

RECORD OF DECISION  
*ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT*  
*FIFTH GENERATION FORMAL TRAINING UNIT OPTIMIZATION*  
*JOINT-BASE LANGLEY EUSTIS AND EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE*

**INTRODUCTION**

The United States Air Force (USAF) is issuing this Record of Decision (ROD) for two decisions involving Eglin Air Force Base (AFB), Florida. The first decision is to permanently beddown the F-22 Formal Training Unit (FTU) mission that is temporarily operating at Eglin AFB due to Hurricane Michael’s devastation of nearby Tyndall AFB, at Joint Base Langley-Eustis (JBLE–Langley), Virginia. The second decision beds down one additional F-35A FTU squadron at Eglin AFB, backfilling space vacated by the Marine Corps and Navy F-35 squadrons in 2014 and 2019, respectively.

This ROD is based on the Fifth Generation Formal Training Unit (FTU) Optimization at JBLE-Langley and Eglin AFB Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (*Federal Register* Vol. 86, No. 23, page 8356, EIS No. 20210014, February 5, 2021). These decisions to beddown the F-22 FTU mission at JBLE-Langley and the additional F-35A FTU squadron at Eglin AFB considered the information, analyses, and public comments contained in the FEIS, along with other relevant matters.

This ROD is prepared in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) at Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 1505.2 (*Record of decision in cases requiring environmental impact statements*)<sup>1</sup>. The USAF is the lead agency for this Final EIS.

Specifically, this ROD documents the following:

- The USAF’s decisions;
- The alternatives considered by the USAF in reaching the decision and the alternative considered to be environmentally preferable;
- Relevant factors that were considered in making the decision among the alternatives and how those factors entered into its decisions;
- Whether all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the selected alternative have been adopted, and if not, why they were not adopted;
- Practicable mitigation measures, including applicable management actions; and
- A Finding of No Practicable Alternative (FONPA) that there is no practicable alternative to avoid or reduce floodplain and wetland impacts.

**DECISION SYNOPSIS**

The USAF, by these decisions, authorizes the FY19 and FY 20 MILCON associated with beddown of the F-22 FTU mission at JBLE-Langley to begin immediately. However, migration of F-22, T-38, and F-35A aircraft in/out of Eglin AFB will be delayed approximately one year beyond the time frames analyzed in the FEIS (Page 2-5, § 2.2). The operational status quo of the

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<sup>1</sup>Note: This EIS was ongoing prior to the 14 September 2020 effective date of the CEQ’s final rule updating its regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA. Accordingly, the revised CEQ regulations were not used for this action pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 1506.13.

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respective FTUs will continue until late FY22 or early FY23 to provide the Air Force more time to plan, coordinate, and execute the in/out migrations. The approved in- and out-migration of the F-22 FTU and the F-35A FTU squadron may be either accelerated or delayed, if needed, but in no event shall any overlap between the out-migration of the F-22 FTU and in-migration of the F-35A FTU squadron exceed the short period of overlap disclosed in Section 2.3.1 of the Final EIS. Further, in the event of any short period of overlap Air Combat Command (ACC) and Air Education and Training Command (AETC), with the assistance of the 96<sup>th</sup> Operations Support Squadron (OSS), will ensure that operations do not exceed the 89,860 annual operations approved by the Final Special Environmental Assessment ROD for the F-22 FTU interim beddown at Eglin AFB on April 25, 2019. The facility renovations analyzed in the FEIS to support the beddown and operations of the additional F-35A FTU at Eglin AFB may be commenced as soon as practicable. The use of existing F-22 and F-35A force structure and consolidation of the fleets at JBLE-Langley and Eglin AFB respectively will result in increases in aircraft availability and shorter training timelines. In turn, this would improve pilot production rates and pilot readiness.

The F-22 FTU mission beddown consists of 21 F-22 Primary Aerospace-Vehicle Assigned (PAA), two F-22 Backup Aircraft Inventory (BAI), and 16 T-38 PAA. The F-35A FTU squadron beddown at Eglin AFB consists of 24 F-35A PAA with two F-35A BAI, bringing the 33<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing (33 FW) at Eglin AFB to a total of 48 F-35A PAA with four F-35A BAI.

## **BACKGROUND**

The need for the F-22 FTU mission beddown action is partially tied to the damage wrought by Hurricane Michael at Tyndall AFB in Florida. In October 2018, the hurricane displaced the Air Force's only F-22 FTU from Tyndall AFB. A decision for the interim beddown of the F-22 FTU mission was formalized in April 2019, locating the F-22 FTU temporarily at Eglin AFB with some operations continuing to occur Tyndall AFB to utilize the flight simulators and the low observable coatings maintenance facility that survived Hurricane Michael's destruction.

The Air Force requested and was granted emergency alternative arrangements for compliance with NEPA (40 CFR § 1506.11) from the CEQ to respond to a pilot manning shortage exacerbated by Hurricane Michael that presented significant national security implications. As part of the alternative NEPA arrangements, the Air Force was required to prepare a Special Environmental Assessment (SEA). A ROD for the SEA was signed on April 25, 2019 and Eglin AFB was selected as the interim location for the F-22 FTU with some split-based training and aircraft maintenance occurring at Tyndall AFB, utilizing the flight simulators and the low observable coatings maintenance facilities that survived the hurricane. Since the hurricane, Tyndall AFB regained some operational capability, which has permitted some flight training by the F-22 FTU to occur in existing Tyndall airspace.

## **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

As more fully described in the FEIS (*Vol. I, Pages 2-1 through 2-5, §2.1*), the USAF identified selection standards and mission requirements that a base must meet for the permanent beddown of the F-22 FTU. JBLE-Langley was the only location that met all the selection standards for the beddown of the F-22 FTU mission and was carried forward for analysis.

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In September 2018, the Air Force's Strategic Basing Executive Steering Group recommended approving a proposal to beddown an additional Air Force F-35A training squadron at Eglin AFB, to backfill facilities previously vacated by Marine Corps and Navy F-35 squadrons in 2014 and 2019, respectively. The proposed F-35 backfill proposal was contingent upon the F-22 FTU beddown decision because of insufficient capacity at Eglin AFB to accommodate an additional F-35A training squadron. The beddown of an additional F-35A FTU squadron at Eglin AFB would only be implemented if the F-22 FTU mission departed.

The No Action Alternative was also evaluated, in which case the F-22 FTU mission beddown would not occur at JBLE-Langley and would remain at Eglin AFB while the academics, simulators, low observable maintenance, and some flight training would continue to be conducted at Tyndall AFB. There would be no F-22 FTU related personnel or facility renovation or construction at JBLE-Langley. With the No Action Alternative, there would be no establishment of a second F-35A FTU squadron at Eglin AFB.

### **ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES**

Of the alternatives considered, the environmentally preferred alternative for JBLE-Langley is the No Action Alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, the F-22 FTU mission would remain at Eglin AFB with some operations conducted at Tyndall AFB. No F-22 FTU flight operations, personnel changes, or construction would occur at JBLE-Langley. Without the F-22 FTU mission beddown at JBLE-Langley, the additional F-35A FTU squadron beddown would not occur at Eglin AFB. Implementation of the No Action Alternative is environmentally preferable for JBLE-Langley because taking no action would result in no impacts to environmental resources from construction, such as soil, water and cultural resources, and would result in the lowest total number of people exposed to noise impacts in the off base communities of JBLE-Langley.

Of the alternatives considered, the environmentally preferred alternative for Eglin AFB is the Preferred Alternatives. Implementation of the Preferred Alternatives is environmentally preferable for Eglin AFB because there would be an overall reduction in aircraft operations and would result in the lowest total number of people exposed to noise impacts in the off base communities of Eglin AFB, as well as a reduction in criteria pollutant emissions that would be beneficial to regional air quality.

### **BASIS OF DECISIONS**

The USAF selected JBLE-Langley for the F-22 FTU beddown and Eglin AFB for the F-35A FTU squadron beddown based on operational analysis; results of site surveys; environmental, economic, and technical factors discussed in this ROD; environmental impacts as analyzed in the FEIS; input from the public and government agencies; and military judgement factors. The permanent beddown of the F-22 FTU at JBLE-Langley will consolidate F-22 operations to optimize maintenance and supply efficiencies and improve aircraft availability, which ultimately enables increased F-22 pilot production rates. The beddown of the additional F-35A squadron at Eglin AFB will optimize the use of existing ramp, facilities, airspace, and range capacity while consolidating F-35A operations to enable the Air Force to produce more F-35A fighter pilots.

In addition to these analyses, and as required the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, consideration was also given military family readiness factors, as such and by

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authority delegated from the Acting Secretary of the Air Force by memorandum dated 19 Mar 2021, this ROD documents consideration by the Deputy Assistant Secretary (Installations) of the following information:

- F-22 FTU Housing: As part of this process and as documented in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (Vol. I, page 4-166, §4.2.11.1) the Department considered the extent to which Air Force and private sector resources are available. Analysis and long-term planning continue as to the provision of the adequate mix of such housing to adequately support the expected population.
- F-22 FTU Health Care: As part of this process and as documented in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (Vol. I, page 4-167, §4.2.11.1), the Department determined that health care resources will be adequate to support the expected population and is conducting analysis and planning to ensure sufficient medical care from Air Force and private sector resources is available to support the expected population.
- F-22 FTU Interstate Portability of Licensure and Certification Credentials: Using the Support of Military Families analytic framework, the results of which are publicly available at <https://www.af.mil/> in the Background Information section under the Support to Families tab, the Department of the Air Force determined that Virginia statutes contain barriers to licensure and certification portability.
- F-35 FTU Housing: As part of this process and as documented in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (Vol. I, page 4-208, §4.3.11.1) the Department considered the extent to which Air Force and private sector resources are available. Analysis and long-term planning continue as to the provision of the adequate mix of such housing to adequately support the expected population.
- F-35 FTU Health Care: As part of this process and as documented in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (Vol. I, page 4-208, §4.3.11.1), the Department determined that health care resources will be adequate to support the expected population and is conducting analysis and planning to ensure sufficient medical care from Air Force and private sector resources is available to support the expected population.
- F-35 FTU Interstate Portability of Licensure and Certification Credentials: Using the Support of Military Families analytic framework, the results of which are publicly available at <https://www.af.mil/> in the Background Information section under the Support to Families tab, the Department of the Air Force determined that Florida statutes are effective in removing barriers to licensure and certification portability. Military spouses can easily transfer professional licenses and certificates from other states and sustain their careers.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Public involvement was integral to the development of the FEIS. Public and agency comments were received and considered, including those received during scoping, at the Draft EIS public hearing, and during the public comment period on the Draft EIS.

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Information reflecting public involvement is in the FEIS (*Vol. I, Pages 1-8 through 1-11*). The FEIS Vol. II, Appendix A provides public involvement documentation as well as a summary of comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period and responses to those comments. Public notices and meetings included:

- *Notice of Intent*: The USAF published a Notice of Intent to prepare the EIS in the *Federal Register* on March 26, 2019. Notices were also published in local newspapers near JBLE-Langley, Virginia and Eglin AFB, Florida.
- *Scoping Period*: The scoping period began on March 26, 2019, and ended on June 24, 2019. During that period, scoping meetings were held on May 14, 2019 at Cornerstone Worship Center in Valparaiso, Florida; May 15, 2019 at Northwest Florida State College in Niceville, Florida; May 16, 2019 at Gulf Coast State College in Panama City, Florida; and on May 22, 2019 at Thomas Nelson Community College in Hampton, Virginia.
- *Draft EIS Notice of Availability (NOA)*: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published the NOA of the Draft EIS on October 16, 2020, EIS No. 20200203.
- *Public Comment and Review Period*: The USAF initiated public review of the Draft EIS on October 16, 2020, with a formal notice published in the *Federal Register* by the EPA. The public comment period closed on November 30, 2020. The Draft EIS was available at public libraries and on the project website for review by the public and federal, state, and local agencies. A virtual public hearing was held via WebEx and telephone on November 16, 2020.
- *FEIS NOA*: The FEIS NOA was published on February 5, 2021, in the *Federal Register* Vol. 86, No. 23, page 8356, EIS No. 20210014. Notices were also published in the local newspapers. The FEIS NOA publication initiated the mandatory 30-day waiting period prior to ROD signature.

## **COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION**

As described more completely in the FEIS (*Vol. I, Pages 1-7 through 1-8, §1.4*), the USAF coordinated and consulted with federal and state agencies and federally recognized tribes (tribes) throughout the EIS process. The USAF coordinated and consulted with federal and state agencies responsible for relevant resources (cultural, biological, etc.) early in the environmental planning process.

### *National Historic Preservation Act Consultation with State Historic Preservation Officers*

In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the USAF consulted with the Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and interested parties regarding its determination of effects to historic properties for the F-22 FTU mission beddown at JBLE-Langley. The USAF and Virginia SHPO executed a Memorandum of Agreement on January 19, 2021, stipulating the mitigation measures which would resolve adverse effects to historic properties (*FEIS Vol. III, Appendix F*).

The USAF also consulted with the Florida SHPO and interested parties regarding its determination of effects to historic properties for the F-35A FTU squadron beddown at Eglin

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AFB. In a letter dated July 9, 2020, and a subsequent letter dated November 9, 2020, the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with the USAF determination that the proposed F-35A FTU squadron beddown at Eglin AFB would have no effect to historic properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) (*FEIS Vol. III, Appendix F*).

*Section 7 Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

In compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the USAF consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding impacts to federally-listed threatened and endangered species. The USAF prepared and submitted Biological Assessments to the USFWS. The USFWS Raleigh Field Office, in a letter dated August 17, 2020, and the USFWS Virginia Field Office, in an e-mail dated August 21, 2020, concurred with the USAF determination of may affect, not likely to adversely affect federally listed threatened and endangered species at JBLE-Langley. In a letter dated June 19, 2020, the USFWS Panama City Field Office concurred with the USAF determination of may affect, not likely to adversely affect federally-listed species at Eglin AFB. In an e-mail dated August 4, 2020, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) concurred with the USAF's determination of may affect, not likely to adversely affect listed species under the jurisdiction of NMFS (*FEIS Vol. III, Appendix E*).

*Government-to-Government Consultation*

In accordance with the NHPA, Executive Order (EO) 13175, U.S. Department of Defense Instruction 4710.02, and Department of Air Force Instruction 90-2002, the USAF completed government-to-government consultations with potentially affected tribes. No adverse effects to tribal resources or traditional cultural properties were identified. Consultation documentation is presented in the FEIS (*Vol. III, Appendix F*).

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

As described in the FEIS (*Vol I, Pages 2-13 to 2-19, §2.5*), implementation of the F-22 FTU beddown at JBLE-Langley would result in potentially significant noise impacts, including disproportionate impacts to Environmental Justice populations, and significant impacts to cultural resources. No significant impacts are anticipated to any of the other resource areas evaluated.

As analyzed in the FEIS (*Vol I, §4.2.2*), there are unavoidable noise impacts associated with the F-22 FTU mission beddown at JBLE-Langley. The off-base land area exposed to 65 decibel Day-Night Average Sound Level (dBA DNL) or greater would increase to 8,119 acres, and an estimated 8,460 housing units and 20,554 people would be exposed to 65 dBA DNL or greater, with the mitigation measures described below applied to the proposed action. These noise impacts, with mitigation measures applied, reflect a reduction of 907 acres, 1,832 housing units and 3,732 people exposed to DNL greater than 65 dBA when compared to the proposed action without mitigation measures (*FEIS, Vol I, §4.2.2.4*). Implementation of the proposed action at JBLE-Langley would result in disproportionate impacts to Environmental Justice populations, including low-income, minority, and elderly populations, with census block groups exposed to 65 dBA DNL or greater (*FEIS, Vol I, §4.2.12.1*). While no specific mitigations are identified for these impacts to Environmental Justice populations, the noise mitigation measures identified below would lessen impacts on these communities.

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There would be significant impacts to cultural resources due to the adverse effects on historic properties associated with the demolition of Building 753, a contributing property to the Langley Field Historic District, and the introduction of visual elements from new construction that could potentially diminish the integrity of the Langley Field Historic District (*FEIS, Vol I, §4.2.10*). The USAF and Virginia SHPO executed a Memorandum of Agreement on January 19, 2021, stipulating the mitigation measures which would resolve adverse effects to historic properties (*FEIS Vol. III, Appendix F*).

While not significant, potential impacts could occur to several resource areas. An example of this is the typical impacts associated with construction and demolition projects. However, these impacts would be limited as compliance with environmental regulations (e.g. permitting) has been or would be followed in all aspects, that is, construction and operation of the action. Criteria pollutant emissions would increase as a result of increased aircraft operations and building construction at JBLE-Langley. Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) emissions would increase, although the proposed net changes would be less than the *de minimis* thresholds for VOCs and NO<sub>x</sub>. Construction would impact up to 25 acres within the floodplain and up to 0.5 acres of wetlands.

As described in the FEIS (*Vol I, Pages 2-19 to 2-23, §2.5*), implementation of the F-35A FTU squadron beddown at Eglin AFB would not result in significant impacts to any of the resource areas evaluated. With the departure of the F-22 FTU and arrival of the additional F-35A FTU squadron, there would be an overall reduction in the number of annual aircraft operations at Eglin AFB. As a result, areas adjacent to Eglin AFB would experience a decrease in noise levels and fewer people would be exposed to the 65 dBA DNL or greater. Additionally, criteria pollutant emissions would decrease and the proposed net changes would be beneficial to regional air quality.

## **MITIGATION**

Mitigation by avoiding, minimizing, or reducing potential impacts has been a priority in guiding the development of the proposed F-22 FTU mission beddown at JBLE-Langley and the proposed beddown of a second F-35A FTU squadron at Eglin AFB. Specific measures to avoid, reduce, or minimize impacts have been built or designed into the beddown alternatives; will apply to construction, operation, and maintenance involved in the action; or implemented as compensatory measures. Mitigations are listed below by each installation and each resource area.

Other management actions to facilitate implementation of the decision were identified in the FEIS (*Vol. I, Pages 2-23 through 2-26, §2.6*) and will be carried forward and implemented. These are different from mitigation measures because they are required by regulation, or USAF guidance or instructions. Compliance laws and regulations administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other regulatory and/or state environmental quality agencies are mandated and some have mitigating effects. These laws and regulations are not considered discretionary with respect to USAF decision making and will be implemented.

To track mitigations the USAF will develop a Mitigation Plan specific to each installation within 90 days of the signature of this ROD that identifies principal and subordinate organizations with responsibility for oversight and execution of these specific actions. In no case will an impact-inducing action be taken or implemented prior to the applicable mitigation measure (defined below) being funded and put in place.

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The Mitigation Plan will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Identification of the specific actions;
- Identification of the responsible organization for each action; and
- Timing for execution of the actions.

JBLE-Langley:

*Airspace Management and Use*

- Operations will adhere to all existing Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Department of Defense (DOD) rules and regulations.

*Noise*

- Reduce F-22 closed pattern operations by 3,200 per year for the F-22 FTU in future steady-state years once the FTU is fully operational.
- Reduce Adversary Air (ADAIR) straight-in arrivals to Runway 08 by 75 percent by increasing ADAIR straight-in arrivals on Runway 26.
- Reduce ADAIR nighttime operations from 3 to 2 percent.

*Air Quality*

- During construction activities, Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be implemented in order to mitigate construction related emissions and may include engine idling limitations, lower speed limits, traffic rerouting, and dust suppression techniques. Dust suppression techniques may include but not be limited to:
  - Use of water or chemicals for dust control;
  - Installation and use of hoods, fans, and fabric filters to enclose and vent the handling of dusty materials;
  - Covering of open equipment for conveying soil and or dusty materials; and
  - Prompt removal of spilled or tracked dirt or other materials from paved streets and removal of dried sediments resulting from erosion.
- Reduce F-22 closed pattern operations by 3,200 per year for the F-22 FTU in future steady-state years once the FTU is fully operational.
- The USAF will look for off-base options for closed pattern training outside of the Hampton Roads air quality area to optimize FTU training.

*Safety*

- Personnel will implement applicable Air Force Occupational Safety and Health (AFOSH) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements during construction, renovation, and demolition projects.
- Health and safety plans (i.e., Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) and emergency response plans) will be updated.

*Soil*

- Site-specific stormwater BMPs, such as the use of silt fences, for erosion and sediment control will be implemented to minimize the degradation of soil quality and soil loss.

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*Water Resources*

- The USAF will update the existing Municipal Separate Storm Sewer permit, Virginia Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit and associated Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and implement site-specific management actions such as stormwater erosion and sediment control plans. Construction BMPs, such as silt fences and vegetation buffers, will be implemented to mitigate impacts to surface waters and water quality and wetlands from stormwater runoff.
- New building construction will incorporate BMPs into the design to mitigate impacts to the floodplain in accordance with the Unified Facilities Criteria (UFC) for Civil Engineering.
- The USAF will adhere to wetlands mitigation requirements in accordance with the permit issued pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

*Biological Resources*

- Airfield management and risk reduction measures associated with the BASH prevention program will continue to be implemented with the overall goals of reducing the likelihood for BASH incidents, ensuring pilot safety and the protection of military aircraft, and minimizing incidents of injury or death to birds and other wildlife.

*Cultural Resources*

- The USAF and Virginia SHPO executed a Memorandum of Agreement on January 19, 2021, stipulating the following mitigation measures, which would resolve adverse effects to historic properties:
  - The USAF will complete a Historic American Building Survey, Level III documentation of Building 753. The resulting documentation will be submitted to the SHPO, the National Park Service's Heritage Documentation Program for review, and upon acceptance archived in the Library of Congress and at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.
  - The USAF will prepare a NRHP nomination form for the Langley Field Historic District and submit it to the SHPO for review and listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and NRHP.
  - The USAF will conduct rehabilitation of Buildings 1004 and 1007, both contributing resources to the Langley Field Historic District, to enable further productive use of these buildings. The plans for rehabilitation will be submitted to the SHPO for review and concurrence prior to conducting the rehabilitation work.
- In the event of an inadvertent cultural discovery during ground disturbing operations, the USAF will follow the standard operating procedures identified in the JBLE-Langley Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan.

*Land Use and Recreation*

- JBLE-Langley and the surrounding communities will continue to collaborate on land use issues and develop and update land use plans as needed.

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*Aesthetics and Visual Resources*

- New buildings will be constructed in the visual character of JBLE-Langley as identified in the 2017 Installation Development Plan.

*Infrastructure*

- Incorporate LEED® and sustainable development concepts into construction projects to achieve optimum resource efficiency, sustainability, and energy conservation, except to the extent limited or prohibited by law.
- Coordinate with all utility providers prior to any ground-disturbing activities in an effort to minimize unintended damage to underground utilities.
- Continue and enhance recycling and reuse programs to accommodate waste generated.

*Hazardous Materials and Waste*

- The USAF will use the existing Hazardous Materials Pharmacy for handling hazardous materials and dispose of all such materials in accordance with existing procedures.
- Storage of hazardous materials, hazardous wastes, and Petroleum Oil and Lubricants (POLs) will follow local BMPs noted in the JBLE-Langley Hazardous Waste Management Plan (HWMP), Spill Prevention and Response Plan, and SWPPP.

*Transportation*

- Construction deliveries will be scheduled outside of peak periods of inbound traffic.
- Construction workers will use the West Gate to reduce congestion at JBLE-Langley's other gates.
- The installation will implement necessary measures to reduce gate congestion, such as:
  - Adjusting operational schedules; and
  - Providing additional personnel at gates to process security checks during peak hours.

Eglin AFB:

*Airfield Operations*

The June 26, 2014 ROD for the Final Supplemental EIS for the F-35 Beddown at Eglin AFB, Florida, required the May 2009 Mitigation and Monitoring Plan for the initial F-35 beddown at Eglin AFB and Eglin AFB Instruction 11-201 (EAFBI 11-20) to be amended to include the following guidance and limitations for all F-35 operations:

- RW 12/30: This is the primary runway for F-35 operations.
- RW 19: F-35 operations to RW 19 are limited to takeoffs, unless necessary for emergencies, unplanned contingencies, and weather affecting aircraft performance limitations and requirements.

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- RW 01: F-35 operations to RW 01 are limited to approaches and landings, unless necessary for emergencies, unplanned contingencies, and weather affecting aircraft performance limitations and requirements.

These limitations will also apply to the additional F-35A training squadron approved for Eglin AFB by this ROD. The 33<sup>rd</sup> Operations Group Commander (33 OG/CC), with assistance from the 33 FW/CC, and the 96 OSS, will continue to be responsible for tracking and enforcing these F-35 flight limitations on RW 19 (other than takeoffs) and RW 01 (other than approaches and landings). The 33 OG/CC, with assistance from the 33 FW/CC and 96 OSS, will also continue to track F-35A flight operations on or over RW 01/19 necessitated by emergencies, unplanned contingencies, and weather affecting aircraft performance limitations and requirements.

The April 25, 2019 Special Environmental Assessment ROD for the beddown of the F-22 FTU at Eglin AFB also applied all of the above requirements and limitations on RW 12/30 and RW 01/19 for F-22 operations at Eglin AFB. These limitations will continue to apply to the F-22 FTU's operations at Eglin until it has completed its out migration and beddown at Langley AFB, Virginia. The 43<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Squadron (43 FS/CC), with the assistance of the 96<sup>th</sup> OSS, will continue to be responsible for tracking and enforcing these flight limitations on RW 19 (other than takeoffs) and RW 01 (other than approaches and landings). The 43 FS/CC and 96 OSS will also track F-22 flight operations on or over RW 01/19 necessitated by emergencies, unplanned contingencies, and weather affecting aircraft performance limitations and requirements.

#### *Airspace Management and Use*

- Operations will adhere to all existing FAA and DOD rules and regulations.

#### *Safety*

- Personnel will implement applicable AFOSH and OSHA requirements during demolition projects.
- Health and safety plans (i.e., BASH and emergency response plans) will be updated.

#### *Biological Resources*

- Construction equipment from off-site locations used for interior building renovations will be cleaned prior to entry onto Eglin AFB to minimize the threat of non-native plant introductions.
- Airfield management and risk reduction measures associated with the BASH prevention program will continue to be implemented with the overall goals of reducing the likelihood for BASH incidents, ensuring pilot safety and the protection of military aircraft, and minimizing incidents of injury or death to birds and other wildlife.

#### *Hazardous Materials and Waste*

- The USAF will use the existing Hazardous Materials Pharmacy for handling hazardous materials and dispose of all such materials in accordance with existing

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procedures.

- Storage of hazardous materials, hazardous wastes, and Petroleum Oil and Lubricants (POLs) will follow local BMPs noted in the Eglin AFB HWMP, Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures Plan, and SWPPP.

*Transportation*

- Deliveries associated with building renovations will be scheduled outside of peak periods of inbound traffic.
- Construction workers will use the Commercial Gate to reduce congestion at Eglin AFB's other gates.
- The installation will implement necessary measures to reduce gate congestion, such as:
  - Adjusting operational schedules; and
  - Providing additional personnel at gates to process security checks during peak hours.

**WETLANDS AND FLOODPLAIN FINDING OF NO PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE**

Pursuant to Executive Order (EO) 11990, *Protection of Wetlands*, there is no practicable alternative to development within or affecting wetland areas from construction for the F-22 FTU beddown at JBLE-Langley (*FEIS, Vol. I, §3.2.5.2 and §4.2.5.3*). The Child Development Center (CDC) improvements leverage the use of existing facilities and provide expanded capacity to accommodate additional dependents of personnel relocating to JBLE-Langley. The proposed covered walkways and an associated gazebo at the CDC are the only construction elements with the potential to impact wetlands. These site improvements would create a safer means of traversing the CDC campus, particularly during the summer months and inclement weather. Even with all practicable avoidance of wetlands, the CDC site improvements would impact approximately 0.5 acres of wetlands.

As part of the wetlands mitigations, wetlands will be avoided to the extent practicable and wetland impacts will be mitigated through established U.S. Army Corps of Engineers procedures. Prior to any new construction or related activities located in wetlands, the USAF will prepare an analysis and documentation, in accordance with Clean Water Act Sections 401, 404, and 404(b)(1) guidelines, Department of Defense Instruction 4715.03, and provisions of EO 11990. For any construction activities affecting wetlands, compensatory mitigation and federal permitting and state water quality certification will be in accordance with Sections 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act.

Pursuant to EO 11988, *Floodplain Management*, there is no practicable alternative to development within the floodplain from construction for the F-22 FTU beddown at JBLE-Langley (*FEIS, Vol. I, §3.2.5.1 and §4.2.5.2*). Construction would impact up to 25 acres within the floodplain. The majority of JBLE-Langley is located within the floodplain. The project locations are the only sites feasible to support the flight mission and associated mission support functions. All areas on base that are out of the designated floodplain have limited access and development capacity due to being a weapons storage area, explosive ordnance disposal range, part of an historic bombing range, or too far from the flightline to support the necessary facility

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functions. In addition, constructing off base would degrade the mission and increase costs significantly due to the need for enhanced anti-terrorism force protection measures. New building construction will incorporate Best Management Practices into the design to mitigate impacts to the floodplain in accordance with the UFC for Civil Engineering.

**DECISIONS**

After considering the potential environmental consequences of the proposed actions, comments and concerns of the public and other key stakeholders, as well as other factors related to national defense, including current military operational needs and costs, the USAF decides to beddown the F-22 FTU mission at JBLE-Langley and beddown an additional F-35A FTU squadron at Eglin AFB. By implementing the mitigation measures identified in the FEIS and adhering to the mitigation plan described herein, the USAF has adopted all practicable means to avoid, minimize, or mitigate environmental harm.

The USAF will, by these decisions, beddown 21 F-22 PAA with 2 BAI and 16 T-38 PAA at JBLE-Langley, and 24 F-35A PAA with 2 BAI at Eglin AFB. All FY19 and FY20 F-22 FTU MILCON, analyzed in the FEIS are authorized to begin immediately upon signature of this ROD at JBLE-Langley, and all F-35A FTU facility renovations analyzed in the FEIS at Eglin AFB are authorized to begin as soon as practicable. Associated movement of personnel, aircraft, and equipment to Langley AFB are authorized to begin approximately May 2022 and ending approximately October - December 2022. However, migration of F-22, T-38, and F-35A aircraft in/out of Eglin AFB will be delayed approximately one-year beyond the approximately May through October 2021 time frame analyzed in the FEIS (Page 2-5, § 2.2). The operational status quo of the respective FTUs at Eglin AFB will continue until late FY22 or early FY23 to provide the Air Force more time to plan, coordinate, and execute the in/out migrations. The approved in- and out-migration of the F-22 FTU and the F-35A FTU squadron may be either accelerated or delayed, if needed, but in no event shall any overlap between the out-migration of the F-22 FTU and in-migration of the F-35A FTU squadron exceed the short period of overlap disclosed in Section 2.3.1 of the Final EIS. Further, in the event of any short period of overlap ACC and AETC, with the assistance of the 96 OSS, will ensure that operations do not exceed the 89,860 annual operations approved by the Final Special Environmental Assessment ROD for the F-22 FTU interim beddown at Eglin AFB on April 25, 2019.

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ROBERT E. MORIARTY, P.E., SES  
Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force  
(Installations)

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Date