

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

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

The Department of Defense (DoD) proposes to construct a Digital Airport Surveillance Radar (DASR) system at Travis Air Force Base in California. This proposed action is part of the National Airspace System (NAS) Program, developed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in cooperation with the DoD to modernize approach control systems in the United States and its territories. DASR is a DoD-lead contract to replace 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 bases throughout the country and at overseas DoD installations. 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 Travis AFB and the Addendum to the EA address the site-specific impacts of locating a DASR system on Travis AFB, and evaluate 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 Travis 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 Travis AFB to replace the existing AN/GPN-20 radar.

The DASR system at Travis 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. 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 discrete weather precipitation levels.

The No Action alternative was evaluated. Continued use of the existing AN/GPN-20 radar (i.e. the No Action alternative) would deny Travis AFB the improved system reliability, additional weather data, and improved performance offered by the new DASR system; thus, this alternative was not chosen. Three alternative sites (Site 3, Site 7, and Site 8) were evaluated for location of the ASR-11. Sites 7 and 8 are located within the south/southeastern perimeter of the base. Site 7 is located south of Perimeter Road, near the abandoned Rapid Runway Repair training area; the site contains windrows and occasional piles of concrete debris partially covered with soil and vegetation. Site 8 is located in the southeastern corner of the base, behind the former wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) and associated oxidation ponds. Site 3 is located off-base, just beyond the south/southeastern boundary of the base, on private property that is currently utilized as pasture. The on-base sites (Sites 7 and 8) share relatively similar existing conditions and would be acceptable from an environmental perspective. The off-base site (Site 3) has some uncertainties regarding the potential presence of wetland features and threatened/endangered species. Due to operational and other base considerations, the USAF has selected Site 8 as the preferred ASR-11 location.

If Site 3 were selected as the preferred alternative, no significant adverse impacts associated with socioeconomics, noise, air quality, soils, cultural resources, or hazardous waste would be anticipated. Site 3 is located on private property, but within an easement maintained by Travis AFB. Furthermore, the site is zoned for the purpose of preserving the potential for expansion of Travis AFB. Thus, although there would be some loss of available grazing land, given the abundance of alternative nearby grasslands, the conversion of this site from pasture to radar facility is not anticipated to present conflicts with existing land uses. However, because the site is located off-base, it is not within an area that has been delineated for the presence/absence of wetland

resources. Given the proximity of the site to on-base areas with extensive patches of isolated wetland resources, there is a relatively high potential that the vicinity of Site 3 could support seasonal wetlands. Therefore, it is not possible to conclude whether or not there would be direct wetland impacts resulting from construction and operation of an ASR-11 at Site 3. Connection to nearest suitable telephone service would occur at a distance of approximately 1,500 feet; the nearest suitable connection for electric would be approximately 3,700 feet; and fiber optic would be approximately 2,800 feet. The alignments for these connecting utilities and the proposed access road would cross primarily through off-base areas that similarly have not been delineated for the presence/absence of wetlands and thus have corresponding potential for significant impact to wetland resources. Therefore, it is not possible to make a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Site 3 at this time. Should this site be selected, surveys for threatened and endangered species (fairy shrimp and Contra Costa goldfields), federal/state species of special concern (western burrowing owl), and cultural resources should be completed prior to land acquisition; additionally, an Environmental Due Diligence Audit would be required. Such surveys may require two years to complete, which would have a corresponding adverse effect on the DASR program's implementation schedule. Thus, given the potential significant impacts associated with Site 3, in light of the availability of alternative sites where no significant impacts would be anticipated, the USAF has elected to dismiss Site 3 from further consideration as a potential site for the ASR-11.

If Site 7 were selected as the preferred alternative, no significant adverse impacts associated with socioeconomics, transportation, noise, air quality, soils, cultural resources, or hazardous waste would be anticipated. Site 7 is located within undeveloped open space, formerly identified for the construction of the Rapid Runway Repair facility. Subsequent to the stalling of that project, Travis AFB has sought to identify other suitable land uses for this area that would be consistent with its mission; therefore, installation of the ASR-11 at this location is not anticipated to conflict with base general land use planning. There are several windrows, as well as occasional piles, of concrete construction debris, some of which include asbestos containing materials, in the vicinity of Site 7; these may require relocation/disposal prior to construction of the ASR-11. Vegetation, consisting primarily of grassland/ruderal communities, would be cleared. Given the proximity of several mapped isolated wetland areas within approximately 275 to 400 feet of the site, the proposed access road and utility connections would be carefully aligned so as to avoid impacts to surface water and biological resources. Surveys for federal/state species of concern (western burrowing owl) would be required, prior to breeding season in the year of construction. Connection to the nearest suitable telephone service would occur at a distance of approximately 450 feet; the nearest suitable connection for electric would be approximately 9,300 feet and for fiber optic would be approximately 9,100 feet.

If Site 8 were selected as the preferred alternative, no significant adverse impacts associated with socioeconomics, transportation, noise, air quality, soils, cultural resources, or hazardous materials would be anticipated. Site 8 is located within open space behind the abandoned WWTP and associated oxidation ponds. Installation of an ASR-11 within this undeveloped location would be compatible with supporting the mission of Travis AFB and, therefore, is not anticipated to present land use conflicts. Although Site 8 is within Environmental Restoration Program (ERP) WP017, it is beyond the plumes of known soil or groundwater contamination. Vegetation, consisting primarily of grassland/ruderal communities, would be cleared. Given the proximity of several mapped wetland features, including a vernal swale and the former oxidation ponds within approximately 100 to 400 feet of the site, the proposed access road and utility connections would be carefully aligned so as to avoid significant impacts to surface water and biological resources. Surveys for federal/state species of special concern (western burrowing owl) would be required, prior to breeding season in the year of construction. Connection to the nearest telephone and electric service would occur at a distance of approximately 2,800 feet; the nearest suitable connection for fiber optic would also be approximately 2,800 feet.

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 harm to the general population.

During the DASR system operation, fuel will be stored at an aboveground storage tank and some 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 Travis AFB 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 order to further reduce the potential for adverse impact to the environment, a number of mitigation measures, including those identified during coordination with the United States Fish & Wildlife Service, will be implemented during construction and operation of the facility. The proposed DASR facility will incorporate appropriate best management practices (BMPs), such as vegetative swales or buffer strips, to reduce the effects of stormwater runoff from the site and along access roads, while maintaining the hydrology of the proximate wetlands/vernal pools. Earthmoving activities will be prohibited during the wet season (mid-November through mid-March). The existing wetland resources will be flagged or staked prior to construction, and the contractor will be advised that no construction, excavation, staging, or stockpiling shall occur in these flagged areas. Sedimentation and erosion control barriers consisting of haybales and/or silt fence will be placed along the limits of work in those areas within 100-feet of flagged wetland resources to reduce the potential for construction runoff to contribute to the silting in of wetland areas. All areas disturbed for the DASR system construction will be seeded with a native grass mixture or covered with a geotextile fabric and crushed stone to stabilize the disturbed soils, to further minimize the potential for erosion and sedimentation. Dust will be managed onsite by using water, or other acceptable control, to wet down disturbed areas. Should dewatering be necessary during installation of tower footings or during utility trenching, proper base procedures for discharge of groundwater would be implemented. Groundwater would be tested to determine if it is contaminated. If there are known contaminants in the area, no discharge of groundwater during construction, shall occur without prior consultation of the 60 CES/CEV. Groundwater levels would be monitored and maintained as necessary to prevent alteration of wetland hydrology and/or potential settling of existing structures or utilities. Should western burrowing owls (a species of special concern) be present within the site, they would be relocated in coordination/compliance with the California Department of Fish and Game protocols. To minimize noise impacts during construction, mufflers will be used on construction equipment and vehicles. In addition, all equipment and vehicles used during construction will be maintained in good operating condition so that emissions are minimized, thus reducing the potential for air quality impacts. All hazardous materials used during construction will be handled and disposed of in accordance with Travis AFB guidelines and all applicable state and federal regulations. Traffic management measures will be developed to facilitate traffic flow and pedestrian access.

Based on this summary of effects, along with the detailed description of the effects provided in the EA and subsequent addendum, I have determined that construction of the ASR-11 at Site 8, which is the site that I have selected, will not have a significant impact on the natural or human environment. For this reason, no environmental impact statement needs to be prepared.

Michael L. Sevier
MICHAEL L. SEVIER, Colonel, USAF
Environmental Protection Committee, Chair
Vice Commander, 60th Air Mobility Wing

2 JUN 03

Date

STAFF SUMMARY SHEET

	TO	ACTION	SIGNATURE (Surname) GRADE & DATE		TO	ACTION	SIGNATURE (Surname) GRADE & DATE
1	60 CES/ CC	Coord	<i>Schoof</i> 6514 29 Apr 03	6	60 CES/CEVC	File	
2	60 MSG/CC	Coord	<i>Labruy, Col.</i> 5 May 03	7			
3	60 AMW/JA	Coord	<i>Cedeno</i> Col 1384 03	8			
4	60 AMW/DS	Coord	<i>R. Miller</i> LT Col 28 MAR 03	9			
5	60 AMW/CV	Sign	<i>Lauree, Col.</i> 2 JUN 03	10			

SURNAME AND GRADE OF ACTION OFFICER Pontemayor, GS-12	OFFICE SYMBOL 60 CES/CEVP	PHONE 4-8354	TYPIST'S INITIALS rmp	SUSPENSE DATE
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SUBJECT Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), Environmental Assessment (EA) Addendum and EA for Digital Airport Surveillance Radar System	DATE 20030425
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SUMMARY

1. **PURPOSE:** To obtain 60 AMW/CV signature on the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the subject project.
2. **DISCUSSION:** The Environmental Protection Committee (EPC) chairperson is required to approve the FONSI for the proposed project IAW 32 CFR 989.15(f). The FONSI informs the public that the base has followed the National Environmental Policy Act in its decision to proceed with the proposed actions and that there are no significant impacts to the environment. The EA Addendum in Tab 2 was issued in response to JA comments in Tab 3, to clarify and address environmental impacts to endangered species on wetlands (fairy shrimp and Contra Costa goldfields) that were not addressed specifically in the previous EA in Tab 4.
3. **RECOMMENDATION:** The Environmental Protection Committee Chair sign the FONSI at Tab 1.


TROY MARTINSON, P.E.
 Chief, Environmental Flight

- 4 Tabs
 1. FONSI
 2. EA Addendum
 3. JA Comments
 4. EA

PLEASE CONTACT MR. RUDY PONTEMAYOR AT 4-8354 TO HAND CARRY THIS DOCUMENT TO THE NEXT ORGANIZATION. THANK YOU.

29 May 03

60AMW SSS TRACKING

CCEA-(nbr) 1932

RA - Coord NA

CCF (G-1) NA

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REC MSG: 30 APR 03 (1400)
 AF FORM 1768, SEP 84 (EF)