



COMPREHENSIVE AIRSPACE INITIATIVE FOR MOODY AIR FORCE BASE

Introduction - Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was enacted to address concerns about federal actions and their effects on the environment. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is the most detailed analysis prescribed by regulations implementing NEPA. The US Air Force (Air Force) has developed a Draft EIS for the Comprehensive Airspace Initiative for Moody Air Force Base (AFB), and published a Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft EIS pursuant to NEPA. The Proposed Action addressed in the Draft EIS is to configure new low-altitude Military Operations Areas (MOAs) beneath existing special use airspace (SUA) of the Moody Airspace Complex.

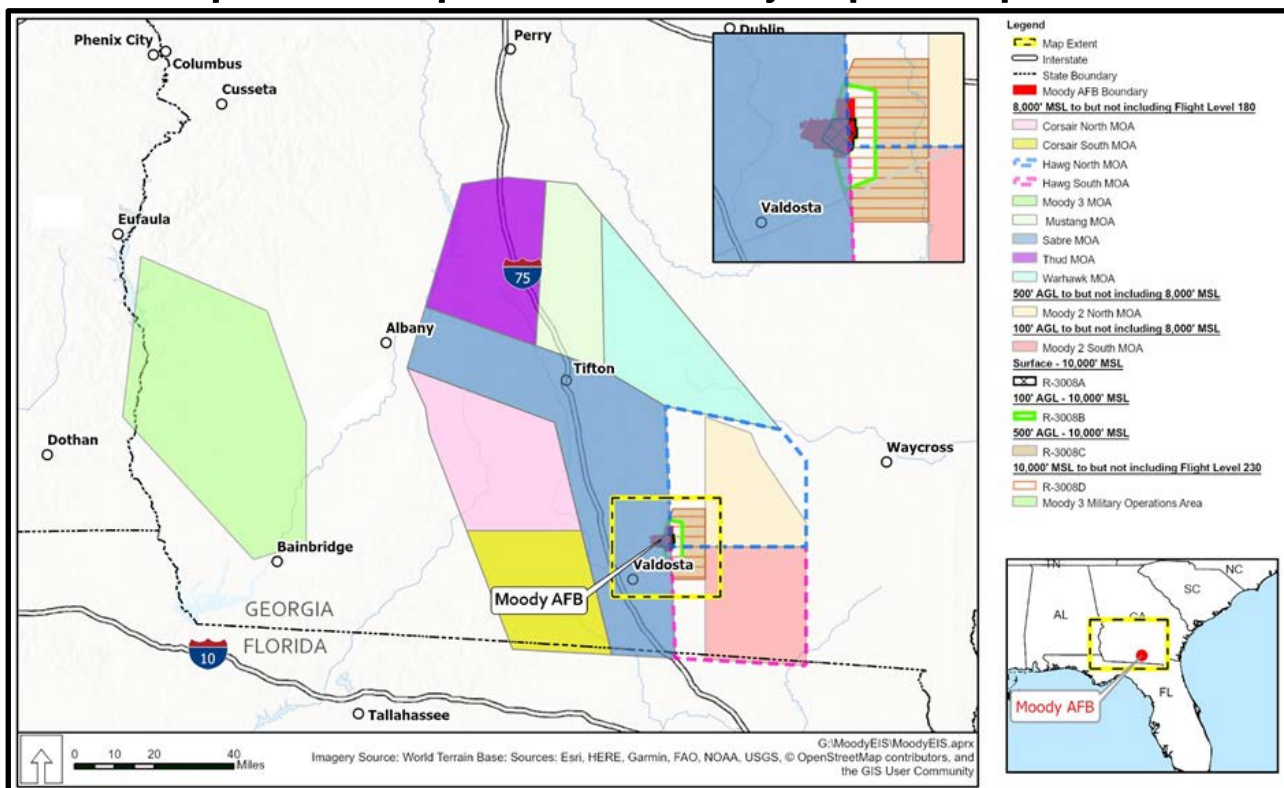
A MOA consists of airspace below 18,000 feet above mean sea level (MSL) established to separate military activities from instrument flight rules traffic and to identify where these activities are conducted for the benefit of pilots using visual flight rules.

Project Background

Moody AFB is located in south central Georgia near Valdosta in Lowndes County. The Moody Airspace Complex, which overlies Moody AFB and portions of south Georgia and north Florida, supports training in the SUAs associated with the Moody Airspace Complex for close air support (CAS) and combat search and rescue (CSAR) missions for combat support to US forces and allies. An EIS has been prepared to assess the potential environmental consequences associated with modifying existing and creating new SUA in the Moody Airspace Complex.

Since the establishment of Moody AFB, aircraft and training missions at the installation have transitioned many times. Within the last 20 years, these changes included shifting from support of high-altitude tactical fighter/bomber training missions to support of various low-altitude CAS, low-altitude engagement and attack, and personnel recovery/CSAR missions. At no point during the shift in mission training were the Moody Airspace Complex's mid-altitude MOAs and associated Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspace (ATCAA), which range from 8,000 feet above MSL to Flight Level (FL) 230 (23,000 feet)—realigned or reconfigured to more appropriately accommodate the training missions at low altitude (lower than 8,000 feet MSL).

Special Use Airspace within the Moody Airspace Complex





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Purpose of and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide a more realistic and regularly accessible airspace training environment to meet the need for aircrew training in CAS and CSAR, and configure new low-altitude MOAs that more appropriately align with the training missions at Moody AFB.

The Proposed Action is needed to provide access for training missions operating at low altitudes from Moody AFB and to optimize the Moody Airspace Complex to enable effective training to achieve real-world combat readiness and survivability. Specifically, the low-altitude MOAs are needed to:

- Provide reliable access to low-altitude SUA to support aircrew proficiency training to various mission objectives
- Reduce airspace congestion in the Moody 2 North and Moody 2 South MOAs

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action for the Moody AFB Comprehensive Airspace Initiative is to configure and establish new low-altitude MOAs to enhance the airspace capacity within which A-10C, HH-60G, HC-130J, and A-29 aircrews can optimize their low-altitude mission readiness training to specific requirements.

There would be no changes in the numbers of sorties, aircraft operations, or type or quantity of defensive countermeasures used during training. This action would result in a change in the distribution of some existing training operations from the mid- to high-altitude airspaces into the low-altitude airspaces. No ordnance other than chaff and flares would be expended in the new low-altitude MOAs. The Proposed Action would modify the Banks Lake National Wildlife Refuge exclusion zone.

The Air Force has identified three alternatives to implement the Proposed Action.





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Alternatives

The three alternatives being considered by the Air Force for the Comprehensive Airspace Initiative would create new low-altitude MOAs beneath and within the lateral confines of existing MOAs and Restricted Areas of the Moody Airspace Complex, and lower the floor of Moody 2 North MOA. While the three alternatives are independent of each other, the decision maker may choose to implement one, a combination of low-altitude MOAs from among the three, or none of the alternatives based on the analysis provided in the EIS.

- Alternative 1** would create the Corsair North Low, Corsair South Low, Mustang Low, and Warhawk Low MOAs with a floor of 1,000 feet above ground level (AGL) and a ceiling of 7,999 feet MSL; create a Thud Low MOA with a floor of 4,000 feet AGL and a ceiling of 7,999 feet MSL; create a Grand Bay MOA with a floor of 100 feet AGL and a ceiling of 499 feet AGL; and lower the floor of the existing Moody 2 North MOA from 500 feet AGL to 100 feet AGL.
- Alternative 2** would create and modify MOAs as described under Alternative 1, except that the new Corsair North Low, Corsair South Low, Mustang Low, and Warhawk Low MOAs would be created with a floor of 2,000 feet AGL instead of 1,000 feet AGL.
- Alternative 3** would create and modify MOAs as described under Alternative 1, except that the new Corsair North Low, Corsair South Low, Mustang Low, and Warhawk Low MOAs would be created with a floor of 4,000 feet AGL instead of 1,000 feet AGL.
- No Action Alternative** would not change the SUA at the Moody Airspace Complex.

Existing & Proposed Alternative Low-Altitude Floors in the Moody Airspace Complex

Special Use Airspace	No Action Alternative (Existing)	Alternative 1. 1,000-Foot Floor, New Grand Bay MOA, Lower the Floor of Moody 2 North	Alternative 2. 2,000-Foot Floor, New Grand Bay MOA, Lower the Floor of Moody 2 North	Alternative 3. 4,000-Foot Floor, New Grand Bay MOA, Lower the Floor of Moody 2 North
Corsair North Low MOA	N/A	1,000 feet AGL	2,000 feet AGL	4,000 feet AGL
Corsair South Low MOA	N/A	1,000 feet AGL	2,000 feet AGL	4,000 feet AGL
Mustang Low MOA	N/A	1,000 feet AGL	2,000 feet AGL	4,000 feet AGL
Thud Low MOA	N/A	4,000 feet AGL	4,000 feet AGL	4,000 feet AGL
Warhawk Low MOA	N/A	1,000 feet AGL	2,000 feet AGL	4,000 feet AGL
Moody 2 North MOA	500 feet AGL	100 feet AGL	100 feet AGL	100 feet AGL
Grand Bay MOA	N/A	100 feet AGL	100 feet AGL	100 feet AGL

AGL – above ground level; MOA – Military Operations Area; N/A – not applicable

Environmental Resources

The Air Force understands there is the potential for the Comprehensive Airspace Initiative to affect environmental resources and the human environment. The Draft EIS analyzes and presents the potential environmental consequences associated with the Proposed Action and Alternatives. In summary, no significant impacts on any resource area were found for any of the three alternatives evaluated.



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ANTICIPATED TIMELINE



Draft EIS Public Comment Period

Following publication in the Federal Register of the NOA for the Draft EIS on September 25, 2020, commencement of an extended 60-day public comment review period occurs. The public hearing is scheduled for October 29, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via Cisco Webex Virtual Platform, and also accessed through the project website (moodyafbairspaceeis.com). The Air Force invites interested parties to comment on the Draft EIS as well as submit written comment by mail and email, and may provide verbal comment at the hearing.

What Happens with the Comments

Comments received during the Draft EIS public review period are considered in the preparation of the Final EIS. All comments received within the extended 60-day public comment period for the Draft EIS will be reviewed, and substantive comments will be responded to in the Final EIS. The Air Force considers a comment to be substantive if it:

- Provides additional or new information that is relevant to the EIS
- Presents other reasonable alternatives or components to the project, provided that a rational basis for consideration of the alternative or component is included
- Questions the accuracy or adequacy of the information presented in the Draft EIS, provided that a rational basis for the question is included

How to Provide Comments

Anyone that would like to provide comments relevant to the project, proposed alternatives, or the analyses presented in the Draft EIS, is encouraged do so via the comment form on the project website at moodyafbairspaceeis.com, by email (23wg.pa@us.af.mil), or by printing and mailing a comment form to:

USPS Address:

AFCEC/CZN, Attn: Moody AFB Comprehensive Airspace Initiative, 2261 Hughes Avenue, Suite 155, JBSA Lackland, TX 78236-9853

FedEx and UPS Address:

AFCEC/CZN, Attn: Moody AFB Comprehensive Airspace Initiative 3515 S General McMullen, San Antonio, TX 78226-9853

To ensure the Air Force has sufficient time to consider public input on the Draft EIS, please submit comments by **November 24, 2020**.

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