

**EUREKA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**Joint Meeting with Naval Air Station Fallon**  
**October 20, 2015**

STATE OF NEVADA            )  
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COUNTY OF EUREKA        )

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Board of Eureka County Commissioners met pursuant to law on October 20, 2015, for a special joint meeting between the Commissioners, Naval Air Station Fallon, Eureka County Planning Commission, and Natural Resources Advisory Commission. The meeting was called to order at 5:03 p.m. and began with the Pledge of Allegiance. The interactive video conferencing system was connected and utilized between Crescent Valley and Eureka for the entire meeting.

Present for the Board of County Commissioners were: Chairman J.J. Goicoechea; Vice Chairman Michael Sharkozy; Commissioner Fred Etchegaray; and Commissioner Clerk, Jackie Berg. Naval Air Station Fallon was represented by Rob Rule, Community Plans & Liaison Officer. Present for the Eureka County Planning Commission were: Chairman Russell Conley; Hollon Moll; Tony Rowley; and Department Assistant, Anne Kniefel. Present for Natural Resources Advisory Commission were: Chairman Jim Baumann; Vice Chairman Carl Slagowski; Gary McCuin; Leo Damele; Mike Rebaleati; Ken Conley; Paul Etzler; Secretary, Jessica Santoyo; and Natural Resources Manager, Jake Tibbitts.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve the agenda for the October 20<sup>th</sup> special meeting; Commissioner Etchegaray seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chairman Goicoechea opened the floor for public comments; there were none. Chairman Goicoechea invited those present to introduce themselves. This included: Ray & Jackie Bailey, Pine Valley; Mr. & Mrs. Marshall Davis, Palisade Ranch; Tom Tomera, Tomera Ranch in Pine Valley; John (last name not available), Pine Valley; Ron & Linda Rankin, Pine Valley; Christine Smith, Eureka; Dale Bugenig, Consulting Hydrogeologist for Eureka County; Mike Sullivan, EMS Coordinator and Assistant Emergency Manager for Eureka County; Abby Johnson, Consultant for Eureka County; and in Crescent Valley, Lisa Wolf, Correspondent for Eureka Sentinel.

**JOINT LAND USE STUDY – NAVAL AIR STATION FALLON**

Overview of Final Joint Land Use Study: Rob Rule, Community Plans & Liaison Officer for NAS Fallon, traveled to Eureka to update County officials, personnel, and the public on the NAS Fallon Joint Land Use Study (JLUS). A JLUS is a cooperative land use plan between the active military installation, surrounding cities and counties, state and federal agencies, and other affected stakeholders. This study, finalized in May, was primarily funded by a grant from the US Department of Defense. The JLUS and related documents are available online at <http://www.fallonjlus.com/>. Mr. Rule provided a map of the study area along with a matrix outlining plan strategies.

Some of the primary purposes of a JLUS are to provide transparency, open up lines of communication, and reduce potential conflicts between the military and surrounding areas. The objective is to promote collaborative planning that meets the needs of the military while sustaining economic vitality and protecting the health and interests of the general public. Larger aspects of the plan have been forwarded to the Nevada State Clearinghouse for broadcast throughout the State. Partners and stakeholders involved in this plan include: NAS Fallon, City of Fallon, City of Fernley, Churchill County, Eureka County, Lander County, Mineral County, Nye County, Pershing County, Washoe County, Tribal Governments, Bureau of Land

Management, US Forest Service, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Nevada State Lands, Nevada Department of Wildlife, and others.

Coordination & Communication: Most phases of the plan are more significant to the immediate area – for instance, Churchill County. The JLUS recommends that a member of the navy participate on local Planning Commissions. The JLUS asks for communication when any major land use changes are planned. The navy would like to be notified of any communication facilities, such as cellular towers, due to the potential for impacts or interference. The navy is in favor of alternate energy sources, such as wind, solar, and geothermal, but would like to be informed of any installations. They are interested in UAS (Unmanned Aircraft Systems) activity – not lower-scale use that is residential or private, but industrial type uses.

Air Space: One aspect of the plan relevant to Eureka County is air space. No new air space restrictions are proposed, but those already in place are referenced in the JLUS.

The Federal Aviation Administration notifies the navy of any installations 200 feet or taller. This standard would be applicable to Eureka County as it would be unusual to have flight activity here below the 200 feet threshold. The navy would be interested in documenting anything 75 feet or taller, but the County can determine the significance of anything between 75 feet and 200 feet. Mr. Rule reiterated that communication and coordination are requested in the JLUS, but are not required. No approval is required for projects, construction, or installations, especially in Eureka County where no zoning exists. The navy is interested from an informational standpoint only.

Military Training Routes: All military training routes are already established (and have been for years) and nothing new is proposed. There are areas within Eureka County where restricted air space, in relation to these routes, exists down to the surface of the ground. This is to allow for low flying training maneuvers. There are no plans to increase the level of training, which is as high now as it's ever been except during wartime, and no additional flight activity will be seen in Eureka County. The Federal Aviation Administration controls the air space and they provide authorization to the military.

Supersonic Activity: The supersonic corridor is between Battle Mountain and Austin, so there shouldn't be any sonic activity from the navy in Eureka County. Some sonic activity by the air force does exist over the Tonkin Summit area.

NAS Fallon – Training Base: Mr. Rule emphasized that NAS Fallon is a training base. It was established in 1942. Training activity correlates with upcoming military actions directly related to what is happening overseas.

Medical Flights: The navy is in constant communication to avoid any interference with medical flights.

Sage Grouse Questions: Several questions were raised regarding the navy flight patterns over sage grouse habitat. Mr. Rule explained that when possible, flights and military activities are averted, especially to avoid leks during brooding season. He added that his next topic would explain a program that mitigates disturbance with proactive efforts to enhance habitat and provide other benefits.

Future Communication: It was agreed that comments, questions, and concerns can be forwarded to the navy through the local County Commission or Natural Resources offices. Mr. Rule will make sure these offices have his contact information.

## **SAGE LANDS HABITAT COLLABORATION**

Collaborative Partnership: Mr. Rule explained that NAS Fallon is collaboratively working with federal agencies and Nevada partners in developing a project to address sagebrush ecosystem and sage grouse habitat threats while protecting military training operations. The possibility of a sage grouse listing as a threatened or endangered species was problematic for the entire west, including the navy. This initiative was proactive to avert a listing and will continue as a conservation effort.

This collaboration is intended to enhance existing programs such as US Department of Agriculture's Sentinel Landscapes Partnership and US Department of Defense's REPI (Readiness & Environmental Protection Integration) Program. Under the REPI Program, NAS Fallon has collaborated on 4,500 acres in conservation easements over the past ten years, and will add another 3,000 acres this year.

The main partners of the Sage Lands Habitat Collaboration are the Nevada Department of Wildlife, Nevada Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Nevada Conservation Districts, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Department of the Navy. Additional participating organizations include the US Fish & Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management. The three main project objectives are to purchase rural conservation easements on private lands, outline a coordinated habitat restoration effort, and provide essential research for current populations. The project boundary is the Naval Air Station Fallon Military Influence Area, which encompasses over 40,000 square miles of northern Nevada.

Mr. Rule briefly explained the conservation easements portion of the program. This is a voluntary initiative where landowners sell a conservation easement which preserves the agricultural use of that land forever. This is basically a purchase of the value of the property tied to future development for other than agricultural uses. These easements benefit sage grouse by preserving habitat and benefit the navy by keeping lands under flight zones from converting to more populated uses.

The navy intends to keep this program going for five to ten years and will make funding requests based on level of interest. Conservation easements require a legal process involving multiple agencies. In Churchill County, an avenue has been established for interested property owners to start the process through the county. If parties in Eureka County are interested, Mr. Rule suggested inquiring through the local Conservation District, contacting the Natural Resources office, or contacting him directly.

The Board thanked Mr. Rule for traveling to Eureka and providing this information.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comments were taken and answered throughout the presentation. Chairman Goicoechea called for final public comments; there were none.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; the meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

*Approved by vote of the Board this 20<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2015.*

/s/ J.J. Goicoechea

J.J. Goicoechea, Chairman

*I, Jackie Berg, Commissioner Clerk, attest that these are a true, correct, and duly approved minutes of the October 20, 2015, special meeting of the Board of Eureka County Commissioners.*

/s/ Jackie Berg

Jackie Berg, Commissioner Clerk

*I, Beverly Conley, Clerk & Treasurer of Eureka County, acknowledge and accept the attached minutes as approved by the Board of Eureka County Commissioners and attested to by the Commissioner Clerk.*

/s/ Beverly Conley

Beverly Conley, Clerk & Treasurer