

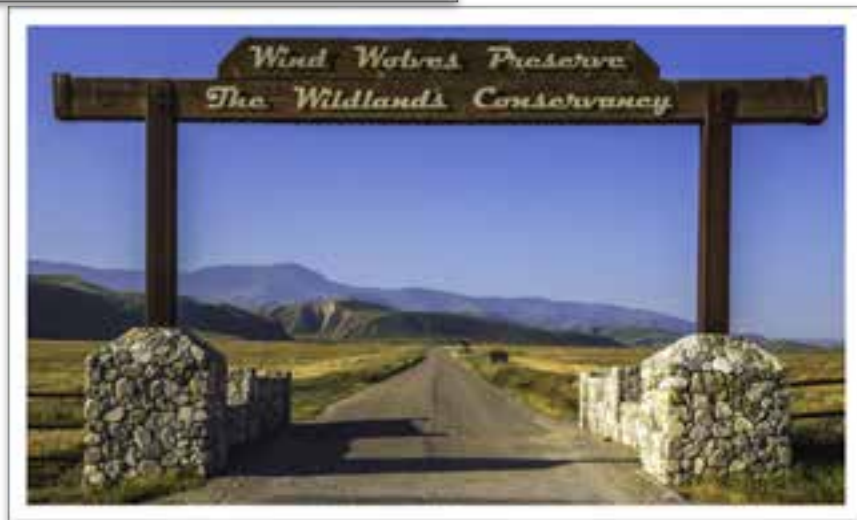
**Draft Environmental Assessment  
Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program  
Edwards Air Force Base, California**

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November 2024



Prepared for:  
United States Air Force  
412th Test Wing / TPL



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### **PRIVACY ADVISORY**

This Environmental Assessment (EA) is provided for public comment in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA regulations (40 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Parts 1500–1508), and 32 CFR Part 989, *Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP)*.

The EIAP provides an opportunity for public input on US Department of the Air Force (DAF) decision-making, allows the public to offer inputs on alternative ways for the DAF to accomplish what it is proposing, and solicits comments on the DAF's analysis of environmental effects.

Public commenting allows the DAF to make better, informed decisions. Letters or other written or oral comments provided may be published in the EA. As required by law, comments provided will be addressed in the EA and made available to the public. Providing personal information is voluntary. Any personal information provided will be used only to identify your desire to make a statement during the public comment portion of any public meetings or hearings or to fulfill requests for copies of the EA or associated documents. Private addresses will be compiled to develop a mailing list for those requesting copies of the EA; however, only the names of the individuals making comments and specific comments will be disclosed. Personal home addresses and phone numbers will not be published in the EA.

### **COMPLIANCE**

This document has been certified that it does not exceed 75 pages, not including appendices, as defined in [40 CFR § 1501.5\(g\)](#). As defined in [40 CFR § 1508.1\(bb\)](#), a “page” means 500 words and does not include maps, diagrams, graphs, tables, and other means of graphically displaying quantitative or geospatial information.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

412 TW	412th Test Wing
AFB	Air Force Base
BASH	Bird/Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard
BGEPA	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CDNL	C-weighted Day-Night Average Noise Level
CDWR	California Department of Water Resources
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level
CWA	Clean Water Act
DAF	US Department of the Air Force
dB	decibels
dba	A-weighted decibels
DoD	United States Department of Defense
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIAP	Environmental Impact Analysis Process
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EO	Executive Order
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
GHG	greenhouse gas
GSA	Groundwater Sustainability Agencies
GSP	groundwater sustainability plan
HR	hydrologic region
IPaC	Information for Planning and Consultation
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
REPI	Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration
ROI	Region of Influence
RUE	restrictive use easement
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SJVAPCD	San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TCP	Traditional Cultural Property
TPL	Trust for Public Land
US	United States
USC	United States Code
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
VR	Visual Route (Military Training)

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## CHAPTER 1 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The 412th Test Wing (412 TW) at Edwards Air Force Base (AFB), California, in conjunction with The Wildlands Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land (TPL), is proposing to enter into a restrictive use easement (RUE) in perpetuity on and over property adjacent to Edwards AFB and areas used by the US Department of the Air Force (DAF) in accordance with [Title 10 United States Code \(USC\) § 2684a, Agreements to Limit Encroachments and Other Constraints on Military Training, Testing, and Operations](#), under the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program. The TPL, a national nonprofit organization working to protect land as parks and open space, would provide appraisals for the areas to be included under the RUE prior to establishing agreements. Edwards AFB and the DAF use the airspace over these areas to conduct tests, training, and operations. Entering into an RUE would prevent further commercial, industrial, and residential development in areas needed for military use.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) provides sufficient information to analyze potential environmental impacts associated with allowing the DAF to execute multiple agreements with multiple private landowners under the authority of 10 USC § 2684a over private property in Southern California. These agreements would prevent incompatible developments in areas that are currently used by the DAF. This EA evaluates the potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic effects of the proposed RUE. These actions are further described throughout this EA and collectively referred to as the “Proposed Action.”

This EA is prepared in accordance with the *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969*, as amended ([42 USC § 4321](#) et seq.) (NEPA); the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA regulations ([40 Code of Federal Regulations \[CFR\] Parts 1500–1508](#)); and the DAF NEPA regulations at [32 CFR Part 989, Environmental Impact Analysis Process \(EIAP\)](#). The EIAP informs decision-makers, regulatory agencies, and the public about a DAF proposed action before any decision is made on whether to implement the action. During the EIAP, if analyses in the EA determine that potential significant adverse effects would be likely to occur, the DAF would publish a notice of intent in the *Federal Register* to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The CEQ NEPA regulations at [40 CFR § 1500.1\(b\)](#), [40 CFR § 1506.6](#), and [40 CFR § 1507.4](#) provide purpose and direction for streamlining the NEPA process. CEQ memoranda and guidance on modernizing the NEPA process also identify opportunities to streamline the NEPA process, including the use of technology for communications and information dissemination. This EA satisfies the requirements of NEPA in accordance with the CEQ regulations and promotes streamlining of NEPA through the implementation of the DAF EIAP. To render this document more concise, links are provided to online data sources to which the reader can refer for more information. Should the reader not have internet access, please contact the DAF point of contact listed on the **Cover Sheet** of this EA and accommodations will be made to provide printed copies of relevant information requested.

### 1.2 LOCATION

The Proposed Action would occur within the Wind Wolves Preserve, located approximately 48 miles northwest of Edwards AFB. The proposed RUE would occur over land associated with airspace that currently is used for test and training by Edwards AFB.

#### 1.2.1 WIND WOLVES PRESERVE

The Wind Wolves Preserve consists of 93,000 acres of land in Kern County, California (ABC7, 2015). The preserve is approximately 35 miles southwest of the city of Bakersfield and approximately 48 miles northwest of Edwards AFB, in unincorporated Kern County (**Figure 1-1**). The Wildlands Conservancy, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation, acquired the land in 1996 and is the sole owner and administrator of the Wind Wolves Preserve.

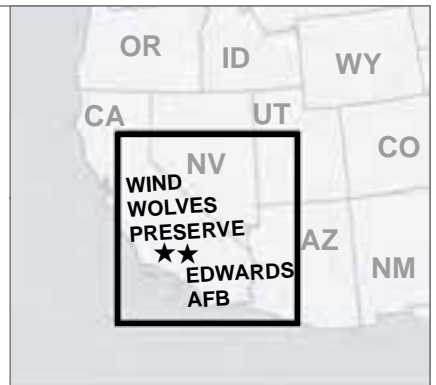


**FIGURE 1-1**  
Regional Overview

- City
- River
- National Forest
- State Boundary



Imagery: ESRI, 2022.  
Coordinate System: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 11N





A portion of the Wind Wolves Preserve is open for free public access and provides a variety of outdoor recreation activities, including camping and hiking, as well as educational opportunities. The remaining lands are not publicly accessible and are used for cattle grazing, sheep grazing, beekeeping, utility easements, and for a small permitted oil drilling operation. The Wildlands Conservancy manages the land for its biodiversity, conservation values, free recreation, and outdoor education programs.

## **1.2.2 EDWARDS AFB**

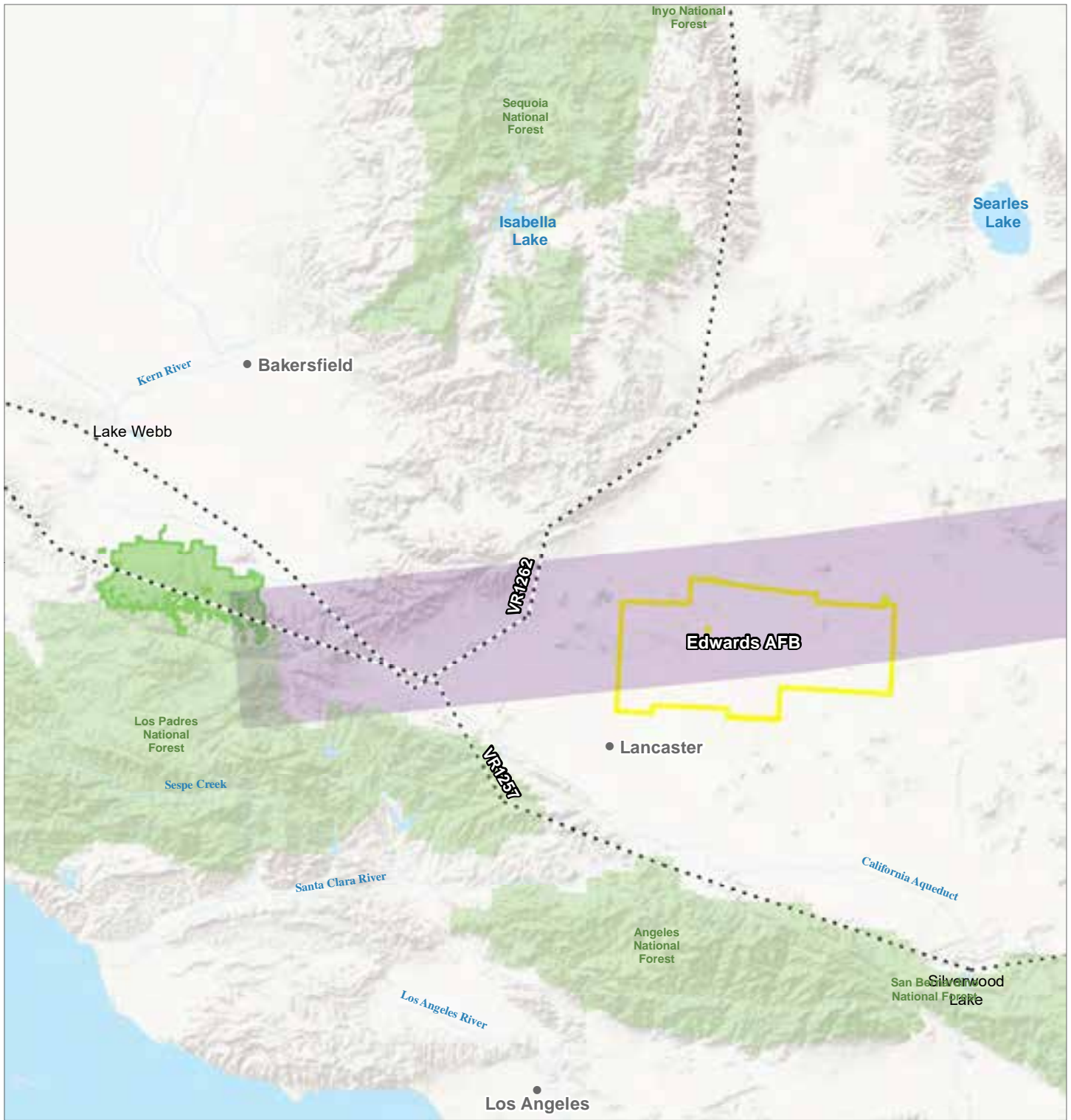
Edwards AFB is located in the Antelope Valley within the western Mojave Desert in Southern California. The Base is approximately 30 miles northeast of the city of Lancaster and occupies an area of approximately 308,000 acres (**Figure 1-1**). The Base falls within three counties: Kern, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino. It is the second largest base in the DAF and is home to the Air Force Test Center as well as the National Aeronautics and Space Agency's Armstrong Flight Research Center (Edwards AFB, 2023). Edwards AFB falls under Air Force Materiel Command and is the center for conducting and supporting research and development of flight, in addition to testing and evaluation of aerospace systems from concept to combat (Boeing, 2021). The 412 TW, the host wing at Edwards AFB, plans, conducts, analyzes, and reports on all flight and ground testing of aircraft, weapons systems, software, and components and conducts modeling and simulation for the DAF. Additionally, Edwards AFB is home to 15 tenant units and operates the US Air Force Test Pilot School.

As part of its mission, Edwards AFB maintains multiple military operations areas, restricted airspace areas, flight corridors, and special-use areas for various aerial training, testing, and evaluation purposes. The Bell X-1 Supersonic Corridor is a unidirectional supersonic corridor used by the 412 TW to assess stresses and efficiencies to airframes and propulsion systems while maneuvering at supersonic, super-cruise, and after-burner phases of flight. The corridor extends from the southeastern corner of the Wind Wolves Preserve across the northern portion of Edwards AFB to the east (**Figure 1-2**). Aircraft cruising flights within the Edwards Bell X-1 Supersonic Corridor occur at elevations from 30,000 to 50,000 feet above ground level. Military Training Visual Route (VR) 1257 and VR 1262, which have a floor of 200 feet above ground level, are utilized by Edwards AFB for low-altitude navigation and tactical training; the VRs converge at the southwestern end of the Bell X-1 Supersonic Corridor and extend to the west beyond the Installation boundary above the Wind Wolves Preserve (**Figure 1-2**) (DAF, 2022).

## **1.3 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION**

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to prevent further commercial, industrial, and residential development within existing flight corridors utilized by Edwards AFB. The area surrounding the Bell X-1 Supersonic Corridor, VR 1257, and VR 1262 is highly sought after for development. The establishment of an RUE between the DAF and private landowners in these areas would prevent land uses that are incompatible with the current DAF flight mission.

The Proposed Action is needed to preserve the military's present and future mission-critical use of the corridors. Maintaining the Wind Wolves Preserve and its grasslands as open space is critical to the Edwards AFB flight mission. Incompatible development within this area would be detrimental to the DAF mission and degrade Edwards AFB testing and training operations if corridor access was limited or no longer available. DAF readiness depends on ensuring that installations and ranges provide realistic and effective training and testing. Costly workarounds and/or restricted or unrealistic testing and training can inadequately prepare aircrews for their combat missions. If military installations are to remain active and a contributing economic participant in their communities, the installations must have the space necessary to successfully accomplish their test and training missions.



**FIGURE 1-2**  
Edwards AFB Training Routes

- ..... Military Training Visual Route
- ..... Wind Wolves Preserve
- ▭ Installation Boundary
- ▭ Bell X-1 Supersonic Corridor



Imagery: ESRI, 2022.  
Coordinate System: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 11N



## 1.4 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION, PUBLIC AND AGENCY PARTICIPATION

The EIAP, in compliance with NEPA guidance, includes public and agency review of information pertinent to a proposed action and alternatives. The DAF's compliance with the requirement for intergovernmental coordination and agency participation begins with the scoping process ([40 CFR § 1501.9](#)). Accordingly, and in accordance with Executive Order (EO) 12372, *Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs*, the DAF notified federal, state, and local agencies and tribal governments with jurisdictions that could potentially be affected by the Proposed Action and Alternatives via written correspondence throughout the development of this EA. A mailing list of the recipients of this correspondence as well as a sample of the outgoing letters and all responses are included in **Appendix A**. The DAF has historically partnered with the US Navy for REPI acquisitions due to overlapping mission goals; however, the US Navy has declined involvement with this particular REPI action.

### 1.4.1 GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION

The *National Historic Preservation Act* ([54 USC § 300101](#), et seq.) (NHPA) and its regulations at [36 CFR Part 800](#) direct federal agencies to consult with Indian tribes when a proposed action or alternatives may have an effect on tribal lands or on properties of religious and cultural significance to a tribe. Consistent with the NHPA, US Department of Defense Instruction 4710.02, *DoD Interactions with Federally Recognized Tribes*, and DAF Instruction 90-2002, *Air Force Interaction with Federally Recognized Tribes*, the DAF has invited federally recognized tribes that are historically affiliated with lands in the vicinity of the Proposed Action and Alternatives to consult on all proposed undertakings that have a potential to affect properties of cultural, historical, or religious significance to the tribes. The tribal consultation process is distinct from NEPA consultation and requires separate notification to all potentially affected tribes. The timelines for tribal consultation are also distinct from those of the other consultations. The Edwards AFB point of contact for federally recognized tribes is the Edwards AFB Base Commander. The point of contact for consultation with the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation is the Edwards AFB Cultural Resources Manager. A mailing list of the tribal government recipients of this invitation as well as a sample of the outgoing correspondence and all responses are included in **Appendix A**.

### 1.4.2 AGENCY CONSULTATIONS AND COORDINATION

Implementation of the Proposed Action involves coordination with several organizations and agencies. Compliance with Section 7 of the *Endangered Species Act of 1973*, as amended ([16 USC § 1531](#) et seq.) (ESA), and implementing regulations ([50 CFR Part 402](#)) requires communication with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and/or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine Fisheries Service. On 17 November 2023, the DAF initiated Section 7 consultation under the ESA for the Proposed Action using the USFWS's Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) tool to obtain an official species list from the USFWS. The list identified threatened and endangered species and other protected species (e.g., migratory birds) with potential to be affected by the Proposed Action. This information is included in **Appendix A** and incorporated into this EA where applicable.

Other federal agencies the DAF might coordinate with include the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, US Forest Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The DAF also coordinated with state agencies regarding potential effects from the Proposed Action and Alternatives. Compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA and implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800) was accomplished through the Edwards AFB Cultural Resources Program, and the State Historic Preservation Office was given the opportunity to concur on determinations of eligibility and effects.

Finally, notice of the Proposed Action and Alternatives was provided to elected officials that represent the state at the federal and local levels. A sample of agency correspondence and all responses are included in **Appendix A**.

### 1.4.3 COOPERATING AGENCY

In response to intergovernmental coordination, the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department, representing the Kern County Board of Supervisors, requested to participate as a cooperating agency ([40 CFR § 1501.8](#)) via letter dated 21 November 2023. The request for cooperating agency status is based on the administration of the Kern County General Plan and Kern County Zoning, which, by law, manages land use on this private land. A portion of the property identified for the Proposed Action is part of a larger project, all on private land with different owners that was entitled in the Kern County General Plan as the San Emidio New Town Specific Plan. The DAF accepted Kern County's request via letter dated 16 May 2024 (**Appendix A**).

As a cooperating agency, Kern County will continue to coordinate closely with the DAF and will actively participate in the preparation of the Draft EA and Final EA. Kern County will conduct an independent evaluation and analysis of this EA and may adopt the EA for purposes of making its decision regarding the Proposed Action pursuant to [40 CFR § 1506.3](#).

### 1.5 PUBLIC AND AGENCY REVIEW

The DAF invites the tribes, the public, and other interested stakeholders to review and comment on this EA. Accordingly, a notice of availability of the Draft EA and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was published in the following local newspapers to commence a 30-day public comment period:

- *Antelope Valley Press*
- *Mojave Desert News*

During the public comment period, the Draft EA and Draft FONSI are available online for view or download at <https://www.edwards.af.mil/About/Environment/>. Additionally, printed copies of the Draft EA and Draft FONSI are available by request (see **Cover Sheet**) and have been placed at the following area libraries for review:

- Rosamond Branch Library – 3611 Rosamond Boulevard, Rosamond CA
- Tehachapi Branch Library – 212 South Green Street, Tehachapi, CA
- Mojave Branch Library – 15555 O Street, Mojave, CA
- Arvin Branch Library – 201 Campus Drive, Arvin, CA
- Frazier Park Public Library – 3732 Park Dr, Frazier Park, CA
- Wilson Branch Library – 1901 Wilson Road, Bakersfield, CA

### 1.6 DECISION TO BE MADE

Should the DAF choose to implement the Proposed Action, this EA will assist in determining an appropriate scope of action to minimize potential adverse environmental impacts and allow for additional, project-specific environmental review in compliance with NEPA. The decision-making framework for this EA (see also **Section 3.1**) is described as follows:

- 1) Determine the potential environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action and Alternatives and sign a FONSI if all environmental impacts are less than significant;
- 2) Initiate preparation of an EIS if it is determined that significant impacts would occur through implementation of the Proposed Action or Alternatives; or
- 3) Select the No Action Alternative, whereby the Proposed Action would not be implemented.

## 1.7 SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

In accordance with [40 CFR § 1501.3](#), the DAF determined the appropriate level for this analysis is an EA. An EA is a concise public document that briefly discusses the purpose and need, alternatives, and potential environmental impacts of a proposed federal action. It aids in agency planning and decision-making, or facilitates the preparation of an EIS, as necessary ([40 CFR § 1501.5](#)).

NEPA, which is implemented through the CEQ regulations, requires federal agencies to consider alternatives to the Proposed Action and to analyze potential impacts of alternative actions. Potential impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives described in this EA will be assessed in accordance with the CEQ regulations, which require that federal agencies analyze the potentially affected environment and degree of the effects of the action. To help the public and decision-makers understand the implications of potential impacts, the impacts are described in terms of direct effects (those which occur at the same time and place), indirect effects (those which occur at a later time or farther removed in distance but are still reasonably foreseeable), and cumulative effects (those resulting from the incremental effects when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions).

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## CHAPTER 2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The REPI Program was established under 10 USC. § 2684a and is aimed at preventing encroachment that can limit or restrict military training, testing, and operations. It protects these operations by helping to remove or avoid land use conflicts near installations and addressing regulatory restrictions that inhibit military activities. Encroachment describes any external factor that inhibits military readiness, including, but not limited to, the growing competition for land and airspace. Incompatible land uses can impact critical, at-risk military mission capabilities. Increasingly, land use far away from installation and range boundaries can also have an impact on the military's ability to train, test, and operate (US Department of Defense, 2022).

A key component of the REPI Program is the use of buffer partnerships among the military services, private conservation groups, and state and local governments, as authorized by Congress under 10 USC § 2684a. These partnerships share the cost of acquisition of easements or other interests in land from willing sellers to preserve compatible land uses and natural habitats near installations and ranges, which helps sustain critical, at-risk military mission capabilities.

While the REPI Program's primary mission is to protect military readiness, REPI also benefits the environment by conserving land near military installations and ranges. These partnerships often protect working lands (e.g., farms, forests, ranches), wildlife habitat, water resources, natural spaces for recreational opportunities, and threatened and endangered species.

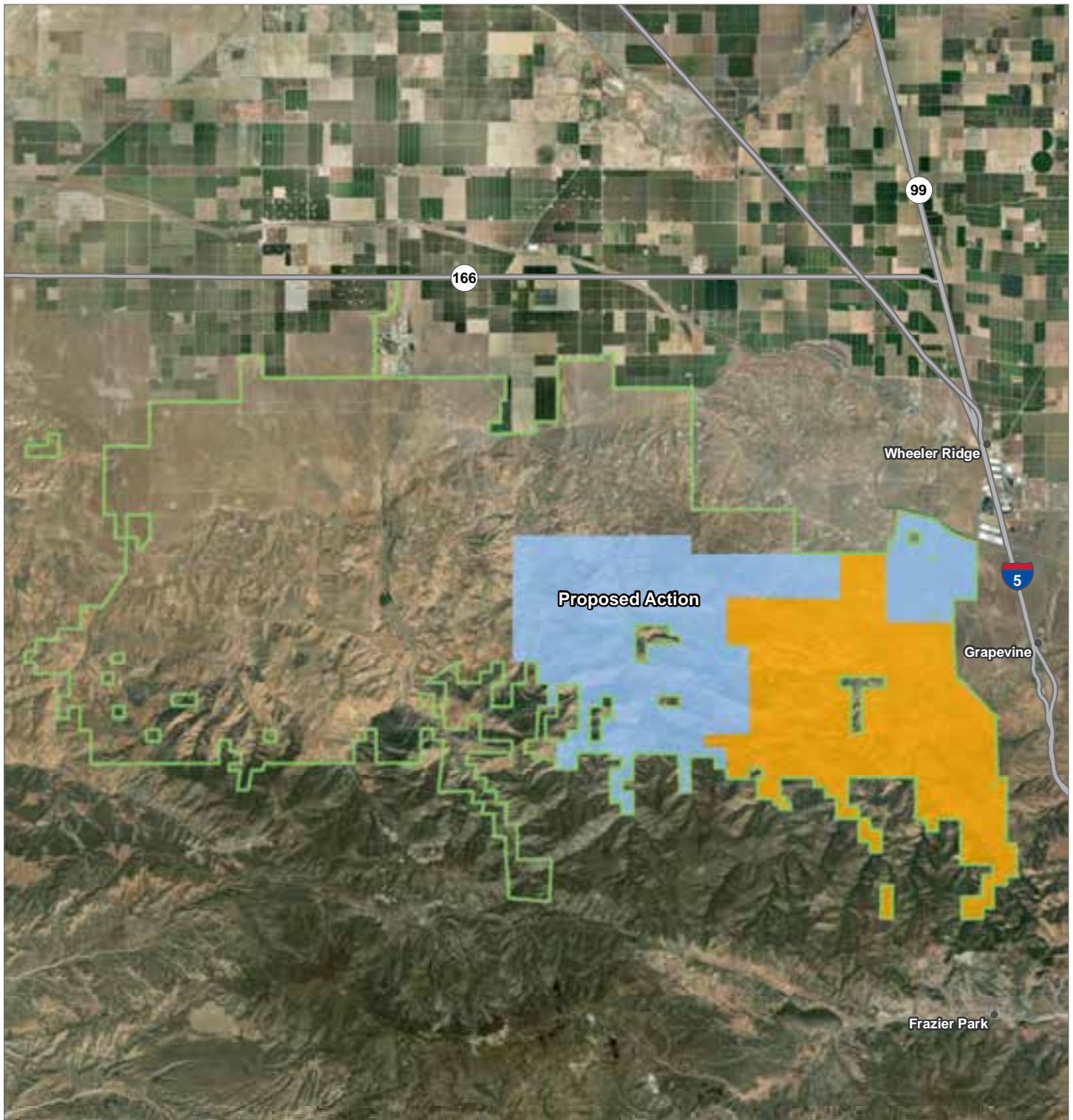
The DAF acquires lands and interests in lands, such as easements, consistent with legislation or other congressional guidelines and executive orders. In accordance with Air Force Instruction (AFI) 32-9001, *Acquisition of Real Property*, the DAF may only acquire land for new or changed mission requirements, organizational changes or temporary relocations, or encroachment protection outside an installation's perimeter.

When land is needed to achieve the DAF mission objectives, the DAF seeks to acquire the least amount of interest and space for the shortest term possible to conduct and sustain mission operations. Within the Wind Wolves Preserve, easement acquisition would provide the level of protection needed to accomplish the DAF objectives, while being cost effective and considering the needs of local landowners.




In 2021, the DAF completed a permanent conservation agreement covering 14,631 of the total 93,000 acres of the Wind Wolves Preserve with funding from the REPI Program in conjunction with The Wildlands Conservancy and the TPL (Rangeland Trust, 2021). This was Phase 1 in a series of planned easements on the Wind Wolves Preserve and the first step for Edwards AFB in preventing encroachment on the Bell X-1 Supersonic Corridor and the future development of incompatible land uses nearby (**Figure 2-1**). Edwards AFB seeks to move forward with additional phases in the series of easements on the Wind Wolves Preserve. The US Army and Navy have existing Categorical Exclusions<sup>1</sup> developed for REPI actions. The DAF is performing an EA for the Wild Wolves Phase 2 REPI action, in part, to develop the evidence and framework for future Categorical Exclusion considerations to support mission goals that require larger land areas.

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<sup>1</sup> A Categorical Exclusion is a category of actions that normally do not have a significant effect on the human environment ([40 CFR § 1501.4\(a\)](#)).



**FIGURE 2-1**  
Edwards AFB Restrictive Use Easement Phases

-  Wind Wolves Preserve Boundary
-  Phase 1 RUE
-  Proposed Action (Phase 2 RUE)



Imagery: ESRI, 2022.  
Coordinate System: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 11N





## 2.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

Under the Proposed Action, the DAF would enter into an RUE in perpetuity on and over the property in accordance with 10 USC § 2684a. The agreement would restrict commercial, industrial, and residential development in the area. The TPL would provide appraisals for the areas to be included under the RUE prior to establishing the agreement. The TPL is not a government agency, but often works with government agencies to protect land. The *National Defense Authorization Act* allows the DAF to enter into agreements with private conservation organizations, such as the TPL, to acquire RUEs in the vicinity of military installations. No ground disturbance would occur under the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would not affect current easements in place. As part of the RUE, conservation restrictions would prohibit the following actions from occurring:

- uses for residential or household purposes;
- uses related to commercial or industrial activities, other than agriculture and passive recreation;
- use of off-road vehicles;
- placement of billboards, signs, or other structures;
- filling, dumping, excavating, draining, dredging, mining, drilling, removing, or exploring for extraction of minerals, loam, soil, sands, gravel, rocks, or other material on or below the surface of the property, including ground disturbance for new utility work;
- removal, destruction, or cutting of trees, shrubs, or other vegetation, except as required for fire breaks, maintenance of foot trails or existing roads, health of the population, or utilities;
- lighting;
- operation of activities that produce smoke, glare, or other visual hazards without permit;
- altering the surface or general topography of the property;
- depositing soil, trash, ashes, refuse, wastes, bio-solids, or any other materials on the property site; and
- conducting activities detrimental to water quality.

## 2.3 SELECTION STANDARDS FOR ALTERNATIVE SCREENING

Consistent with [32 CFR § 989.8](#), selection standards were developed to establish a means for determining the reasonableness of an alternative to the Proposed Action and whether an alternative should be carried forward for further analysis in the EA. Potential alternatives to the Proposed Action were evaluated based on universal selection standards, which were applied to all alternatives. The following selection standards meet the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action and were used to identify reasonable alternatives for analysis in the EA. Reasonable alternatives must:

- preserve the military's present and future mission-critical use of the Bell X-1 Supersonic Corridor, and the VR 1257 and VR 1262 flight corridors;
- prevent further commercial, industrial, and residential development near the Bell X-1 Supersonic Corridor, and the VR 1257 and VR 1262 flight corridors;
- engage with a willing landowner or municipality;
- not be cost prohibitive by requiring the purchase of land, and
- must be planned for authorization within 5 years of the date of analysis.

These selection standards were used to identify reasonable alternatives for analysis in the EA, as described in **Section 2.4**.

## **2.4 ALTERNATIVES RETAINED FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS**

### **2.4.1 PROPOSED ACTION (PHASE 2 RUE)**

Under the Proposed Action, DAF would enter into an RUE for areas identified as Phase 2 within the Wind Wolves Preserve, as shown in **Figure 2-1**. The Phase 2 property is located to the west and adjacent to the previously acquired Phase 1. Phase 2 includes approximately 20,000 acres. Under the Proposed Action, the RUE for Phase 2 would limit development as described in **Section 2.2**. Implementation would be determined by the TPL appraisal process and funding availability.

### **2.4.2 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE**

Analysis of the No Action Alternative provides a benchmark, enabling decision-makers to compare the magnitude of the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Action. NEPA requires an EA to analyze the No Action Alternative. No action means that an action would not take place at this time, and the resulting environmental effects from taking no action would be compared with the effects of moving forward with the proposed activity.

Under the No Action Alternative, no additional RUEs would be established between the DAF, The Wildlands Conservancy, and the TPL; the RUE for Phase 1 would remain in place. Future development outside of Phase 1 could potentially occur under the Bell X-1 Supersonic Corridor and VRs and could degrade Edwards AFB's testing and training operations if access was limited and/or no longer available due to incompatible land use. Developing another suitable location for this type of flight corridor would be highly speculative as well as cost prohibitive.

## **2.5 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED ANALYSIS**

In an attempt to develop additional alternatives for the RUE, Edwards AFB approached other private landowners and municipalities to gauge their interest in entering into a conservation easement under the REPI Program. Only The Wildlands Conservancy showed an interest. All other property owners in the vicinity of the existing VRs and Bell X-1 Supersonic Corridor utilized by Edwards AFB were not interested. Therefore, no other alternatives for the Proposed Action exist.

Additional phases are not included in this EA for detailed analysis. An RUE may eventually be pursued for additional area between Edwards AFB and The Wildlands Conservancy; however, the timeline for this action would occur too far in the future for consideration in this analysis. If Edwards AFB were to pursue an additional RUE in the future, the DAF would initiate a separate NEPA analysis at that time.

## **2.6 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

The potential impacts under the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative are summarized in **Table 2-1**. The summary is based on information discussed in detail in **Chapter 3** of this EA and includes a concise definition of the issues addressed and the potential environmental impacts associated with each alternative.

**Table 2-1.  
Summary of Environmental Consequences**

<b>Resource Area</b>	<b>Proposed Action</b>	<b>No Action Alternative</b>
Air Quality and Climate Change	Beneficial impacts to long-term air quality	No impacts to regional air quality or greenhouse gas emissions
Noise/Acoustic Environment	No change to the existing noise environment	No change or impacts to the existing noise environment
Cultural Resources	No adverse impacts to cultural resources	No changes to cultural resources
Biological/Natural Resources	Beneficial impacts to biological and natural resources	No impacts to biological or natural resources
Water Resources	Beneficial impacts to water resources	No impacts to water resources
Land Use	No adverse impacts to land use	No impact to existing land use
Infrastructure and Utilities	No adverse impacts to infrastructure and utilities operations or maintenance	No impacts to the existing infrastructure and utilities operations
Earth Resources	Beneficial impacts to earth resources	No impacts to earth resources
Safety and Occupational Health	Beneficial impacts to flight safety and occupational health; no impacts to ground safety	No impacts to safety and occupational health

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