) for 25 years but did not include modernization as proposed by the Navy. The Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying NDAA FY2021 included the following language:

"The House bill contained a provision (sec. 2842) that would renew the existing land withdrawal and reservation for the FRTC for a period of 25 years. The Senate amendment contained a similar provision (sec. 2861). The Senate recedes. The conferees note this renewal maintains the status quo of the FRTC. However, the conferees also note that with the increasing deployment of 5th generation fighters, finding a way to expand the FRTC, in a manner that is responsive to the needs of all stakeholders is essential for the Nation's tactical aviation readiness and improved ground forces training. The conferees direct the [Department of the Navy] to continue to work with the committees of jurisdiction, the Nevada congressional delegation, [and] State and Tribal stakeholders to secure a mutually-agreed upon expansion at FRTC."

As directed by this language, the Navy will work in collaboration with stakeholders to develop a modernization proposal for future consideration.

Record of Decision Commitment Updates

The Navy has been working to meet the commitments made in the Record of Decision since it was signed March 12, 2020. The Navy has documented progress made as of Spring 2021, presented by topic.

GENERAL PROJECT

Commitment	Status	Notes
<p>Rotate B-17 expansion to avoid State Route 839 and the Rawhide Mine.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>The Navy changed the orientation of the B-17 proposed expansion to avoid Sand Springs, State Route 839 (which leads to the Rawhide Mine), and the Fairview Peak communication site.</p>
<p>Establish an Intergovernmental Executive Committee (IEC) with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), State of Nevada, tribal representatives, and other stakeholders.</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<p>Both the Record of Decision and Section 2844 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (NDAA FY2021) direct the Navy and the Department of the Interior to establish an IEC <i>"for the purpose of exchanging views, information, and advice relating to the management of the natural and cultural resources"</i> on the lands withdrawn by the NDAA FY2021. The Navy is developing the required agreement establishing the IEC and has begun meeting with stakeholders to initiate this effort.</p>
<p>Properly notify and compensate private landowners within the proposed expansion withdrawal area for losses.</p>	<p>Planned</p>	<p>If the proposed modernization is ultimately approved by Congress, the Navy will notify affected stakeholders and offer fair market value for the purchase of any property required by the Navy after withdrawal is enacted and funds appropriated.</p>
<p>Reduce Bravo range withdrawal areas to match proposed Weapons Danger Zones (WDZ) by utilizing the smallest possible sectional breakdown.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>The Navy has reduced withdrawal boundaries as much as possible, taking into account training requirements, safety, and security.</p>

Commitment	Status	Notes
Reduce the boundary of B-20 to avoid the Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge (NWR).	Complete	The Navy will avoid the Stillwater NWR.

CULTURAL RESOURCES/TRIBES

Commitment	Status	Notes
Work with Walker River Paiute Tribe to address the existing off-range ordnance contamination issue on the Walker River Reservation.	In Progress	The Navy is working with the Walker River Paiute Tribe and coordinating with the Department of the Interior and congressional delegation in an effort to resolve off-range ordnance issues.
Revise the Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan (ICRMP) with tribal input.	Planned	If the proposed modernization is ultimately approved by Congress, the Navy will revise the current ICRMP to ensure lands coming under its control are managed to protect cultural and tribal resources. Tribes will be asked to participate in the revision.
Execute the amended 2011 Programmatic Agreement (PA) and invite Tribes to sign as concurring parties.	Complete	An amended PA was signed March 3, 2020, by the Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Navy. Tribes have been invited to sign as concurring parties.
Initiate development of a replacement PA within 90 days of the signing of the Record of Decision.	Complete	The Navy sent letters to Tribes and stakeholders in early June 2020 to initiate consultation concerning a replacement PA. The plan and schedule for the development of the replacement PA was shared with Tribes in January 2021.

Commitment	Status	Notes
Complete ethnographic overview study of expanded ranges.	In Progress	The Navy has awarded the ethnographic study contract. Initial discussions were held with Tribes in March 2020 and further discussions are ongoing through regular meetings.
Complete cultural resources surveys on expanded Weapons Danger Zones (buffer areas) within B-17 and B-20.	In Progress	Plans are proceeding for Class III pedestrian surveys (intensive surveys to locate and record cultural properties), starting with the B-20 buffer areas. Initial discussions were held with Tribes in March 2020 and further discussions are ongoing through regular meetings.
Ensure Tribes are involved with the development of the ethnographic study and cultural resources surveys; compensate them as appropriate for their contributions and support.	In Progress	The Navy has consulted with Tribes, and contractors will seek tribal expertise to conduct the study and surveys.
Develop protocols for tribal access to areas of religious and cultural significance in Bravo ranges.	In Progress	The Navy held a kickoff meeting and is developing a tribal access agreement with the Tribes.
Establish a Tribal Liaison Office.	Complete	The Navy has established and on-boarded two new positions at Naval Air Station Fallon: Tribal Liaison and Range Access Coordinator.
Commit to unrestricted tribal access to the Dixie Valley Training Area (DVTA), including new expanded areas.	Complete	There will be no Navy restrictions on tribal access to the DVTA.
Avoid sacred sites and traditional cultural properties wherever possible.	Planned	The Navy will strive to avoid cultural sites when placing targets, fencing, or other infrastructure. Existing and planned cultural resources surveys, which will include tribal participation, will inform placement

Commitment	Status	Notes
		decisions. For target areas, required surveys are complete.

ACCESS PROTOCOLS AND AGREEMENTS

Commitment	Status	Notes
Develop protocols for tribal access to areas of religious and cultural significance in Bravo ranges.	In Progress	The Navy is actively working with Tribes to develop a tribal access agreement.
Develop an agreement with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to address land management of the Dixie Valley Training Area (DVTA). Include protocols for leasable geothermal and uses compatible with the military mission.	Planned	Navy and BLM staff will develop a memorandum of agreement for land management of the DVTA.
Allow U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) personnel access to the portion of the Fallon National Wildlife Refuge that falls within B-20 and mitigate public access impacts.	Planned	The Navy will develop access protocols for USFWS personnel and is currently negotiating appropriate mitigation for the loss of public access.
Coordinate with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) for management access within B-16 and B-20 ranges to facilitate flood control measures.	Planned	The Navy will develop range access procedures with BOR to ensure accountability and safety.
Develop range access procedures to facilitate scientific, research, and management activities within the Bravo ranges.	Planned	The Navy is collaborating and will continue collaboration with the Nevada Department of Wildlife and other state agencies on agreements to facilitate resource management,

Commitment	Status	Notes
		scientific, and research measures compatible with the mission.

MINING AND MINERAL RESOURCES

Commitment	Status	Notes
Allow saleable mineral mining activities in the Dixie Valley Training Area (DVTA).	Complete	The Navy has committed to allowing saleable mineral mining in the DVTA.
Allow geothermal exploration/development in the DVTA west of State Highway 121, consistent with design features identified in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.	Complete	The Navy has committed to allowing geothermal development (with required design features) in the DVTA, on the west side of State Highway 121.
Notify and make payments to mining claim holders if impacted by the modernization.	Planned	If the proposed modernization is ultimately approved by Congress, the Navy will notify owners of validated mining claims and compensate them after the withdrawal is enacted and funds are appropriated. Nominal payments will be offered to holders of non-validated claims to relinquish their claims.
Minimize withdrawal overlap with the Bell Mountain mining claim area on northeast corner of expanded B-17.	Complete	The Navy worked with mine owners to reduce potential impacts, including aligning the proposed withdrawal to the smallest possible area.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING

Commitment	Status	Notes
Notify grazing permit holders of impacts and potential changes of the existing boundaries.	In Progress	If the proposed modernization is ultimately approved, the Navy will send status update letters to each potentially affected permit holder.
Commit to allowing grazing in the Dixie Valley Training Area (DVTA).	Complete	Grazing permits in the DVTA will not be impacted by the proposed withdrawal.
Make payments to grazing permit holders for losses from the modernization under Taylor Grazing Act.	Planned	The Navy outlined the valuation methodology it will follow in the Final Environmental Impact Statement and will provide appropriate payments, if the proposed modernization is ultimately approved by Congress. The Navy will notify the Bureau of Land Management and each permit holder to begin the process of trying to replace forage and/or making payments arising from loss of grazing privileges once the withdrawal is enacted and funds appropriated.

TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES

Commitment	Status	Notes
Request funding from Congress to realign State Highway 361, which will be impacted by the expansion of B-17.	Planned	The Navy has requested Congressional appropriation to relocate a 15-mile section of State Highway 361.
Reroute Sand Canyon Road or provide alternative access around the north side of B-16.	Planned	The Navy will provide alternative access around the north side of B-16.

Commitment	Status	Notes
Request funding from Congress to improve State Highway 718 (Lone Tree Road), which is heavily used by Navy SEALs training on B-16.	Planned	The Navy has requested Congressional appropriation to improve a three-mile section of State Highway 718.
Accommodate a right of way along the northeast boundary of B-16 to allow the I-11, B-2 corridor between the northeast corner of the withdrawal area and existing private property at the end of Lone Tree Road.	Complete	The Navy has committed to allowing this right of way.
In coordination with state and county representatives, fund and conduct a study to identify alternatives and costs to reroute Pole Line Road out of the expanded B-20 range or identify alternative regional ingress/egress routes.	Planned	The Navy will work with state and county representatives to relocate the road.
Relinquish the currently withdrawn areas that include Simpson Road and the area south of the road.	Complete	The Navy relinquished existing withdrawn land on and south of Simpson Road as part of legislation.
Avoid identified county roads.	Complete	The Navy will avoid identified county roads where possible.
Recognize and honor existing rights of way for roads that qualify under Revised Statute 2477.	Complete	The Navy recognizes and honors any existing rights of way for roads that qualify under Revised Statute 2477 but defers to courts of appropriate jurisdiction or the Department of the Interior on Revised Statute 2477 determinations.

Commitment	Status	Notes
Avoid withdrawing East County Road or land east of the road.	Complete	The Navy will not withdraw East County Road or adjacent public lands to the east of the road.
Avoid withdrawing areas along U.S. Routes 50 and 95, State Highway 839, and Earthquake Fault Road. Assure public access to State Highway 121.	Complete	The withdrawal application does not impact U.S. Routes 50 and 95, State Highway 839, and Earthquake Fault Road. State Highway 121 will remain a public conveyance.
Purchase the portion of the Paiute Pipeline within the proposed B-17 Weapons Danger Zone (WDZ) and facilitate construction of the relocated portion of the pipeline to circumnavigate the WDZ.	Planned	The Navy is continuing planning to support purchase and relocation of the portion of the Paiute Pipeline within the proposed B-17 withdrawal area. Follow-on, site-specific environmental analysis and planning would be required before any potential relocation of the pipeline could occur.
Support the Dixie Valley Water Project.	Complete	The Navy will accommodate development of the Dixie Valley water project in the DVTA consistent with Navy training requirements.
Accommodate two additional (electrical) transmission lines or a utility corridor in the DVTA.	Complete	The Navy will accommodate two additional utility transmission lines or a utility corridor that run(s) parallel and as close as possible to the existing power line that runs parallel to State Highway 121 to facilitate a larger energy corridor.

AIRSPACE AND NOISE

Commitment	Status	Notes
Revise the Range Operations Manual (ROM) to identify Crescent Valley and Eureka as noise-sensitive areas.	Complete	The ROM was revised to include this measure.

Commitment	Status	Notes
Implement a three-nautical-mile airspace exclusion zone over Gabbs and Eureka airfields.	Planned	The Navy will implement these exclusion zones in the ROM as airspace is approved by Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
Provide for an airport exclusion zone (five-nautical-mile radius and 0-1,500' AGL) around Gabbs, Crescent Valley and Eureka airports.	Complete	The Navy will partially accommodate this request by providing a three-nautical-mile exclusion zone for each airport.
Extend the VFR corridor through the newly established airspace.	Complete	The Navy will ensure the FAA incorporates VFR corridor extension in various airspace charts.

WATER RESOURCES

Commitment	Status	Notes
Notify water right owners of impacts on access to water rights and potential use inside of new Weapons Danger Zones and Surface Danger Zones; compensate appropriately.	Planned	If the proposed modernization is ultimately approved by Congress, the Navy will notify impacted water rights holders and offer fair market value.
Allow the Nevada Department of Wildlife to access spring and wildlife guzzlers monitoring and maintenance.	Planned	The Navy is developing range access procedures to ensure access and accountability and safety.
Relinquish 23 acres along State Highway 839 to allow unabated access to support livestock and wildlife with water resources.	Complete	The Navy adjusted boundaries to relinquish this area, reducing the proposed withdrawal by 23 acres.
Implement management practices and mitigation measures specifically designed to reduce or avoid potential impacts on surface	Complete	Management practices, such as avoiding placing targets in washes, will be addressed in the revised Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan, which will be initiated if

Commitment	Status	Notes
water and groundwater, such as placing targets outside of washes.		proposed modernization is ultimately approved.

CONSERVATION/BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Commitment	Status	Notes
Revise the Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW).	Planned	The Navy will revise the INRMP if modernization is ultimately approved. Additional management practices are expected to be included in the revised INRMP given the increased number of acres.
Revise the Fire Management Plan.	In Progress	The Navy is revising the Fire Management Plan to address current lands. The planned revision for currently withdrawn lands is expected to be complete before the end of 2021. A revision to the plan to address the expanded areas will be initiated if the modernization is approved.
Avoid target placement in Biologically Sensitive Areas.	Complete	The Navy will avoid these areas.
Fund and complete a study in collaboration with NDOW to further assess the impacts of aircraft overflight on the greater sage-grouse.	In Progress	The Navy has initiated discussions with NDOW and other stakeholders to develop study objectives, methods, and protocols.
Incorporate four-wire, wildlife-friendly fencing to minimize impacts on wildlife.	Planned	The Navy will use four-wire, wildlife-friendly fencing.

Commitment	Status	Notes
Fund two conservation law enforcement officers to patrol fence lines and address trespassing violations.	In Progress	If the proposed modernization is ultimately approved by Congress, the Navy will move to finalize and onboard these positions.

RECREATION AND SOCIOECONOMICS

Commitment	Status	Notes
Establish and maintain a bighorn sheep hunting program on B-17.	Planned	The Navy is currently developing a memorandum of agreement with the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) and is continuing discussions to ensure a minimum two-week hunting season on B-17.
Develop a collaborative plan with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and NDOW to evaluate wildlife guzzler locations and develop access protocols to maintain those guzzlers within the Weapons Danger Zones.	Planned	The Navy will develop a plan with BLM and NDOW to maintain wildlife guzzlers.
Compensate property right owners/holders for losses associated with the withdrawal.	Planned	The Navy will begin the process to acquire any required real property if and when the proposed modernization is enacted and funds are appropriated.