

## ***MH4 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS, IRREVERSIBLE, AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES***

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### ***Cumulative Effects***

CEQ regulations stipulate that the cumulative effects analysis within an EIS should consider the potential environmental impacts resulting from “the incremental impacts of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions” (40 CFR 1508.7). Recent CEQ guidance in *Considering Cumulative Effects* affirms this requirement, stating that the first steps in assessing cumulative effects involve defining the scope of the other actions and their interrelationship with the proposed action. The scope must consider other projects that coincide with the location and timetable of this alternative. It must also evaluate the nature of interactions among these actions.

In this section, an effort has been made to identify past and present actions associated with Mountain Home AFB, plus those actions that are in the planning phase at this time. Only those foreseeable actions with a potential to interact with the Mountain Home alternative are addressed in this cumulative analysis. Although the level of available detail regarding such proposals varies, this approach provides decisionmakers with the most current information to evaluate the environmental consequences of the proposal to beddown the F-22 aircraft and conduct operations in associated airspace at Mountain Home AFB.

Mountain Home AFB is an active military installation where changes in mission and training requirements occur in response to defense policies, current threats, and technological advances. Like any other major institution (e.g., university, industrial complex), Mountain Home AFB requires new construction, facility improvements, infrastructure upgrades, and maintenance and repairs. Such requirements are consistent and will continue to apply during and after the proposed beddown. Beyond those construction projects noted below, the specifics and timing of types of actions are not reasonably foreseeable.

### ***Past and Present Actions Relevant to the Mountain Home AFB Alternative***

Mountain Home AFB has been a military airfield and base since 1942. Since that time, it has been developed, changed internally, and supported numerous different types of aircraft. Past actions most relevant to assessment of the beddown of F-22s start in 1992 with the establishment of the Composite Wing or 366<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Expeditionary Wing (366 AEW). To support rapid deployment of a major force to trouble spots around the world, the Air Force established the 366 AEW at Mountain Home AFB in 1992. A new concept for peace-time basing, the 366 AEW consisted of F-16, F-15C, F-15E, and KC-135 aircraft that train and fight together as a unit. Establishment of the 366 AEW involved construction and modification of facilities on base, as well as addition of personnel. The 366 AEW also increased sortie-operations in all of the MOAs associated with Mountain Home AFB to about 24,000 annually.

In 1996, the Air Force relocated the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomber Squadron and 7 B-1B aircraft to Mountain Home AFB to complete the 366 AEW (Air Force 1996b). Associated with this addition, 573 personnel were added at the base and a total of \$43 million dollars was spent for facility and infrastructure construction.



*The B-1B aircraft of the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomber Squadron were relocated to Mountain Home AFB in 1996 to complete the 366 AEW.*

In 1998, the Air Force established the 12,000-acre Juniper Butte Range southeast of Mountain Home AFB (Air Force 1998a). This range, located within the Jarbidge MOA, enhances the training capabilities of the 366 AEW by providing increased realism, flexibility, and quality in training. Use of this range did not alter activities at the base, but did increase total sortie-operations in the reconfigured airspace to baseline levels (about 26,500 annually). While the F-22 would fly in the airspace, it would not use either Juniper Butte Range or SCR for air-to-ground munitions training. The F-22, like other aircraft using the airspace, would use the threat emitter assets under the airspace. The base is currently implementing a Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan for the Juniper Butte Range and associated sites.

### ***Incremental Impacts of the Mountain Home Alternative with Reasonably Foreseeable Actions***

During the timeframe for F-22 construction, Mountain Home AFB has proposed 18 projects that are independent of the proposed beddown and would be implemented whether or not there were a decision to beddown the Initial F-22 Operational Wing at Mountain Home AFB. These 18 proposed projects will have their own environmental analyses and would be implemented through 2005. They represent over \$124.7 million dollars and 1.4 million square feet of construction activity.

While Mountain Home is a growing city, no reasonably foreseeable actions are planned within the area potentially affected by beddown of the F-22s at the base. As noted in section MH3.12, Land Use, Elmore County controls development and land use in the vicinity of the base to prevent encroachment. Other actions, such as the ongoing upgrades to I-84 north of the city of Mountain Home, would be peripheral to activities on the base and have a negligible effect.

### ***Analysis of Cumulative Effects***

The following analysis examines how the impacts of these other actions might be affected by those resulting from the proposed action at Mountain Home AFB, and whether such a relationship would result in potentially significant impacts not identified when the proposed action is considered alone.

Past establishment of the 366 AEW (including B-1Bs) and Juniper Butte Range are integrated into baseline conditions and analyzed under the no-action alternative. All activities and effects of these past actions are reflected under the affected environment/no-action sections. Additionally, all aircraft operations (except for the F-15Cs being replaced) are incorporated and analyzed in the relevant resource categories for the proposed F-22 beddown. As such, the analysis of impacts in section MH3 also addresses the cumulative effects of these past and present Air Force actions.

Although not fully analyzed at this time in separate environmental analysis, none of the future on-base actions would be expected to result in more than negligible impacts individually or cumulatively. All actions affect very specific, circumscribed areas, and the magnitude of the actions is minimal. Short-duration, temporary increases in localized noise and air emissions from construction and vehicles, as well as a minor temporary increase in on-base traffic would be expected. These effects would generally overlap with those from F-22 proposed construction. Given that the F-22 construction would likewise have a short-term minimal effect on noise, air quality, and traffic, the combined impacts of these actions would remain well below the threshold of significance for all resource categories.

### *Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources*

Irreversible and irretrievable resource commitments are related to the use of nonrenewable resources and the effects that the uses of these resources have on future generations. Irreversible effects primarily result from the use or destruction of a specific resource (e.g., energy and minerals) that cannot be replaced within a reasonable time frame. Irretrievable resource commitments involve the loss in value of an affected resource that cannot be restored as a result of the action.

For the Mountain Home AFB alternative, most resource commitments are neither irreversible nor irretrievable. Most impacts are short-term and temporary, such as air emissions from construction, or longer lasting, but negligible (e.g., public service increases). Increases in sonic booms would not be negligible. However, the duration of individual booms would be extremely brief. Those limited resources that may involve a possible irreversible or irretrievable commitment are discussed below.

If Mountain Home AFB was the chosen alternative, almost 440 acres of land would be disturbed. Much of this land has been previously disturbed. Construction and renovation of base facilities would require the consumption of limited amounts of material typically associated with interior renovations (wiring, insulation, windows, drywall) and exterior construction (concrete, steel, sand, brick). An undetermined amount of energy to conduct renovation, construction and operation of these facilities would be expended and irreversibly lost.

Training operations would continue and involve consumption of nonrenewable resources, such as gasoline used in vehicles and jet fuel used in aircraft. Use of training ordnance would involve commitment of chaff and flares. None of these activities would be expected to significantly decrease the availability of minerals or petroleum resources. Personal vehicle use by the personnel continuing to support the existing missions would consume fuel, oil, and lubricants. The amount of these materials used would increase slightly; however, this additional use is not expected to significantly affect the availability of the resources.

