



Idaho Department of Commerce • Economic Development Division

# Idaho Joint Land Use Study

Summary of Public Workshops #2  
January 2009

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The Idaho Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) is a joint venture planning effort between the military and stakeholders in the surrounding area. The JLUS will identify strategies and develop recommendations to encourage compatible land use planning around military installations, airfields, ranges and military-controlled airspace in southwestern Idaho. The study is expected to be complete in Fall 2009.

The study involves two military use areas: 1) the Mountain Home Air Force Base (AFB) and the Mountain Home Range Complex, and 2) the Idaho National Guard (ING) at Gowen Field and the Orchard Training Area (OTA).

The 18-month study involves four rounds of public forums. The first forum was held in Fall 2008. The following summary covers two public workshops in January 2009 that were part of the second forum.

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#### **Workshop Overview**

The Idaho Department of Commerce conducted two public workshops in January 2009 to present the JLUS project, and to identify and discuss compatibility issues and concerns. Participants included interested members of the public, landowners, and representatives of the military and government agencies.

Workshops were held:

- January 20, 2009 at the Mountain Home City Hall in Mountain Home, Idaho
- January 21, 2009 at the Ada County Courthouse in Boise, Idaho

#### **Workshop Purpose**

- Gather information about current and future land uses near military installations and use areas.
- Gather issues and concerns from stakeholders regarding land use compatibility.
- Expand on information from initial public workshops in Fall 2008.

#### **Notification**

Landowners and members of the public were notified of the workshops in several ways.

- A display ad was printed in the Owyhee Avalanche on January 12, the Mountain Home News on January 14, the Idaho Business Review on January 16, and the Idaho Statesman on January 18.
- Media releases were sent to six local media outlets, including the Associated Press bureau, Boise Journal, Idaho Business Review, Idaho Press-Tribune, Idaho Statesman and Mountain Home News.
- Copies of the media release were sent to the public information officers of the Mountain Home Air Force Base and Gowen Field.
- Personal letters were sent to property owners within a one- or two-mile radius of each of the military installations. Mailing lists were provided by the county assessor's office of Ada, Elmore and Owyhee counties.

## **Participants and Format**

Participants were seated around a large map of military installations. Handouts included:

- Idaho JLUS Fact Sheet #1
- Compatibility Issues brochure
- Idaho JLUS overview map

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## **Welcome and Introductions**

Greg Seibert of the Idaho Department of Commerce opened the workshops with introductions and a brief overview of the Idaho JLUS. The JLUS is administered by the Idaho Department of Commerce Economic Development Division and funded through a grant from the Department of Defense, Office of Economic Adjustment.

Other staff were asked to introduce themselves. Staff included Gloria Mabbutt of the Idaho Department of Commerce; Rick Rust and Celeste Werner of Matrix Design Group, the prime consultant for the Idaho JLUS; Jerome Mapp, a local land use consultant; Gary Kuwabara of the Office of Economic Adjustment; and public involvement consultant company RBCI.

Greg gave an overview of the public forum process for JLUS, which includes a policy committee, landowner committee and technical committee. Input from the public workshops would be taken to each committee for analysis.

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## **JLUS Overview and Objectives**

Rick Rust of Matrix Design Group provided an overview of the Idaho JLUS. The Idaho JLUS team is examining existing land use; growth trends and development potential; and existing regulations, plans and procedures near two military installations and use areas in Southwest Idaho: the Mountain Home Air Force Base (AFB) and Range Training Complex and the Gowen Field/Orchard Training Area (OTA).

### **The Idaho JLUS will:**

- Balance community and military needs and desires
- Encourage compatible land use planning to seek ways to reduce the impacts of communities on military activities and military activities on the communities
- Encourage collaboration and a common understanding of issues
- Equip citizens and stakeholders to be proactive when issues arrive.
- Provide a set of tools, strategies, or procedures to promote compatibility.

### **The completed document will include the following components.**

- **Introduction:** What does the JLUS cover and how will it be used?
- **Study Area Profile:** What do we know today about current and future land use in the area?
- **Compatibility Issues:** What are the issues that need to be addressed?
- **Existing Plans and Programs:** What are the tools currently used to address compatibility?
- **Recommendations:** What tools will be needed in the future?

Recommendations will be based on issues of concern to local jurisdictions, agencies, the public, and the military. Rick stressed the role of the public in helping ensure that recommendations meet the area's needs.

## **Group Discussion – Themes & Outcomes**

Participants were asked to use the compatibility issues brochure to identify current and potential land use and compatibility issues on a large map of both military installations and use areas.

### **Mountain Home Air Force Base and the Mountain Home Range Complex**

The group discussion focused on potential developments in the area and possible encroachment issues in the long term.

#### **Participants identified the following current compatibility issues:**

- Vibrations can be felt at night near Sand Hollow at the county line (Mayfield property).
- Private airstrip at Cinder Road was poor planning but is already there.
- Sprawl is a big issue and can cause encroachment.
- Birds of Prey habitat modification is bringing back more food sources for birds. Birds could fly into planes' engines.
- BLM land near Simco Road is a natural place for recreation (ATVs, canoes and occasional rafting). People need this area and would like to keep it natural.
- Wilderness study in 2000 was intended to preserve canyon lands for wildlife grazing, hunting, etc. Study was intended to not impact military areas.

#### **Participants identified the following future or potential compatibility issues included:**

- A racetrack has been proposed on Simco Road between the freeway and railroad. There is a potential for additional commercial development, vertical obstruction and noise. Racetrack developer may lose his option on the land.
- Development in the area would affect transportation and could cause encroachment issues. Roads would need to be built, causing frequency problems from traffic.
- Seven or eight houses are planned on five-acre lots near Cinder Road at the private airstrip.
- Wind farms are gaining popularity and could expand. Would cause height and safety issues. Two small farms exist on Hydrogen Road.
- Planned nuclear plant in Hammett is creating jobs and thus houses, development.
- New transmission line (Idaho Power/Montana Power partnership) will involve large towers. Line will cut across I-84 at Ada/Elmore county line by Boise Stage Stop.
- Pepper grass could be an issue.
- Indian tribe and BLM did a land swap at Simco Road and I-84. There are rumors about a casino being built in that area.

#### **Other issues identified by participants:**

- People who live near the airport and complain about noise already knew what they were buying.
- Dairy farm is getting complaints from neighbors. Small issues become big issues.
- Deeds should be marked with a warning and follow the land. Would people volunteer to have their deeds retroactively marked?
- Building codes should require noise abatement measures.
- Why would the Air Force put their own residential areas in a bad situation?
- Community is very supportive of the base. It means a lot to the community.
- Land swapping with BLM should be more readily available. JLUS study team needs to get a list of land that is being "disposed" for land-swapping.
- Is grant money available to buy land and mitigate encroachment?
- Fire is a big concern to people here than the military areas.
- Birds of Prey area is well-marked, but military and BLM land is not well-marked.

- Chamber of Commerce has a blast fax list of 200 people. They could help notify for the next public workshop.
- Display ads should be placed by the “News of Record” (divorce and arrest listings).

### **Idaho National Guard at Gowen Field and the Orchard Training Area**

The group discussion focused on the potential for development in the area surrounding the military installation and use area located south of Boise. The drawbacks of developing this area were also discussed.

#### **Participants identified the following current compatibility issues:**

- Is there construction (revitalization of housing) going on at the base?
- Consider recreation and access to property.
- Subdivisions do not make the best neighbors.
- Consider noise and vibration.
- No longer separating industrial and residential (mixed use). Put people next to jobs.
- Residents actually live in the Orchard Training Area.
- Effectively spend JLUS money—ask residents what impacts if any are they suffering from?
- Landowner has owned three rentals since 1990. Renters have not ever complained about the Orchard Training Area.
- Should restrictions be put in deeds?
- Notice is different than a written record.
- Coordinating a JLUS will be simpler because thousands of acres around the Orchard Training Area are owned by just five people.
- Industrial, commercial and residential will be planned for the next 25 years.
- A lot of people and industries.
- Need to guide uses.

#### **Participants identified the following future or potential compatibility issues included:**

- Key issues noted were land use compatibility, noise, vibration, dust, light and glare, and frequency spectrum
- A shooting range is planned next to the Orchard Training Area.
- Many restrictions are equivalent to condemnation of property.
- How often does the training occur? April through August, 200 to 230 days a year.
- Because troops are at war, tank presence is much lower.
- Will change once war is over.

#### **Other issues identified by participants:**

- Impossible to draw a line.
- Orchard Training area was originally developed with a “buffer zone” so compatibility would not be an issue.
- Artillery areas require a “buffer area.” What activities require buffer?
- What does the military do and where?
- “Buffer zone” can be used in a way that benefits both parties.
- Would like a map that shows data, noise, activities that are occurring , artillery ranges, etc.
- We want to know data and science.
- Final JLUS decisions will rest with local policy makers.
- Win-win to both sides.
- Willing to trade lands.

- Where is the noise line for Gowen?
- Developer submitted an application to county to develop houses on 2.5-acre lots. Request was denied because it was within a noise zone.
- Workshop participants want a 15 minute overview of Orchard Training Area activities at the next public workshop.
- What is the future plan for Simco Road if it is improved?
- Future land uses are unknown for both military and property owners.
- Trust is needed in order to develop a JLUS.

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## **Next Steps/Public Involvement Schedule**

The next public workshops are planned in the Spring 2009. A fourth public workshop later in the study will present the draft recommendations, planning tools and strategies. A 30-day public review period and a public hearing at the end of the study will allow members of the community to comment on the Draft JLUS.

The website [www.landusecompatibility.com](http://www.landusecompatibility.com) will serve as a major communication tool as the study progresses. PowerPoint presentations and workshop handouts will be posted to the Web site.

Attendees are encouraged to spread information about the JLUS and invite more people to the next set of workshops. Questions can be directed to Gloria Mabbutt (208-334-2650 x 2139 or [gloria.mabbutt@commerce.idaho.gov](mailto:gloria.mabbutt@commerce.idaho.gov)) or Greg Seibert ([greg.seibert@commerce.idaho.gov](mailto:greg.seibert@commerce.idaho.gov)) at the Idaho Department of Commerce.