

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

Name of Action: Department of Defense National Airspace System

The Department of Defense (DoD) National Airspace System (NAS) proposes to replace radar approach control components at U.S. Air Force (USAF), U.S. Navy and Marine Corps (USN/USMC) and U.S. Army (USA) airfields throughout the United States and its territories by installing Digital Airport Surveillance Radars (DASR), DoD Advanced Automation Systems (DAAS) and Voice Communications Switching Systems (VCSS). These three components will upgrade existing, comparable components that are less technologically advanced. Each of the three replacement components can be acquired independently of the remaining two, and the combination of components may vary among locations. Implementation of the proposed action will also include dismantling and removal of the existing surveillance radar system at each of the NAS sites receiving the DASR.

Although the airfields proposed for NAS replacements are known, the exact site of each of the components at each military installation remains to be determined. The DAAS and VCSS will either be located in existing buildings, or will be accommodated by constructing a small addition to existing buildings. In contrast, the DASR system will include an antenna that will be constructed on a vacant parcel of land approximately one-half acre in size, an access road and associated utility trenches. Although the DASR will likely be sited in close proximity to the runway at each installation, this component could be sited as far as one mile away from the airfield itself. Site selection will be conducted in accordance with the *National Airspace System Digital Airport Surveillance Radar Siting Plan* (Siting Plan), which identifies a three-step screening process in which decreasingly restrictive categories of criteria are employed to identify potential DASR sites at an airfield while minimizing environmental impacts.

The *Department of Defense National Airspace System Programmatic Environmental Assessment* (EA) provides a nationwide, non-site-specific, programmatic assessment of the potentially affected environment and potential consequences of the proposed action. The EA focuses on the following national resources and issues: geology, soils, water resources, air quality, biology, noise, infrastructure, visual resources, cultural resources, socioeconomics, pollution prevention, hazardous waste management, and human safety. Since NAS sites will be relatively small in size and separated by considerable distances, cumulative impacts will be nonexistent and are therefore not addressed in the NAS EA. In accordance with 32 CFR § 989.10, site-specific, tiered environmental documentation as appropriate will be completed for NAS implementation at each airfield.

The EA considers the environmental consequences of NAS as a whole, rather than distinguishing among the environmental consequences of the three components. Of the three, the DASR will have the greatest impact on existing resources because its installation requires a greater amount of external construction activity than either the DAAS or VCSS. Site-specific environmental documentation tiered to the EA as appropriate will identify the relatively lesser

impacts at NAS locations where only the DAAS and/or the VCSS components will be installed.

The NAS project will result in no significant impacts to the environment. Through implementation and adherence to the NAS DASR Siting Plan, sensitive and protected environmental resources will be avoided to the maximum extent practicable. The NAS DASR Siting Plan directs that the following human and natural resources shall be avoided to the maximum extent possible during the site screening process: wetlands and floodplains; wilderness areas; ecological/wildlife refuges, preserves, conservation areas and sanctuaries; threatened and endangered species habitat; coastal zones; hazardous waste sites; capped landfills; wild and scenic rivers; scenic highways; national natural landmarks; prime and unique farmlands; historical and archaeological sites; and national and state parks and recreation areas.

Construction of the proposed NAS Project will result in minor, short-term construction related impacts, including slight increases in soil erosion, surface water runoff, dust, vehicle emissions, and noise levels; increased demand upon electric, telephone, water, and sewer service; and slight increased use and generation of hazardous wastes. The use and generation of hazardous waste is not considered to present a significant impact as all hazardous materials will be handled and disposed in accordance with applicable local, state and federal regulations. No significant socioeconomic impacts are expected during NAS construction as there will be only a small number of construction workers employed for about six months, and these individuals will likely be local residents.

NAS operation will result in the following minor, long-term impacts at each of the proposed sites: loss of small areas (less than 3 acres) of vegetation and habitat due to the installation of the DASR antenna and associated access road and utility trenches; incidental bird mortality due to birds colliding with the structures; and minor increased development. In general, the minor impacts associated with NAS operation will be equivalent to those currently associated with the existing radar. The small area of habitat that could be lost as a result of NAS operations is not considered significant as the vicinity of the site will likely be a developed area with low wildlife value. In addition, threatened and endangered species habitat and unique habitat will be avoided during the site selection process. The bird mortality will be the same as that currently associated with the existing radar tower, and will be minor and insignificant due to the relatively low height (less than 100 feet) of the DASR tower and siting to avoid bird concentration areas.

Impacts to geology and soils, water resources, and cultural resources will not occur as a result of NAS operation because proper siting will avoid sensitive areas. Since operation-related emissions from emergency generators will be well below those requiring review under the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) regulations, significant air quality impacts are not anticipated and any minor impacts are below General Conformity Rule Deminis thresholds. The operation of the DASR will produce some noise, but the noise generated will be the same as that currently produced by the existing radar. No significant impacts to visual resources are anticipated as construction and operation of the NAS components will occur in either (1) areas

characterized by similar activities and structures or (2) areas with low viewer sensitivity due to restricted public access to most military installations. No significant socioeconomic impact is anticipated as no additional military or government civilian employees will be required for operations. No significant safety impacts are expected to result from radio frequency radiation (RFR) generated during NAS operation as the area outside of an 8-foot radius of the DASR will present no safety hazard.

The primary mitigation measure to be implemented is the avoidance of sensitive or protected resources through adherence to the NAS DASR Siting Plan. Additionally, use of appropriate construction practices, such as dust control, revegetation of disturbed areas, runoff containment, and erosion control will further minimize construction-related impacts. Additional, detailed site-specific mitigation measures will be identified as appropriate in the site-specific environmental analyses.

Signed

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DATE