



Sustainability and Environmental Group

COMMANDER'S GUIDE TO COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

**ABERDEEN TEST CENTER
DUGWAY PROVING GROUND
ELECTRONIC PROVING GROUND
REAGAN TEST SITE
REDSTONE TEST CENTER
WHITE SANDS TEST CENTER
YUMA PROVING GROUND**

**NAVAL AIR WARFARE CENTER AIRCRAFT DIVISION PATUXENT RIVER
NAVAL AIR WARFARE CENTER WEAPONS DIVISION CHINA LAKE
NAVAL AIR WARFARE CENTER WEAPONS DIVISION POINT MUGU
NAVAL SURFACE WARFARE CENTER DAHLGREN DIVISION
NAVAL UNDERSEA WARFARE CENTER DIVISION KEYPORT
NAVAL UNDERSEA WARFARE CENTER DIVISION NEWPORT
PACIFIC MISSILE RANGE FACILITY**

**96th TEST WING
412th TEST WING
ARNOLD ENGINEERING DEVELOPMENT COMPLEX**

**SPACE LAUNCH DELTA 30
SPACE LAUNCH DELTA 45**

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

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COMMANDER'S GUIDE TO COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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Preface

In order to meet its objectives, the Range Commanders Council (RCC) Sustainability and Environmental Group (SEG) has developed and updated the *Commander's Guide to Community Involvement* to address the need to proactively work with the civilian communities, government organizations, Tribal Governments, media, and others to preclude adverse impacts of encroachment on the military's ability to test, train, and operate. This guide, intended to build on the material presented in the previous guides, highlights current selected best practices and lessons learned.

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Summary of Change

This 2022 Commander's Guide to Community Involvement is a continuation of the 2006 Commander's Guide to Community Involvement and the 2012 update. Installations and ranges were surveyed to provide a more in-depth look at common issues that they are facing and additional examples of community involvement best practices to help lead and inform future efforts. New case studies were added to the report and dispersed throughout the guide rather than listed at the end. The guide as a whole was reworked and modified to create a different flow. While sections such as The Need of Communication, Commander's Action, Stakeholders, and Tools to Help remain in this guide, they have been reworked and modified. Sections related to local governments and elected officials at local, state, and federal levels were removed. New sections in this guide include Current and Emerging Issues, Building a Team and Developing Key Messages, and Adapting to the Future.

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Acronyms

AFB	Air Force Base
CPLO	Community Planning Liaison Officer/Community Plans Liaison Officer
MILREP	Military Representative
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHO	Native Hawaiian Organization
PMRF	Pacific Missile Range Facility
RCC	Range Commanders Council
REPI	Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration
SEG	Sustainability and Environmental Group
TELE	Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively

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1. Introduction

This guide is intended to provide installation and range commanders with tools and information about effectively working with communities to help protect the military mission. In 2006, the first Commander's Guide to Community Involvement was published. The Range Commanders Council (RCC) Sustainability Group published an update in 2012 through the Office of the Secretary of Defense Sustainable Ranges Initiative. This report is a continuation of those guides, providing updates on common issues that installations and ranges are facing and additional examples of community involvement best practices to help lead and inform future efforts. The examples and lessons learned shared previously are still relevant today and some recommendations are presented in this version to serve as a useful standalone guide. This update is intended to be used as a supplement to information in the earlier guides for a more comprehensive view. This guide is also applicable to non-DoD entities, such as NASA, who are part of the RCC.

In 2020, members of the RCC Sustainability and Environmental Group (SEG) were surveyed and asked to share insights about current outreach programs, priorities, and lessons learned. A common theme emerged that was also highlighted in the previous guides: effective community involvement is critical to maintaining a military activity's current and future mission. How this is accomplished varies across the ranges and installations surveyed. A majority of the ranges and installations that responded have a formal Community Involvement Program and/or a designated staff member leading community outreach efforts, often called a Community Planning Liaison Officer/Community Plans Liaison Officer (CPLO). While not all military services or installations have CPLOs, it was evident that extensive resources are expended to plan and conduct outreach. In fact, the amount of time that a CPLO or other individuals spend on community involvement activities (either directly or indirectly) was reported to be as much as 75-95%. In these cases, tenant agencies or commands may play a supporting role in outreach or may participate if an issue directly impacts their activities.

An effective community involvement program is essential to protect the ability of an installation, range, and/or operating area to test and train. The prevention of encroachment in areas of critical concern is key for an installation or range to perform its current and future missions. Encroachment can take many forms, including urban development, renewable energy, noise, environmental restrictions, height obstructions, radio frequency usage, etc. The installation or range must take a proactive approach in working with the civilian community and organizations to preclude mission degradation from encroachment.

1.1 Using This Guide

The commander serves the most important and influential role in the military's ability to work with the community. This guide provides the installation or range commander with updated information and tools to assist in developing outreach strategies and addressing encroachment issues. Key topics include the following.

- The importance of communication
- Current and emerging encroachment issues that installations/ranges are facing
- Unique characteristics of an installation/range that affect outreach

- How to build an effective outreach team
- Identifying key stakeholders and audiences
- Other useful advice for commanders
- Challenges or areas in need of improvement associated with working with community or external stakeholders
- Case studies

1.2 The Importance of Communication

Two-way communication between the military and community or stakeholder groups is critical to a successful working relationship. The goal of community involvement is to advocate and strengthen early and meaningful community participation. An open dialogue can help identify community concerns and areas of tension, allowing them to be addressed before they rise to a level where they can no longer be easily resolved. Two-way communication also allows community members to have a voice in the process and have their opinions heard. On the other hand, the community may not be aware of the issues facing its local installation or range. Providing the community with a better understanding of the importance of the military mission and purpose of test and training can help foster support.

Working collaboratively, the military, state and local governments, and other stakeholder groups can protect military testing and training capabilities while conserving important natural resources and maintaining community well-being.

2. Current and Emerging Issues

Encroachment often drives the need for outreach in the community. Encroachment on U.S. military installations and ranges remains a serious and growing problem for the DoD. Encroachment, as defined by DoD, refers to any external factors that inhibit the ability of the Military Services to use their ranges, airspace, and other operating areas to conduct effective training and testing. It can have negative impacts on operations and military readiness, and in the worst case, cause the installation to significantly alter or relocate activities. Because the installations and ranges provide jobs and revenue to the surrounding community, keeping encroachment to a minimum benefits both the military and the people who live in the surrounding communities. Some of the more common encroachment issues are identified below.

2.1 Common Encroachment Issues

Survey participants were surveyed about the top three encroachment or environmental issues at their installation or range that currently require some level of community involvement/outreach. While a variety of answers were received, there were three that were most prevalent:

- Renewable energy, including solar and wind energy development;
- Noise;
- Urban/land development around installations.

In recent years there has been an increased push for renewable energy (wind and solar) development across the country. Renewable energy can interfere with military operations. For example, wind turbines can restrict the ability to conduct certain low-level flying and/or weapons test and training operations, which can create avoidance areas that degrade the quality or timing of testing or training. They can also interfere with radars, Air Traffic Control, and other military systems. Solar panels can impact aircraft operations or instrumentation due to glint/glare, solar photovoltaic retained heat, and/or electromagnetic interference, in addition to potential concerns about foreign ownership or operational security.

Noise continues to be an issue across the ranges, as many ground and aircraft operations create noise that impacts local communities. Resulting noise complaints and damage claims can require implementing workarounds or can lead to a loss of test and training space.

The rapid pace of urban growth into formerly rural areas around military installations and ranges continues to be an issue and presents two sets of encroachment problems. First, as residential and commercial development increases in areas near military bases, residents may be exposed to aircraft over-flights, dust, and noise from military activities. Second, the military's ability to conduct important training exercises may be compromised due to incompatible land use adjacent to or near installations and ranges.

Aside from the top three encroachment issues listed, survey participants reported several other high-priority topics, including threatened and endangered species, increased commercial and civilian boat and air traffic, Tribal outreach and engagement, and installation restoration cleanup projects.

2.2 Emerging Encroachment Issues

Survey participants were also asked about emerging or anticipated issues that have a community involvement component. In addition to encroachment issues, the participants reported other programs or requirements that necessitated coordination or engagement with the community. The following is a short description of the emerging issues identified, each posing different threats to both the range/installation and the surrounding community.

- **New and growing missions:** New testing and training requirements have resulted in the expansion of weapons systems, safety footprints, installation size, and/or alternative areas or corridors. Proposing operations in new areas or corridors may cause community pushback from a safety standpoint and potentially from users sharing the spaces who may have their access restricted (e.g., recreational and commercial boaters sharing water ranges).
- **Climate change:** Installations that are located close to or on major bodies of water are vulnerable to shoreline erosion, more frequent flooding, and greater storm surges due to sea level rise. Others are impacted by increased threat of wildfires, drought, and lack of groundwater availability.
- **Frequency spectrum interference:** The push for commercialization of the 5G spectrum could reduce the spectrum available for DoD operations. This loss of spectrum could directly impact research, development, acquisition, test, and evaluation of existing and planned DoD programs by delaying or extending critical flight testing schedules and increasing costs to accommodate a shift in operating frequency bands.

- Environmental regulations and contaminants: New or emerging environmental regulations or mitigation requirements can impact the types of permissible activities and/or available range space or operating areas. Recently, there has been increased concern about water quality including on- and off-base drinking water contamination due to perfluoroalkyl substances – a group of chemicals that experienced widespread use due to their fire retardant properties. On- and off-base drinking water is being sampled and analyzed at several installations across the country.

An encroachment or environmental issue may warrant engagement or communication with the public when there is a possible direct impact to the community or if there is something that the public can do to help.

2.3 Other Requirements for Community Involvement

Encroachment is not the only factor driving community involvement and coordination. It is often driven by other requirements or programs, such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and agency interactions in support of test/training programs. For example, outreach is required during the development of Environmental Impact Statements to obtain input from the surrounding community. The NEPA process also includes a public comment period for Environmental Impact Statements and Environmental Assessments. The process also allows for performing state and federal agency outreach. Cultural resources programs also require a partnership with the installation, State Historical Preservation Offices, and Tribal governments and often lead to cooperative agreements.

Case Study: Eglin Air Force Base Reduces Noise Complaints

The 2019 Record of Decision for the *Special Environmental Assessment for the Emergency Beddown of the F-22 Formal Training Unit and Associated T-38 Aircraft from Tyndall Air Force Base (AFB) to Eglin AFB, Florida* included a requirement to reconstitute and reconvene the Eglin AFB Noise Committee with representatives of Walton, Okaloosa, and Santa Rosa Counties. This effort was helpful in working through local noise concerns with respect to the F-22 coming to Eglin AFB and serves as a model for other communities experiencing jet noise impacts.

The Eglin AFB Environmental Public Affairs representative worked with local community leaders to identify appropriate individuals who could represent those leaders to identify and resolve jet noise-related concerns. The Eglin AFB Environmental Public Affairs representative, Environmental Assets Section Chief, and Environmental Attorney then met with these representatives on a quarterly basis. A product of these meetings was an agreement for Eglin AFB to submit media releases two weeks before any projected night flying. This courtesy has gone a long way to improving community relations and demonstrates the Air Force's commitment to mitigating jet noise concerns.

The Noise Advisory Committee with local communities was first established in the Record of Decision for the Base Realignment and Closure beddown of the Joint Strike Fighter at Eglin AFB in 2009 to address potential noise concerns. Prior to establishment of the Noise Advisory Committee, Eglin AFB was receiving 60 noise complaints annually due to F-15 operations.

Eglin AFB achieved a 75% reduction in noise complaints (down to 15 per year) after establishing the committee.

3. Building a Team & Developing Key Messages

Survey participants were asked about guiding principles for evaluating and carrying out an effective outreach program. Building a team of subject matter experts can help identify encroachment issues and when an issue may become of higher concern or have negative impacts on the mission. Additionally, a good team knows what is important to the surrounding community. This will build synergy with local community organizations and bring focus to issues sensitive to the community. Tips for building a good team include the following.

- Identify the go-to people that have broad knowledge of the issues and the community (e.g. a CPLO or similar type role).
- Engage the experts related to specific encroachment issues. Tenant agencies or commands may have a more direct role in the team if an issue directly impacts their activities.
- Involve the local Public Affairs personnel. They can provide insight into effective outreach methods and can help tailor messages toward specific audiences.

Case Study: Benefits of Forming a Larger Working Group in San Bernardino County, CA

San Bernardino County contains wholly, or in part, five military installations with testing and training operations vital to national defense. The installations include Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Marine Corps Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Edwards AFB, Fort Irwin National Training Center, and Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow. In 2016, after San Bernardino County initiated work to update the county general plan, the five installations and operational representatives from the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division China Lake formed a Military Representative (MILREP) Working Group and engaged the San Bernardino County planning staff. The MILREPs educated the county on encroachment concerns for each installation's operational equities. The sustained MILREP messaging was key to encouraging compatible land use planning with effective policies and partnerships to protect the military missions, support national defense, and enhance the quality of life of the residents of San Bernardino County.

After four years of sustained collaboration between the MILREP Working Group and the county planning staff, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted the Countywide Plan in October 2020. The adopted Countywide Plan includes goals and policies vital to the protection of the military mission and addresses land use compatibility, encroachment, resource conservation, infrastructure, economic development, transportation, and national security.

While the adopted Countywide Plan includes language that supports the military missions of each installation, there remain significant opportunities to build upon the success through continued engagement with the county planning staff. San Bernardino County has invited MILREPs to provide input on the Development Code and Implementation Plan that will define how the policies in the Countywide Plan will be executed.

Installations and ranges may seek partnerships with outside organizations to help achieve goals. Working with other organizations toward the same goals can be quite powerful. Each entity brings their own area of expertise and resources along with unique organizational goals or priorities. Work can be coordinated or divided amongst organizations according to skills, resources, or location. The first step toward building a successful partnership is opening lines of communication with entities that might share similar geographies or outcomes. This is described in more detail in Subsection [4.1](#)

Survey participants reported the importance of developing key messages when planning outreach. Having consistent and well-thought-out key messages ensures that a strong, unified statement is communicated to external organizations and the general public. Proactive communication before an issue arises is a sign of good will and stewardship. Anticipating stakeholder questions and concerns before they are raised can help to organize your thinking and develop prepared messages in response to questions and concerns.

Some considerations for developing key messages include the following.

- Keep it simple. Don't overwhelm the audience with too much information. Focus on three main ideas or messages and use simple language, avoiding technical terms, acronyms, and jargon. Instead, use clear, concise language that the audience can relate to and that captures their attention. Bullets, tables, or graphs can be used to communicate complex information.
- Pictures and graphics can help communicate a message or support a position. Sometimes, a picture or a graphic can drive home a point faster and more powerfully than a thousand words.
- Have a call to action. If there is a specific action for the audience to take, include a clear and specific call to action and a strong compelling reason for audiences to take that action.
- Consider a facilitator. Having someone facilitate a meeting or discussion that does not represent either group or side can help mitigate concerns and allow for a more productive outcome.

More on Keeping it Simple

Keeping messages concise and to the point is not always easy, especially when describing military or technical concepts. However, it is important to consider how the intended audience (e.g., the general public) will "receive" the information. Consider using the 27/9/3 method to simplify and target messaging where "statements or messages should be no more than 27 words, or 9 seconds long, with 3 key messages". Message maps can be used to identify the 3 key messages, and are a helpful tool for communicators that provides a hierarchy of organized response to anticipated questions or concerns. It is a visual aid that provides, at a glance, the

organization's messages for high concern or controversial issues. This helps organizations or teams to develop a consistent set of messages and speak with one voice.^{1,2}

4. Identifying Key Stakeholders & Reaching New Audiences

4.1 Identifying Key Stakeholders

Stakeholders are those who may be affected by or have an effect on an organization. They may include people who have a strong interest in the effort for academic, philosophical, or political reasons, even though they and their families, friends, and associates are not directly affected by it. Involving stakeholders has a number of potential benefits.

- It puts more ideas on the table than would be if only a single organization or small group of like-minded people were involved.
- It includes varied perspectives from all sectors of the community affected.
- It gains buy-in and support for the effort from stakeholders by making them an integral part of its development, planning, implementation, and evaluation. It becomes their effort, and they will do their best to make it work.
- It is fair. All stakeholders can have a say in the development of an effort that may affect them.
- It saves the range or installation from being blindsided by unknown concerns and reduces the need for risk management. If everyone is involved, concerns can be aired and resolved before they become obstacles. Even if they cannot be resolved, they will not come as surprises that derail the effort.
- It strengthens a position if opposition emerges. Having all stakeholders on board makes a huge difference in terms of political and moral clout.
- It increases the credibility of the organization. Involving and tending to the concerns of all stakeholders establishes the organization as fair, ethical, and transparent, and more likely that others will cooperate in other circumstances.

Examples of Stakeholders

- Local & State Governments
- Elected Officials
- Non-Governmental Organizations, Environmental Groups, and Military Support Organizations
- Community Groups and Churches
- Internal Audiences: Installation/Range Staff
- Private Entities and Commercial Developers
- Real Estate Groups and Homeowner Associations
- Local Communities and Residents (including under-represented communities)
- Tribal Governments
- Federal Government/Agencies
- Other DoD Installations
- School Districts
- Media

¹ Covello, V. T., D. B. McCallum, and M. Pavlova. "Principles and guidelines for improving risk communication." In *Effective Risk Communication: The Role and Responsibility of Government and Non-government Organizations*, ed. Covello, V. T., D. B. McCallum, and M. Pavlova (New York: Plenum Press, 1989), pp. 3-16.

² Vincent Covello. *Message Mapping, Risk and Crisis Communication*. Presented at the World Health Organization Conference on Bio-terrorism and Risk Communication. Geneva, Switzerland. October 2002.

- It increases the chances for the success of the overall effort.

The goal should be to identify stakeholders early in the communication process. They should be part of every phase, so that they can both contribute and take ownership. Their knowledge of the community and understanding of its needs can prove invaluable to avoid mistakes in approach and in the people chosen to be involved. It is also important to identify the correct points of contact or persons with the knowledge of proposed projects and plans to assist in decision making. More details on interaction with stakeholders can be found in the 2012 Commander's Guide to Community Involvement.³

Case Study: Partnership Building using the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program

Several installations and ranges report using the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program as a tool to prevent encroachment. These efforts involve a great deal of stakeholder engagement and collaboration. The REPI Program preserves and enhances military missions by helping remove or avoid land-use conflicts near installations and ranges, their associated facilities, range infrastructure, and airspace, as well as addressing regulatory restrictions that inhibit military activities. These win-win partnerships share the cost of acquisition of easements or other interests in land from willing sellers to preserve land uses that are compatible with military missions and natural habitats near installations and ranges that help sustain critical military capabilities.

A key component of the REPI Program is the use of encroachment management partnerships among the military Services, private conservation groups, and state and local governments, authorized by Congress.⁴ Through these partnerships, the military and community align around common goals and are able to achieve more success through coordinated and strategic efforts.

As the DoD partners with local and regional communities in innovative ways, these collaborations help build installations' military value and resilience; increase the longevity of compatible working lands such as farms, forests, and ranchlands; promote species conservation and recovery; and expand recreational and public access opportunities for residents, active military families, and veterans.

The REPI Program also supports large landscape partnerships that advance cross-boundary solutions and link military readiness, conservation, and communities with federal and state partners through a common, collaborative framework. Such partnerships include the Southeastern Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability and the Western Regional Partnership. The DoD also participates in the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership with the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior.

Since its first partnerships in 2003, REPI has grown and fostered a change in how the DoD responds to conservation and military testing and training issues and engages in outside-the-fence land use planning. Engaging with all stakeholders at the federal, state, and local level, REPI continues to explore policy and regulatory solutions to incompatible development, off-

³ Range Commanders Council. *Commander's Guide to Community Involvement*. August 2012. Available on request to the RCC Secretariat.

⁴ Authority. 10 U.S.C. §2684a.

installation species habitat, and other mission sustainability issues. Through fiscal year 2020, 757,297 acres have been protected through REPI partnerships at 115 locations across 35 states and territories.

The REPI Program offers a variety of resources including webinars, fact sheets, primers, and interactive maps. This text originated and was amended from the DoD REPI Program website and can be found at www.repi.mil.⁵

4.2 Reaching New Audiences

When surveying RCC SEG members, an interesting challenge was noted in locations where outreach was done on a recurring or continuous basis; it was observed that often it is the same entities or families that participate in an installation's or range's outreach efforts. Over time, these relationships can become too close or familiar, thereby preventing a proper professional relationship and affecting the overall outreach effort. Reaching new and different audiences is often a struggle when it comes to outreach.

This need to identify new and different audiences is also demonstrated through a recent movement to ensure that underserved communities are represented and included in messaging, decision-making, and other activities. According to the Executive Order 13985, an underserved community "refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life."⁶


A recent Sustaining Family Forests Initiative Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively (TELE) workshop (2020) suggested creating an audience profile to tailor outreach and communications to the audience's specific needs.⁷ This can help create better messaging, better programs, and a better reach. The first step is to identify the new audience, then adapt and tailor any messaging to what is important to them. A guide published by TELE recommends that being more specific may actually help reach different groups in the community. For instance, if there is a specific neighborhood that may be affected by flight noise on a specific day, note that neighborhood in a news release and contact the neighborhood's housing authority (if there is one) to get the word out. According to TELE, messages that are specific to an audience's needs and preferences will feel more personal and relevant to them.

Consider attending a community event to help reach a targeted audience and new people. Using multiple and varying outlets to convey messages and information can also help to reach a broader audience.

⁵ Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program. "About REPI." Retrieved 12 January 2022. Available at <https://www.repi.mil/About-REPI/Frequently-Asked-Questions/>.

⁶ Exec. Order No. 13,985, 86 FR 7009 (20 January 2021)

⁷ Sustaining Family Forests Initiative Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively (TELE). "Engaging Landowners in Conservation: A Complete Guide to Designing Programs and Communications." Retrieved 12 January 2022. Available at <https://www.engaginglandowners.org/guide>.



“Targeting specific audiences is, therefore, essential for bringing new people—those who are not already part of the choir—into the program”
- Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively (TELE) Workshop, 2020

Case Study: Hawaii Range Complex Involves Local Native Hawaiian Organizations

In the past, many native Hawaiians migrated away from the “Mana Plains” area where Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF) is located, and relocated to adjacent towns. With a connection to the area, many of them found employment at PMRF.

In 2011, PMRF and Na Ohana Papa o Mana, a local Native Hawaiian Organization (NHO) comprised of the ancestral families in this region, executed a Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Comprehensive Agreement. Federal agencies and Native American Tribes use Comprehensive Agreements to “address all federal agency land management activities that could result in the intentional excavation or inadvertent discovery”⁸ of human remains and cultural items. Over the years, during construction activity, workers have come upon burial grounds. Due to the findings of ancient burial grounds, local Hawaiian families and the NHO were asked to provide their knowledge of the history and eventually provided specific directions on proper removal or relocation of “iwi kūpuna” (ancestral remains).

Oral history interviews of local families or those who worked at PMRF before and during World War II have accomplished the following.

- Assist in defining the age and ethnic identity of people buried at cemeteries.
- Provide a better understanding of the relocation/re-interment of the people buried at cemeteries.
- Help to identify the location of other possible burial grounds dating back to this period.

5. Common Tools to Help

Survey participants noted that as encroachment and outreach programs have matured, numerous tools have been developed to assist installations and ranges with community coordination. Documents and resources such as Joint Land Use Studies, Compatible Use Plans, Encroachment Action Plans, Geographic Areas of Concern, Army Compatible Use Buffer Program, and Range Air Installations Compatible Use Zones help to identify encroachment issues that may impact both installations and communities and recommend actions and guidance for improvement. Several of these resources also provide tools and suggestions for establishing and maintaining effective relationships and partnerships to address the challenges of encroachment, and can be used to help identify appropriate stakeholders. Encroachment management groups are also useful to identify and keep up to date with the status of issues

⁸ Comprehensive Agreements. 43 CFR §10.5 (f).

affecting the installation and range. Members of these groups can serve as members of a larger team outreach.

A community or public involvement plan is another useful resource cited by RCC SEG members. These plans can vary in level of detail but a community involvement plan usually identifies stakeholders, key messages, and goals, and outlines actions and tools for community involvement. Identifying a means of tracking progress and assessing success are also beneficial to ensuring goals of a plan are met.

Outreach events are one way to connect the community with the installation. Some examples include: Earth Day events where local schools are invited to learn about installation and range environmental efforts; air shows where the installation puts on exhibitions of platforms and capabilities; and community tours of installations and ranges with mission demonstrations.

There are also various ways to deliver messages and information including brochures, postcards, flyers, letters, posters, press releases, news stories, frequently asked questions, presentations, public meetings, public hotlines, tours, videos, websites, and social media.

Since the last iteration of this guide, social media and other digital technologies have become a commonly used medium for delivering outreach. Social media refers to the use of digital platforms to share information, photos, etc., including blogs, social networks (such as Facebook and Instagram), and websites that support collaboration and information sharing. This is one way to reach a broader audience in a timely manner. Many survey participants reported that a combination of media releases, a base website, and social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube) are currently used at their installations and ranges, typically managed by local Public Affairs personnel.

6. Other Useful Advice for the Commander

This collection of tips originates from the previous guides, and RCC SEG members continue to recommend the same principles today.

1. **Be Open.** Openness and candor are the cornerstones to success. If the security classification of an issue prevents full disclosure, say that openly.
2. **Be Proactive.** The commander should know the message and be able to answer questions before they are asked and handle complaints before they are made. The commander's goal should be to address problems before they turn into crises.
3. **Provide Team Leadership.** The commander should ensure that the activity's entire team is involved in the program and presents one viewpoint.
4. **Be Consistent.** The commander should ensure the activity's message is consistent over the long term. The civilian community's challenge is to plan long range (10-20 years), and the military must strive to do the same. If new requirements cause a change in operations, ensure the community knows about the change in a timely manner and the commander proactively seeks the support of the local community for the change.
5. **Be Timely.** When more information is requested, get a response back quickly. In those cases where you cannot respond quickly, provide a timeline for when you will respond.

6. **Educate.** Ensure the audience understands the activity's mission; the importance to military readiness, homeland defense, and national security; and the activity's contributions to the community.
7. **Engage in Active, Two-way Communication.** Provide a single point of contact, then listen and respond to concerns. Speak in a "language" the audience understands. Avoid the use of acronyms and buzz words.
8. **Collaborate.** Working with other members inside and outside the installation/organization is a vital part of sustaining the installation's mission.
9. **Maintain Credibility.** Without credibility, a leader will not generate relationships of trust or loyalty.
10. **Be Aware of Body Language/Facial Expressions.** Faces and body language are extremely expressive and able to convey countless emotions without saying a word. Maintain eye contact; try to be relaxed and conscious of the message being sent with body language.

7. Adapting to the Future

In 2020, the global COVID-19 pandemic pushed a lot of communication from in-person to online. As a result, there has been an increase in the use of online tools in lieu of more traditional face-to-face outreach. Survey participants were asked about how outreach efforts were impacted at their installations and ranges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic including those activities that were adapted, modified, or curtailed. Many installations and ranges adopted virtual meeting formats to meet public engagement requirements as in-person open houses and events were restricted across the nation to adhere to social distancing rules. These virtual meetings varied from static websites that provided information such as pre-recorded videos and presentations to online open houses where participants could "move" from poster to poster and ask questions.

Maintaining readiness still requires the military to continue testing and training because not all work can be done virtually. Encroachment issues remain, and in some circumstances, community perceptions have changed. For example, more people working at home during the day may lead to an increase in noise complaints from daytime operations.

The most significant impact reported by survey participants was due to the mass telework put in place during the pandemic and the inability to have meetings in person. It was noted that COVID-19 made interaction with various government agencies more difficult, and while virtual meetings helped to keep communication lines open, it could not replace the benefits of face-to-face interaction.

Several survey participants reported that many outreach events had to be postponed or cancelled. One example described how significant outreach is normally conducted with schools in the surrounding community via environmental courses or Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math activities. With the closure of schools across the country, some events were either cancelled outright or shifted to online instruction.

There have been impacts to outreach activities with other organizations and partnerships as well, including consultations with Tribal governments. At Yuma Proving Ground in Arizona, for example, a local Native American Tribe requested cultural resource assistance with historical

buildings; however, a call for volunteer manpower had to be postponed until in-person work could resume. At Naval Undersea Warfare Center Keyport in Washington, efforts to enhance salmon fisheries also had to be adjusted. Naval Undersea Warfare Center Keyport supports an annual Coho salmon fish transfer that involves a local Tribal government and federal government agencies coming to Keyport to transfer hatchery fish from a truck to a boat to be put into a bay pen. While the transfer of the fish from the hatchery did occur in 2021, scheduling was difficult and there may have been a slight impact related to fish loss.

While some of these new or modified actions will be temporary, there are several, including telework, that could continue for the foreseeable future. As situations change, outreach must evolve. It is still too early to know what lasting changes and impacts the experience will yield, but adapting will be key.

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APPENDIX A

Citations

Authority. 10 U.S.C. §2684a.

Comprehensive Agreements. 43 CFR §10.5 (f).

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