

## X-33 to land in Dugway in '99

From: **Rich Thomson**  
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Subject: X-33 to land in Dugway in '99

Regarding the recent speculation that Dugway's Michael AAF would be the "new Groom Lake", I did a little searching and found this article on the X-33 from the Deseret News archives. <URL: <http://www.desnews.com>>.

Deseret News Archives,  
Tuesday, October 29, 1996

X-33 TO HIT UTAH WITH A BOOM IN '99

By Joe Bauman, Science Writer

Hurtling toward ground at 11,000 miles an hour, the massive X-33 experimental vehicle will generate a mighty sonic boom, loud enough to break windows in its flight path, NASA officials said Monday night.

Since few windows will be in the vehicle's flight path when it comes in for landings at Dugway Proving Ground in 1999, the main concern is the impact on wildlife, particularly those at Fish Springs National Wildlife Refuge, 30 miles to the southwest.

``It can produce a startle effect on the wildlife because it's an unexpected, sharp noise,'' said Rebecca McCaleb, director of environmental engineering and management at Marshall Space Flight Center, Huntsville, Ala.

McCaleb, in charge of writing the environmental impact statement for the X-33, spoke at a public meeting held in the Dugway Proving Ground base theater. About 60 residents attended, giving the project an enthusiastic welcome.

She was among NASA officials and consultants speaking at the first of three public meetings this week on the X-33 in Utah. The other sessions are Tuesday night at the Tooele Senior Center and Wednesday in Salt Lake City's Airport Quality Inn, 5575 W. Amelia Earhart Drive; both start at 7 p.m.

The X-33 is the expected prototype for the next generation of reusable space vehicle. Designed to launch in an upright position, the wedge-shaped spaceship will carry all its fuel with it, rather than using booster rockets that fall away. It will glide in for a landing at an airstrip.

Built by Lockheed Martin's Skunk Works with government support, the X-33 is to be 63 feet long and 68 feet wide at its base. It will weigh 136 tons at launch, including 105 tons of fuel.

X-33 is a half-size prototype for the VentureStar, which should be able to lift 45,000 pounds into low Earth orbit.

During 15 test flights in 1999, the X-33 will take off from Edwards Air Force Base near Lancaster, Calif., reach 50 miles altitude, and land at short-, mid- and long-range landing sites.

The short-range targets are two alternatives in California, the only mid-range site is Dugway's Michael Army Air Field, and long-range flights would land either in Washington state or Montana.

After it lands, about 50 private contractors and NASA experts will bolt the X-33 onto the back of a conventional jet for shuttle back to Edwards.

Responding to a question about the sonic boom, McCaleb said, ``It appears to be very close to what we experience with the shuttle orbiter . . . We pay one or two - I'm not sure (how many) - a small number of claims'' when the shuttle lands at Edwards.

