

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

PROPOSED COMBAT SUPPORT TRAINING RANGE PROJECT NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE, NEVADA

Pursuant to provisions of the *National Environmental Policy Act* (Title 42 *United States Code* § 4321 et seq.) (NEPA), as amended by the *Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023* ([Public Law 118-5](#)); United States (US) Department of Defense (DoD) NEPA implementing procedures issued 30 June 2025; and Executive Order (EO) 14154, *Unleashing American Energy* (20 January 2025), the US Department of the Air Force (DAF) prepared the attached Environmental Assessment (EA) to address the potential environmental consequences associated with Combat Support Training Range (CSTR) projects at Nellis Air Force Base (AFB) in Nevada.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to create a training platform where combat support teams can acquire the skills necessary to establish, operate, protect, and recover an expeditionary airbase. The CSTR would support integrated training by providing an adaptable infrastructure that simulates contested operations and enables the dynamic employment of expeditionary assets under various training scenarios. The Proposed Action is needed to ensure that Nellis AFB meets the requirements for a Regional Training Site within the western contiguous US (CONUS). Presently, there is a lack of satisfactory training locations in the western CONUS and an inability to meet combat support readiness within existing CONUS locations. Furthermore, the DAF does not yet have enough platforms to facilitate advanced certification exercises for combat support units positioned as “Force Elements.” The proposed CSTR would provide a facility that meets the 2020 and 2022 requirements directed by the Air Force Civil Engineer Center and the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Command and would assemble an entire Force Element and enable training and certification in a realistic setting.

Description of Proposed Action

The Proposed Action includes construction of new facilities, repurposing existing facilities, improving infrastructure, demolishing and removing obsolete equipment, grading, paving, and building and repairing roads.

The DAF developed the following selection standards to identify reasonable alternative locations for the Proposed Action for analysis in this EA. The alternative locations must:

1. support Rapid Airfield Damage Recovery (RADR) training to include expanding the current training airfield (750 feet x 150 feet) by an additional 2,000 feet, 48 vehicles to execute RADR operations, and storage facilities in which to store the equipment;
2. be located within the feasible construction proximity (i.e., 30-minute drive or less) of the 820th Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers (RED HORSE) Squadron located at Nellis;
3. contain at least 205 acres of developable land to fit all training components, including the mock air strip, in one location; and
4. be located within an area that is accessible by existing roads.

Based on the criteria above, the current Camp Cobra location was the only site that met all the criteria and was selected for the Proposed Action. The EA evaluates environmental impacts that would arise from the development of the CSTR and considers aspects of the training that may contribute to environmental impacts.

Summary of Findings

Potentially affected environmental resources were identified through communications with state and federal agencies and review of past environmental documentation. Specific environmental resources with the potential for environmental consequences include land use; earth resources; air quality and climate change; water resources; biological resources; cultural resources; noise; hazardous materials and wastes, toxic

substances, petroleum products, and contaminated sites; infrastructure, including transportation and utilities; safety and occupational health; socioeconomics; and protection of children.

Land Use

No significant effects to land use would be expected to result from implementation of the Proposed Action. Development would be anticipated to occur on land designated as Open Space A, including roadways, concrete pads, graded space, and semi-improved surfaces. Implementation of the Proposed Action would be expected to result in long-term, negligible, adverse impacts to land use compatibility.

Earth Resources

No significant effects to earth resources would be expected to result from implementation of the Proposed Action. Long-term, moderate, adverse impacts to soils would have the potential to occur under the Proposed Action. Implementation of the Proposed Action would be expected to result in short-term, minor, adverse impacts to geology and long-term, minor, beneficial impacts to topography. The Proposed Action would grade up to 200 acres, and cover up to 20 acres with impervious surfaces, increasing the potential for soil erosion and sedimentation to occur during major rainfall events. With suitable project site analyses and implementation of best management practices (BMPs), the potential for increased soil erosion and sedimentation would be expected to be low and could be managed with structural controls and stormwater drainage improvements.

Air Quality and Climate Change

No significant effects to air quality would be expected to result from implementation of the Proposed Action. Implementation of the Proposed Action would be expected to result in long-term, minor-to-moderate, adverse impacts to air quality. The estimated total annual emissions of the Proposed Action could exceed the Prevention of Significant Deterioration permitting thresholds for nitrogen oxides, an ozone precursor. Clark County is in moderate nonattainment for the 2015 ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard. Therefore, impacts from the Proposed Action on regional air quality would be expected to be long term and minor-to-moderate based on the findings of the Air Conformity Applicability Model. Permitting and coordination with the Clark County Division of Air Quality would establish operational constraints that would reduce the emissions emitted to remain below the threshold of insignificance.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, expressed in terms of carbon dioxide-equivalent (CO₂e), do not have a regulatory threshold; however, estimated emissions for CO₂e demonstrated that CO₂e emissions from the Proposed Action would be below the threshold of insignificance and would not result in a significant increase in GHG emissions.

Water Resources

No significant effects to water resources would be expected to result from implementation of the Proposed Action. Implementation of the Proposed Action would be anticipated to result in long-term, minor, adverse impacts to surface water; short-term, negligible, adverse impacts groundwater; long-term, minor, adverse impacts to stormwater; and long-term, moderate, adverse impacts to the Colorado State University Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands-mapped floodplains. There are no Federal Emergency Management Agency-mapped floodplains within the Proposed Action area; therefore, no impacts to regulated floodplains would occur. There are no wetlands within the Proposed Action area; therefore, no impacts to wetlands would occur. Potential impacts from runoff could be managed by utilizing BMPs and design standards that control stormwater runoff and limit opportunities for stormwater contamination.

Biological Resources

No significant effects to biological resources would be expected to result from implementation of the Proposed Action, with the exception of the driving course, which would not be implemented as part of the Proposed Action due to potential impacts to the desert tortoise. CSTR development under the Proposed Action would be anticipated to result in long-term, minor, adverse impacts to wildlife, vegetation, and migratory birds from loss of approximately 151 acres of habitat. The only federally protected species under the *Endangered Species Act* (ESA) known to occur within the study area is the federally threatened Mojave Desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*). CSTR development under the Proposed Action likely would adversely affect the desert tortoise because approximately 143 acres of potential tortoise habitat would be disturbed. Nellis AFB operates under a 2023 Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO) from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, which sets limits on habitat disturbance and allows for translocation of desert tortoise and their eggs found in the project area. The potential disturbance would be within the allowed limits of the PBO, and

measures would be implemented to minimize impacts. Nellis AFB would implement all the terms and conditions, conservation measures, and reporting requirements specified in the PBO. These environmental protection measures would ensure that potential impacts to desert tortoises and their habitat would be minimized. Proposed operation of the driving course would exceed the speed limits identified in the PBO; therefore, permanent exclusion fencing would be required around the driving course, resulting in the isolation and segregation of approximately 430 acres of tortoise habitat not included in the PBO. The driving course element of the Proposed Action could result in significant, adverse impacts to biological resources; therefore, the driving course would not be implemented as part of the Proposed Action.

Cultural Resources

No significant effects to cultural resources would be expected to result from implementation of the Proposed Action. Implementation of the Proposed Action is unlikely to cause an adverse physical, visual, auditory, or atmospheric effect to architectural or archaeological resources within the Area of Potential Effects (APE). A precise layout for the CSTR has not been determined, and potential adverse effects to cultural resources could occur if the layout is altered to impact these resources. The Proposed Action would have the potential to result in minor, direct, adverse visual effects to cultural resources at Nellis AFB if the seven unevaluated structures within the APE were determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and were altered to be out of character for their architectural setting. Direct, adverse, physical effects could occur to the two unevaluated historic buildings and the one NRHP-eligible archaeological site (CK4986) in the project footprint if not avoided during site development. In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the DAF consulted with the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and federally recognized tribes regarding definition of the APE and its determination of effects. Nellis AFB will continue to consult with the SHPO on potential effects and determine whether mitigation measures would be necessary.

Noise

No significant effects to the noise environment would be expected to result from implementation of the Proposed Action. Construction activities during the development of CSTR would result in temporary noise increases. Noise associated with the operation of construction equipment would be generally short-term, intermittent, and localized. Operations of the facilities, mock airfield trainings, and RED HORSE operation of heavy equipment under the Proposed Action would result in long-term, minor, adverse effects to the noise environment. Operations from unmanned aircraft systems would be limited to less than 24 events per year and would be anticipated to result in short-term, negligible, adverse effects to the noise environment.

Hazardous Materials and Wastes

No significant, adverse cumulative effects to hazardous materials and waste would be anticipated to occur with implementation of the Proposed Action. Operation of the facilities under the Proposed Action may require the use of hazardous materials and therefore contribute to the generation of hazardous waste. Currently, Camp Cobra uses a small amount of hazardous materials and petroleum products, and while the Proposed Action would have the potential to slightly increase the amount used, the overall impact on Nellis AFB would be expected to be negligible. The anticipated result would be short-term, minor adverse impacts related to hazardous materials and waste. Inactive demolition landfill LF-7 is located within the Proposed Action area and could face potential impacts from grading or excavation activities. If the integrity of the landfill cap was impacted during construction, it could result in long-term moderate impacts that would require coordination with the Nevada Department of Environmental Protection.

Infrastructure, including Transportation and Utilities

No significant adverse effects to infrastructure, transportation, or utilities would be expected to result from implementation of the Proposed Action. Road improvements from the Proposed Action would be anticipated to have long-term beneficial impacts to transportation infrastructure. Negligible long-term adverse impacts from increased demand to liquid fuel storage, potable water supply, and the sanitary sewer system would be anticipated to occur. Short-term, negligible, adverse impacts to electricity and natural gas and solid waste infrastructure would be anticipated to occur due to brief service interruptions that could occur during construction when existing lines are connected to newly constructed facilities.

Safety and Occupational Health

No significant effects to safety and occupational health would be expected to result from implementation of the Proposed Action, with the exception of the driving course, which would not be implemented as part of

the Proposed Action due to proximity of the driving course relative to the explosive safety quantity distance (ESQD) arcs. CSTR development under the Proposed Action would be anticipated to have short-term, negligible impacts to ground safety. DAF personnel may be exposed to safety hazards associated with common industrial construction activities. Ground operations and activities would adhere to all applicable occupational safety policies and procedures in DAF Manual 91-203 during and after construction to minimize health and safety risks. Under the Proposed Action, the driving course would pass through an ESQD arc. The personnel, vehicles, foot traffic, and Conex villages are not associated with the Munitions Storage Area explosives mission and would be prohibited from entering the driving course to ensure personnel safety in the event of an accident. In the absence of a risk assessment, the analysis conservatively assumes that the proposed improvements to and operation of the driving course would result in significant, adverse impacts to explosives safety. Therefore, the driving course would not be implemented as part of the Proposed Action.

Socioeconomics

No significant effects to socioeconomics would be expected to result from implementation of the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would be anticipated to have short-term, negligible, beneficial impacts to population and employment due to the increased military personnel and need for local construction personnel to complete construction actions. The Proposed Action would have no significant impact on housing. Long-term, negligible, adverse impacts on educational resources could occur due to overcrowding challenges at the Clark County School District that could strain resources until solutions for capacity issues are reached.

Protection of Children

No significant adverse effects to children would be expected to result from implementation of the Proposed Action. Construction activities would not occur in the vicinity of base housing areas where children or other community members could be present. No disproportionate impacts to children would be anticipated to occur under the Proposed Action.

Cumulative Impacts

The EA considered the cumulative effects on the environment that result from the incremental effects of the Proposed Action when added to the effects of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions at Nellis AFB. The following projects could potentially occur concurrently and result in cumulative effects:

- Environmental Impact Statement for Master Planning and Installation Development at Nellis AFB
- Environmental Assessment for the Beddown of Tactical Air Support Squadron at Nellis AFB
- Completed Military Construction Projects
- Environmental Assessment for Nellis Reclaimed Waterline Project
- Environmental Assessment for Addition of F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, Addition of F-22A Raptors and Contract Adversary Air
- Environmental Assessment for Installation Development at Nellis AFB
- Collaborative Contract Aircraft Experimental Operations Unit Beddown
- Clark County Regional Flood Control District Confluence Detention Basin Expansion

No significant cumulative impacts were identified.

Mitigation

The EA analysis concluded that the Proposed Action would not result in significant environmental impacts; therefore, no mitigation measures are required. BMPs are described and recommended in the EA where applicable.

Conclusion

Finding of No Significant Impact. After reviewing the EA prepared in accordance with the requirements of NEPA and DoD NEPA implementing procedures, and which is hereby incorporated by reference, I have determined that the Proposed Action, with the exception of the proposed driving course (which would not be implemented), would not have a significant impact on the quality of the human or natural environment. Accordingly, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared. This decision was made after considering all submitted information, including a review of agency comments submitted during the 30-day public comment period, and considering a full range of practical alternatives that meet project requirements and are within the legal authority of the DAF.

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DATE