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001-21

NAS Fallon works to create advisory board

Inter-governmental Executive Committee is congressionally mandated

NAS Fallon, NV – The 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), passed by Congress on 3 January, 2021, renewed the existing public land withdrawal in Northern Nevada the Navy uses to train tactical aviators and Navy SEALs. The military training area, which includes bombing ranges, ground maneuver areas, an electronic warfare range, and 13,000 square miles of airspace, have not been updated since 1995. The NDAA did not include provisions to modernize the Fallon Range Training Complex (FRTC) the Navy had requested. The Navy’s proposal, which would add just under 600,000 acres to the existing quarter of a million acres currently under military control, still needs to be addressed by Congress.

Because of advancements in aircraft and weapons systems, as well as current assessments of potential threat country capabilities, significant range improvements are needed to make the FRTC tactically acceptable for both air wing and SEAL special operations training.

While the 2021 NDAA did not include Navy’s proposal, it did direct all of the stakeholders to keep working on the expansion. The act directed the creation of an advisory board to address contentious issues with the range modification. The board, called the Intergovernmental Executive Committee (IEC) is designated as a leadership advisory panel of all of the stakeholders that may be impacted by the proposed changes across Northern Nevada.

“This is a great way to move forward,” said Captain Evan Morrison, Commanding Officer of Naval Air Station Fallon, “It’s a venue to bring everyone to the table to work towards an acceptable outcome. The Navy is pleased to work together with our local, state, federal and tribal partners.”

The establishment of the committee, mandated by the NDAA legislation, is tasked to both the Department of Defense and the Department of the Interior. Initial coordination is being done by NAS Fallon, but the Navy is only a small part of the advisory board membership. The members include government entities such as the Bureau of Land Management, the State of Nevada (specifically, the NV Department of Environmental Protection, the NV Department of Natural Resources, and the state Department of Wildlife), the counties that the FRTC touches (Churchill, Lyon, Pershing, Mineral, and Nye), and Tribal Council representatives from the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone, Walker River Paiute, Pyramid Lake Paiute, Yomba Shoshone, Lovelock Paiute and other northern Nevada tribes as per congressional legislation.

The committee will facilitate the exchange of ideas regarding natural and cultural resources, and work to balance the Navy’s training requirements (and the safety buffers that will protect the public) with multiple use access to public lands in Northern Nevada.

The first meeting of the IEC is set for the 20th April, 2021 at 4:00PM. This meeting will focus mainly on setting up the charter of the committee, electing a Chair and Vice Chair, and outlining any Memorandums of Understanding that will allow the advisory board to operate. The meeting will be conducted in accordance with the Nevada open meeting law (NRS-241) and will be streamed over Zoom to accommodate broad involvement. To find more information on the upcoming meeting, please go to www.FRTCModernization.com/IEC.