

## How will the Duke Military Operations Airspace (MOA) Affect the Pennsylvania Wilds?

By Lori Szymanik

There aren't many places in the world like the Pennsylvania Wilds. It's a unique area where residents and visitors escape modern city life and enjoy the pristine and undisturbed wilderness. The Duke MOA currently exists above Potter County and its surrounding areas. However, aircraft are currently flying at altitudes between 8,000 to 17,999 feet.

The Maryland Air National Guard would like to lower the elevation for A-10 Warthog training in the Duke MOA to elevations between 100 to 7,999 feet. They are proposing to train 170 days per year (almost every other day), 2 hours per day, 1 hour at a time. This may make it easier for other military branches to train in the MOA too. More military branches could possibly extend the 170 training days. The noise and disturbance of these flights may affect humans, wildlife, farm animals, and visitors to the area, including hikers of the Susquehannock Trail System. It is concerning that no other training site has been proposed. It is also concerning that the Maryland Air National Guard is NOT planning on doing a full assessment on the effects of this MOA. Although watching aircraft trainings can be a unique and exciting experience, this will not be a single event. With 170 training days, we can expect aircraft overhead about every other day.

While we are very grateful for our military and understand they need the space and time to practice, perhaps there would be a better location for the MOA than over a designated tourism region—The Pennsylvania Wilds. This area depends on tourism especially since Covid-19 has encouraged more people to explore the outdoors when other places of entertainment were closed. The Duke MOA along with the increase of ATV use in our state forests could change the character of this region and make it less appealing to tourists that enjoy the solitude of nature.

You can help by contacting Major Jeff Andrieu from the Maryland Air National Guard at [jeffrey.andrieu.4@us.af.mil](mailto:jeffrey.andrieu.4@us.af.mil) as well as Senators Toomey & Casey, Congressmen Keller & Thompson, and state representatives.