were declared excess to the Department of Navy and made available for use by other Federal public agencies. Approximately 215 acres have been requested by another Federal agency. That property is not included in this notice.

Election To Proceed Under New Statutory Procedures

Subsequently, the Base Closure Community Redevelopment and Homeless Assistance Act of 1994 (Pub. L. 103–421) was signed into law. Section 2 of this statute gives the redevelopment authority at base closure sites the option of proceeding under new procedures with regard to the manner in which the redevelopment plan for the base is formulated and how requests are made for future use of the property by homeless assistance providers and non-federal public agencies. On November 18, 1994, the City of Suffolk, VA submitted a timely request to proceed under the new procedures. Accordingly, this notice of information regarding the redevelopment authority fulfills the **Federal Register** publication requirement of section 2(e)(3) of the Base Closure Community Redevelopment and Homeless Assistance Act of 1994.

Also, pursuant to paragraph (7)(B) of section 2905(b) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, as amended by the Base Closure Community Redevelopment and Homeless Assistance Act of 1994, the following information regarding the surplus property at the Naval Radio Transmitting Facility, Driver, VA, is published in the **Federal Register**.

Redevelopment Authority

The base closure local redevelopment authority for the Naval Radio Transmitting Facility, Driver, VA, for purposes of implementing the provisions of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, as amended, is the City of Suffolk, VA. Day-to-day operations of the City of Suffolk, VA base closure local redevelopment authority are handled by a professional staff. For further information contact Mr. Robert Goumas, Department of Planning, City of Suffolk, PO Box 1858, 428 West Washington Street, Suffolk, Virginia, telephone (804) 538–0687 and facsimile (804) 539–7693.

Surplus Property Descriptions

The following is a listing of the land and facilities at the Naval Radio Transmitting Facility, Driver, VA, that are surplus to the federal government.

Land

Approximately 384 acres of improved and unimproved fee simple land at the U.S. Naval Radio Transmitting Facility, Driver, VA, City of Suffolk, Virginia.

Buildings

The following is a summary of the facilities located on the above-described land, which is available. The facility operationally closed on March 31, 1994. Property numbers are available on request.

—Bachelor quarters housing facilities (2 structures). Comments: Approx. 17,338 square feet, including a 3,538 square foot dining facility.
—Administration/Operations facilities (3 structures). Comments: Approx. 63,120 square feet. One building, the former transmitter building, contains 54,260 square feet.
—Maintenance facilities (3 structures). Comments: Approx. 10,833 square feet. Automotive, antenna/electronics, and public works maintenance facilities.
—Storage buildings (5 structures). Comments: Approx. 14,024 square feet.
—Recreational facilities (2 structures). Comments: Approx. 1600 square feet. Outdoor pavilion and latrine.
—Piers and wharves (1 structure). Comments: Approx. 167 square feet wooden fishing pier.
—Utilities. Comments: Measuring systems vary. Telephone, electrical, roads, and water.

Expressions of Interest

Pursuant to paragraph 7(C) of section 2905(b) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, as amended by the Base Closure Community Redevelopment and Homeless Assistance Act of 1994, State and local governments, representatives of the homeless, and other interested parties located in the vicinity of the Naval Radio Transmitting Facility, Driver, shall submit to the redevelopment authority (City of Suffolk) a notice of interest, of such governments, representatives, and parties in the above described surplus property, or any portion thereof. A notice of interest shall describe the need of the government, representative, or party concerned for the desired surplus property. Pursuant to paragraphs 7(C) and (D) of section 2905(b), the redevelopment authority shall assist interested parties in evaluating the surplus property for the intended use and publish in a newspaper of general circulation in Suffolk, VA, the date by which expressions of interest must be submitted.

Dated: May 24, 1999.

Ralph W. Corey,

Commander, Judge Advocate General's Corps, U.S. Navy, Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer.

[FR Doc. 99–13992 Filed 6–2–99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Navy

Record of Decision for the Disposal and Reuse of Naval Air Station Cecil Field, Duval and Clay Counties, Florida

SUMMARY: The Department of the Navy (Navy), pursuant to Section 102(c)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C) (1994), and the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality that implement NEPA procedures, 40 CFR Parts 1500–1508, hereby announces its decision to dispose of Naval Air Station (NAS) Cecil Field, which is located in Duval County and Clay County, Florida.

Navy analyzed the impacts of the disposal and reuse of NAS Cecil Field in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), as required by NEPA. The EIS analyzed five reuse alternatives and identified the NAS Cecil Field Final Base Reuse Plan dated February 1996 (Reuse Plan) as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative proposed to use the base for aviation, industrial, commercial, forestry and conservation activities; to develop public parks and recreational areas; and to establish a natural resource corridor. The City of Jacksonville is the Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA) for NAS Cecil Field. Department of Defense Rule on Revitalizing Base Closure Communities and Community Assistance (DoD Rule), 32 CFR 176.20(a).

Navy intends to dispose of NAS Cecil Field in a manner that is consistent with the Reuse Plan. Navy has determined that the proposed mixed land use will meet the goals of achieving local economic redevelopment and creating new jobs, while limiting adverse environmental impacts and ensuring land uses that are compatible with adjacent property. This Record of Decision does not mandate a specific mix of land uses. Rather, it leaves selection of the particular means to achieve the proposed redevelopment to the acquiring entities and the local zoning authorities.

Background: Under the authority of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (DBCRA), Public Law 101–510, 10 U.S.C. 2687 note (1994), the 1993 Defense Base

Closure and Realignment Commission recommended the closure of Naval Air Station Cecil Field. This recommendation was approved by President Clinton and accepted by the One Hundred Third Congress in 1993. The base is scheduled to close on September 30, 1999.

Most of the property comprising NAS Cecil Field is located in the southwestern part of Duval County, Florida, about 14 miles west of the City of Jacksonville's downtown area. Duval County and the City of Jacksonville have congruent geographic boundaries and a largely consolidated government.

The Cecil Field property covers 40,354 acres and consists of nine parcels that are owned or otherwise controlled by Navy through special use permits and easements. The base's Main Station, located in Duval and Clay Counties, covers about 9,336 acres of Navy-owned property. Navy controls an additional 180 acres near the Main Station by way of easements for air operations. The Yellow Water Weapons Area, located in Duval County just north of the Main Station, covers about 8.118 acres of Navy-owned property.

Outlying Landing Field (OLF) Whitehouse, located in Duval County about seven miles north of the Main Station, covers about 1,907 acres of Navy-owned property. Navy controls an additional 658 acres near OLF Whitehouse by way of easements for air operations. The Pinecastle Target Complex covers about 2,691 acres of Navy-owned property. Navy controls an additional 17,409 acres by way of special use permits for target range operations. Navy controls an additional three acres near the ranges by way of easements that permit travel on access roads. The Palatka Radar Site is located at the Kay Larkin Airport in Putnam County and covers one acre controlled by way of a special use permit. The last parcel, known as the Tactical Aircrew Training System, is located in McIntosh County, Georgia. It covers about 51 acres of Navy-owned property.

The Pinecastle Target Complex is composed of four parcels. The Stevens Lake Range, located in Clay County about 20 miles south of downtown Jacksonville, covers about 2,554 acres and is controlled by way of a special use permit. The Rodman Range, located in Putnam County about 50 miles south of downtown Jacksonville, covers about 2,690 acres of Navy-owned property and two and one half acres that Navy controls through easements. The Lake George Range, located in Putnam County and Volusia County about 65 miles south of downtown Jacksonville, covers about one acre of Navy-owned property, one half acre controlled through easements, and about 8,960 acres that Navy controls by way of a special use permit. The Pinecastle Range, located in Lake County and Marion County about 80 miles south of downtown Jacksonville, covers about 5,895 acres that Navy controls by way of a special use permit.

The 1995 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission modified in the 1993 Commission's recommendation by directing Navy to retain certain properties associated with NAS Cecil Field in support of operations at the nearby Naval Air Station Jacksonville. The 1995 Commission's recommendation was approved by President Clinton and accepted by the One Hundred Fourth Congress in 1995.

The retained properties consist of 200 units of military family housing situated on 252 acres in the southwest corner of the Yellow Water Weapons Area; OLF Whitehouse; the Pinecastle Target Complex, including the Stevens Lake Range, the Rodman Range, the Lake George Range, and the Pinecastle Range; the Palatka Radar Site; and the Tactical Aircrew Training System site.

This Record Of Decision addresses the disposal and reuse of those parts of NAS Cecil Field that are surplus to the needs of the Federal Government. This property, located on the Main Station and at the Yellow Water Weapons Area, covers about 17,202 acres of Navy-owned property. Navy will transfer its interests in the easements to the acquiring entities. These easements impose restrictions on 180 acres of private property near the northeast corner of the Main Station. The surplus property at the base contains about 175 buildings and structures that provide about 2.9 million square feet of space.

The Main Station is located south of Normandy Boulevard (Duval County Route 228), which separates the Main Station from the Yellow Water Weapons Area. The Main Station contains four runways: two parallel 8,000-foot runways and one 12,500-foot runway with a parallel 8,000-foot runway. There are eight hangars and associated aviation maintenance and fueling facilities. The Main Station has administrative offices, training facilities, personnel support facilities, medical facilities, recreational areas, and 97 family housing units. It also contains large areas of undeveloped forests, clearings, and wetlands.

The Yellow Water Weapons Area is located north of Normandy Boulevard. It contains ordnance storage buildings, maintenance facilities, barracks, personnel support facilities, and recreational areas as well as the 200 family housing units retained by Navy. Most of the Yellow Water Weapons Area consists of undeveloped forests, clearings, and wetlands.

Navy published a Notice of Intent in the **Federal Register** on January 25, 1995, announcing that Navy would prepare an EIS for the disposal and reuse of NAS Cecil Field. On February 9, 1995, Navy held a public scoping meeting at the Post of Snyder, Army National Guard Center in Jacksonville, Florida, and the scoping period concluded on March 11, 1995.

Navy distributed the Draft EIS (DEIS) to Federal, State, and local governmental agencies, elected officials, community groups and associations, and interested persons on April 25, 1997, and commenced a 45-day public review and comment period. During this period, Federal, State, and local agencies, community groups and associations, and interested persons submitted oral and written comments concerning the DEIS. On May 27, 1997, Navy held a public hearing at the Army National Guard Center to receive comments on the DEIS.

Navy's responses to the public comments were incorporated in the Final EIS (FEIS), which was distributed to the public on October 16, 1998, for a review period that concluded on November 23, 1998. Navy received three letters commenting on the FEIS.

Alternatives: NEPA requires Navy to evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives for the disposal and reuse of this surplus Federal property. In the FEIS, Navy analyzed the environmental impacts of five reuse alternatives. Navy also evaluated a ''No Action'' alternative that would leave the property in caretaker status with Navy maintaining the physical condition of the property, providing a security force, and making repairs essential to safety.

On July 19, 1993, the City of Jacksonville, acting as the LRA, established the Base Conversion and Redevelopment Commission. City of Jacksonville Executive Order 93–167. On December 19, 1994, the City of Jacksonville renamed this body the Cecil Field Development Commission. City of Jacksonville Executive Order 94–190. The Commission conducted six public forums, held numerous meetings, and made several public presentations where it solicited comments from the public concerning the proposed reuse of NAS Cecil Field. On February 26, 1996, the Commission completed the NAS Cecil Field Final Base Reuse Plan, and, on April 22, 1997, the Jacksonville City Council approved the Reuse Plan. City Council Resolution No. 97–329–A. On

July 10, 1997, the City of Jacksonville dissolved the Cecil Field Development Commission and assigned responsibility for redevelopment of the base to the Jacksonville Economic Development Commission. City of Jacksonville Executive Order 97–210.

The Reuse Plan, identified in the FEIS as the Preferred Alternative, proposed a mix of land uses. The Preferred Alternative would use the runways, hangars, and related maintenance buildings, covering 2,013 acres, as an airport serving civilian general aviation and military helicopter operations. This Alternative would use 3,453 acres for light industrial activities; 1,030 acres for heavy industrial activities; 206 acres for commercial retail activities; 2,944 acres for parks and recreational activities; 2,836 acres for forestry; and 640 acres for conservation purposes. The Preferred Alternative proposed to reserve 4,080 acres for forest land for future expansion of the airport facilities. The Preferred Alternative would also establish a Natural and Recreation Corridor to protect wildlife and habitat. It will be necessary to make extensive utility infrastructure and roadway improvements to support the Reuse Plan's proposed redevelopment of undeveloped property at Cecil Field.

On the Main Station's southern edge, the Preferred Alternative proposed to use 640 acres as a conservation area. North and northeast of this conservation area, the Preferred Alternative would reserve two parcels, comprising about 4,080 acres of forest land, for future expansion of the airport facilities. The four runways, located north of the conservation area and between the two forestry parcels, would be used for air operations. The eight hangars and related maintenance buildings, located north and west of the runways, would be used for aviation operations and support services. Some of the aviation facilities would be used by helicopter units of the Florida National Guard. Some buildings located north and west of the hangars and maintenance buildings would be demolished to build new facilities for use in heavy industries such as manufacturing and as shops for assembling automotive and aviation parts.

The barracks, classrooms, and offices in the area north and west of the hangars would be retained and used as a conference and training center for private entities occupying buildings on the property. West of this conference and training center, the property that presently includes the Cecil Field golf course, Lake Fretwell, and Lake Newman would be maintained as a recreational area. On the western edge of the Main Station, the undeveloped property would be maintained as forest land.

North of the heavy industrial area, on the southern side of Normandy Boulevard, the Preferred Alternative would build commercial facilities such as retail stores, banks and credit unions, and a United States Post Office. East of this commercial area and north of the aviation facilities, the Preferred Alternative would build new light industrial facilities.

At the Yellow Water Weapons Area, north of Normandy Boulevard, property in the eastern half and in the central part would be redeveloped for light and heavy industrial activities. In the northwest corner, the Preferred Alternative would maintain the undeveloped forest land. In the southwest corner, the Preferred Alternative would provide a recreational area. On the southern edge of the Yellow Water Weapons Area, along Normandy Boulevard, the Preferred Alternative would build facilities for commercial activities similar to those proposed for the Main Station.

The property located in the western parts of the Main Station and Yellow Water Weapons Area to be used for forestry, forestry reserve and conservation purposes and about half of the parks and recreational area would also be designated as a Natural and Recreation Corridor (Corridor). This Corridor, covering about 6,306 acres, would connect Carey State Forest north of the Yellow Water Weapons Area with Jennings State Forest south of the Main Station. The Corridor would preserve significant natural resources and enable wildlife to migrate between these two State forests.

To establish and maintain the Corridor, the City of Jacksonville, the Jacksonville Port Authority, Clay County, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and the St. Johns River Water Management District entered into a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) on March 13, 1998. This MOU recognizes that the western part of the base contains significant natural resources and is more suited for conservation and passive recreational activities. The MOU provides that the Corridor and the two State forests will be managed uniformly as an integrated system of wetlands and upland forests.

Navy analyzed a second ''action'' alternative, described in the FEIS as Alternative Reuse Scenario (ARS) 1. In ARS 1, the acquiring entity would own the property but would not prepare a redevelopment plan for it. Instead, the acquiring entity would publicize the availability of existing facilities on the Main Station for reuse. This Alternative would not use the base's aviation facilities as a general aviation airport and would dedicate the entire Yellow Water Weapons Area, covering about 7,866 acres, to forestry use.

On the Main Station, ARS 1 proposed to use 158 acres, including some of the aviation facilities in the developed area north and west of the runways, for the Florida National Guard's helicopter operations. This Alternative would use the remaining facilities covering 893 acres at the Main Station for office and light industrial activities. South of Normandy Boulevard and west of the developed area, this Alternative proposed to use 573 acres for parks and recreational activities. These activities would include use of the Cecil Field golf course and the recreational areas at Lake Fretwell and Lake Newman. The remaining 7,712 acres in the western, southern and eastern parts of the Main Station would be dedicated to forestry.

Navy analyzed a third ''action'' alternative, described in the FEIS as ARS 2. In ARS 2, the acquiring entity would take only moderate action to stimulate redevelopment of the base. Instead, redevelopment would focus on using the existing facilities for civilian general aviation and military helicopter operations and market-driven office and light industrial activities. Most of the property, *i.e.*, 11,737 acres, would be dedicated to forestry uses.

On the Main Station, ARS 2 proposed to use 1,833 acres for civilian general aviation and military helicopter operations like those proposed in the Preferred Alternative. The four runways, eight hangars and related maintenance buildings would be used for aviation operations and support services. North and west of the aviation facilities and runways, ARS 2 proposed to use the remaining buildings on the Main Station for office and light industrial activities. South of Normandy Boulevard and west of the developed area, this Alternative would provide a park and recreational area that would include use of the Cecil Field golf course and the recreational areas at Lake Fretwell and Lake Newman. The remaining Main Station property *i.e.*, the western, southern and eastern parts, would be maintained as undeveloped forest land.

At the Yellow Water Weapons Area, ARS 2 proposed to use the ordnance storage buildings, maintenance facilities, barracks, and personnel support facilities in the center of the property for office and light industrial activities. This Alternative would provide a park and recreational area in

the southwest corner. The remaining property in the Yellow Water Weapons Area, *i.e.*, the eastern, northern, and northwestern parts, would be maintained as undeveloped forest land.

Navy analyzed a fourth ''action'' alternative, described in the FEIS as ARS 3. In ARS 3, the acquiring entity would direct and market the redevelopment of Cecil Field for non-aviation uses. Thus, all of the aviation facilities would be modified to serve non-aviation purposes or would be demolished. This Alternative proposed to build a 3,250-unit residential community on 3,437 acres in the eastern part of the Main Station where the Preferred Alternative would reserve forest land for future expansion of the airport.

On 786 acres west of this residential area, ARS 3 would use the existing aviation facilities in the developed area for commercial purposes. North of these businesses, ARS 3 proposed to build a 241-acre business park. At the southern end of the Main Station, ARS 3 proposed to maintain 2,291 acres of undeveloped forest land for conservation purposes. North and northwest of this conservation area, ARS 3 proposed to build manufacturing facilities.

South of Normandy Boulevard and west of the developed area, this Alternative would provide a park and recreational area that would include use of the Cecil Field golf course and the recreational areas at Lake Fretwell and Lake Newman. South of Normandy Boulevard and north of the residential area, ARS 3 would build commercial facilities such as retail stores, banks and credit unions, and a United States Post Office to support the residential community.

At the Yellow Water Weapons Area, ARS 3 proposed to build light industrial facilities on 4,184 acres located in the northern and eastern parts of the property. In the center of the property, at the developed ordnance storage area, ARS 3 would use 1,574 acres for open space. On the western side and in the southwest corner of the Yellow Water property, ARS 3 proposed to build manufacturing facilities.

Navy analyzed a fifth ''action'' alternative, described in the FEIS as ARS 4. This Alternative proposed aggressive redevelopment and marketing of NAS Cecil Field for aviation and other industrial uses similar to the Preferred Alternative. It proposed to use the runways, hangars, and related maintenance buildings, covering 2,011 acres, as an airport serving civilian general aviation and military helicopter operations. This Alternative would use 3,362 acres for light industrial activities; 1,029 acres for heavy industrial activities; 1,565 acres for correctional facilities; 207 acres of commercial retail activities; 2,955 acres for parks and recreational activities; 980 acres for forestry; and 641 acres for conservation purposes. It also proposed to reserve 4,452 acres of forest land for future expansion of the airport facilities.

At the southern end of the Main Station, ARS 4 proposed to use 641 acres as a conservation area. North and northeast of this conservation area, ARS 4 would reserve two parcels, comprising 4,452 acres of forest land, for future expansion of the airport facilities. The four runways, located north of the conservation area and between the two forestry parcels, would be used for air operations. The eight hangars and related maintenance buildings, located north and west of the runways, would be used for aviation operations and support services. Some of the aviation facilities would be used by helicopter units of the Florida National Guard. Some of the existing buildings located north and west of the hangars and maintenance buildings would be demolished to build new facilities for use in heavy industries such as manufacturing and as shops for assembling automotive and aviation parts.

The barracks, classrooms, and offices in the area north and west of the hangars would be retained and used as a conference and training center for private entities occupying buildings on the property. West of this conference and training center, the property that presently includes the Cecil Field golf course, Lake Fretwell, and Lake Newman would be maintained as a recreational area. This Alternative also proposed to build light industrial facilities on property located west of the recreational area that the Preferred Alternative would maintain as forest land.

North of the heavy industrial area, on the southern side of Normandy Boulevard, ARS 4 would build commercial facilities such as retail stores, banks and credit unions, and a United States Post Office. East of this commercial area and north of the aviation facilities, ARS 4 would build new light industrial facilities.

In the center of the Yellow Water Weapons Area, ARS 4 proposed to build a 1,439-acre State Corrections Facility and a 126-acre State Juvenile Justice Facility. In the eastern half of the Yellow Water Weapons Area, ARS 4 proposed to build heavy and light industrial facilities. In the northwest corner, this Alternative would maintain the undeveloped forest land. On the western side and in the southwest corner, it would provide a park and recreational area. On the southern edge of the property, along Normandy Boulevard, ARS 4 would build facilities for commercial activities like those proposed for the Main Station.

Environmental Impacts: Navy analyzed the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the disposal and reuse of this surplus Federal property. The EIS addressed the impacts of the Preferred Alternative, ARS 1 through ARS 4, and the ''No Action'' Alternative for each alternative's effects on land use and aesthetics, topography, geology and soils, terrestrial resources, water quality and hydrology, climate and air quality, noise, socioeconomics and community services, transportation, infrastructure and utilities, cultural resources, and hazardous materials management and environmental contamination. This Record Of Decision focuses on the impacts that would likely result from implementation of the Reuse Plan, identified in the FEIS as the Preferred Alternative.

The Preferred Alternative would not have any significant impact on land use. While many areas at NAS Cecil Field are constrained by features such as wetlands and wildlife habitats, there are also large areas of land that are not restricted and could reasonably support new development. An area of about 29 million square feet could be developed without adversely affecting environmentally sensitive features such as wetlands, wildlife habitat, environmental cleanup sites, the 100-year floodplain, and archaeologically sensitive areas. Thus, the 3.9 million square feet of new development proposed by the Reuse Plan would not have an impact on land use.

The land uses proposed in the Preferred Alternative would be generally compatible with each other. While the proposed heavy industrial areas are not consistent with the adjacent parks and recreational areas, the establishment of buffer zones between these activities would minimize any such impact.

The land uses proposed in the Preferred Alternative would also be generally compatible with adjacent off-base land uses. Although the light industrial area in the eastern half of the Yellow Water property would be adjacent to private property currently zoned for low density residential and commercial land uses, the establishment of buffer zones between these incompatible uses would minimize any such impact.

The Preferred Alternative would not have any significant impact on aesthetic resources because it would not alter the overall aesthetic character of NAS Cecil Field. Indeed, the Reuse Plan calls for the removal of structures and utilities that would not be used and the preservation of existing positive visual features such as the tall pine trees that constitute the dominant aesthetic characteristic of the undeveloped areas.

The Preferred Alternative would not have any significant impact on soils and would not have any impact on local or regional geological resources or topography. Disturbance of soils by compaction, rutting, and erosion would be limited to those areas that would be redeveloped. These impacts would be temporary and can be minimized during construction by the use of standard soil erosion and sedimentation control measures such as the use of the hay bales and silt fences.

The Preferred Alternative would not have any significant impact on upland vegetation and wildlife. Although the proposed construction would result in some loss of vegetation and associated wildlife habitat, these impacts would be limited to the areas under construction. They can be minimized by retaining surrounding native vegetation and maintaining connections between habitats. The Natural and Recreation corridor will provide protection for most of the wildlife habitat.

The Preferred Alternative would not have any significant impact on wetland vegetation and wildlife. The non-wetland areas available for redevelopment can accommodate the proposed new construction without encroaching on existing wetlands. Most of the existing wetlands are located in the northwest corner of the Yellow Water Weapons Area, which would be maintained as forest land and placed in the Natural and Recreation Corridor. Another large area of wetlands located on the Main Station in the forest land east of the runways would be reserved for future airport expansion. Further redevelopment plans that may affect wetlands would be subject to the regulations that implement Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. 1344 (1994). These regulations are set forth at 33 CFR Part 323 and are enforced by the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

The Preferred Alternative would not have any significant impact on endangered, threatened, or other species protected under Federal and State laws. Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), 16 U.S.C. 1536 (1994), Navy conducted a biological assessment to determine the presence of Federally-listed endangered and threatened species. Although not required by Section 7 of ESA, Navy also included in this assessment those species that are identified as endangered, threatened, or of concern under Florida law.

No Federally-listed endangered or threatened species were found to be present at NAS Cecil Field. The assessment demonstrated, however, that the base provides suitable habitat for one mammal, three birds, five reptiles and amphibians, and nine plant species that are either endangered, threatened, or otherwise protected under Federal and State laws. The habitats suitable for 13 of these 18 species are located in wetlands that would be avoided during implementation of the Preferred Alternative. As discussed earlier, the impact on habitats would be limited to the particular areas under construction and can be mimized by retaining surrounding native vegetation and maintaining connections between habitats.

Based upon the findings of the biological assessment, Navy determined that the disposal and reuse of Cecil Field would not have any adverse effect on Federally-listed endangered or threatened species. In a letter dated August 20, 1998, the United States Fish And Wildlife Service concurred in Navy's determination.

Additionally, the City of Jacksonville amended the Jacksonville 2010 Comprehensive Plan to require a survey that would ascertain the presence of Federally and State-listed species in all areas proposed for redevelopment. This Plan is the local development plan required by Florida law to ensure that future development is consistent with the long range goals, objectives, and policies guiding social, economic, and physical growth of the State. Fla. Stat. §§ 163.3161–3244 (1997). If the survey reveals the presence of Federally or State-listed species, the City will require the developer to prepare a habitat management plan that describes the manner in which the Federally or State-listed species will be protected from the impacts of the proposed redevelopment.

The Preferred Alternative would not have any significant impact on water quality. The closure of Cecil Field's wastewater treatment plant and replacement by the City of Jacksonville's wastewater system would improve water quality by eliminating the treated discharge that previously flowed into Rowell Creek. However, stormwater discharges from new industrial activities, roadways and parking areas and from routine operations and maintenance in the developed areas (such as the application of herbicides and pesticides) could have adverse impacts on the surface water quality of Rowell Creek, Sal Taylor Creek, Yellow Water Creek, Lake Fretwell, and Lake Newman. In accordance with Federal, State, and local laws and regulations, the acquiring entities will implement stormwater management practices to minimize these potential impacts.

The Preferred Alternative would not have any significant impact on the availability or quality of groundwater. The groundwater under NAS Cecil Field does not contribute to the Floridian Aquifer, which is the main source of drinking water for Duval County.

The Preferred Alternative would not have any significant impact on surface water hydrology. There would be no realignment of streams or physical alternation of wetlands during construction, other than alterations that would enhance the wetlands system in the Corridor.

The Preferred Alternative would not have any significant impact on local or regional climatic conditions. The regional climate would not change as a result of implementing the proposed Reuse Plan.

The Preferred Alternative would not have any significant impact on air quality. The base is located in an ozone maintenance area, which is defined by the Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. 7401–7671q (1994), as a transition between non-attainment and attainment status for common air pollutants. The base is in attainment for all other common air pollutants. Ozone, commonly known as smog, is produced when volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides react in the atmosphere, and emissions of these pollutants would decrease under the Reuse Plan. However, emissions of two other common air pollutants, carbon monoxide and small particulate matter, may increase under the Reuse Plan.

Carbon monoxide is produced by the burning of fossil fuels. Compared with pre-closure levels, the Reuse Plan projects that annual emissions of carbon monoxide would increase by 407 tons, largely as the result of increased vehicular traffic moving to and from the property. This constitutes an insignificant increase in carbon monoxide emissions (less than 0.2 percent) in the Jacksonville area.

Small particulate matter is caused by activities that generate smoke and dust. Emissions from particulate matter would temporarily increase from 25 to 107 tons per year as the result of construction activities. Developers of future facilities would be responsible for obtaining the required air permits and complying with Federal, State, and local laws and regulations governing air

pollution. These regulations prescribe pre-construction review; impose emission and control technology standards; and require construction and operating permits.

Section 176(c) of the Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. 7506 (1994), requires Federal agencies to review their proposed activities to ensure that these activities do not hamper local efforts to control air pollution. Section 176(c) prohibits Federal agencies from conducting activities in air quality areas, such as Jacksonville, that are in maintenance status for one or more of the national standards for ambient air quality, unless the proposed activities conform to an approved implementation plan. The United States Environmental Protection Agency regulations implementing Section 176(c) recognize certain categorically exempt activities. Conveyance of title to real property and certain leases are categorically exempt activities. 40 CFR 93.153(c)(2)(xiv) and (xix). Therefore, the disposal of NAS Cecil Field will not require Navy to conduct a conformity determination.

The Preferred Alternative would not have any significant impact on noise. Exposure to noise from aircraft operations would be substantially less than when the Air Station was operating. This decrease results from the reduction from 175,168 annual jet aircraft operations before closure of the Air Station to 50,000 annual jet aircraft operations proposed under the Preferred Alternative. In addition, the aircraft that would use the airfield under the Preferred Alternative would make less noise than the Navy aircraft such as the F/A–18 jets that currently operate at NAS Cecil Field.

During reuse, a gradual increase in ambient noise levels from other sources would likely occur. This increase would arise out of industrial operations, traffic, and the operation of heavy equipment during construction. The absence of any nearby concentrations of sensitive noise receptors such as residences, hospitals and churches would minimize the impact of this gradual increase in ambient noise.

The Preferred Alternative would have minor impacts on the population and demographics of Duval County and Clay County. The proposed redevelopment would increase employment opportunities, but recruitment of employees from outside local counties is not likely because the demand for new employees would be gradual. Therefore, it is unlikely that there would be an increase in the local population as a result of implementing the Preferred Alternative.

The Preferred Alternative is projected to create 3,199 direct jobs and 3,528 indirect jobs that would generate about $78 million in direct payroll earnings and $67 million in indirect earnings. The total assessed value of taxable property after the redevelopment of Cecil Field would reach nearly $100 million. As a result, the Preferred Alternative would generate an estimated $2.16 million in annual property tax revenues.

The Preferred Alternative would have no significant impact on local and regional housing markets and would have positive impacts on local school systems. There would be fewer school age children residing in the area than when NAS Cecil Field was an active base, and property tax revenues that support local school systems would increase as property previously owned by the Federal Government became taxable.

The Preferred Alternative could have minor adverse impacts on police, fire, and emergency services in the City of Jacksonville. The conveyance of NAS Cecil Field from Navy ownership would increase the geographic area served by local police, fire, and ambulance units. Consequently, manpower and equipment requirements would increase. The equipment requirements, however, could be offset by conveyance of the base's public safety buildings and equipment such as police stations, firehouses, and certain vehicles to the City of Jacksonville. Additionally, implementation of the Preferred Alternative would increase local government revenues by expanding the property tax base.

The Preferred Alternative would increase the number of recreational facilities in the Jacksonville area. Under the Preferred Alternative, the Cecil Field golf course, Lake Fretwell, Lake Newman, and most of the base's athletic fields and other recreational areas and facilities would be made available to the public. The remaining athletic fields, located in that part of the Main Station proposed for heavy industrial activities, would not be used for recreational purposes.

The Preferred Alternative would not have any significant impact on transportation. By the year 2010, there would be about 24,359 average daily trips. This constitutes an increase of about 10,000 average daily trips over the conditions that prevailed when the base was active. The roadways that would experience traffic increases would be Chaffee Road, Normandy Boulevard, and 103rd Street. These increases would likely occur between the years 1999 and 2010 and would be addressed by improvements to the regional roadway network planned by the City of Jacksonville and the State of Florida.

After NAS Cecil Field closes, the current mass transit service may be canceled or limited because of insufficient ridership. Future mass transit service to the Cecil Field property would likely be based upon the demand for such service.

The Preferred Alternative would have minor adverse impacts on utilities. While the Reuse Plan proposes to make extensive improvements to the existing water and sewer systems, these improvements would likely be made in the course of new construction.

The Preferred Alternative proposed to connect NAS Cecil Field's water distribution and sewage collection systems to the City of Jacksonville's systems. After closure of the base, stormwater management would remain subject to Federal, State, and local laws and regulations. The acquiring entity and/or the developers of the property would be responsible for installing adequate drainage facilities.

The long term demand for natural gas would require expansion of the existing natural gas distribution system to serve the redeveloped areas. The existing 16-inch gas transmission line, located at the entrance to the Air Station, is adequate to accommodate the increased demand likely to occur under the Preferred Alternative.

The long term demand for electrical power would require expansion of the existing electrical distribution system to serve the redeveloped areas. It would be necessary to upgrade the existing distribution system to meet the local electrical authority's standards for electric meters in order properly to charge customers for electric utility service.

Under the Preferred Alternative, the existing centralized steam generation plant and the aboveground steam lines would not be used. Instead, auxiliary boilers served by existing natural gas lines may be used, and other electric or gas heating systems may be installed.

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would not have any significant impact on the management of solid waste. When fully implemented, the Preferred Alternative would generate about 150,000 tons of solid waste annually. This constitutes a 50 percent reduction in the amount of solid waste compared with the amount generated before closure of the base.

The Preferred Alternative would not have any significant impact on cultural resources. Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1988, 16 U.S.C. 470f (1994), Navy

conducted a cultural resource assessment of NAS Cecil Field. Navy evaluated all of the buildings and structures at Cecil Field and determined that none was eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. In a letter dated October 9, 1996, the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concurred in the Navy's determination.

There are no known archaeological sites at NAS Cecil Field. However, the cultural resource assessment identified 15 archaeologically sensitive areas in certain parts of NAS Cecil Field that are on the surplus Federal property. Thirteen archaeologically sensitive areas are located in parts of the Main Station and the Yellow Water Weapons Area that would be used for conservation, forestry, parks and recreational activities. Two archaeologically sensitive areas are located on that part of the Yellow Water Weapons Area where light industrial facilities would be built. Depending upon the location and design of particular redevelopment projects, these two archaeologically sensitive areas could be adversely affected by construction activities.

Navy has completed consultation pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer. These consultations identified measures that the acquiring entities must take to avoid or mitigate adverse effects on the archaeologically sensitive areas. The measures are set forth in a Programmatic Agreement entered into by Navy, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, dated January 22, 1997. This Programmatic Agreement requires recipients of the property to obtain written permission from the SHPO before undertaking any activities that would disturb the ground at these 15 archaeologically sensitive areas.

The Preferred Alternative would not have any significant impact on the management of hazardous materials and hazardous waste. The quantity of hazardous materials used, stored, and disposed of, and the quantity of hazardous waste generated on the property would be less under the Preferred Alternative than during Navy's use of the Cecil Field property. Hazardous materials used and hazardous waste generated under the Preferred Alternative will be managed in accordance with Federal and State laws and regulations.

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would not have any impact on existing environmental contamination at NAS Cecil Field. Navy will inform future property owners about the environmental condition of the property and may, where appropriate, include restrictions, notifications, or covenants in deeds to ensure the protection of human health and the environment in light of the intended use of the property.

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 3 CFR 859 (1995), requires that Navy determine whether any low-income and minority populations will experience disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects from the proposed action. Navy analyzed the impacts on low-income and minority populations pursuant to Executive Order 12898. The FEIS addressed the potential environmental, social, and economic impacts associated with the disposal of NAS Cecil Field and subsequent reuse of the property under the various proposed reuse scenarios. Minority and low-income populations residing within the region will not be disproportionately affected.

Navy also analyzed the impacts on children pursuant to Executive Order 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks, 3 CFR 198 (1998). Under the Preferred Alternative, the largest concentration of children would be present in the recreational areas. The Preferred Alternative would not impose any disproporationate environmental health of safety risks on children.

Mitigation: Implementation of Navy's decision to dispose of NAS Cecil Field does not require Navy to implement any mitigation measures. Navy will take certain actions to implement existing agreements and regulations. These actions were treated in the FEIS as agreements or regulatory requirements rather than as mitigation.

The FEIS identified and discussed those actions that will be necessary to mitigate impacts associated with the reuse and redevelopment of NAS Cecil Field. The acquiring entitites, under the direction of Federal, State, and local agencies with regulatory authority over protection resources, will be responsible for implementing necessary mitigation measures.

Comments Received on the FEIS: Navy received comments on the FEIS from the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the Florida Department of Community Affairs. These comments concerned issues already discussed in the FEIS and do not require further clarification.

Regulations Governing the Disposal Decision: Since the proposed action contemplates a disposal under the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (DBCRA), Public Law 101–510, 10 U.S.C. 2687 note (1994), Navy's decision was based upon the environmental analysis in the FEIS and application of the standards set forth in the DBCRA, the Federal Property Management Regulations (FPMR), 41 CFR Part 101–47, and the Department of Defense Rule on Revitalizing Base Closure Communities and Community Assistance (DoD Rule), 32 CFR Parts 174 and 175.

Section 101–47.303–1 of the FPMR requires that disposals of Federal property benefit the Federal Government and constitute the ''highest and best use'' of the property. Section 101–47.4909 of the FPMR defines the ''highest and best use'' as that use to which a property can be put that produces the highest monetary return from the property, promotes its maximum value, or serves a public or institutional purpose. The ''highest and best use'' determination must be based upon the property's economic potential, qualitative values inherent in the property, and utilization factors affecting land use such as zoning, physical characteristics, other private and public uses in the vicinity, neighboring improvements, utility services, access, roads, location, and environmental and historic considerations.

After Federal property has been conveyed to non-Federal entities, the property is subject to local land use regulations, including zoning and subdivision regulations, and building codes. Unless expressly authorized by statute, the disposing Federal agency cannot restrict the future use of surplus Government property. As a result, the local community exercises substantial control over future use of the property. For this reason, local land use plans and zoning affect determination of the ''highest and best use'' of surplus Government property.

The DBCRA directed the Administrator of the General Services Administration (GSA) to delegate to the Secretary of Defense authority to transfer and dispose of base closure property. Section 2905(b) of the DBCRA directs the Secretary of Defense to exercise this authority in accordance with GSA's property disposal regulations, set forth in Part 101–47 of the FPMR. By letter dated December 20, 1991, the Secretary of Defense delegated the authority to transfer and dispose of

base closure property closed under the DBCRA to the Secretaries of the Military Departments. Under this delegation of authority, the Secretary of the Navy must follow FPMR procedures for screening and disposing of real property when implementing base closures. Only where Congress has expressly provided additional authority for disposing of base closure property, *e.g.*, the economic development conveyance authority established in 1993 by Section 2905(b)(4) of the DBCRA, may Navy apply disposal procedures other than those in the FPMR.

In Section 2901 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994, Public Law 103–160, Congress recognized the economic hardship occasioned by base closures, the Federal interest in facilitating economic recovery of base closure communities, and the need to identify and implement reuse and redevelopment of property at closing installations. In Section 2903(c) of Public Law 103–160, Congress directed the Military Departments to consider each base closure community's economic needs and priorities in the property disposal process. Under Section 2905(b)(2)(E) of the DBCRA, Navy must consult with local communities before it disposes of base closure property and must consider local plans developed for reuse and redevelopment of the surplus Federal property.

The Department of Defense's goal, as set forth in Section 174.4 of the DoD Rule, is to help base closure communities achieve rapid economic recovery through expeditious reuse and redevelopment of the assets at closing bases, taking into consideration local market conditions and locally developed reuse plans. Thus, the Department has adopted a consultative approach with each community to ensure that property disposal decisions consider the LRA's reuse plan and encourage job creation. As a part of this cooperative approach, the base closure community's interests, as reflected in its zoning for the area, play a significant role in determining the range of alternatives considered in the environmental analysis for property disposal. Furthermore, Section 175.7(d)(3) of the DoD Rule provides that the LRA's plan generally will be used as the basis for the proposed disposal action.

The Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, 40 U.S.C. 484 (1994), as implemented by the FPMR, identifies several mechanisms for disposing of surplus base closure property: by public benefit conveyance (FPMR Sec. 101–47.303–2); by negotiated sale (FPMR Sec. 101–47.304–9); and by competitive sale (FPMR 101–47.304–7). Additionally, in Section 2905(b)(4), the DBCRA established economic development conveyances as a means of disposing of surplus base closure property. The selection of any particular method of conveyance merely implements the Federal agency's decision to dispose of the property. Decisions concerning whether to undertake a public benefit conveyance or an economic development conveyance, or to sell property by negotiation or by competitive bid, are left to the Federal agency's discretion. Selecting a method of disposal implicates a broad range of factors and rests solely within the Secretary of the Navy's discretion.

Conclusion: The LRA's proposed reuse of NAS Cecil Field, reflected in the Reuse Plan, is consistent with the requirements of the FPMR and Section 174.4 of the DoD Rule. The LRA has determined in its Reuse Plan that the property should be used for several purposes, including aviation, industrial, commercial, forestry, conservation, parks and recreation. The property's location, physical characteristics, and existing infrastructure as well as the current uses of adjacent property make it appropriate for the proposed uses.

The Preferred Alternative responds to local economic conditions, promotes rapid economic recovery from the impact of the Air Station's closure, and is consistent with President Clinton's Five-Part Plan for Revitalizing Base Closure Communities, which emphasizes local economic redevelopment and creation of new jobs as the means to revitalize these communities. 32 CFR Parts 174 and 175, 59 FR 16123 (1994).

Although the ''No Action'' Alternative has less potential for causing adverse environmental impacts, this Alternative would not take advantage of the property's location, physical characteristics, and infrastructure or the current uses of adjacent property. Additionally, it would not foster local economic redevelopment of the Cecil Field property.

The acquiring entities, under the direction of Federal, State, and local agencies with regulatory authority over protected resources, will be responsible for adopting practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm that may result from implementing the Reuse Plan.

Accordingly, Navy will dispose of Naval Air Station Cecil Field in a manner that is consistent with the City of Jacksonville's Reuse Plan for the property.

Dated: May 19, 1999.

William J. Cassidy, Jr.,

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Conversion and Redevelopment).

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Navy

Meeting of the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Executive Panel

AGENCY: Department of the Navy, DOD.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The CNO Executive Panel is meeting to conduct the final briefing of the Homeland Defense Task Force to the Chief of Naval Operations. This meeting will consist of discussions relating to proposed Navy involvement in Homeland Defense.

DATES: The meeting will be held on June 23, 1999 from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 2000 Navy Pentagon, Washington, DC 20350–2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONCERNING THIS MEETING CONTACT: Commander Christopher Agan, CNO Executive Panel, 4401 Ford Avenue, Suite 601, Alexandria, Virginia 22302–0268, telephone number (703) 681–6205.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App. 2), these matters constitute classified information that is specifically authorized by Executive Order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense and are, in fact, properly classified pursuant to such Executive Order. Accordingly, the Secretary of the Navy has determined in writing that the public interest requires that all sessions of the meeting be closed to the public because they will be concerned with matters listed in section 552b(c)(1) of title 5, United States Code.

Dated: May 18, 1999.

Ralph W. Corey,

Commander, Judge Advocate General's Corps, U.S. Navy, Federal Register Liaison Officer.

[FR Doc. 99–13990 Filed 6–2–99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Navy

Meeting of the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Executive Panel

AGENCY: Department of the Navy, DOD.