

My Turn

The Air Force is trying again

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The Low-Altitude Training Program is a danger to Taos County residents. In order to stop this program from continuing, we must individually and as a community request that an Environmental impact Study (EIS) be put into action.

The EIS is a much more thorough and comprehensive study to assess the "impact" of such a program on the environment (that would be us). Many people have understandably confused what an EIS with the Air Force's "EA" (Environmental Assessment).

The aircraft Osprey CV22 that will be flown 300 feet over our homes, forest, livestock, wild animals with an over the top, against all noise ordinances, decibel level has a horrific crash record. Anyone can google or Wikipedia "Ospreys/Notable accidents" to see for themselves that this indeed is a serious issue. Not only does a crash pose danger/ death to whomever is in the plane/or to who the plane crashes into, but the potential of widespread forest fires are imminent if we allow this.

The Osprey aircraft was grounded for a number of years by the Marines because of the faulty Avionics causing death to military personnel and destruction of areas that the crashes occurred in.

The tourism issue is a big sulking elephant in this Taos family living room. We have watched so many business go under in these last few years.

Tourism is the trickle down that's awfully squeaky dry and it's not just the town that hosts and solicits tourism. All over Taos County (where the flyovers will be) are: B&Bs, galleries, artist studios in the surrounding villages. Many county residents are hosting tourists, art collectors, artists in residence, cottage industries, farming to provide restaurants in one form/business or another.

Someone who comes here to partake of food, culture, art, theater, music and unwind their tightly wound urban nervous system is not going to come back and visit if they are levitated out of bed in adrenaline terror from the apocalyptic roaring Osprey aircraft that is 300 feet over their B&B, rattling the walls, dogs barking their scared heads off all over whatever neighborhood/area somewhere in Taos County.

So much for the Land of Enchantment's peaceful, cultural getaway tourist economy that has sustained us.

The Air Force was before us 13 years ago with the intention of having flyovers in Taos County and they simply renamed the program. It was the RBTI "Realistic Bombing Training Initiative" now called "The Low-Altitude Training Program." The Air Force is trying again. It was the RBTI program that we chased away 13 years ago and we did it with the findings of the EIS. Please send your written request for an EISS to: S.O.W./Public Affairs, 110 Sextant, 1150 Cannon, AFB, NM, 88103 or fax your statement request for an EIS to (575) 784-7412.

Stephanie Lee is a resident of Taos.