Dear Range Recreation Users and Stakeholders:

We thank you for your continued support and flexibility as an important stakeholder at Avon Park Air Force Range. We understand the value of public access to our landscape. We have a long history of supporting this public access for hunting, fishing and other forms of outdoor recreation, and we hope to continue this indefinitely. However, we have recently made some large changes in how we manage our hunting program, specifically in regard to deer/hog dog hunting. We understand that these changes are concerning to many people, but please know the changes were not made lightly. We have heard your concerns, and the concerns of your political representatives. Know that your representatives have been outspoken on your behalf. However, we feel that in terms of safety and the sustainability of both the primary military training mission and the entire outdoor recreation program, these changes are necessary.

As many of you have noticed, the range has seen a steady increase in military training volume over the last several years which has put pressure on the recreation program. It is important to note that we expect these trends to accelerate, as we are currently in discussion with the State of Florida for the expansion of the Florida National Guard training mission here at the range and three squadrons of F-35 fighters are tentatively slated to be based at Tyndall Air Force Base as it is rebuilt. Please understand that the range staff is doing everything we can to support our primary national defense mission while maintaining the continued access for public outdoor recreation. Again, we understand your concerns, and appreciate the positive advocacy, so please reach out to the range staff if you have further questions on this matter or any other.

DALE A. STARK, Lt Col, USAF
Commander