



TOWNSEND BOMBING RANGE MODERNIZATION

PROJECT UPDATE NOTICE – *January 2014*



This Project Update Notice offers a means to provide easily accessible, wide-spread distribution of new Project information. This information augments the regular update of key public documents on the Townsend Bombing Range Project Web site. Please visit www.townsendbombingrangeeis.com to view all Project documents for an overview and key background information.

Department of the Navy Issues Record of Decision for the Proposed Expansion and Modernization of Townsend Bombing Range

The Department of the Navy (DON) will publish its Record of Decision (ROD) on the Proposed Expansion and Modernization of Townsend Bombing Range (TBR) in McIntosh and Long Counties, Georgia, in the *Federal Register* on or about January 31, 2014. The ROD documents the DON's decision to proceed with the Proposed Action through Alternative 4. The DON reached this decision after careful consideration of the purpose and need for the Proposed Action, the analysis and conclusions presented in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and comments received from federal, state, and local agencies, non-governmental organizations, tribal nations, and members of the public. The full version of the DON's ROD can be found on the project Web site: www.townsendbombingrangeeis.com.

MODERNIZATION UNDER SELECTED ALTERNATIVE 4

The expansion and modernization of TBR is required to support United States Marine Corps (Marine Corps) aviation training and readiness proficiency in the use of inert (non-explosive) precision-guided munitions (PGM). Modernizing TBR to accommodate inert PGM training will significantly enhance east coast aviation unit training efficiency. Presently, TBR can accommodate only 47% of the required F/A-18 Hornet individual fixed-wing air crew air-to-ground training syllabus. Alternative 4 will allow air crews to meet up to 85% of their air-to-ground proficiency requirements at TBR. Alternative 4, identified in the Final EIS as the Preferred Alternative, offers the best balance of operational capability and potential impacts to the environment. All practical means to avoid or minimize environmental harm that were identified in the Final EIS have been adopted. Alternative 4 includes four main actions:

1. *Acquisition of Land.* DON will acquire 28,630 acres of land (Acquisition Areas 1B and 3) in McIntosh County (8,520 acres) and Long County (20,110 acres). A sufficiently sized land area at TBR will maintain public safety, enable the required training delivery of PGM, and allow for more realistic and effective training on a wider array of target types for greater aircrew competency. Like the inert weapons currently used at TBR, the PGM to be used at TBR will be inert, only armed with a small marking smoke charge, and weigh 500, 1,000, or 2,000 pounds. PGM, however, will be satellite-guided or laser-guided.
2. *Termination of a Timber Easement.* DON will pay fair market value to McIntosh County to terminate a 3,007-acre timber easement held by McIntosh County on DON-owned land within the current TBR boundary. To ensure the safety of TBR personnel and the public, it is necessary for DON to own all the timberland within TBR and to manage it in support of mission requirements.
3. *Modification of Existing Restricted Airspace.* Restricted Area R-3007 airspace will be modified by extending the current 100-foot floor to ground level over the land to be acquired (Acquisition Areas 1B and 3) to match the existing restricted airspace over the current range. The purpose of this additional airspace is to unite the airspace with acquired land to enable the delivery of inert ordnance and to exclude non-participating aircraft from intruding into hazardous operations, as required by Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations.
4. *Construction of Infrastructure to support PGM training.* The modernization will include the installation of target scoring equipment, tower construction, roadway construction/improvement, and six new target areas – Target Areas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8. This action will allow the enhancement of current training capabilities by accommodating full-scale inert weapons; enabling the use of inert PGM; and increasing weapons delivery parameters by providing multiple run-in headings (i.e., aircraft direction during ordnance delivery).

The DON has acknowledged the potential loss of tax revenues to local governments resulting from the Proposed Action and recognizes tax loss as a significant impact to both Long and McIntosh Counties. The DON remains committed to working with neighbors and stakeholders. Additional information is included on pages 14 and 15 in the full version of the ROD, which can be found on the project Web site: www.townsendbombingrangeeis.com.



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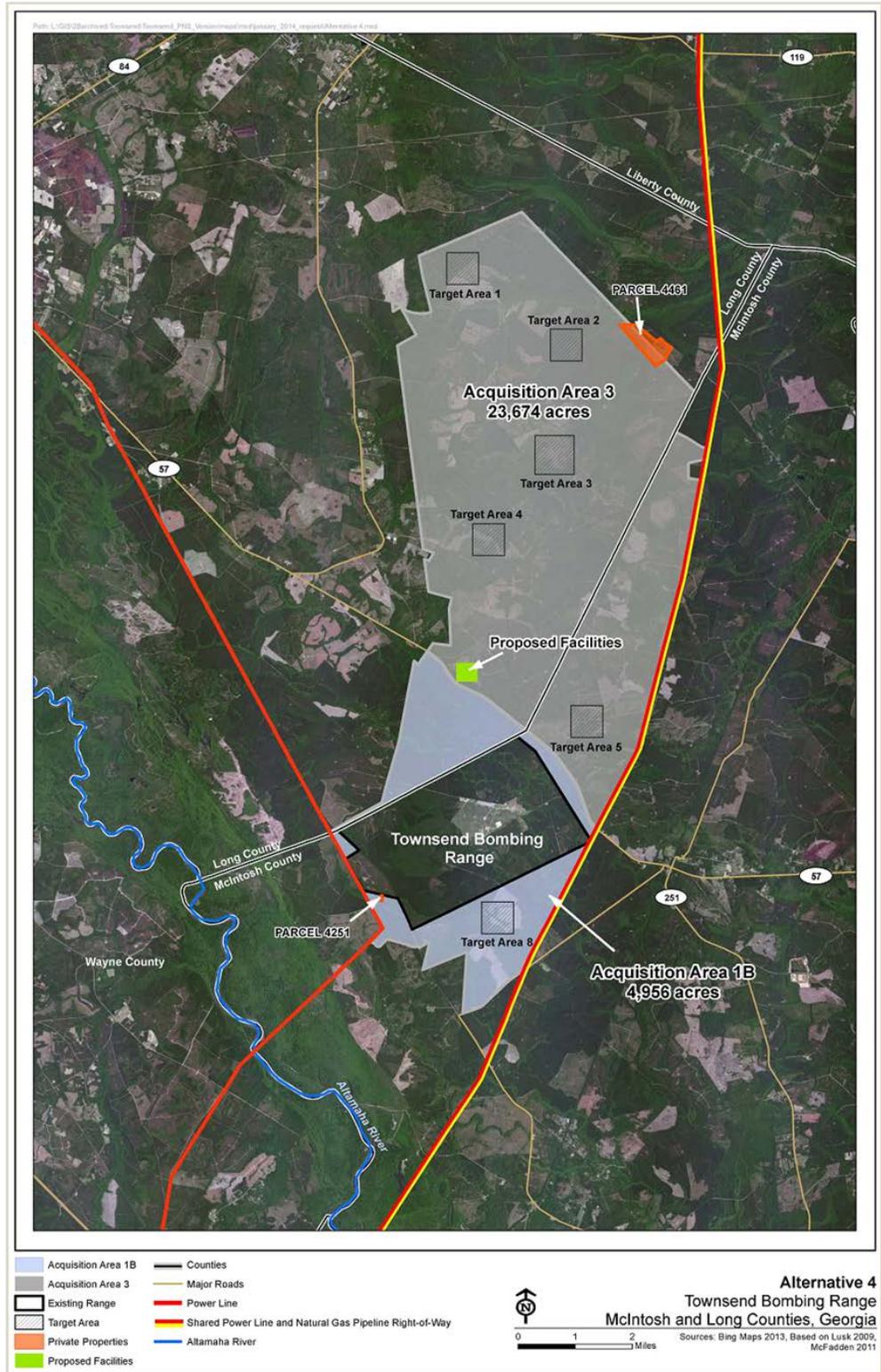
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NEXT STEPS

Following the publication of the ROD, the Marine Corps will move forward into the first phase of the project. The timeframes for the following actions are approximate.

- FAA undertakes processes to consider establishment and modification of existing restricted airspace. (2014-2015)
- Congress appropriates funds to pay for land acquisition and for range equipment and preparation. Fair market value will be offered for land or property interests identified for acquisition. (2014-2015)
- The Marine Corps begins the real estate acquisition process on lands for range expansion. (2014-2016)
- The Marine Corps undertakes range preparations for the installation of new targets, target scoring equipment, tower construction, and roadway construction or improvement. (2015-2017)
- TBR to reach initial PGM operational capability. (2017)



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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