

September 5, 2024

Madrean Archipelago Wildlife
141 Page Lane
Canelo, AZ

My name is Kate Scott. With my husband, Tony Heath, I am a co-founder of Madrean Archipelago Wildlife located in the Huachuca Mountains near Canelo, Arizona.

Our mission is environmental stewardship, wildlife protection, and conservation of unspoiled wilderness. Due to the lack of any scheduled public hearings in Cochise County within the Tombstone MOA, I am here today virtually to voice my shock and disbelief at the Air Force's proposal to violate the most biodiverse ecoregion in North America. Our area covers multiple wildlife refuges, wilderness study areas of critical concern, and unspoiled lands coveted by recreationalists. These include the Coronado National Forest, the Chiricahua Wilderness Area, the Chiricahua National Monument, the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area, and the San Bernardino Wildlife Refuge. Other equally critical areas exist next door in southern New Mexico.

With this proposal enacted, we would be subject to supersonic strafing at dangerously low levels emitting decibel bombshells, toxic chaff, incendiary flares and more. It would harm rich biotic communities and wildlands coveted by us, residents, with millions of dollars at stake.

What threat or perceived threat to our country's security is so great that we must resort to such destructive policies? Why would you dare risk wildfires, or toxic aluminum tailings falling indiscriminately from the sky poisoning the land and water with no regard to the health and protection of the people and wild communities? What do you imagine would be the impact of a supersonic boom on a hummingbird? Or the impact to flight patterns on the twenty-thousand plus Sandhill Cranes that arrive in the fall for rejuvenation during their winter migration?

With up to twenty-two flight training sorties planned daily (8,000 annually), it would be unbearable for my husband and I and our neighbors, threatening everything we've worked to build this past twenty-seven years, nurturing the land and wildlife communities with great success.

The DEIS is failing to adequately investigate the dangerous impacts of low-level supersonic jet flight. Within our ecoregion are endangered and threatened flora and fauna found nowhere else in America. The DEIS dismisses impact on these lives, existing tenuously in critical habitats below the proposed air space. The analysis fails to consider the incremental and cumulative effects on these species, as required by EIS regulations.

Air Force pilots need to be trained at well-established areas like the Barry Goldwater Range, away from economies dependent on recreation and ecotourism, where folks like us have settled for decades and invested specifically for our area's non-military benefits like peace and quiet. Who are you to sacrifice our rights?

I stand before you to state unequivocally the need to please, in the name of common decency, abandon this disastrous proposal. Please understand that at all cost, this region must be protected for the future, for the next "seven generations" and far beyond.

I urge you to leave our vibrant, rare, bio-diverse wilderness in peace.

Respectfully,
Kate Scott