

February 17, 2004

Pursuant to Section (102)(2)(c) of the *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969*, as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508), the United States Air Force (Air Force) is announcing its intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the potential environmental consequences of the implementation of the Military Family Housing (MFH) Privatization Demolition, Construction, Renovation, and Leasing (DCR&L) Program at Eglin Air Force Base and Hurlburt Field, Florida (Figure 1).

The Air Force proposes to convey 2,739 housing units distributed among several areas located on Eglin AFB and Hurlburt Field (Figure 2) to a private contractor. The conveyance will also include infrastructure and utilities. Selected real estate (land) on which the housing units are located would remain in Air Force ownership but would be leased to the private developer for 50 years. The developer will manage and maintain the housing, making it available to military personnel at rates that will not exceed their housing allowance. Of the 2,739 units proposed for conveyance, there are 138 existing units that meet standards and do not require improvement, two units that would be renovated in place, and 2,594 units that would be demolished. The Air Force is proposing that a developer construct 2,015 new units, for a net total of 2,155 privatized military family housing units. All demolition and construction activities would occur on Air Force property within the Eglin Reservation.

The purpose of implementing the Proposed Action is to provide military personnel and their families' safe and affordable housing. With the exception of about 138 units between Eglin AFB and Hurlburt Field, housing improvements are required because the majority of units on Eglin AFB and Hurlburt Field are between 20 and 80 years old and do not meet current Air Force housing standards. The EIS will evaluate the environmental effects associated with socioeconomics, transportation, cultural resources, water resources, wetlands, floodplains, land use, infrastructure, and biological resources. The analysis will include an evaluation of the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts.

The Air Force initiated the scoping process on January 26, 2004, hosted two public scoping meetings to identify community and agency concerns. Public comments from these the scoping meetings or written comments submitted during the scoping period will be considered in the preparation of the Draft EIS. Public scoping meetings will be held on/at the following dates, locations, and times:

<u>Dates</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>
February 17, 2004	Mary Esther	Hurlburt Soundside Club	6:30 PM
February 19, 2004	Fort Walton	OWCC FWB Campus	6:30 PM

Prior to the start of the scoping meetings at 6:30 p.m., there was an open information session. The open session is an opportunity for community members to learn more about the MFH DCR&L project and environmental impact statement process.

During the scoping meetings, the Air Force will provide information on the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed action and solicit public comments on alternative development. Comments regarding the hearing can be provided either in writing or orally. You may direct your written comments by March 23, 2004, to: Ms. Julia Cantrell, HQ AFCEE/ISM, 3300 Sydney Brooks Road, Brooks City-Base TX 78235-5112.