DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
355TH CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON (ACC)
DAVIS-MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE, ARIZONA

January 21, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR STAKEHOLDERS

FROM: 355 CES/CEIE

SUBJECT: Notice of Intent to prepare Environmental Impact Statement for Special Use Airspace Optimization to Support Air Force Missions in Arizona

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, and its implementing regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508), the Department of the Air Force (DAF) is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of optimizing the special use airspace available to support Air Force missions in Arizona. The DAF is proposing to modify existing Air Force managed Military Operations Areas (MOAs) and associated Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspace (ATCAA) to address training needs for aircrews stationed at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base (AFB), Luke AFB, and Morris Air National Guard Base (ANGB) in Arizona. This regional action is being jointly proposed by leadership at all three DAF installations, but Davis-Monthan AFB is serving as the lead proponent for interagency, intergovernmental, and public stakeholder coordination.

A MOA is a type of special use airspace with defined spatial boundaries within the National Airspace System designated to contain non-hazardous, military flight activities, such as basic air combat maneuvers and low-altitude operations. ATCAAs are not special use airspace but can support the same training activities that occur in MOAs. An ATCAA exists in higher altitudes within the National Airspace System and can be requested by the military to extend the usable training airspace. ATCAAs typically have the same horizontal boundaries of the underlying MOA and an agreed upon ceiling.

Many of the DAF managed MOAs available to aircrews in this region were first charted decades ago and have had minimal improvements over time to meet current and evolving training requirements. The DAF is proposing regional airspace modifications to address the training shortfalls caused by the insufficient existing special use airspace to include: changing the published times of use; adjusting the horizontal dimensions of one MOA; lowering the defined floor of some MOAs to allow for additional low-altitude training in the region; and adjusting the attributes of some airspace to allow for supersonic flight below 30,000 feet mean sea level and use of chaff and flares. The Proposed Action does not include any changes at the installations (personnel, infrastructure, aircraft inventory, or airfield operations), ground disturbance beneath the MOAs, or weapons deployment. The special use airspace being addressed in the EIS includes several Air Force managed MOAs and their associated ATCAAs (named Tombstone, Outlaw, Jackal, Morenci, Reserve, Bagdad, Gladden, Sells, Ruby, and Fuzzy) located throughout Arizona and a small area of western New Mexico (see Enclosure 1).

The DAF is soliciting comments on three preliminary alternatives that would optimize the existing MOAs. The EIS will also evaluate a No Action Alternative per 40 CFR 1502.14 (Alternative 1). Alternative 2 includes all proposed modifications to optimize the MOAs/ATCAAs. Alternatives 3 and 4 are variations of Alternative 2. A summary of each of these is provided below, please visit the project website (www.ArizonaRegionalAirspaceEIS.com) for detailed information on these alternatives.

Alternative 1 (No Action) – airspace optimization would not occur. None of the existing MOAs/ATCAAs would be modified.

Alternative 2 – optimize DAF managed MOAs/ATCAAs to address existing and future training deficiencies for training aircrews stationed at Davis-Monthan AFB, Luke AFB, and Morris ANGB due to insufficient airspace. Major actions would include: changing the published times of use for the MOAs to align with current training hours; increasing the size of the Tombstone MOA/ATCAA by moving the northern boundary approximately 10 nautical miles to the north and lowering the subsonic floor to 100 feet above ground level (AGL); lowering the subsonic floor of four MOAs to 500 feet AGL (Outlaw, Jackal, Bagdad and Gladden MOAs); authorizing the use of chaff in Tombstone MOA and lowering the altitude for releasing flares in Tombstone, Outlaw, Jackal, Bagdad, and Gladden MOAs; and authorizing supersonic flight down to 5,000 feet AGL in Tombstone, Outlaw, Jackal, Morenci, and Reserve MOAs.

Alternative 3 – optimize DAF managed MOAs/ATCAAs to address existing and future training deficiencies due to insufficient airspace. Major actions would include all of those listed for Alternative 2 except for increasing the size of Tombstone MOA/ATCAA by expanding the northern boundary. The subsonic floor of the Tombstone MOA would still be lowered to 100 feet AGL. Additionally, to increase the low-altitude airspace available to support Davis-Monthan AFB, the subsonic floor of Jackal MOA would be lowered to 100 feet AGL.

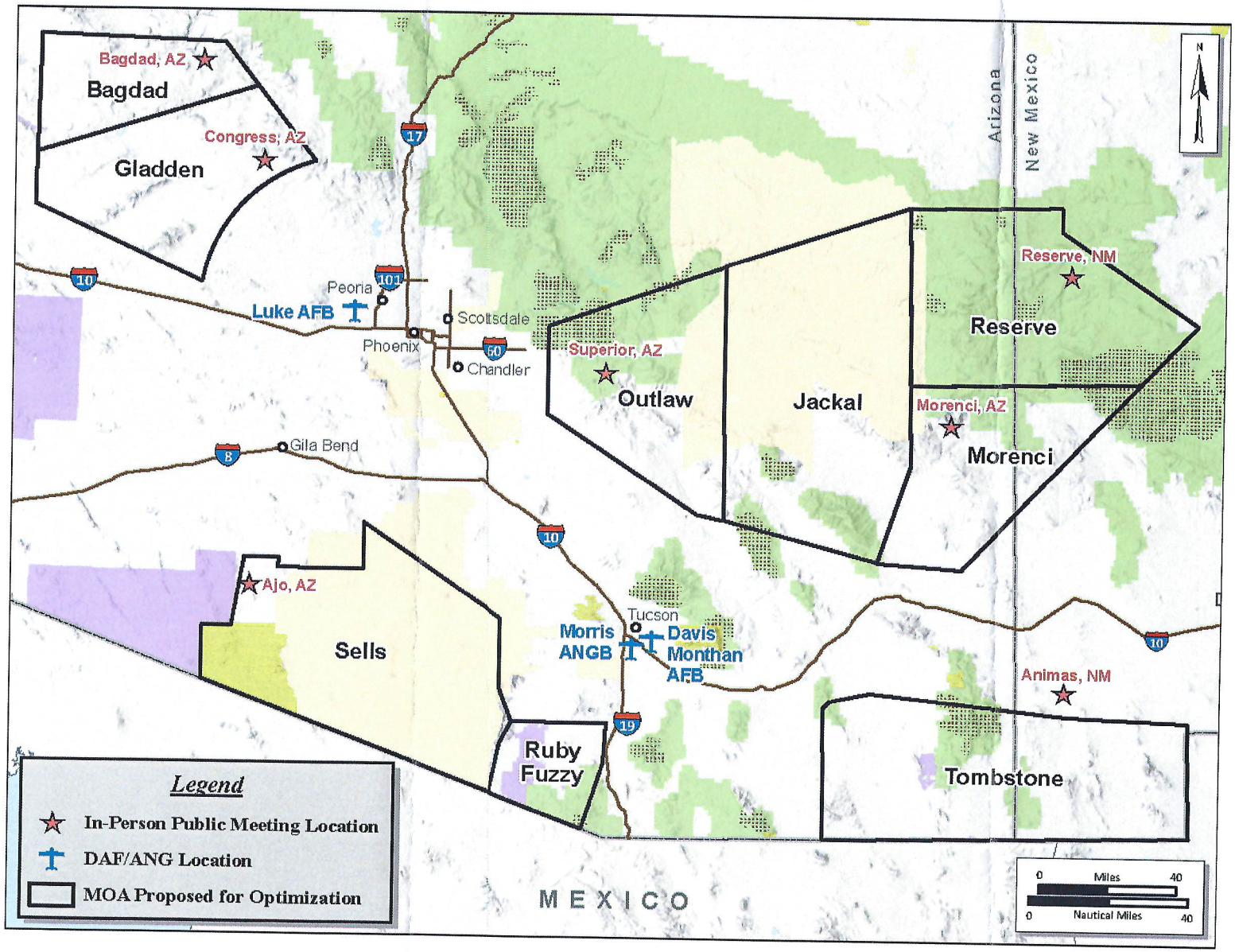
Alternative 4 - optimize DAF managed MOAs/ATCAAs to address existing and future training deficiencies due to insufficient airspace. Major actions would include all of those listed for Alternative 2 except that supersonic flight would be authorized down to 10,000 feet AGL in Tombstone, Outlaw, Jackal, Morenci, and Reserve MOAs.

The DAF published a Notice of Intent to prepare the EIS in the Federal Register initiating the scoping phase of the project, which is the first opportunity for public and stakeholder involvement in the NEPA process. We request your participation and solicit your comments on the potential alternatives to the Proposed Action and information or analyses relevant to the Proposed Action. Please provide your comments no later than **March 4, 2022** to ensure consideration in the Draft EIS in accordance with 40 CFR 1503.3(b); comments submitted after this date shall be considered forfeited. Electronic comments may be submitted on the project website any time prior to the comment deadline, www.ArizonaRegionalAirspaceEIS.com. Written comments may be submitted at the in-person public meetings or by mailing to Arizona Regional Airspace EIS, c/o Cardno, 501 Butler Farm Rd., Suite H, Hampton, VA 23666 (must be postmarked by **March 4, 2022**).

The DAF is hosting several in-person public meetings to provide information on the proposed action and the preliminary alternatives described above. You are invited to attend any of the public meetings listed in Enclosure 2. All of the meetings will be open-house style at each location on the date and times indicated. No formal presentation will be given, please attend at your convenience during the time designated. Project specific display posters will be staffed by Air Force representatives who will be available to answer questions. We encourage you to visit the project website at any time where you can preview all the materials that will be on display at the meetings. If you do not wish to attend an in-person meeting or are unable to do so, the project website provides a Virtual Meeting option that includes all of the same displays and information that will be available at the in-person meetings. We look forward to your participation.

Enclosures: 1. Project Area Map
2. In-person Public Meeting Locations and Schedule

**Enclosure 1**


Bagdad, AZ
Bagdad
Congress, AZ
Gladden
Arizona
New Mexico
N
Reserve, NM
Reserve
Peoria
Luke AFB
Scottsdale
Phoenix
Chandler
Superior, AZ
Outlaw
Jackal
Morenci, AZ
Morenci
Gila Bend
Ajo, AZ
Sells
Tucson
Morris ANGB
Davis Monthan AFB
Animas, NM
Ruby
Fuzzy
Tombstone
Legend
In-Person Public Meeting Location
DAF/ANG Location
MOA Proposed for Optimization
MEXICO
0 Miles 40
0 Nautical Miles 40

**Enclosure 2**

| In-Person Public Meeting Locations | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Date** | **Time (Local)** | **Location** |
| Monday, February 7, 2022 | 5:00 – 7:00 pm | Sonoran Desert Inn & Conference Center<br>55 South Orilla Avenue<br>Ajo, AZ 85321 |
| Tuesday, February 8, 2022 | 5:00 – 7:00 pm | Superior Town Hall<br>199 N Lobb Avenue<br>Superior, AZ 85173 |
| Wednesday, February 9, 2022 | 5:00 – 7:00 pm | Bagdad Event Center<br>121 Main Street<br>Bagdad, AZ 86321 |
| Thursday, February 10, 2022 | 5:00 – 7:00 pm | Congress Fire Department<br>26733 Santa Fe Road<br>Congress, AZ 85332 |
| Tuesday, February 22, 2022 | 5:00 – 7:00 pm | Village Hall<br>15 Jake Scott Street<br>Reserve, NM 87830-0587 |
| Wednesday, February 23, 2022 | 5:00 – 7:00 pm | Clifton Community Center<br>100 North Coronado Blvd<br>Clifton, AZ 85533 |
| Thursday, February 24, 2022 | 5:00 – 7:00 pm | Animas High School<br>1 Panther Blvd<br>Animas, NM 88020 |