

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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

The Department of Defense (DoD) proposes to construct a Digital Airport Surveillance Radar (DASR) system at Moody Air Force Base (AFB) in Georgia. This proposed action is part of the DoD National Airspace System (NAS) Program, which involves the replacement of analog air traffic control systems with state-of-the-art digital air traffic control equipment on U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, and U.S. Air Force (USAF) bases throughout the country. 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) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) (1995).

The EA for Moody AFB addresses the site-specific impacts of locating a DASR system on Moody AFB, and evaluates the consequences of the DASR system construction on both the natural and man-made environments. The DAAS and VCSS components of the NAS program at Moody AFB would be located within existing buildings, and impacts are anticipated to be minor. The primary consequences of the DASR system evaluated in the EA involve the construction and operation of an ASR-11 radar system on Moody AFB to replace the existing AN/GPN-20 radar.

The DASR system at Moody AFB is needed to replace the existing AN/GPN-20 airport surveillance radar. The ASR-11 will improve system reliability, provide additional weather data, reduce maintenance cost, improve performance, and provide digital data input to proposed new digital automation system air traffic controller displays. While the existing AN/GPN-20 at Moody AFB was installed in 1995, the proposed new ASR-11 will take advantage of the significantly increased capabilities of digital technology. The proposed new DASR system will serve to accurately locate aircraft in terms of range, azimuth, and latitude; provide information regarding aircraft identification code; identify emergency conditions; and report six discreet weather precipitation levels.

Three alternative sites (Site 4, Site 5, and Site 6) were evaluated for location of the ASR-11. All three sites feature characteristics that would generally make any of these locations an acceptable location for the radar facility from operational and environmental perspectives. However, Site 4 and Site 5 are the preferable alternatives from an environmental perspective. Of these two sites, Site 5 is the preferred alternative site of the Air Force. While both Site 4 and Site 5 are located in areas known to contain subsurface contamination, only Site 5 is actually part of an IRP (Installation Restoration Program) site. Site 6, which is located in an open space/recreational area adjacent to both on- and off-base residences is not considered an environmentally preferred site due primarily to potential land use and aesthetic impacts.

If excavation were to reach the groundwater level at Site 4 or Site 5, monitoring and treatment of water may be required due to the subsurface contamination present at these sites; however, the required depth of excavation for the ASR-11 facility is not anticipated to reach groundwater depth and no impacts resulting from installation in these areas are expected. Further, no compounds with concentrations above risk-based values are expected to be encountered in the surface or subsurface soils at these sites; therefore, soil contamination does not represent a concern at either site.

Installation and operation of the ASR-11 facility at Site 4 would be generally compatible with the surrounding industrial/aircraft operations and maintenance land uses. No substantial adverse impacts associated with land use, socioeconomics, utilities, transportation, noise, air quality, geology, surface water, groundwater, aesthetic resources, or cultural resources would be anticipated if Site 4 were selected as the preferred alternative. As stated above, it is not anticipated that construction of the ASR-11 at this site would encounter soil or groundwater contamination even though subsurface contamination is present at this site.

Site 5 would also be generally compatible with the construction and operation of the ASR-11 facility. Site 5 is located on an IRP site. However, similar to Site 4, the depth of excavation required for installation of the ASR-11 is not expected to reach the groundwater level, where concentration levels would be a concern; thus, subsurface contamination present at Site 5 would not exclude this alternative site from consideration. No substantial adverse impacts associated with land use, socioeconomics, utilities, transportation, noise, air quality, geology, surface water, groundwater, aesthetic resources, or cultural resources would be anticipated if Site 5 were selected as the preferred alternative.

Site 6 is located in an open space/recreational area adjacent, and clearly visible, to both on- and off-base residences. Activities associated with the construction and operation of the ASR-11 facility would be expected to represent a greater impact to the areas surrounding Site 6 than those areas surrounding Sites 4 and 5. Due to the proximity of Site 6 to the neighboring recreational and residential areas, short-term impacts associated with construction of the facility and long-term impacts associated with the placement of such a facility in this locale would be anticipated to impact land use and the aesthetic character of the surrounding area. However, the siting of the ASR-11 at Site 6 would not be anticipated to result in substantial long-term impacts to socioeconomics, utilities, transportation, noise, air quality, geology, surface water, groundwater, or cultural resources.

Installation of the ASR-11 facility at any of the alternative sites would result in the permanent clearing of vegetation within the approximately 140-foot by 140-foot area and along access routes to the facility. This limited clearing is anticipated to result in minimal long-term impacts for all sites. However, each of the three sites would also require the clearing and/or pruning of trees within a radius of approximately 2000 feet from the ASR-11 location in order to clear the line of sight of the radar. Tree removals would be required initially, before facility operation, and long-term maintenance of tree heights surrounding the future ASR-11 site would continue through the life of the facility. Due to the significant tree stands in the surrounding areas, this line-of-sight clearing may represent substantial initial and long-term maintenance. Tree removals for Site 4 and Site 5 would occur entirely on base property. Tree removals required for Site 6 would occur both on base and on privately-owned property. The anticipated tree removals and continued maintenance in this area would result in impacts to the aesthetic characteristics of the surrounding area.

Operation of the DASR system is anticipated to have minimal long-term impacts to the natural and human environments. The radar would generate radio frequency radiation (RFR) while operating. However, the RFR generated would be safe to humans at ground level and is not anticipated to pose a harm to the general population. During the DASR system operation, fuel and other hazardous materials may be used at the site, such as engine oil and grease. However, use and disposal of any hazardous materials would occur in compliance with Moody AFB protocols and guidelines as well as applicable state and federal regulations. Consequently, it is anticipated that operational use of hazardous materials would not adversely affect the natural or human environments.

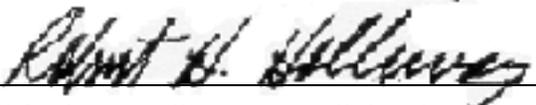
In summary, construction and operation of the DASR system at Moody AFB at either Site 4 or at Site 5 would result in minimal short-term and long-term impacts to the environment. Implementation of the DASR system at Site 6 would result in potentially more significant short-term and long-term environmental impacts. Due to operational and other base considerations, the Air Force has selected Site 5 as the preferred ASR-11 location.

It is anticipated that few mitigation measures would be required during construction and operation of the facility. During the construction period, sheeting or supports of some kind may be used in the areas excavated for the tower footings and utility trenches in order to prevent collapse of these excavated areas. Groundwater levels would be monitored and maintained as necessary. 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. Noise barriers may also be used to reduce noise levels. These barriers would have the benefit of providing a visual buffer. Dust would be controlled onsite by using water to wet down

disturbed areas. All areas disturbed for the DASR system construction would be seeded with a grass mixture or covered with a geotextile fabric and crushed stone to stabilize the disturbed soils, in order to minimize the potential for erosion and sedimentation. All hazardous materials used during construction would be handled and disposed of in accordance with Moody AFB policies and protocols and all applicable state and federal regulations. Traffic management measures would be developed to ensure traffic flow and pedestrian access is maintained.

During operation of the DASR system, fuel would be stored at an above-ground storage tank (AST) and some hazardous materials, such as equipment oil or grease, may be used at the site. Similar to the construction period, all hazardous materials used during operation would be used and disposed of in accordance with Moody AFB policies and protocols and all applicable state and federal regulations in order to minimize the potential for media contamination.

Based on this summary of effects, along with the detailed description of the effects provided in the Environmental Assessment, I have determined that Site 5, which I have selected, will not have a significant impact on the human environment. For this reason, no environmental impact statement needs to be prepared.

  
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ROBERT H. HOLLIWAY, Colonel, USAF  
Chairperson, 347 WG Environmental Protection Committee

  
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