



# WELCOME

## TO THE MARINE CORPS PUBLIC MEETING

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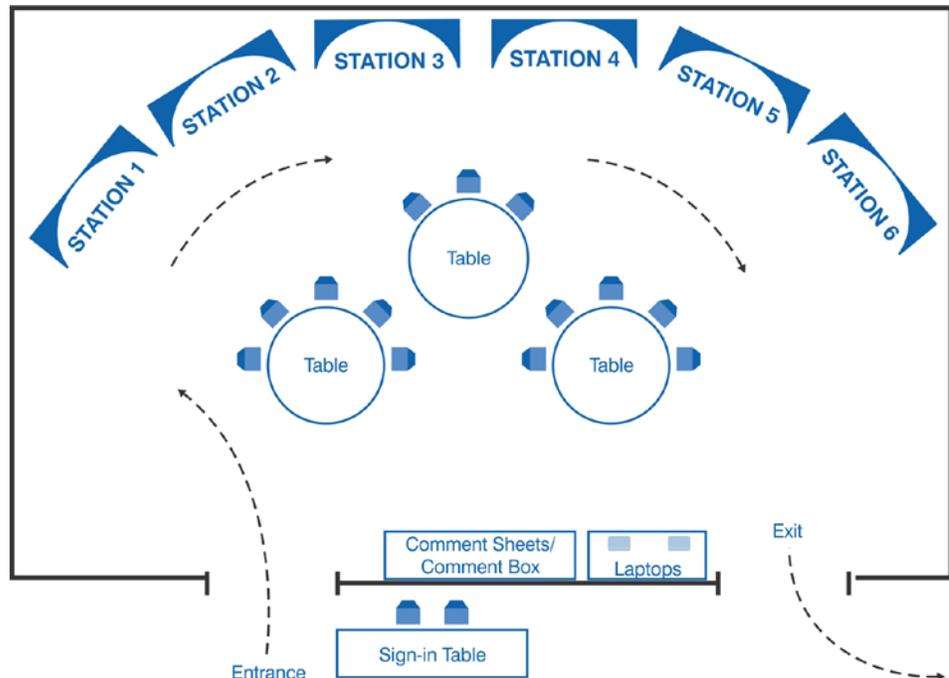


Today's open information session is for the United States Marine Corps (USMC) to solicit comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) at Townsend Bombing Range (TBR) in McIntosh County, Georgia. The Draft EIS evaluates the potential environmental effects of acquiring additional property and constructing the necessary infrastructure to allow the use of inert (non-explosive munitions with a spotting charge) precision-guided munitions (PGMs) at TBR. Through the use of PGMs at TBR, the USMC can more efficiently meet current training requirements for pilots by significantly increasing air-to-ground training capabilities at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Beaufort, South Carolina.

USMC representatives are available to explain the Proposed Action, project alternatives and schedule, and the environmental analysis and findings in the Draft EIS. Areas in the meeting room have been designated to allow you the opportunity to submit your comments today or refer to page 3 for additional ways to provide comments. The public comment period ends on August 27, 2012. Please submit your comments by that date to ensure they are considered in the EIS.

The purpose of this public comment meeting is to solicit your comments on the Draft EIS.

For future updates, please visit the project Web site at:  
**[www.townsendbombingrangeeis.com](http://www.townsendbombingrangeeis.com)**



# FACT SHEET

## FOR THE PROPOSED MODERNIZATION AND EXPANSION OF TOWNSEND BOMBING RANGE

### *The National Environmental Policy Act and Public Involvement*

The National Environmental Policy Act is the federal law that requires all federal agencies to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of any major actions they propose and to inform and involve the public in the decision-making process.

#### **Environmental Impact Statement**

An EIS is a detailed study that analyzes the potential effects, both positive and negative, that the Proposed Action and the associated alternatives may have on the environment and the local community.

The Marine Corps' Draft EIS for the Proposed Modernization and Expansion of TBR includes the following:

- Purpose of and need for the expansion and modernization of TBR;
- Description of the Proposed Action and alternatives;
- Presentation of existing/baseline conditions and evaluation of any potential impacts to the environment and the local community; and
- Assessment of potential cumulative impacts when the proposal is considered along with other past, present, and future actions that have occurred or are occurring in the region.

**Your involvement and feedback are essential to helping the Marine Corps make an informed decision on the Proposed Action.**



## Submit Your Comments

Your involvement and feedback are essential to helping the Marine Corps make an informed decision on the Proposed Action. There are four ways to provide your comments:

1. At today's public meeting
2. Online at: [www.townsendbombingrangeeis.com](http://www.townsendbombingrangeeis.com)
3. By mail to:

**Townsend EIS Project Manager  
P.O. Box 180458  
Tallahassee, FL 32318**

4. By email to: [townsendbombingrangeeis@ene.com](mailto:townsendbombingrangeeis@ene.com)



**The public comment period ends on August 27, 2012.**

## Public Meeting Dates and Locations

**Open House Meetings will be from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

Date	Location Address
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tuesday</b> August 7, 2012</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>McIntosh County Middle School Gymnasium 500 Green Street Darien, GA 31305</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Thursday</b> August 9, 2012</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>City of Ludowici City Hall Meeting Room 469 North Macon Street Ludowici, GA 31316</b></p>



# History and Mission

## History

TBR is a 5,183-acre facility located in McIntosh County, Georgia. TBR is owned by the Marine Corps and is part of the Georgia Air National Guard's Combat Readiness Training Center in Savannah, Georgia. The primary user of TBR is Marine Aircraft Group 31 (MAG-31), based at MCAS Beaufort. TBR serves as an important training facility for 19 users from five states.

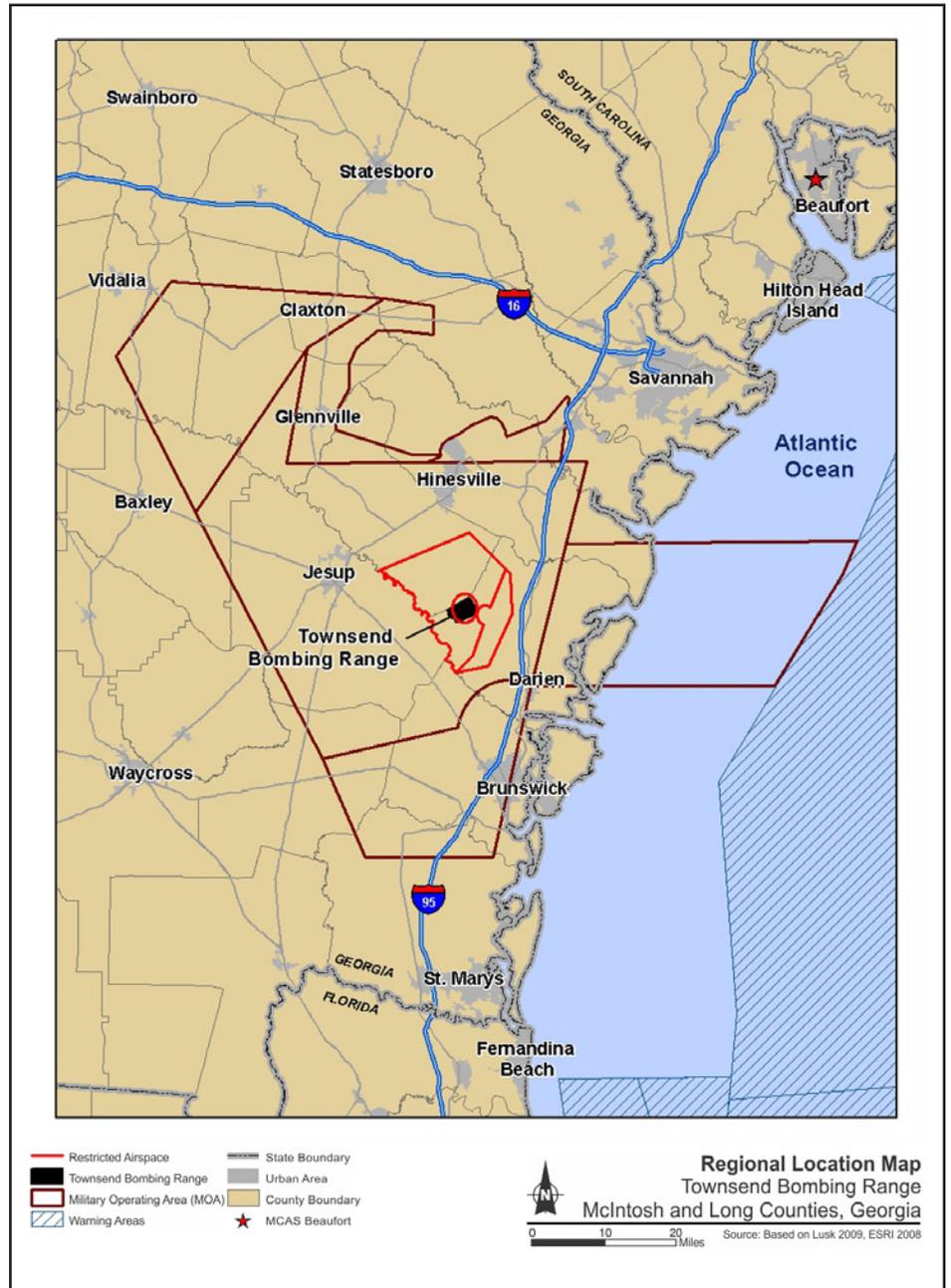
TBR, formerly known as "Glynco Bombing Range," was first opened as an aerial gunnery range by the U.S. Navy in the early 1940s. The Range was closed in 1972 in conjunction with the closure of nearby Naval Air Station Glynco. The Marine Corps reopened the Range in 1981 as Townsend Bombing Range, a training facility for MCAS Beaufort, SC.

## Mission

TBR's mission is to provide realistic combat training for pilots from all military services. It supports training at all levels - from basic skills to advanced training.

## Types of Training Conducted at TBR:

- Air-to-Ground Training;
- Low-Angle Strafing Training;
- Close Air Support Training; and
- Electronic Warfare.



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## ***Purpose of and Need for the Proposed Action***

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### **Proposed Action**

The Proposed Action that is evaluated in the Draft EIS is to modernize and expand TBR to accommodate MAG-31's requirement to train with inert PGMs and the larger Weapon Danger Zones (WDZs; also referred to as safety zones) their use requires. To accomplish this, the USMC proposes to acquire lands in the vicinity of TBR on which to create new target areas to allow for a greater variety of training activities. The Proposed Action includes five interrelated components:

- Acquisition of land;
- Acquisition of a timber easement;
- Modification of existing airspace;
- Construction of infrastructure to support PGM training; and
- Improvement of training capabilities.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide an air-to-ground training range capable of providing a wider variety of air-to-ground operations, including the use of PGMs, to meet current training requirements.

Inert precision-guided weapons training capability at TBR would enhance mission effectiveness for MAG-31 and other TBR users. Under the Proposed Action, any increase in TBR's boundaries would insure the safety of adjacent communities.

### **Need**

The Proposed Action is needed to more efficiently meet current training requirements for USMC aviation assets by significantly increasing air-to-ground training capabilities in the Beaufort, South Carolina Region.

Presently, squadrons from MCAS Beaufort must use West Coast training ranges to satisfy precision-guided munitions training requirements. Having a nearby range available for this training would result in greater training efficiency.



# Comparison of Candidate Ranges

Before selecting TBR, the Marine Corps considered several possible locations based on the following criteria:

- Must be within 165 nautical miles of Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Beaufort, SC.
- Must be under or adjacent to enough restricted airspace to support the current training as well as the required precision-guided munition training.
- Must not currently host conflicting military operations.

**TBR is the only location able to meet all of these criteria.**

**Comparison of Ranges Based on Range Evaluation Criteria**

Range	1. Proximity	2. Adequate Airspace	3. Does Not Host Conflicting Military Operations
Fort Stewart (Georgia)	45 NM	Yes	No
Townsend Bombing Range (Georgia)	70 NM	Yes	Yes
Poinsett Range (South Carolina)	75 NM	No	Yes
Fort Jackson (South Carolina)	90 NM	No	No
Fort Gordon (Georgia)	96 NM	No	Yes <sup>(a)</sup>
Grand Bay Range (Georgia)	146 NM	No	No
Camp Blanding (Florida)	160 NM	No	No

Note: <sup>(a)</sup> Impact Area restrictions exist.

Key: NM = nautical miles



MCAS Beaufort 165-Nautical Mile Radius

AFB = Air Force Base  
MCAS = Marine Corps Air Station



0 50 100 Miles

**Candidate Ranges**  
Townsend Bombing Range  
McIntosh and Long Counties, Georgia

Source: Esri 2008

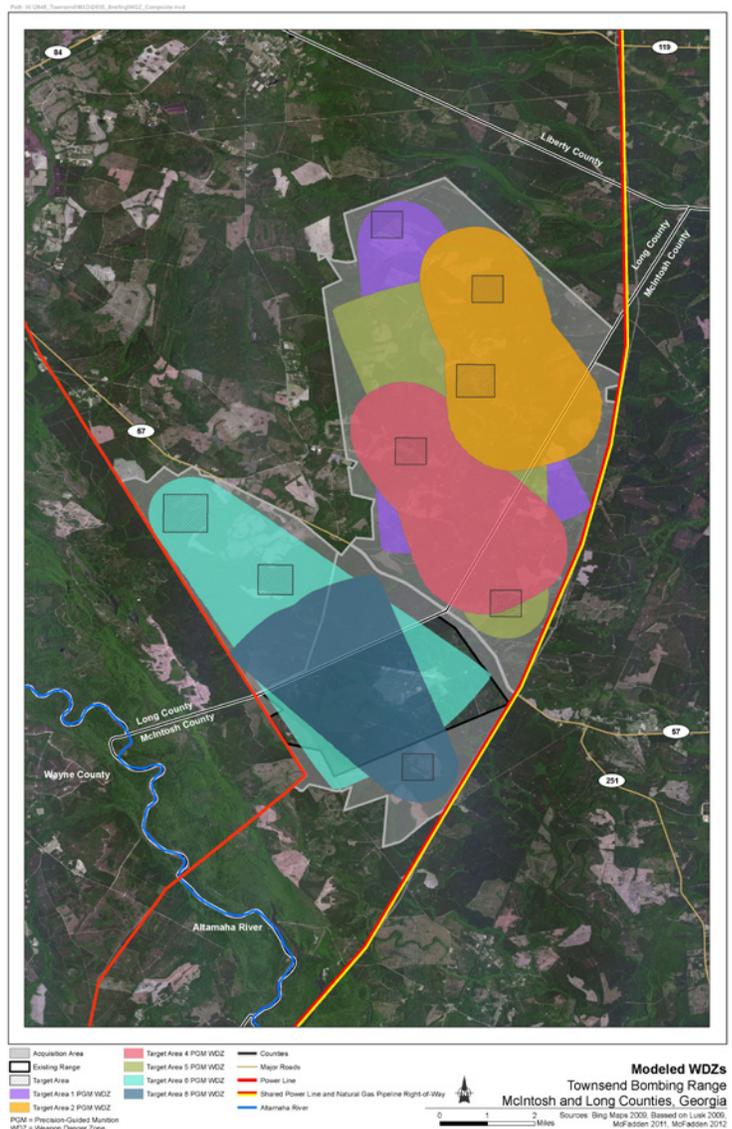
# Details of the Proposed Action

## Acquisition of Land

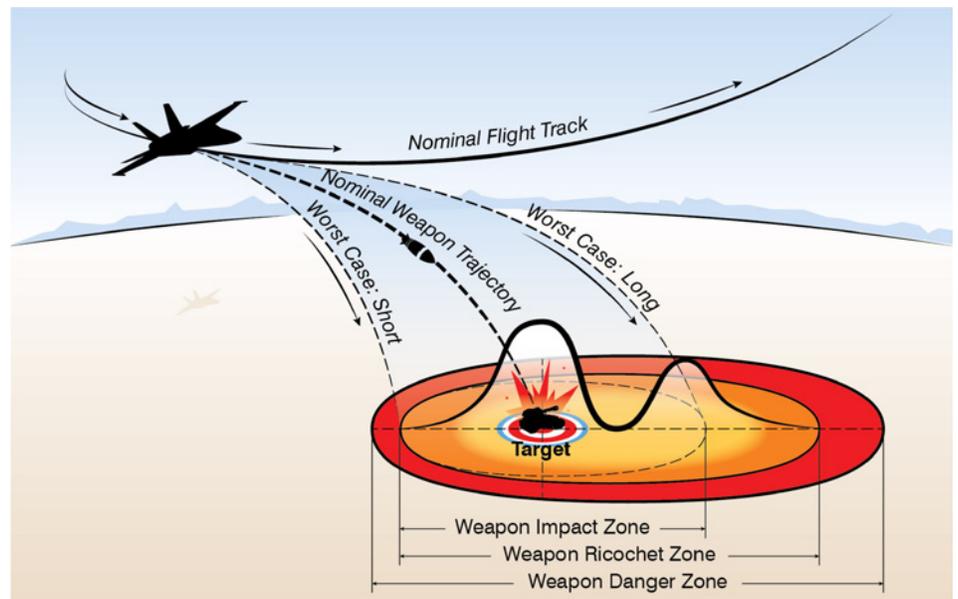
The Marine Corps used modeling software to develop weapon danger zones, which in turn were used to identify potential land acquisition scenarios necessary to accommodate the use of non-explosive precision-guided munitions at TBR.

Precision-guided munitions (PGMs) are guided, advanced weapons that are designed to precisely hit a specific target. They are made with a laser or global positioning system (GPS) guidance systems with operable fins that correct the munitions' trajectory. Because of its ability to correct itself in-flight to the target, PGMs are often referred to as "smart bombs." PGMs are released from higher altitudes and at greater distance from the target than unguided weapons. Unguided munitions are free-falling when released from the aircraft and they descend towards the target with no ability to change their trajectory. Therefore, unguided weapons are often referred to as "dumb bombs."

Though PGMs are more accurate, the weapon danger zone requirements are much larger because it must contain the area in which the weapon may impact the ground should the guidance system fail.



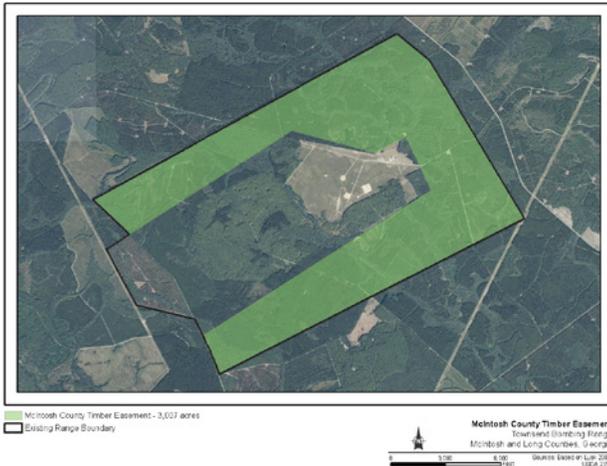
A Weapon Danger Zone is a three-dimensional zone that encompasses the ground and airspace for lateral and vertical containment of projectiles, fragments, debris, and components resulting from the firing, launching, and/or detonation of air-to-ground ordnance. To effectively deliver PGMs at TBR, the land area must be increased to ensure the containment of the WDZs, allow for their realistic combat employment, and ensure the safety of military personnel and civilians present at and around TBR.



## Details of the Proposed Action (Cont.)

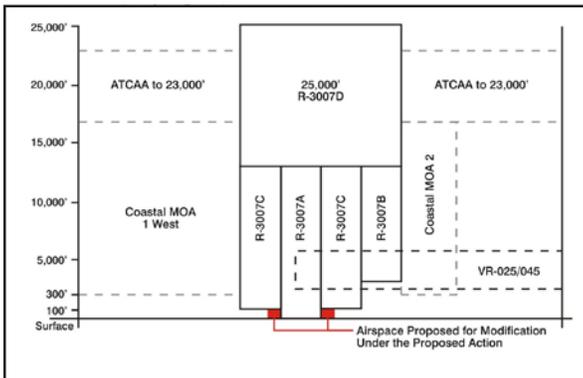
### Acquisition of a Timber Easement

The USMC proposes to purchase a timber easement from McIntosh County, Georgia, on approximately 3,007 acres of land within the current TBR boundary.



### Modification of Existing Airspace

The USMC proposed to modify Restricted Area R-3007A by extending the current restricted area laterally to the proposed acquisition area boundary. The proposed modification would eliminate the current gap from 100 feet above ground level down to the surface of the ground over the areas proposed for acquisition.



### Construction of Infrastructure to Support PGM Training

- New target areas.
- Support buildings and observation tower.
- Roads and fencing.



### Improvement of Training Capabilities

- Currently, Marine Corps aircrew can accomplish 47% of their air-to-ground training requirements at TBR.
- The Proposed Action would allow Marine Corps aircrew to complete up to 85% of their air-to-ground training requirements.

### Infrastructure Construction

- Up to 8 new target areas total. Target locations have been preliminary proposed to avoid and minimize potential impacts to natural resources, including wetlands.
- Additional facilities (e.g., Weapon Impact Scoring System [WISS] and observation tower).
- Roads, fencing, and access points to target areas.

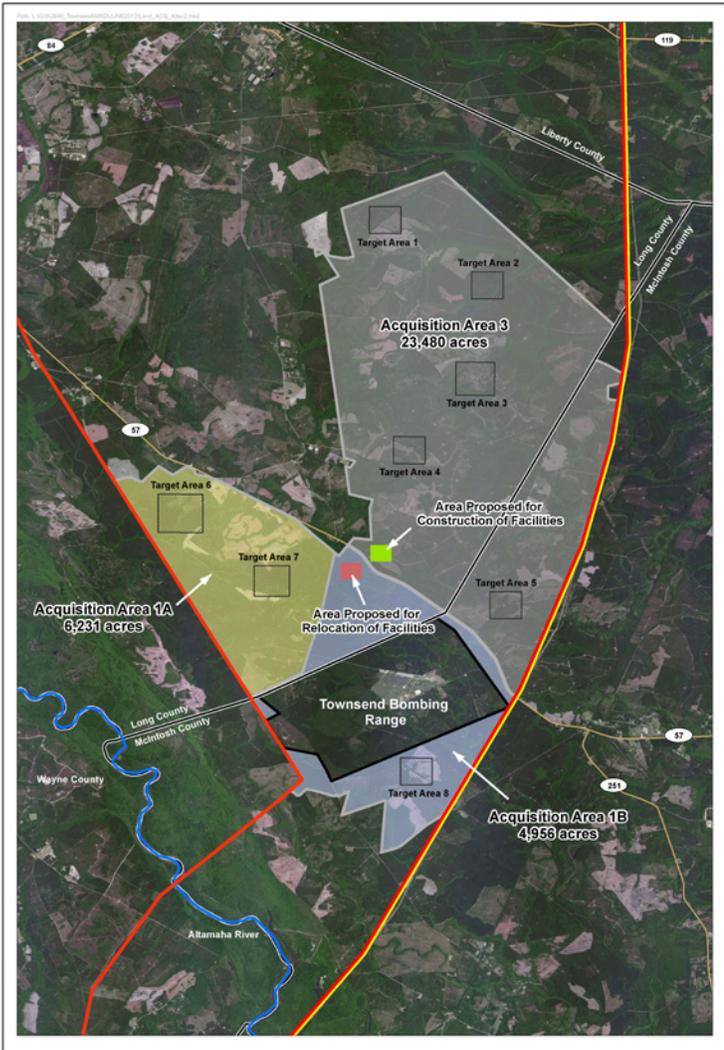
### Training Improvements

- Marines must train as they fight. Realistic training prepares Marines to succeed in their mission and helps bring them home safely from combat.
- The Proposed Action would allow Marine Corps pilots to complete nearly all of their air-to-ground training requirements at TBR.
- Currently, Marine Corps pilots can accomplish less than half of the air-to-ground training requirements at TBR.

# Alternatives

The alternatives for modernizing and expanding TBR, as well as the No Action Alternative, are outlined in the table below and illustrated on the map.

Alternative 1 would involve the relocation of the existing range compound facilities and observation tower to the northern corner of Acquisition Area 1B. The existing facilities would not be relocated under Alternatives 2, 3, or 4; however, a new observation tower would need to be constructed in the southwestern corner of Acquisition Area 3.



**Land Acquisition Alternatives**  
Townsend Bombing Range  
McIntosh and Long Counties, Georgia

Legend:  
 Acquisition Area 1A (Yellow)  
 Acquisition Area 1B (Blue)  
 Acquisition Area 3 (Grey)  
 Existing Range (Black)  
 Target Area (White)  
 Counties (Black outline)  
 Major Roads (Yellow outline)  
 Power Line (Red outline)  
 Shared Power Line and Natural Gas Pipeline Right-of-Way (Orange outline)  
 Altamaha River (Blue line)

Scale: 0 1 2 Miles  
 Sources: Bing Maps 2009, Based on Luak 2009, McFadden 2011

Alternative	1	2	3	4*	No Action
Acquisition Area	1A + 1B	3	1A + 1B + 3	1B + 3	N/A
Acreage	11,187	23,480	34,667	28,436	N/A
Target Areas	6, 7, 8	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8	N/A
Facilities	All Facilities	Observation Tower	Observation Tower	Observation Tower	N/A
Sorties	3,583	4,243	4,243	4,243	2,358
Training and Readiness Percentage Met	72%	85%	85%	85%	47%
Availability of Targets During Range Maintenance Periods	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Minimize Relocation of Private Citizens	No	Yes	No	Yes	N/A

\* Preferred Alternative

# Resource Analysis

The following 14 resources were analyzed in the Draft EIS:

- Land Use            - Socioeconomics    - Recreation                            - Wetlands                            - Water Resources
- Airspace            - Noise                    - Biological Resources    - Cultural Resources    - Air Quality
- Transportation - Topography,            - Utilities and                            - Hazardous Materials                    and Waste  
                          Geology, and Soils    Infrastructure

## Wetlands

- Approximately 28% of the 34,667 acres within the proposed acquisition areas is classified as wetlands.
- Target areas have been sited to avoid and minimize potential impacts to wetlands.

## Biological Resources

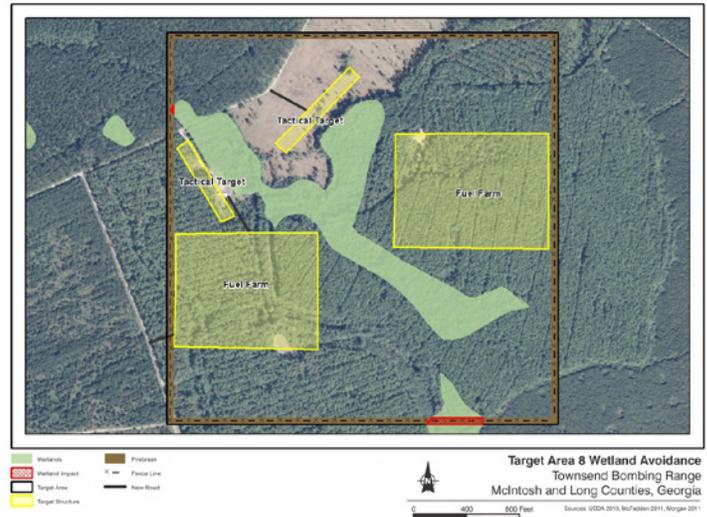
- Fourteen federally and state-protected species have the potential to occur within the proposed acquisition areas.
- Potential habitat within each proposed target area was surveyed to verify the presence of habitat and species to determine potential impacts.
- The Proposed Action was determined to have no effect on 11 species. Of the 14 species, three species (Eastern Indigo Snake, Wood Stork, and Gopher Tortoise) may be affected, but not likely adversely affected by the Proposed Action.

## Timber Management

- Industrial forestland compromises approximately 98% of the potential acquisition areas.
- The Marine Corps manages timberlands in support of ordnance use by frequently employing prescribed fires.
- Marine Corps management would increase harvest cycles from approximately 30 years to approximately 80 years.

## Cultural Resources

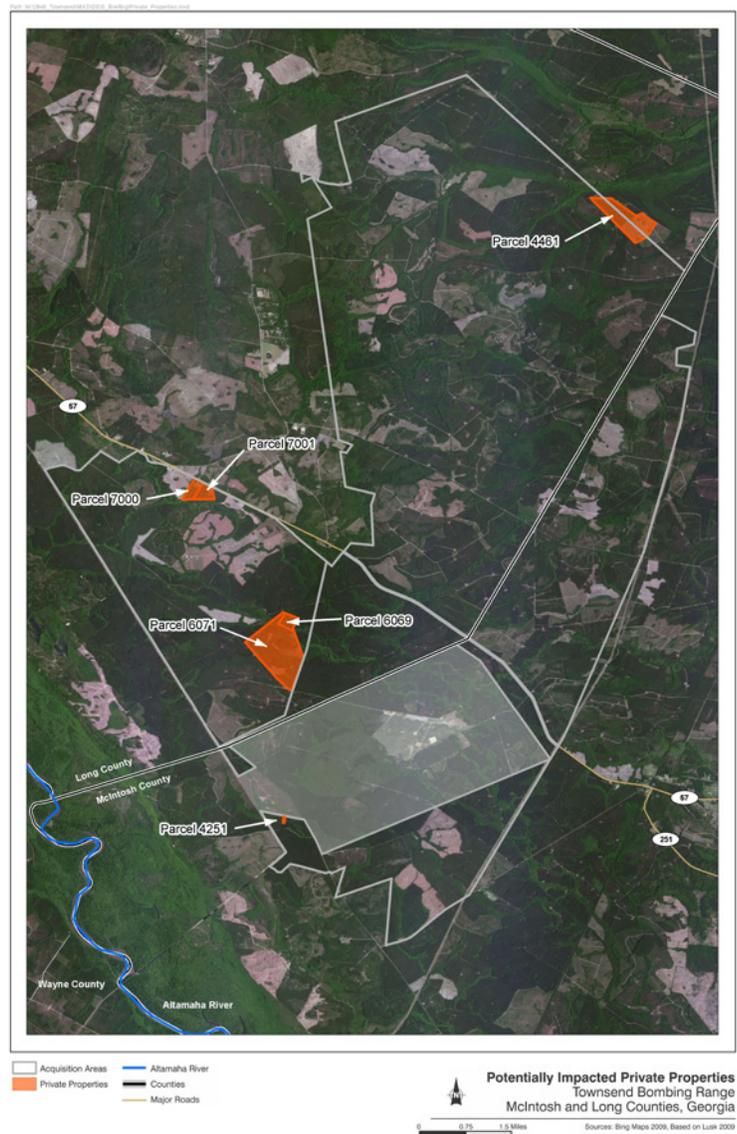
- Of the 1,950 acres proposed for use as target areas, the Marine Corps surveyed approximately 1,729 acres for archeological resources. Nine new archeological sites were recorded during the survey. Five of the sites are recommended for further archeological testing to determine whether they qualify for the National Register of Historic Places.
- Of the 34,667 acres proposed for potential acquisition, the Marine Corps conducted a reconnaissance survey of approximately 24,031 acres for historic built resources. Six built resources were identified within the proposed acquisition area.



## Resource Analysis (Cont.)

### Recreation

- Access to lands proposed for acquisition would be limited.
- Existing hunting leases on lands proposed for acquisition would be cancelled.
- Townsend Bombing Range's existing hunting program would be applied to any acquired lands which would allow all persons in the community access to more hunting lands.
- Wildlife management areas and other protected lands outside of the proposed acquisition areas would not be impacted.



### Socioeconomics

- Only six parcels within the proposed acquisition areas are owned by private citizens. Three are currently undeveloped. The remaining three parcels contain:
  - One residence
  - One hunting lodge
  - One business
- All remaining parcels within the proposed acquisition areas are owned by commercial timber companies.

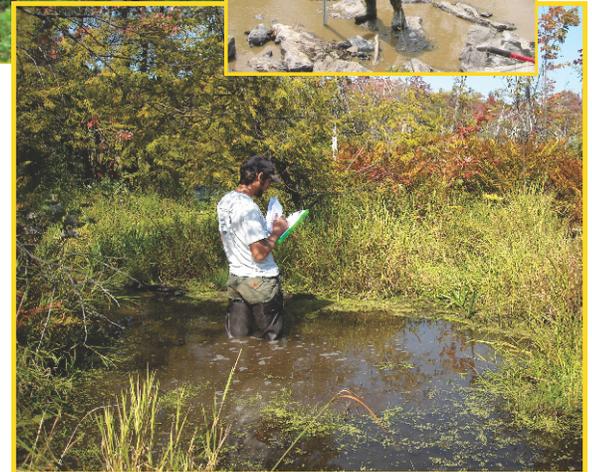
Alternative	1 (11,187 acres)	2 (23,480 acres)	3 (34,667 acres)	4* (28,436 acres)	No Action
<b>McIntosh County (367,680 acres)</b>					
Acres Acquired	2,983	5,343	8,326	8,326	N/A
Annual Property Tax Loss	\$12,708	\$22,761	\$35,469	\$35,469	N/A
Percent of Total Property Taxes	0.22%	0.39%	0.60%	0.60%	N/A
<b>Long County (258,240 acres)</b>					
Acres Acquired	8,204	18,137	26,341	20,110	N/A
Annual Property Tax Loss	\$53,572	\$118,435	\$172,007	\$131,318	N/A
Percent of Total Property Taxes	1.39%	3.08%	4.48%	3.42%	N/A
<b>Economic Impact</b>					
Construction Expenditures (One Year)	\$14.8 Million	\$10.8 Million	\$16.6 Million	\$12.7 Million	N/A
Additional Operational Expenditures (Annual)	\$73,901	\$142,769	\$216,669	\$142,769	N/A

\* Preferred Alternative

# Real Estate Acquisition

If the Record of Decision were to call for the acquisition of land, the following process would occur:

- Identify required properties
- Notify the owners of interest in property
- Hire a surveyor to identify legal property boundaries
- Hire an independent appraiser to determine fair market value
- Make an offer to the owner at fair market value
- Negotiate terms of agreement and enter into a purchase agreement
- The government may use condemnation proceedings if required



**Thank you for your participation in today's public meeting. The public comment period ends on August 27, 2012. Please submit your comments by that date to ensure they are considered in the EIS.**