

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Name of Action: Eglin Air Force Base Digital Airport Surveillance Radar

The Department of Defense (DoD) proposes to construct a Digital Airport Surveillance Radar (DASR) at Eglin Air Force Base (AFB) in Florida. This proposed action is part of the nationwide DoD National Airspace System (NAS) Program, which is replacing analog air traffic control systems with state-of-the-art digital air traffic control equipment. The implementation of the NAS program, which also includes the installation of DoD Advanced Automation Systems (DAAS) and Voice Communications Switching Systems (VCSS) at DoD bases, was previously evaluated in a programmatic Environmental Assessment (EA) resulting in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) (1995).

Eglin AFB is the DoD test site for DASR. The EA addresses the site-specific impact of locating a DASR on Eglin AFB and evaluates the consequences of DASR construction on both the natural and man-made environments. The DAAS and VCSS components of the NAS program at Eglin AFB will be located within existing buildings, and impacts are anticipated to be minor.

The DASR at Eglin AFB is needed to replace an existing Airport Surveillance Radar (ASR-7) which is over 20 years old and near the end of its useful life cycle. Three alternative sites were evaluated for location of the DASR. All three sites have very similar existing environmental conditions, and thus short term construction and long-term operation impacts are similar for all three sites. All of the sites are located on Eglin Main near the intersection of Runway 01-19 and Runway 12-30, in areas zoned for industrial use, and are thus characterized by similar existing socio-economic, noise, traffic and air quality conditions. All three alternative sites are located in upland areas vegetated with mowed grass, and are characterized by rapidly draining soils and deep water tables. Wildlife use of all three sites is minimal. No surface water resources or wetlands, threatened or endangered species, or cultural resources are present at any of the sites. All of the sites are located in areas with minimal aesthetic value. No specific sources of radio frequency radiation are known to be present at any of the three sites. None of the sites is known to contain contaminated soils; however, the groundwater at Site 1 may be contaminated as a result of past activities at the nearby abandoned fire training area. Sites 1 and 3 are located just outside of the explosive safety quantity-distance (ESQD) zone around the munitions area, while Site 2 is located inside the ESQD zone.

The same intensity and type of construction would be utilized to install the DASR facility regardless of which site is chosen. Due to the developed nature of all the sites, and the absence of sensitive resources of any type, construction of the DASR at any of the sites would result in minimal impacts to the existing natural and human environments.

Operation of the DASR facility is anticipated to have minimal long-term impacts to the natural and human environments, regardless of which site is selected. Each site is in a relatively remote area of the base and is compatible with surrounding land uses. The facility will be operated in accordance with Eglin Air Force Base policies, and federal, state and local regulations. The radar would generate radio frequency radiation (RFR) while operating; however, the RFR generated would be safe to humans at ground level, except at very close distances to the radar (approximately 0 to 8 feet below the focal point of the beam). During the DASR operation, fuel would be stored at the site in an above-ground storage tank. Hazardous materials such as engine oil and grease may be used at the site; however, use and disposal of any hazardous materials would occur in compliance with Eglin AFB protocols and guidelines as well as applicable state and federal regulations. Consequently, it is anticipated that operational use of hazardous materials will not adversely affect the natural or human environments.

In summary, construction and operation of the DASR facility at Eglin AFB would result in minimal short-term and long-term impacts, regardless of which of the three alternative sites is selected as the preferred location. The USAF has identified Site 3 as the preferred location for the DASR facility; however, each of the three sites would be an acceptable location for the DASR facility from an environmental perspective.

It is anticipated that few mitigation measures would be required during construction and operation of the facility. During the construction period, sheeting or supports may be used in the areas excavated for the antenna foundation and utility trenches in order to prevent collapse of these excavated areas. To minimize noise impacts during construction, mufflers would be used on construction equipment and vehicles. In addition, all equipment and vehicles used during construction would be maintained in good operating condition so that emissions are minimized, thus reducing the potential for air quality impacts. All areas disturbed for the DASR construction would be seeded with a grass mixture to stabilize the disturbed soils, in order to minimize the potential for erosion and sedimentation. All hazardous materials used during construction would be used and disposed of in accordance with Eglin AFB policies and protocols and all applicable state and federal regulations.

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*1 Dec 97*

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Date

*Signed*

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*19 Nov 97*

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Date