

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR CAMP PINCHOT ADAPTIVE REUSE
AT
EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA**

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 United States Code, Section 4321-4347) and Department of Defense NEPA Procedures (as of June 30, 2025), the Department of the Air Force (DAF), as the lead agency, has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzing the impacts associated with reuse and repurposing of the Camp Pinchot land parcel.

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

Purpose of the Action and Need for the Action (EA Sections [§§] 1.2 and 1.3, page 1-6): The purpose of the Proposed Action described in this EA is to ensure that any future use of Camp Pinchot includes keeping the property under DAF control for safety and security purposes and for utilizing existing facilities to the extent practical. Camp Pinchot is vacant for the first time since the United States (US) Forest Service constructed the facilities in 1910. The need for the Proposed Action is to reuse or repurpose this currently underutilized DAF property in a manner that supports the 96th Test Wing (96 TW) mission. As Eglin’s host wing, the 96 TW provides essential base operating support and services for 9 wings and wing equivalents, 11 operating locations and detachments, and more than 35 associated units. Occupation of these structures will preserve use and encourage maintenance of these buildings for Eglin’s Natural Resources Office (NRO) and Cultural Resources Office (CRO). Both the NRO and CRO will be able to continue their mission for the base, range, and community while preserving Eglin land and the heritage of Camp Pinchot.

ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

Proposed Action and Action Alternatives (EA §2.1, §2.3, §2.4, §2.5, §2.6, pages 2-2, 2-6, 2-7, and 2-8): To meet the purpose and need, Eglin identified a Proposed Action and four action alternatives. The Proposed Action described in this EA is to implement a Camp Pinchot Adaptive Reuse Plan (ARP), which would include relocation of Eglin NRO and CRO personnel to Camp Pinchot as a duty station. The Proposed Action would also include the potential addition of buildings, parking areas, and a public recreation area outside the historic district. Several existing facilities would be renovated to support new functions. Prior to initiating new construction or other future actions, the DAF would develop and implement a Camp Pinchot Area Development Plan (ADP). The Proposed Action would include implementation of the Camp Pinchot Historic Preservation Plan, which would support rehabilitation of historic structures as necessary. The Proposed Action would be implemented in three phases occurring over approximately 6 years. Future activities other than conversion of existing facilities, including new construction, are considered notional currently.

Under Alternative 1, an Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) would be established for the currently undeveloped/forested portion of the Camp Pinchot parcel. Development would not occur within the historic district. The parcel could be used for multiple types of development, potentially including a housing community and commercial/retail facilities. A conservation buffer space could be maintained along the Lewis Turner Boulevard property frontage.

Under Alternative 2, an EUL option would be implemented (similar to Alternative 1) but would encompass the entire Camp Pinchot parcel, including the historic district. However, per the Camp Pinchot Historic Preservation Plan, there would be a requirement to preserve the historic district and associated buildings as a Historical Park. Site development would therefore include historic preservation activities

for relevant facilities and the eligible archaeological site.

Under Alternative 3, some or all of the existing buildings in the historic district would be demolished to provide new options related to the EUL. This alternative would likely result in adverse effects to the historic buildings and eligible archaeological site. Prior to a determination to demolish the facilities, an Economic Analysis would be required per Department of Defense Instruction 4715.16, Enclosure 3 Procedure Item 5.

Under Alternative 4 (Specialized Range Mission Use), the forested part of the Camp Pinchot land parcel would be converted to an Eglin Specialized Range use, which would require a change in land use designation from Cantonment to Interstitial. The Camp Pinchot parcel would support water-to-land contrast training where personnel can come ashore and move onto Eglin-controlled land. Military units would conduct small boat operations and ground training in support of their overall mission. Typical training would involve small teams of 10 to 50 personnel conducting small boat and dismounted operations in a simulated low-intensity combat environment. Most training would occur in the undeveloped part of the parcel but buildings in the historic district could be used as objectives (an “objective” is a structure or defined area that is the focus of specific training event); however, there would be no damage to the structures. Other objectives could be established, such as a lean-to within a forested area, a few cleared acres containing berms, CONEX containers/boxes, and fighting positions. New objectives would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Environmental Impact Analysis Process. Proposed training activities would include littoral operations and small boat team activities; specialized skill training; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance activities; human intelligence activities; infiltration/exfiltration activities; bivouac activities; life support training; land navigation training; survival, evasion, resistance, and escape training; and distance swim training and diving. Littoral operations training would be variable but could occur up to several days per week. Training in land areas would occur up to two times per month, for up to three days and nights per training event. Most activities would involve quiet, stealthy operations. There would be no live fire or use of blank ammunition or pyrotechnics other than signal or marking smoke (expelled from canisters). Training could occur during the day or night (to 11:00 p.m.). Security fencing could potentially be constructed along part of the Specialized Range boundary. Eglin would develop a training ground profile that would describe and delineate the types of training allowed in various parts of the parcel.

No Action Alternative (EA §2.2, page 2-6): Under the No Action Alternative, current housing functions and other facilities at Camp Pinchot would remain unchanged. Implementation of the Camp Pinchot ARP, including reuse of the area for natural resources and cultural resources functions, would not occur. The undeveloped portion of the parcel would remain unchanged. Maintenance and preservation activities for relevant facilities in the historic district would no longer be conducted, resulting in adverse effects on these archaeological resources.

Preferred Alternative: Eglin identified the preferred alternative as a combination of the Proposed Action (relocation of Eglin’s NRO and CRO personnel to Camp Pinchot as a duty station) and Alternative 4 (convert the parcel to a Specialized Range to support a specific mission set).

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Analysis was conducted to determine the potential impacts to the human and natural environment resulting from the Proposed Action and alternatives. Environmental analysis focused on the following resource areas: air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, infrastructure/utilities, land use, noise, socioeconomics, soils, transportation, visual resources and aesthetics, and water resources. Potential impacts associated with the preferred alternative (combination of the Proposed Action and Alternative 4) are summarized below. No significant impacts to resources were identified (EA Chapter 3, pages 3-1 to 3-75).

Air Quality (EA §3.2, pages 3-2 to 3-8): The Proposed Action would include grading, construction and demolition, and paving. Operations would also include construction worker trips and stationary equipment (e.g., generators and saws), mobile equipment, and architectural coatings. Construction emissions would mainly occur from fossil fuel combustion during machinery use, and fugitive dust emissions from ground disturbance. Post-construction emissions would be associated with ongoing operations of the new and renovated facilities, including emissions from commuting activities of the relocated personnel. While construction and operation activities would increase emissions (including greenhouse gases) at the Camp Pinchot parcel, they would remain within regulatory thresholds and well below significance indicators. Implementing dust control measures would decrease emissions during construction. Emissions from military operations would primarily result from vehicle and vessel use. Emissions associated with these activities would remain below regulatory significance indicators for criteria pollutants in attainment areas. In addition, training activities would not generate substantial quantities of any greenhouse gas.

Biological Resources (EA §3.3, pages 3-8 to 3-36): Vehicle and equipment use, noise, and other disturbance caused by construction, land clearing, maintenance, and training activities may potentially cause mortality, injury, stress, or harassment of wildlife, including protected species, but a relatively small number of animals would be affected, with no detectable effects at the population level expected. Forest habitat removal could displace some wildlife, including protected species, but the amount of forested habitat removed would be small relative to other available habitat nearby. Vessel noise and general human presence/activity on the water during training activities may startle or disturb wildlife in Garnier Bayou and in terrestrial habitats near the shoreline, including protected species. Impacts from any given activity would be temporary and minor, although vessel operations could occur up to several days per week. Affected animals would generally be able to resume typical behaviors after completion of activities. The potential for vessel strikes would be low. Waves and currents would smooth areas of bottom disturbance and dissipate suspended sediments. Management measures would substantially decrease the potential for habitat effects caused by erosion and the addition of impervious surface area, and would decrease the potential for physical and behavioral effects on some protected species. Eglin would implement practices to prevent the introduction or spread of invasive species. Although there would be some adverse effects on biological resources, with implementation of management practices, significant impacts would not be expected.

Cultural Resources (EA §3.4, pages 3-37 to 3-42): Building repair, upgrades, and code compliance would occur in conjunction with building preservation. These actions would limit impacts on the Camp Pinchot Historic District by preserving the original structures and repurposing them with limited detrimental changes. Short-term disturbances are anticipated to occur from the improvement process. Impacts from new construction in the historic district and at archaeological sites would be dependent on the location and aesthetics of the structures. New structures inside the historic district could potentially disrupt the viewshed and aesthetics if they are visually incompatible with existing historical structures. Structures outside the district could additionally impact the viewshed of the historic district. Limiting new construction inside the historic district and at archaeological sites would minimize the potential for impacts on cultural resources. For locations where this is not feasible, minimizing the area affected and reducing aesthetic differences between old and new construction would reduce the magnitude of any impacts. By following recommendations of the Camp Pinchot Historic Preservation Plan, adaptive reuse would not likely result in adverse effects on cultural resources. With implementation of required use restrictions, training activities would not affect cultural resources. There would be no ground-disturbing activities within archaeological sites. Training activities in the historic district would require prior evaluation and approval by the Eglin CRO. NRHP-eligible structures would be kept up to the Secretary of the Interior standards. No direct adverse effects on NRHP-eligible sites and structures are anticipated from noise and vibration, as training

activities associated with high-intensity noise would be prohibited.

Infrastructure/Utilities (EA §3.5, pages 3-42 to 3-47): Existing and notional construction and operations under the Proposed Action would likely result in increased demand and use of electricity, potable water, and natural gas at Camp Pinchot. However, prior to initiating new construction or other future actions, the DAF would develop a Camp Pinchot ADP, which would contain constraints evaluation, implementation plans, and capacity analysis. Any new utility lines would likely connect to the existing infrastructure at Camp Pinchot. Any required alterations of potable water systems would be conducted in accordance with state and federal regulations. Existing wastewater treatment plants would be able to accommodate additional flow. Construction contractors would obtain coverage under a stormwater permit and implement appropriate measures to minimize erosion and sedimentation. The Florida Air and Water Pollution Control Act governs industrial and domestic wastewater discharges in the state and would also be followed. Through proper coordination and permitting, no adverse impacts related to infrastructure and utilities would be expected. The addition of training activities could potentially result in a very small increase in demand for and use of infrastructure and utilities, but the activities would be temporary and infrequent, and the additional personnel and types of activities would not result in significant impacts to infrastructure and utilities.

Land Use (EA §3.6, pages 3-47 to 3-51): A change in land use category from Cantonment to Interstitial would not adversely affect any on-site land uses because the parcel is currently vacant and does not support any functions. Noise from construction, new functions on the site (NRO, CRO, and recreational activities), and some training activities (for example, vehicle and vessel operation) could be perceptible in nearby residential areas, but overall noise levels would remain compatible with all current adjacent land uses, including residential. Noise levels from construction and training activities would be temporary, lasting only for the duration of any individual event. In addition, activities would occur in a baseline acoustic environment that includes military operations noise. Use of the parcel by the Boy Scouts and Girls Scouts would continue, with coordination through Eglin's Outdoor Recreation office. Any additional future use of the parcel for public recreational activities would also be coordinated through the Outdoor Recreation office.

Noise (EA §3.7, pages 3-52 to 3-56): Noise levels associated with construction activities may be audible at times at the closest noise-sensitive locations but would remain compatible with levels associated with residential land use. Construction noise would be temporary, lasting only the duration of the construction projects, and would be expected to be limited to normal working hours. Noise generated by day-to-day operations would not be expected to be audible at the closest residences. Training activities could include the operation of small vessels (including Jet Skis) and ground vehicles. The vessels and ground vehicles would be equipped with mufflers and would be compliant with Florida statutes regarding acceptable noise levels. Vessel and vehicle noise generated during training activities would be similar to noise experienced due to boat traffic or vehicle operations ongoing in the area currently. Training noise could potentially be audible at times at the closest noise-sensitive locations, but would be temporary, lasting only for the duration of the training event. Training noise would occur in a baseline acoustic environment that also includes other military operations noise.

Socioeconomics (EA §3.8, pages 3-56 to 3-59): There would be no new direct jobs that would affect population, housing, schools, and other socioeconomic resources because there would be no change in the number of NRO, CRO, or other personnel. There would be beneficial impacts associated with construction and renovation of existing facilities, and potentially from construction of training objectives, from demand for local labor and supplies. Impacts would be localized, low intensity, and short term. It is expected that the local labor force would be able to fulfill any construction employment demand. Existing maintenance activities (e.g., general landscaping services, emergency pruning, trimming, and tree/stump removal) would continue. Nearby residents would not experience significant noise and aesthetic/visual

impacts from implementation of the ARP or proposed training activities.

Soils (EA §3.9, pages 3-59 to 3-63): Ground disturbance would occur during facilities construction, addition of parking areas and other impervious surfaces, renovation, demolition, foot traffic during training, and bivouac. A minor amount of land clearing, grading, or construction could be required to establish training locations and other features such as trails and security fencing. Soil disturbance during these activities could potentially cause erosion and associated contaminant transport and sedimentation that could affect Garnier Bayou, wetlands, riparian areas, and floodplains, and terrestrial wildlife habitats. Erosion control and stormwater runoff measures would be implemented during and after construction and training activities, as applicable. The potential for erosion-related impacts would be reduced by the slope and vegetative cover of the parcel. Ground training would mostly consist of small personnel groups conducting dismounted maneuvers in dispersed locations. The potential for impacts from dismounted maneuvers would be further minimized by the requirement to avoid ground-disturbing activities within 100 feet of streams, water bodies, and wetlands. Vehicles would remain on roads unless off-road operation is approved in advance. Digging would be prohibited, and bivouacking would occur in designated locations. Training units would be required to clear debris from the range, which would decrease the amount of materials that could potentially corrode and leach into the soil. Sediments at the shoreline and in Garnier Bayou could be disturbed during pile installation (a notional activity), vessel operation, and personnel movement. Disturbed sediments at the shoreline would be redistributed by wind, rain, and waves, while disturbed sediments in the water would be redistributed by currents and tidal action. As with other training areas on Eglin, units could rotate among multiple boat landing sites if erosion is detected.

Transportation (EA §3.10, pages 3-63 to 3-67): To complete the long-term phase of the ADP, it is anticipated that the existing Camp Pinchot Road would need to be widened and repaved to support additional personnel and vehicles. In addition, a new road segment would be required to accommodate new functions in currently undeveloped areas. additional development could include establishing trails and constructing training objectives. Except for construction that could occur at the intersection of State Road (SR) 189 (a notional activity), road refurbishment, road replacement, and construction activities on Camp Pinchot would not affect traffic flow or level of service in adjacent off-site areas. Based on the number of people likely associated with NRO, CRO, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and security functions, as well as training activities, upgrade of the Camp Pinchot Road/SR 189 intersection (e.g., adding turn lanes or a traffic light) is not anticipated at this time. Some training activities would involve personnel transiting from Camp Pinchot to Eglin property across Lewis Turner Boulevard. All such movements would occur in vehicles (no pedestrian road crossings), which would be operated in accordance with existing traffic laws and conditions.

Visual Resources and Aesthetics (EA §3.11, pages 3-67 to 3-69): Vehicles and equipment used during construction and renovation activities may temporarily disrupt the aesthetics at Camp Pinchot, but impacts would be localized and short term. The existing limited view of Camp Pinchot from Lewis Turner Boulevard would be maintained. The viewshed from within Camp Pinchot and the public view from Garnier Bayou would benefit from continued maintenance and repairs of historic buildings and facilities by keeping them at the current or improved level of conditions. New construction of notional facilities under the ADP would potentially change the aesthetics of the historic district and natural areas, but impacts would be minimized by considering design and placement of new facilities, maintaining a buffer between the historic district and new construction, and following recommendations of the Camp Pinchot Historic Preservation Plan. The aesthetics and visual landscape could change for recreational participants in Garnier Bayou and nearby residents during construction and training activities (e.g., presence of military vehicles, watercraft) and while personnel are present on Camp Pinchot. Effects to visual resources and aesthetics associated with the presence of military vehicles, watercraft, and personnel associated with mission sets would be temporary, lasting for the duration of the activities. There could be

potential changes to the shoreline from erosion, which may affect visual resources and aesthetics of the area if there is any topsoil or vegetation loss. However, implementation of best management practices would minimize potential for erosion. Additionally, new training objectives would be constructed in the interior of the parcel, and training activities are unlikely to cause substantial shoreline erosion.

Water Resources (EA §3.12, pages 3-70 to 3-75): Adherence to best management practices and other requirements specified in stormwater and construction permits would minimize the potential for sedimentation and conveyance of contaminants to nearby wetlands, floodplains, and to Garnier Bayou during construction and other land clearing, and after completion of construction activities. Vessel use and other training activities in Garnier Bayou and along the adjacent shoreline could impact wetlands and floodplains, particularly from repetitive activities in the same area. Implementation of management actions and training activity restrictions would minimize potential adverse impacts to water resources associated with water-related mission sets. Training missions would not include expenditures of munitions and explosives, and there would be no associated potential for metals and explosives to migrate to groundwater.

AGENCY AND PUBLIC COMMENT

The DAF prepared a Draft EA to inform the public of the preferred alternative and allow the opportunity for public review and comment. The Draft EA 30-day review period began with a public notice published in the *Northwest Florida Daily News* on July 10, 2025. The notice described the Proposed Action, solicited public comments on the Draft EA and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), provided public comment review dates, and announced that a copy of the EA would be available for review on the Eglin Air Force Base website: <https://www.eglin.af.mil/About-Us/Eglin-Documents/>. No comments were received.

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, I conclude that implementation of the preferred alternative (Proposed Action and Alternative 4) would not have a significant impact on the human or natural environment. Accordingly, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The signing of this FONSI fulfills the requirements of NEPA.

MICHELLE L.E. STERLING, Colonel, USAF
Commander, 96th Civil Engineer Group

28 August 2025
DATE