



**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
AND FINDING OF NO PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE**

Environmental Assessment for
Establishing Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP)
Vehicle Storage and Repair Facilities at
Joint Base Charleston/Army Strategic Logistics Activity
Charleston, South Carolina

Pursuant to provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 United States Code (USC) 4321 to 4270d, implementing Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations, 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1500-1508, and 32 CFR Part 989, Environmental Impact Analysis Process, the U.S. Air Force (Air Force) assessed the potential environmental consequences associated with the construction and operation of 12 dehumidified buildings of approximately 133,000 square feet each, a 53,544 square foot maintenance facility, a 9,000 square foot concrete hardened armory, with attendant associated facilities and improvements at the Army Strategic Logistics and Activity facility (ASLAC) located at Joint Base Charleston, Berkeley County, South Carolina.

The purpose of the proposed project is to provide long-term storage for an MRAP vehicle fleet that is properly allocated, configured, positioned to support the full range of future Army contingency operations, and provide a limited number of MRAP vehicles that stand ready and are available for movement with 96 hours.

The Environmental Assessment (EA), incorporated by reference into this finding, analyzes the potential environmental consequences of activities associated with the construction of the MRAP storage and maintenance facilities at ASLAC-JBS, and provides environmental protection measures to avoid or reduce adverse environmental impacts.

The EA considers all potential impacts of the Preferred Alternative, the construction of the ASLAC Storage and Maintenance Facilities at Site 5, and the No-Action Alternative. The EA also considers cumulative environmental impacts with other projects at ASLAC Facilities at Joint Base Charleston.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (PROPOSED ACTION)

In July 2011, the US Army Material Command was tasked to develop plans to receive, store, and maintain the MRAP family of vehicles for Army Pre-Positioned Stocks and Pre-Deployment Training Equipment. In response to this mission, previous planning efforts developed site facility criteria including a vehicle test track, petroleum/lubricant/hazardous wastes storage facility, vehicle maintenance facility, armory, controlled humidity warehouse and depot, open storage areas, and staging/marshalling areas. While there are no existing facilities either not available nor suitable for this mission, the ASLAC facility was selected because it is proximate to rail and port facilities, has an existing track available for MRAP use, and has the available land to accommodate the proposed expansion for maintenance and storage facilities. Once ASLAC was selected, the Preferred Alternative was selected due to its proximity to the test track and that location would not interfere with existing ASLAC missions.

The Proposed Action would result in the construction and operation of enclosed MRAP vehicle storage spaces, a vehicle maintenance facility, an armory, and supporting facilities. The enclosed vehicle storage space would consist of 12 dehumidified metal buildings of approximately 133,000 square feet each, a vehicle maintenance facility consisting of a 53,544 SF, 38-bay, metal building, a concrete-hardened 9000 square foot armory, and supporting facilities such as utilities and connections, lighting, parking, walkways, curb and gutter, and storm drainage. All constructed facilities would be of permanent construction.

The proposed facilities would be constructed on a 95 acres wooded tract of land north and adjacent to the existing ASLAC facilities. This alternative will best meet the Army's mission and requirements due to its proximity to the existing ASLAC facilities, (including the test tract), and lack of any known cultural or historical resources.

NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the No-Action Alternative, the Proposed Action would not occur and mission requirements will not be met as the current facilities cannot support the proposed action. ASLAC would not receive the approximately 3,585 MRAP vehicles; the proposed construction and operation of maintenance and storage facilities and the maintenance and storage functions would not occur. The MRAP vehicles would be distributed to other locations in the United States, overseas or afloat.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The analyses of the affected environment and environmental consequences of implementing the Proposed Action presented in the EA concluded that by implementing environmental protection measures in Chapter 4 of the EA Joint Base Charleston, would be in compliance with all terms

and conditions and reporting requirements for implementation of the reasonable and prudent measures stipulated by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and with the conditions stipulated by the South Carolina Historical Preservation Office (SHPO).

The Army has concluded that no significant adverse effects would result to the following resources as a result of the Proposed Action: air quality, greenhouse gases, biological resources, geology and earth resources, land use and coastal zone resources, noise, public health and safety, transportation, and water resources. No significant adverse cumulative impacts would result from activities associated with Alternative A (Proposed Action) or Alternative B (Action Alternative 1, 2 etc) when considered with past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future projects at the ASLAC Facilities at Joint Base Charleston. In addition, the EA concluded that the action alternative would not affect environmental justice, socioeconomics, public services and utilities, and recreation opportunities.

Environmental Consequences: The ASLAC MRAP Environmental Assessment provides analyses of the potential environmental consequences resulting from implementing the Proposed Action. Eleven resource categories were thoroughly analyzed to identify potential impacts. According to the analysis in this EA, implementation of the Proposed Action with the prescribed mitigation will have no potential for significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to any environmental resource category or significantly affect conditions at JB CHS. The following is a summary of the EA findings.

Aesthetics and Visual Resources: No impact to aesthetic or visual resources would result from the implementation of the Preferred Alternative.

Air Quality: Short term insignificant impacts are expected during the construction and MRAP transport phases. These impacts are temporal in nature and will disappear when construction is completed. Long term impact from operation and maintenance of the proposed project will be very insignificant when compared to existing sources and regional ambient air quality.

Noise: Insignificant short and long term impacts resulting from the construction and operations resulting from the proposed project if implemented at the Preferred Alternative site.

Geology and Topography and Soils: Under the Preferred Alternative, the proposed construction and will not significantly impact underlying geology. Development will occur on predominately flat, previously disturbed areas that will be insignificantly impacted by preconstruction fill activities. Temporary impacts to soils could occur during the construction phases of the Preferred Alternative. Additional impervious surface will increase long-term risk of erosion of soils, but will be minimized through the use of standard erosion and sedimentation control best management practices (BMPs) as mandated by State and Federal permits.

Water Resources: Implementation of the project at the Preferred Alternative will require permanent loss of up to 0.76 acres of wetlands. Due to the spacing of the wetlands on the site and the facility requirements, it is impossible to avoid all the wetland impacts. While avoidance and minimization will be incorporated during Engineering and Design, any wetland loss will be mitigated through the purchase of wetland credits. While up to 8 credits are estimated to be needed for compensation for anticipated losses, specific wetland credit numbers and wetland mitigation bank location will be finalized once designs are completed during the USACE

permitting process. A formal mitigation plan noting mitigation details is a necessary component of any Department of Army 404 permit submittal. Permitting of these actions with the USACE and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control will be completed prior to the initiation of any construction activities. All required mitigation and impact minimization protocols laid out in the wetland permit process will be implemented by the Army.

Impacts to groundwater will be insignificant, and impacts to water quality will be minimized through the use of standard construction BMPs for minimizing soil erosion and any other potential contamination from construction activities. Storm water will be managed through the design and implementation of standard storm water engineering controls, such as gutters and culverts directing flows to detention areas. All required storm water protection measures, BMPs, and minimization efforts will be undertaken to limit impacts from runoff.

The Preferred Alternative is located out of the 100 year floodplain of the Cooper River. Temporary storage of MRAP vehicles will take place in existing parking facilities located within the Cooper River Floodplain. These parking facilities were constructed in a manner that would minimize their impacts to the floodplain, and vehicle storage should have no effect on the floodplain.

Coastal Zone Management: Implementation of the Preferred Alternative will be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of South Carolina's coastal zone management program. A Preliminary Coastal Consistency Determination has been given and a final Federal Consistency Determination will be submitted to the South Carolina Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) office along with other appropriate state permits, including a Sediment and Erosion Control Permit application and a 401 Water Quality Consistency Certification request.

Wildlife: Implementation of the proposed project at the Preferred Alternative site will reduce the amount of land available to wildlife by 95 acres. Animals will be permanently displaced due to construction activities and the conversion of forested land, and there proposed action will result in direct and indirect fauna mortality. Due to the amount of woodland land available at JBS and the surrounding area however, this is an insignificant impact.

Threatened and Endangered Species: No listed species or critical habitat will be impacted as a result of this project.

Land Use: The implementation of the Preferred Alternative will result in permanent changes to lands in the vicinity of JBS. The Preferred Alternative will develop up to 95 acres of undeveloped land into warehouse and maintenance facilities. Land use classification of the Preferred Alternative site will change from managed forestry/wildlife to developed land. Insignificant, short-term impacts from disturbance due to construction activities could occur. These alterations in land use is considered insignificant in that it impacts no more than 0.7 % of the 12,132 acres of land currently managed for wildlife and forestry on JBCHS.

Biological Resources: Under the Preferred Alternative, long term vegetation impacts will occur with the development of up to 95 acres of land currently managed for forest production and wildlife. However, given the abundance of nearby forest land, the impacts are considered to be

insignificant in nature. Construction and demolition activities will not impact wildlife species at the population level, nor remove any unique habitat for terrestrial wildlife.

Socioeconomics: The proposed project should have insignificant impacts to the socioeconomic region of influence. There will be insignificant economic benefits during construction, but those benefits will cease when construction is completed. Existing JBCHS staff will be employed to fulfill this mission.

Cultural Resources: No adverse effects on cultural resources are anticipated if the proposed project is implemented at the Preferred Alternative. This site was surveyed in 2000 and no artifacts or remains were found. This finding was concurred to by the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). The SHPO also concurred that no properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places would be affected by the Proposed Action. If cultural resources are discovered during construction activities, the South Carolina SHPO will be consulted. If any previously unknown historic or cultural resources are uncovered, activities will cease until appropriate coordination has been initiated and a proper course of action has been identified.

Transportation: The Preferred Alternative will increase traffic during construction; however, since this facility will be staffed with current personnel, no impacts to transportation are expected.

Public Health and Safety: The Preferred Alternative will require construction and demolition and could expose workers and personnel to construction related risks. However, the Proposed Action does not pose any unique or novel public health and safety risks. Due to the location of facilities, all construction would be done per Department of Defense regulations to ensure worker and personnel safety while within the safety arcs. There will be no impacts to public health and safety.

Hazardous Materials and Waste: Long-term insignificant adverse effects would be expected from implementing the proposed action at the Preferred Alternative. There would be an increase in the use of vehicle maintenance materials and a potential increase in the generation of waste (solvent and waste fuels) and recyclable hazardous materials (used oil, antifreeze, solvents, and such) that would need to be properly managed in accordance to state and federal regulations. All hazardous materials and waste would be handled and managed in accordance with local, state, and federal regulations and in accordance with established installation procedures.

Infrastructure and Utilities: No adverse impacts to infrastructure and utilities will occur with implementation of the Preferred Alternative. Adequate capacity for public services, communications, energy needs, and potable and wastewater services exist; however, upgrades to the electrical supply will be needed to add supply and an alternate power line along existing utility corridors on JB CHS. Disposal of construction and demolition debris and a small increase in solid waste generation resulting from increases in staffing and students will be handled pursuant to the applicable federal, state and local laws. There is sufficient capacity at existing landfills in the vicinity of JB CHS to adequately accommodate the quantities estimated for the Proposed Action.

Infrastructure upgrades include insignificant resurfacing of the test track and upgrading existing roads to accommodate MRAPs. These impacts are expected to be insignificant and will not expand any existing footprints.

Cumulative Impacts: The following resources were evaluated for cumulative effects: land use and coastal zone management; geology, topography, seismology, and soils; biological resources; water resources; socioeconomics; cultural; transportation; public health and safety; toxic substances, hazardous materials, and waste; infrastructure and utilities and radiological aspects. Other past, present, and foreseeable actions in the Region of Influence were analyzed in the EA. The results of the analysis in the EA indicated that there would be no significant cumulative effects to the physical, biological, or socioeconomic environments caused by implementation of the Proposed Action.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The Preferred Alternative would result in the construction and operation of enclosed MRAP vehicle storage spaces, a vehicle maintenance facility, an armory, and supporting facilities. The enclosed vehicle storage space would consist of 12 dehumidified metal buildings of approximately 133,000 square feet each, a vehicle maintenance facility consisting of a 53,544 SF, 38-bay, metal building, a concrete-hardened 9000 square foot armory, and supporting facilities such as utilities and connections, lighting, parking, walkways, curb and gutter, and storm drainage. All constructed facilities would be of permanent construction.

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FINDING OF NO PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE

The Preferred Alternative is the only reasonable or practical alternative due to its proximity to the test track and its location is such that it will not interfere with existing missions at the ASLAC Facility. The Preferred Alternative will impact up to 0.76 acres of wetlands, however all practicable measures will be taken to avoid and minimize these impacts. Unavoidable impacts will be mitigated as part of the Department of Army permitting process. Based on my review of the facts and analyses contained in the attached EA and in accordance with Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands authority incorporated into Air Force regulations and the written redelegations accomplished pursuant to the order, I find that there is no practicable alternative to implementing the Preferred Alternative within wetlands, and the Proposed Action includes all practicable measures to minimize and mitigate impacts to wetlands to insignificance.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based on my review of the facts and analyses contained in the attached EA, conducted under the provisions of NEPA, CEQ Regulations, and 32 CFR Part 989, I conclude that the Preferred Alternative, Site 5, cumulatively with other projects at Joint Base Charleston, will have no significant impact on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The signing of this Finding of No Significant Impact and Finding of No Practicable Alternative completes the environmental impact analysis process.

In Conjunction with the Final Environmental Assessment for the Establishing Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) Vehicles Storage and Repair Facilities at Joint Base Charleston/Army Strategic Logistics Activity Charleston South Carolina.

Date_____

JOHN H. BONAPART, JR.

SES, DAFC

Director of Installations and Mission Support