

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
350TH SPECTRUM WARFARE WING AND 36TH ELECTRONIC WARFARE SQUADRON BEDDOWN
EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA**

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulation for implementing the procedural provisions of the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA), Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §§ 1500-1508, and U.S. Air Force (USAF) Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP) regulations 32 CFR § 989, the Air Force has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to identify and assess the potential environmental consequences associated with the beddown of the 350 Spectrum Warfare Wing and the 36 Electronic Warfare Squadron at Eglin Air Force Base.

The Department of the Air Force has conducted an EA of the potential environmental consequences associated with the beddown of the 350 SWW and 36 EWS on Eglin Air Force Base (AFB), Florida. This EA, dated July 2022, is hereby incorporated by reference into this finding.

Purpose and Need (EA Section 1.3)

HQ USAF Program Guidance Letter (PGL) 20-02 (Appendix A of the EA), Activation of HQ 350 SWW, directs the activation of the 350 SWW temporarily at Eglin AFB. The temporary beddown began with the activation of the 350 SWW on 25 June 2021. In 2018 and 2019, the Air Force's Electronic Warfare/Electromagnetic Spectrum (EW/EMS) Enterprise Capability Collaboration Team (ECCT) assessed the Air Force's readiness to dominate in the EMS field. From that analysis, the Secretary of the Air Force (SecAF) and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force signed a plan charging the Air Force to consolidate and modernize the EW /EMS Reprogramming Enterprise. The Acting SecAF approved Eglin AFB as the sole candidate base for the 350 SWW. After this decision and approval of the basing criteria SAF/IEIB issued Site Survey Control Number 21-02, 18 February 2021, authorizing ACC to conduct a site survey on Eglin AFB in support of the 350 SWW. HQ ACC was tasked with completing a Strategic Basing Action for SecAF approval to determine the permanent location of the HQ 350 SWW and subordinate units.

The initial operations capability activated the 350 SWW and inactivated the HQ 53 EWG at Eglin AFB and reassigned the subordinate units at Eglin AFB as follows:

<u>Reassign to the 350 SWG:</u>	<u>Reassign to the 850 SWG:</u>
16 EWS	87 EWS
36 EWS	39 EWS
68 EWS	453 EWS
513 EWS	
F-35 PSC	

The activation of the 350 SWW would be supported mainly through reassigned existing manpower at Eglin AFB. A total of 350 additional manpower positions are critical to the activation.

The purpose of this Proposed Action is to consolidate and modernize DAF EW capabilities. The Proposed Action will create an organization with the technical abilities and tasked mission to enhance friendly spectrum capabilities, access, and maneuver-space while countering adversary access and maneuver within the Electromagnetic Spectrum (EMS). This new organization will be led by a commander whose role and overall responsibility is to provide the integrated sets of capabilities (tools and services) required for warfighters to achieve spectrum superiority and dominance.

The proposed SWW activation is needed to ensure the DAF EW/EMS requirements are met. Warfare in the EMS has been more prolific in modern times than ever before. Development of resilient, agile, and efficient technologies and techniques are essential to ensure the DAF's dominance in the EMS. The proposed action would support the DAF Program 20 Guidance Letter PGL 20-02 as directed by the Secretary of the Air Force.

Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives (EA Section 2.0)

The Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative that the USAF has identified is as follows:

Permanently beddown the 350 SWW at Eglin AFB. A new MILCON project would construct a 100,000 sq ft 350 SWW Headquarters building, a 90,000 sq. ft. The 36 EWS Headquarters building would be co-located on one campus with approximately 11 acres of parking, and the 350 SWW would add 350 personnel to Eglin AFB. The 350 SWW would fund and procure new modular facilities (approximately 32,000 square foot) in the Eglin Main cantonment area to satisfy the interim facility requirement.

Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1 the permanent facility plans from the proposed action would remain the same, however for the temporary facility requirement the 350 SWW would utilize existing modular facilities (facilities Z15109 and Z15312) (Fig 2-5) currently located at Duke Field. The 350 SWW would relocate these facilities to the Eglin Main cantonment area in the same location as the proposed action temporary site (Fig. 2-2). The modular facilities would not become available until fiscal year (FY) 2025. This alternative does not meet the temporary timeline for FY 23/2Q but will be carried forward as an alternative to ensure future operational flexibility.

Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2 the permanent facility plans from the proposed action would remain the same, however for the temporary facility requirement the 350 SWW would utilize existing Long Range Stand Off (LRSO) modular facilities (facilities Z15128, Z15129 and Z15130) located in the proposed temporary facility location (Fig 2-2) once they become available and LRSO's permanent facilities are completed. With an estimated completion date of LRSO facilities FY 24, this alternative does not meet the temporary timeline for FY 23/2Q but will be carried forward as an alternative to ensure future operational flexibility.

Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3 the permanent facility plans from the proposed action would remain the same, however no temporary facilities would be obtained. Projected incoming 350 personnel would be located along with the existing personnel, who would continue to operate out of current facilities maximizing the existing space (buildings 249, 351, 1310, 1312 and 1321) until the MILCON project is completed.

Alternative 4

Under Alternative 4, the permanent MILCON facility associated with the proposed action would remain the same; however for the temporary facility requirement the 350 SWW would engage in an off base lease through the General Services Administration. This off base facility would be approximately 11,000 sq. ft., would house 90 personnel from the Wing Staff Agency (WSA) and be located in the immediate vicinity of Eglin Main cantonment area. The WSA does not require Special Access Program space to perform its mission, therefore only administrative and logistical operations would be performed at this temporary, off base leased facility. Due to this reasoning, Alternative 4 will be carried forward for analysis to ensure future operational flexibility.

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not complete the permanent beddown of the 350 SWW at Eglin AFB. The 100,000 sq. ft. facility Headquarters building, a 90,000 sq. ft. 36 EWS Headquarters building, and

approximately 11 acres of parking MILCON projects would not be constructed. No modular facilities would be moved or procured. Base manpower would be increased by 350 additional personnel and the utilization of current base facilities would be maximized. In compliance with 40 CFR §1502.14(d) and 32 CFR §989.14 (c)(d) EAs require analysis of the No Action Alternative regardless if it meets the purpose and need; it represents baseline conditions experienced if the proposed action or alternatives are not implemented over time.

Environmental Consequences (EA Section 3.0)

Summary of Findings

The Air Force has concluded that there would be no significant adverse effects to the following resources as a result of implementation of the Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4 or the No Action Alternative: air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hazardous materials and waste, noise, safety, soil, water resources and utilities.

No significant adverse cumulative impacts would result from activities associated with the Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4 or the No Action Alternative when considered with past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future projects at Eglin AFB.

In addition, the EA concluded that the Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4, and the No Action Alternative would have no affect to airspace and land use.

Air Quality (EA Section 3.1)

Actions associated under the Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 1, 2, 3 and 4 include grading, facility construction, and paving of roads, sidewalks, parking areas, and other impervious surfaces.

Construction worker travel, use of stationary equipment (such as generators and saws), use of mobile equipment, and architectural coatings would also be associated with potential development. Fossil fuel combustion during the use of machinery and fugitive dust emissions from ground disturbance would contribute to construction emissions. Individual pollutant emissions from the implementation of all action Alternatives would not exceed the General Conformity de minimis threshold values outlined in Table 3-2 of the EA for any of the criteria pollutants. Therefore, no significant impacts to air quality would be associated with the implementation of either the Proposed Alternative, Alternatives 1,2,3,4 or the No Action Alternative.

The Proposed Action is located in Okaloosa County which is classified as being in attainment for all criteria pollutants; therefore, a conformity determination is not required for the Proposed Action. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions were quantified in order to provide information for comparison by members of the public as well as decision makers and are summarized in Table 3-3 of the EA and in detail in Appendix E. However, there is currently no regulatory or USAF threshold for significance determination.

Based on air emissions modeling and analysis, implementation of the Proposed Action or Alternatives would not be expected to result in any significant increase in air emissions in the region of influence (ROI), and no adverse impacts would be expected.

The No Action Alternative would increase only mobile emissions, however, they would not exceed levels of what are currently at Eglin AFB, emissions would remain the same, it would not increase or exceed the level Identified in the ACAM report nor would the additional personnel impact the region as there would be a departure of 383 personnel as described in the *5th Gen. Formal Training Unit Optimization EIS ROD Executive Summary*, leaving a surplus of 33 positions once the 350 critical personnel for the 350SWW are established under its IOC. Florida is currently in attainment of all air quality standards set by the EPA. (FDOT 2021) Therefore under the No Action Alternative, no adverse impacts to air quality would occur.

The project proponent would be responsible for adherence to:

- Construction activities will employ standard measures such as watering of graded areas, covering soil stockpiles, and contour grading (if necessary), to minimize temporary generation of dust and particulate matter.
- Diesel-powered highway and non-road vehicles/engines used in construction will limit idling time, except as necessary for safety, security, or to prevent damage to property; and such exhausts will be located the maximum feasible distance from any building fresh air intake vents.

Biological Resources (EA Section 3.2)

No significant adverse impacts to biological resources are anticipated as a result of implementation of the Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4 or the No Action Alternative Eglin AFB as a whole is home to four broad ecological associations as defined by flora, fauna, and geophysical attributes, including the Sandhill Matrix, Flatwoods Matrix, Barrier Island Matrix, and Wetlands/Riparian Matrix. These four ecological associations describe the majority of land cover types found on Eglin AFB, with the exception of artificially maintained open grassland/shrubland areas and developed/urban areas.

Habitat degradation or alteration occurs when physical damage or changes are made to terrestrial or aquatic resources as a result of development. Actions such as filling, clearing, grading, or construction associated with all action Alternatives could contribute to habitat alteration. Habitat degradation or alteration is especially significant for sensitive species or species of concern. Species that are listed or on the ESA receive federal protection, as do species listed under the other acts. Ten federally protected species and their habitats are known to occur within the boundaries of the Eglin Reservation (refer to EA Table 3-4).

Federally protected sensitive species known to occur on or near the Eglin Main cantonment area include the red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW), and eastern indigo snake. Choctaw bean, Gulf sturgeon, narrow pigtoe, southern sandshell, fuzzy pigtoe, and reticulated flatwoods salamander are not known to occur within or in the immediate vicinity of the cantonment area; therefore, these species receive no further analysis in the document. State protected sensitive species known to occur on or near Eglin Main cantonment area include the Florida pine snake (*Pituophis melanoleucus*) and the gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*). Undeveloped portions of the cantonment area often feature trees, shrubs, and other vegetation that provides habitat for migratory birds, protected under the MBTA.

Okaloosa darter streams are present on Eglin Main in the Toms Creek area and near Duke Field in the Juniper Creek area. Sedimentation and runoff associated with construction and land-clearing activities occurring at these two cantonments could potentially impact the Okaloosa darter. However, Eglin AFB requires a vegetative buffer of at least 200 feet around Okaloosa darter streams in order to minimize potential impacts. All action Alternatives have been sited nearly a mile from Okaloosa darter streams and all existing facilities under the No-Action Alternative are in heavily urban areas at the same distance to Okaloosa darter streams. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and erosion BMPs would be implemented to minimize any unnecessary soil erosion that could occur during construction or land clearing activities associated with all action Alternatives and the No Action Alternative.

The Preferred Alternative and Alternatives 1, 2, 3 and 4 are designed and sited to minimize the loss of trees and special species habitat, including RCW active or inactive cavity trees, gopher tortoise burrows, and other suitable habitat. Development occurring under the Proposed Action and Alternatives would comply with the Terms and Conditions identified in the 2013 Final Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO) for the RCW, the 2009 PBO for Air Force activities that may potentially affect the Eastern indigo snake, and best practices and guidelines as outlined in the 2017 *Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan* (INRMP). In the event that a gopher tortoise or eastern indigo snake is spotted, construction activities would cease and the animals would be allowed to leave the area before activities are resumed. In the event that a gopher tortoise burrow would be impacted by renovations occurring under the Proposed Action or Alternatives, relocations would be conducted in accordance with the

procedures outlined in the *Threatened and Endangered Species Component Plan*. Coordination with Eglin NRO would be required prior to project initiation to ensure compliance with the MBTA. The project proponent would be responsible for adherence to:

- Coordinate with Eglin AFB NRO prior to initiation of individual projects to confirm compliance with the MBTA and verify that no migratory bird survey is required.
- In order to limit the potential for introduction of invasive species, equipment and off-site vehicles would be required to be cleaned prior to use on-site. Fill dirt, straw, and any plantings must also be checked for evidence of invasive non-native plants.
- Only native plants would be used for landscaping.
- All activities (training, construction, or otherwise) would cease in the event of an eastern indigo snake sighting until the snake is safely out of harm's way.
- Eglin Natural Resources Office must be notified of any sightings of the eastern indigo snake, gopher tortoise, or black bear.
- A gopher tortoise survey may be required for individual projects prior to the beginning of construction activities. Any tortoises found during the pre-construction survey would be relocated qualified biologists in compliance with FWC guidelines. A temporary silt fence or similar barrier would be erected during construction to prevent relocated gopher tortoises from returning to the area. Burrows found on the project site during the pre-construction survey would be investigated for the presence of eastern indigo snakes. Burrows would be collapsed after investigation and relocated, if applicable, to deter further occupation by additional gopher tortoises or wildlife.
- Waste would be disposed of in bear-proof dumpsters and bear-resistant garbage cans to discourage human-bear interactions.
- A 200-foot vegetated buffer would be maintained along Okaloosa darter and Florida bog frog streams. Erosion control measures, such as silt fencing, would be utilized near these streams.
- Monitoring of RCW near cantonment areas by Eglin NRO would continue.

Cultural Resources (EA Section 3.3)

No significant impacts to cultural resources are anticipated to occur as a result of the Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 1,2,3,4 or the No Action Alternative. Eglin Main cantonment area contains 23 archaeological sites which are considered eligible, potentially eligible, or under review on listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Fifteen cultural restricted access areas are found within the boundaries of Eglin Main. There are seven historic districts either listed in the NRHP or eligible for listing within the boundaries of Eglin Main, as well as 31 structures currently listed in the NRHP and 60 structures eligible for listing. An additional 12 structures are potentially eligible, while 34 structures are currently under review and 28 structures have not been assessed. One cemetery, Davis Cemetery, is potentially eligible for listing on the NRHP and is located within the boundaries of Eglin Main. One archaeological site considered eligible for listing on the NRHP is located within the boundaries of Duke Field. There is one cultural restricted access area. Fourteen cultural resource surveys have been conducted on Duke Field. However, none of the action Alternatives are sited within, or near these sites.

Alternative 3 and the No Action Alternative would require optimization of space in existing facilities. Two of the five facilities are currently eligible for NRHP listing (refer to Table 3-8 of EA). Maintenance and renovation projects have the potential to adversely impact these cultural resources, however, prior to any maintenance or renovations, an Air Force Form 813 (Request for Environmental Impact Analysis) would be required on a case by case basis. Therefore no negative impacts to cultural resources would occur under Alternative 3 or the No Action Alternative.

In the event that unknown cultural resources are discovered during the construction or operational phases of the Proposed Actions, all activity in the immediate vicinity would cease until the Base Historic Preservation Officer and the Cultural Resources Office of 96th Civil Engineer Group/Environmental Assets (96 CEG/CEIEA) have been notified and a determination of significance has been rendered. The following actions would be taken to prevent potential impacts to cultural resources in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) outlined in the *Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan* (ICRMP):

- All ground-disturbing activities would be coordinated with the 96 CEG/CEIEA.
- Any archaeological artifacts discovered would be left in place and their locations immediately reported to the 96 CEG/CEIEA. Construction or demolition activities would cease and efforts to protect the resource from further impact would be taken.
- Vehicle movements would be restricted near water bodies, on steep slopes, or in areas where the soil is soft and/or devoid of vegetation, or in areas where artifacts are located on the surface of the ground.
- In the event of the discovery of potential Native American artifacts and/or remains, construction and operational activities would cease and the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) would be notified immediately.

Government-to-government consultation with federally recognized tribal groups is not anticipated under the Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4 or the No Action Alternative per SOP No. 4 of the Eglin AFB ICRMP. No effect on prehistoric archaeological sites eligible or potentially eligible for listing on the NRHP would occur.

Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste (EA Section 3.4)

No significant adverse impacts to hazardous materials, hazardous waste, or installation restoration sites are anticipated as a result of the Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4 or the No Action Alternative. Any hazardous materials or petroleum products proposed for use during the construction or maintenance would be authorized and approved through the Eglin AFB Hazardous Waste Management Plan (HWMP). Implementation of processes established for proper hazardous materials and petroleum products management during construction would reduce any potential adverse impact that would result from a spill or release. All hazardous materials and petroleum products would be managed in accordance with applicable USAF regulations and federal, state, and local requirements as well as the Eglin AFB HWMP.

Renovations of existing facilities under Alternative 3 and the No Action Alternative could produce small amounts of lead-based paint (LBP), asbestos-containing material (ACM), mercury, and/or polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB). Any buildings considered for demolition under the approved action that are of an age in which ACM, LBP, mercury or PCBs could be present would be surveyed prior to commencing demolition. Removal of contaminated debris would be performed by a licensed contractor and all notification and abatement would be done according to federal, state, and USAF regulations.

The project proponent would be responsible for:

- Manage hazardous materials/waste in coordination with the 96th Civil Engineer Group/Environmental Compliance (96 CEG/CEIEC) and in accordance with all applicable environmental compliance regulations and Eglin AFB environmental management plans.
- Construction will adhere to AFMAN 32-7002 and existing tracking and reporting requirements as presented in the *Hazardous Waste Management Plan*.
- Nonhazardous solid waste generated from construction activities will be recycled to the extent possible.

- Equip all construction sites with adequate waste disposal receptacles for solid, liquid, and hazardous wastes to prevent construction and demolition debris from leaving the work site.

Noise (EA Section 3.5)

No significant impacts to noise are anticipated to occur as a result of the Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4 or the No Action Alternative. Aircraft noise has been considered, and appropriate procedures and/or sound attenuation measures would be implemented during facility design and construction.

Construction noise resulting from construction activities would temporarily increase noise levels in the area surrounding the construction site. However, noise impacts resulting from implementation of the Preferred Alternative and Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4 would be limited to the duration of construction activities and would occur only during normal working hours between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. Construction noise would be temporary and localized to the areas immediately surrounding the active project sites. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Action or Alternatives would have short-term, minor, direct, adverse effects on noise levels.

All applicable noise laws and guidelines would be followed to reduce effects from noise produced by construction activities. Workers would be required to use proper personal hearing protection in accordance with Air Force Occupational and Environmental Safety, Fire Protection, and Health (AFOSH) Standard 48-20, *Operational Noise and Hearing Conservation Program*, to limit exposure. Appropriate noise attenuation equipment would also be used where applicable.

Safety (EA Section 3.6)

No significant impacts to safety are anticipated to occur as a result of the Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4 or the No Action Alternative. Coordination with the 96 TW/RANSS and 96 CES/CESD would occur prior to construction of other ground-disturbing activities proposed in areas of possible or probable UXO contamination. Operations and maintenance procedures would continue to be conducted in accordance with applicable regulations, technical orders, and AFOSH standards pertaining to ground safety. The Anti-terrorism/force protection security program would continue in accordance with regulations and force protection standards at Eglin AFB.

All construction activities would be conducted in compliance with all applicable OSHA regulations to protect workers. USAF and OSHA excavation safety procedures and regulations would be followed at each phase of each project to help ensure the safety of all involved. The project proponent would be responsible for:

- Coordination with 96th Test Wing Safety Office (96 TW/SE), 96th Test Wing Range Support Squadron (96 TW/RANSS), and 96th Civil Engineering Squadron/Explosive Ordnance Disposal Squadron (96 CES/CESD) would be conducted for any ground disturbing activity occurring within the Eglin AFB Range Complex. Surface or subsurface activities occurring within an area delineated as probable UXO contamination would require surveying and remediation prior to 96 TW/SE approval.
- Physical barriers and “no trespassing” signs would be placed around construction sites to deter children and unauthorized personnel. All construction vehicles and equipment would be locked or otherwise secured when not in use.
- All construction equipment would be maintained to the manufacturer’s specification to minimize effects associated with safety and minimize impacts from construction noise.

Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice (EA Section 3.7)

The Preferred Alternative and Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4 would be anticipated to generate temporary construction work in the local region as well as revenue to the local economy through the purchase of materials and supplies. All actions add 350 additional base personnel to Eglin AFB. However, under the *5th Generation Formal Training Unit Optimization Environmental Impact Statement* Record of Decision (ROD) Executive Summary:

The second F-35A FTU squadron would require approximately 377 additional personnel at Eglin AFB. The proposed action to beddown the additional F-35A squadron at Eglin AFB would only be implemented if the F-22 FTU mission departed. The departure of the F-22 FTU mission would include the departure of approximately 760 personnel from Eglin AFB. Therefore, there would be an overall reduction of 383 personnel at Eglin AFB. Additionally, a proportion of the departing personnel would be accompanied by dependents. The reduction of 383 personnel from Eglin AFB is estimated to result in a reduction of 843 dependents. Therefore, there would be an overall reduction of approximately 1,226 persons from the area surrounding Eglin AFB.

Therefore, leaving a surplus of 33 positions on Eglin AFB, resulting in no change in socioeconomic impacts from the additional personnel, as described in the ROD.

Construction activities associated with the implementation of the Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4 would be anticipated to result in temporary, beneficial, insignificant impacts. Therefore, it is anticipated that expenditures, employment, and population at Eglin AFB would remain near current levels. Construction activities associated with implementation of the Proposed Action and Alternatives would be anticipated to result in temporary, beneficial, insignificant impacts.

According to the Eglin AFB Child & Youth Services Flight Chief, there are 130 infants and 32 one-year-olds on the waiting list at the Child Development Center as of 26 January 2022. In addition to the construction of a new Child Development Center, in order to provide care for a high percentage of children under two years (only eight infants can be in a classroom with two teachers), a long term funding mechanism such as additional Appropriated Funds funded caregivers (to lessen the Non-appropriated Funds cost) is required. According to the Eglin AFB Housing Management Chief, any new missions will compete on a first come first serve basis for on/off base housing. All new personnel will compete with everyone else, as there is no way to obtain additional privatized housing. A new Housing Requirement/Market Analysis will take place in March 2022 to identify any shortfalls. The Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 1, 2, 3 and 4 and the No Action Alternative would result in short-term housing and childcare impacts but due to the analysis and funding of new Base Operations Support positions and facilities, no significant long term impacts would be anticipated.

No disproportionate impacts to minority or low-income populations would be anticipated to occur as a result of the Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4 or the No Action Alternative.

Despite the presence of environmental justice populations occurring in the vicinity of Eglin Main, no disproportionate impacts to environmental justice populations would be anticipated to occur as a result of the Proposed Action at Eglin Main because all activities would occur within the confines of Eglin AFB and projects have been sited appropriately to avoid potential impacts from construction noise.

Soils (EA Section 3.8)

No significant impacts to soils are anticipated to occur as a result of Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4 or the No Action Alternative. Land clearing and disturbing activities would temporarily disrupt the top layers of soil, while construction activities would result in grading and compaction of the soil for stability. New construction would result in the addition of impervious surfaces, such as new parking lots, buildings, or roadways.

The permanent and temporary facilities are located in relatively flat topographical locations, no changes to stormwater drainage would be anticipated.

The Preferred Alternative, and Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4 would be conducted in a series of projects, each adhering to basewide best management practices (BMPs) for erosion control as outlined in the *Erosion Control Component Plan*. A Construction Generic Permit would be required under FAC Rule 62-621 for construction activities that would disturb one or more acres of land collectively. Under the terms of the permit, a comprehensive Stormwater, Erosion, and Sedimentation Control Plan and a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan in the final plan design would be required. An application for a Stormwater Discharge Permit with stormwater retention and design would be required prior to any ground-disturbing activities per FAC Rule 62-346. The project proponent would be responsible for:

- A site-specific SWPPP would be implemented to minimize any unnecessary soil erosion that could occur during construction.
- Clearing and grubbing would be timed with construction to minimize the exposure of cleared surfaces. Such activities would not be conducted during periods of wet weather. Construction activities would be staged to allow for the stabilization of disturbed soils.
- Soil erosion-control measures, such as soil erosion-control mats, silt fences, straw bales, diversion ditches, riprap channels, water bars, water spreaders, vegetative buffer strips, and hardened stream crossings, would be used as appropriate.
- Disturbance boundaries would be clearly delineated by measures such as staking, fence, or flagging, prior to the start of construction. Any off-road traffic would be prohibited in the disturbance area. All equipment would be confined to these designated work zones (including access roads and laydown) within the Proposed Action area.
- Project planning should include the need for sampling and subsequent remediation within the project area to account for the discovery of contaminated soil.
- Development would be required to adhere to basewide BMPs for erosion control as outlined in the *Erosion Control Component Plan*.

Water Resources (EA Section 3.10)

No impacts to groundwater would be anticipated under implementation of the Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4 or No-Action Alternative. Only surface-level land-clearing activities would be anticipated to occur as a result of the Preferred Alternative and Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4. Coordination with the IRP would occur in order to check for any relevant land use controls and to locate and comply with restrictions near monitored sites or water wells.

Overall, construction activities would have the potential for short-term, minor to moderate, direct and indirect, adverse effects on surface water quality in any location where construction would occur within 50 feet of a surface water body. However, the use of BMPs specified in the installation-specific SWPPP and development of site-specific construction SWPPPs (as required) would minimize potential adverse effects.

There is a potential for erosion and associated sedimentation to flow into surface water features during construction. However, the Proposed Action and Alternatives are further than 1800 feet from surface waterbodies and would not result in adverse impacts.

All construction activities resulting in ground disturbance would be conducted in accordance with the applicable stormwater discharge permit to control erosion and prevent sediment, debris, or other pollutants from entering the stormwater system. Construction activities that disturb one acre or more would need coverage under the NPDES Construction Generic Permit. No construction activities would begin until a Proposed Action-specific construction SWPPP is completed. All required BMPs contained within the SWPPP would be implemented during construction.

New construction could result in a potential increase in surface runoff due to an increase in impervious surfaces. Development proposed under 2020 *Cantonment Areas EA* and FONSI result in an increase in

surface runoff of 2.212 inches (refer to Appendix F of EA). Any construction of impervious surface (e.g., pavements, buildings), stormwater management systems (retention ponds, swales, stormwater pipes/culverts), would require state and/or federal permitting. Therefore no significant impacts would occur under the permitted impervious surface increase.

No new actions would take place in floodplains. Therefore, no impacts to floodplains are anticipated to occur.

The Proposed Action would take place within the coastal zone and the jurisdictional area of the FDEP. Eglin AFB has prepared a *Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA)* determination to address potential impacts to the coastal zone (refer to Appendix C of the EA). Concurrence would be required prior to construction. The project proponent would be responsible for:

- Use established roads to cross streams.
- Follow recommended BMPs for soil erosion and sedimentation prevention. BMPs utilized by the base to control erosion and excess sedimentation could include one or more of the following:
 - Installation of temporary silt fencing or hay bales
 - Earth moving to establish berms, detention basins, or other stormwater controls
 - Planting of grasses and woody vegetation
 - Fertilizing and mowing
 - Establishing or reestablishing native wetland plants.
- Install and maintain entrenched silt fencing and hay bales along the perimeter of the construction site prior to any ground-disturbing activities and maintain them in effective working order through the construction process to prevent fill material, pollutants, and runoff from entering wetlands or other surface waters.
- Incorporate a monitoring plan to observe the effectiveness of silt fencing, hay bales, and other erosion and sedimentation control devices and address deficiencies accordingly.
- Vehicles and equipment must remain at least 50 meters from the edge of slopes leading down to streams.
- A 100-ft vegetated buffer must be maintained between construction sites and surface waters,
- Where applicable, reduce erosion using rough grade slopes or terrace slopes.

Utilities (EA Section 3.10)

The Eglin Main cantonment area was determined to have sufficient electrical capacity to support future mission and development requirements.

Natural gas supplies at Eglin Main cantonment area was deemed adequate to support future mission and development requirements, coordination with Okaloosa County would occur in the event that natural gas infrastructure would be implemented.

Communications networks on the Eglin Main cantonment area is adequate to support future mission and development requirements from the Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4 or the No Action Alternative.

Alteration of potable water systems that could occur under the Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4, or the No Action Alternative would be conducted in accordance with state and federal regulations, including the *Florida Safe Drinking Water Act* and the federal *Safe Drinking Water Act* (42 USC 201, 300 *et seq.*) and the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations.

Under the Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4 or the No Action Alternative, any development that could affect wastewater systems would be conducted in accordance with the CWA and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting system. Permitting and implementation

pertaining to the *Florida Air and Water Pollution Control Act* would be coordinated with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) as needed. Therefore, no adverse impacts related to utilities are associated with implementation of the Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4 or the No Action Alternative. The project proponent would be responsible for:

- Coordination with all utility providers would be required prior to any ground-disturbing activities in order to minimize potential conflicts between providers.

Public Notice

A notice was published in the *Northwest Florida Daily News* on 15 July 2022, inviting the public to review and comment on the draft final EA and draft FONSI. The public comment period closed on 14 August 2022 and X public comments were received. State agency correspondence indicated that the Florida State Clearinghouse has found that the Proposed Action is consistent with the Florida Coastal Management Program; concurrence was received on 12 February 2020. Copies of agency correspondence and a copy of the public notice can be found in Appendix B, Agency and Public Coordination, of the EA.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based on my review of the facts and analyses contained in the attached EA, conducted under the provisions of NEPA, CEQ regulations, and 32 C.F.R. Part 989, I conclude that implementation of the Proposed Action, Alternatives 1,2,3,4 and the No Action Alternative identified in the EA would not have a significant environmental impact, either by themselves or cumulatively with other projects at Eglin AFB. Accordingly, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The signing of this Finding of No Significant Impact completes the environmental impact analysis process.

DANA J. MCINTYRE, NH-04, USAF
Deputy Base Civil Engineer

DATE