

**FINAL FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
AND FINDING OF NO PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVES (FONPA)
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR TWO RECREATION AREA DEVELOPMENT PLANS
MOODY AIR FORCE BASE, GEORGIA**

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations Implementing NEPA (Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] §§ 1500–1508), with the January 9, 2023, version of CEQ regulations being used, the *National Environmental Policy Act Guidance on Consideration of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change* (40 CFR Parts 1500–1508), 88 Federal Register (FR) 1196, and the Air Force NEPA regulations at 32 CFR Part 989, Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP) which implements NEPA and CEQ regulations, the United States Department of the Air Force (DAF) assessed the potential environmental consequences associated with the redevelopment of two recreation areas – the Grassy Pond Recreation Complex and the Moody Air Force Base (AFB) Quiet Pines Golf Course. The Proposed Action would involve constructing and renovating facilities and infrastructure within the two properties.

The purpose of the Grassy Pond Recreation Complex Proposed Action is to enhance the health and wellness of both Moody AFB personnel and civilians by providing opportunities for various recreational activities while also promoting community engagement and overall well-being. The Proposed Action is needed to modernize and develop sustainable facilities and infrastructure, enhance safety and security, and preserve the area's natural setting and resources.

The purpose of the Quiet Pines Golf Course Proposed Action is to improve the golfing experience for Moody AFB personnel and visitors and to enhance the functionality and accessibility of the golf course and its facilities. The Proposed Action is needed to support the development of the Quiet Pines Golf Course as a core element to serve and support the morale and resiliency of Moody AFB personnel.

The Environmental Assessment (EA), incorporated by reference into this finding, analyzes the potential environmental consequences of activities associated with developing the two recreation areas and provides environmental protection measures to avoid or reduce adverse environmental impacts. The EA considers all potential impacts of the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative. The EA also considers cumulative environmental impacts with other projects at Moody AFB.

PUBLIC AND TRIBAL REVIEW AND COMMENT

The NEPA process is designed to involve the public in the federal decision-making process. Formal notification and opportunities for public participation were provided during the preparation of this EA. Formal and informal coordination and consultation with government agencies and planners was also conducted.

The Draft EA and the Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)/Finding of No Practicable Alternative (FONPA) were provided to federal, state, and local officials and federally-recognized American Indian Tribes as identified in Appendix A of the EA. The Draft EA and the Draft FONSI/FONPA were made available for public review during a 30-day comment period at

the Willis L. Miller Library in Valdosta, Georgia. All substantial and relevant comments from the public and other government agencies were addressed and incorporated in the Final EA and FONSI/FONPA.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

Grassy Pond Recreation Complex

Redevelopment of the Grassy Pond Recreation Complex would occur within the next seven years. These projects address known issues with easily implemented developments, reasonably foreseeable mission requirements, and future needs of operations and personnel at Moody AFB. Proposed developments include construction of entrance signage, light posts, speed bumps, restroom/storm shelter, access control gates, aquatic play area, playgrounds, dog park, fire pits, outdoor classroom, welcome center area, paved parking areas, bunkhouses, yurts, group and primitive camping areas, tree top camps, nature slide, challenge course, pavilions, cottages, Grassy Pond trail boardwalk, and RV Storage and maintenance yard; repair/expansion of the trail system, events center, and RV camping spaces; increased capacity of Grassy Pond and Lot Pond docks; addition of facilities space for lawn games; and removal of invasive vegetation in Lot Pond.

The action alternative (Alternative 1) for the Grassy Pond Recreation Complex would develop all elements described above. Approximately 7.7 acres of vegetation clearing would be required.

Quiet Pines Golf Course

Development of the Quiet Pines Golf Course would involve facility improvements across the property over the next seven years. Proposed developments include the replacement of the clubhouse, cart storage barn, and driving range; construction of a gateway entrance; additional parking areas, signage, and a sports field/parking area; and resurfacing of existing parking areas.

Under Quiet Pines Golf Course Alternative 1, available developable land next to the youth recreation facility would be utilized as a family park area designed for the residents of Quiet Pines. The proposed new clubhouse would face the driving range, with the back facing the highway for improved visibility. This design allows for central parking between the clubhouse and the driving range, with golf cart storage located at the end closest to the golf course.

Under Quiet Pines Golf Course Alternative 2, the land adjacent to the youth recreation facility would be utilized for the construction of a new multi-purpose field and two age-group-specific playgrounds with central bathroom facilities. The park would feature a central open grassed play area with landscaped perimeters providing shade and designated rest areas. The proposed clubhouse would be positioned facing Prewitte Street, the main road serving the Quiet Pines area, to provide a prominent front entrance and to achieve symmetry with the youth recreation facility located across the road.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the No-Action Alternative, the DAF would not initiate development activities at the Grassy Pond Recreation Complex or Quiet Pines Golf Course. Issues associated with aging infrastructure and limited space would continue at Grassy Pond, and management and maintenance of the golf course would transfer to a local government agency. As a result, the No Action Alternative would not meet the purpose and need of the Proposed Action.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The DAF has concluded that no significant adverse effects would result to the following resources as a result of the Proposed Action: land use, noise, air quality, greenhouse gases, water resources, hazardous materials/waste, infrastructure, safety and occupational health, biological and natural resources, cultural resources, socioeconomic and environmental justice, or earth resources. No significant adverse cumulative impacts would result from activities associated with the Proposed Action when considered with past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future projects at Moody AFB. In addition, the EA concluded that the Proposed Action would not affect environmental justice, socioeconomics, public services and utilities, and recreation opportunities.

Under the Proposed Action, the DAF would implement the special considerations identified in Section 2.2 of the EA, which would serve to minimize potential impacts. Such considerations include adherence to installation development standards, maintenance of DAF Morale, Welfare, and Recreation goals such as keeping the recreation areas open during development, and no significant adverse impacts to wetlands and floodplains. The main impact driver for most resource areas is infrastructure impacts resulting from utility shutoffs and temporary construction traffic. Special considerations identified in Section 2.2 as part of the Proposed Action would minimize impacts to an insignificant level, therefore minimizing impacts to the noise environment, hazardous materials and waste generation, safety and occupational health, and socioeconomic and environmental justice. Based on the scope of the Proposed Action and accounting for the special considerations identified in Section 2.2, issues with minimal or no impacts were identified through a preliminary screening process. Airspace resources were not carried forward for detailed analyses in the EA. The rationale for the dismissal of these resource areas is provided in Section 1.6.1 of the EA.

Land Use

The future installation development projects would result in new construction and when combined with the Proposed Action, could pose cumulative impacts to land use. The installation development project is in the early planning stages; therefore, the final preferred location and land use impact are unknown. Open space at Moody AFB would be reduced as it is converted to recreation space for the Quiet Pines Golf Course Developments. There is potential for further conversion of open space due to the future installation developments.

Long-term, minor, beneficial impacts are expected from the expansion of recreational amenities at the Grassy Pond Recreation Complex due to the increased park capacity and improved variety and quality of recreation options at the park. Land use conversions at Grassy Pond are not expected to result in cumulative impacts associated with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions within the Region of Influence (ROI).

Noise

None of the identified Proposed Actions at Moody AFB that would substantially change the noise environment. The Proposed Action would have temporary impacts on noise levels due to the use of heavy equipment during construction. However, with standard Best Management Practices (BMPs), impacts on noise would be negligible and short-term. Construction, renovation, and demolition projects at Grassy Pond and Quiet Pines would occur, but they would not create significant noise impacts in combination with past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions within the ROI. No cumulative impacts have been identified.

Air Quality

Estimated emissions generated by the Proposed Actions are anticipated to be minor and below regulatory thresholds and, therefore, would not contribute significantly to adverse cumulative effects on air quality. Depending on the timing of capital and infrastructure improvement projects occurring on Moody AFB and in the surrounding community, incremental increases in air emissions would result from construction activities. Cumulative effects on air quality would be negligible. No significant impacts would occur.

Water Resources

All construction projects have the potential for adverse effects on surface water quality due to erosion and sediment transport in stormwater runoff. Cumulative impacts on water resources from past, present, and future actions within the ROI would be less than significant because BMPs to control stormwater runoff, erosion, and sedimentation would be used throughout all phases of construction for each project. Construction activity would comply with appropriate local, state, and federal environmental regulations and permits to control erosion and transportation of sediment. BMPs such as silt fences and sediment traps would be used to control erosion and sediment transport to surface waters, and the respective construction activities are unlikely to occur simultaneously. Several of the projects would result in an increase in impervious surfaces. Implementation of the Proposed Action would have a negligible effect on the total quantity and quality of stormwater runoff. There would be no significant incremental adverse cumulative effects on water resources from implementing the Proposed Action. Streams, wetlands, their regulated buffers, and floodplains would be avoided.

Adherence to all environmental management requirements would help to ensure that there would be minimal impacts to any water resources as a result of the proposed activities. Adverse cumulative impacts are not expected when combined with past, present, and future projects because avoidance, minimization (BMPs), and mitigation measures would be employed for each project as directed by state and federal regulations.

Hazardous Materials/Waste

The Proposed Action would use minor amounts of hazardous materials during the construction, including fuels, paints, sealants, adhesives, etc. Relevant past, present, and future actions that include construction of new facilities may cumulatively affect hazardous materials and wastes at Moody AFB. Hazardous materials such as fuels for equipment and vehicles would be managed in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations to prevent accidental releases, and the discovery of hazardous/toxic materials during construction of the various projects would be handled in accordance with applicable regulations. If not recyclable, it is anticipated that hazardous/toxic materials would be disposed of in appropriately permitted disposal facilities in compliance and accordance with local, state, and federal waste regulations if recycling/reuse are not viable options. Past, present, and future actions could contribute cumulatively to impacts to hazardous materials and wastes. These projects would be temporary, and all will be managed in accordance with all federal, state, and local regulations; therefore, cumulative impacts to hazardous materials and wastes would not be significant.

Infrastructure

The Proposed Action would have negligible impacts on infrastructure, while some identified projects could impact the existing utility infrastructure and capacity at Moody AFB. Some of the projects that provide infrastructure improvements also have beneficial effects. Other development projects occurring during the same timeframe as the Proposed Action may also contribute to minor, short-term transportation impacts during construction activities, as access to Quiet Pines is directly adjacent to the Moody AFB main gate. The Proposed Action would not permanently increase, decrease, or otherwise change utility demand, as no additional personnel would be assigned to the base. Beneficial long-term cumulative impacts would result from the improvement of utility infrastructure at the properties as the Proposed Action, present actions, and future actions would utilize energy-efficient lighting and utilities infrastructure. Long-term negligible impacts to transportation infrastructure may be realized at the Grassy Pond Recreation Complex due to temporary increases in traffic and increased wear on existing roadways. Any adverse cumulative impacts would be minor and short-term.

Safety and Occupational Health

Moody AFB requires contractors and heavy equipment operators to adhere to all applicable safety regulations and guidelines. Direct construction and demolition adverse impacts would be negligible, localized, and short-term. No indirect impacts are expected from the Proposed Action. Development activities under the Proposed Action and present and reasonably foreseeable future actions would result in a temporary increase in traffic from vehicles and equipment. However, due to traffic control BMPs and adherence to installation safety procedures, only negligible cumulative impacts to safety would be anticipated. Once construction is completed, transportation patterns are expected to revert to pre-construction direction and frequency. The Quiet Pines Golf Course security improvements and the future installation development would lessen antiterrorism vulnerabilities and terrorist threats to base infrastructure. When combined with the Proposed Action, the projects could have beneficial cumulative impacts on health and safety due to improved road safety and base security. Combined with the potential impacts from the present and reasonably foreseeable future actions, no long-term or significant cumulative impacts on transportation infrastructure are anticipated from the Proposed Action.

Biological/Natural Resources

Construction projects have potential adverse effects on wildlife from habitat alteration, noise, and human activity during construction. Potential cumulative impacts to biological resources would be associated with actions undertaken by Moody AFB that could affect similar forested and wetland habitats and their wildlife species. Multiple small, incremental effects can become pronounced if they reach their significance threshold. For example, multiple actions that individually cause a small amount of habitat fragmentation could eventually result in an area becoming essentially unusable for wide-ranging species.

The Proposed Action would impact some forested areas, and wildlife species relying on these habitats would be affected to some degree. However, it is not anticipated that the overall health or viability of wildlife populations, including sensitive species, would be substantively impacted. Substantial areas of similar habitat occur in the vicinity, including on-base property, although future incremental habitat eradication or alteration could remove some of this habitat. The Grand Bay Weapons Range Expansion and Photovoltaic Panel Array would result in vegetation clearing.

Habitat removal and wildlife disturbance on the base is likely, but there are currently no known projects that would cumulatively jeopardize the continued existence of a species or result in an overall significant decrease in population diversity, abundance, or fitness for any species. As a result, the Proposed Action, combined with the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, could pose cumulative impacts but would not result in significant cumulative impacts to threatened and endangered species within the ROI. The USFWS provided concurrence with Moody AFB's finding of *may affect, but not likely to adversely affect* for the bald eagle and wood stork, and the finding of *no effect* for other species of interest within the proposed development areas in a letter dated July 26, 2024.

Cultural Resources

No impacts to cultural resources are anticipated from the Proposed Action. If adverse effects are anticipated to occur to resources on Moody AFB, the installation would adhere to the Section 106 process in the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and standard operating procedures set forth in the Moody AFB Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan. The DAF has not identified any cumulative impacts to cultural resources from past, present, and future actions. Consultation with the Georgia Historic Preservation Division concurred that the proposed projects (HP-230913-010) would not cause adverse effects to cultural resources.

Socioeconomic Resources/Environmental Justice

The Proposed Action and present and reasonably foreseeable future actions would result in short-term minor beneficial impacts on the socioeconomics of the ROI. Beneficial impacts to the regional economy would result from hiring construction crews during the development phase. The future installation development plan would result in significant long-term impacts on the socioeconomics of the ROI. Short-term beneficial impacts are expected to environmental justice from hiring local labor during the construction phase. These practices are also anticipated for present and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Some short-term cumulative impacts associated with construction, including increased truck traffic, as well as noise, dust, and release of air emissions, may occur if the Proposed Action and future developments like the installation development plan take place simultaneously; however, these impacts would be expected to be short term and minor and would not be significant. These temporary impacts could affect children attending the two nearby schools for the short time construction would be in the area, depending on the time of year of construction. No adverse impacts to children or housing are anticipated from the Proposed Action. Long-term beneficial cumulative impacts on socioeconomic resources and environmental justice are expected due to the continued employment of local workers.

Earth Resources

The Proposed Action has the potential to impact earth resources through increased erosion during construction. All projects discussed (past, present, and future) would be required to comply with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, and Lowndes County Land Disturbance Permit requirements. Under these permits, Moody AFB would be required to implement BMPs as part of the Erosion, Sedimentation & Pollution Control Plan. Implementation of these BMPs would minimize the potential for incremental impacts associated with soil erosion. Since the Proposed Action and present and future projects such as construction, road building, and grading activities are small to moderate in size and localized, any potential impacts would be short-term. The Proposed Action and present and future projects

would not substantially affect local topography, so no cumulative effects related to topographic resources are expected.

The proposed activities would follow proscribed BMPs for soil erosion and are unlikely to introduce contaminants that could enter the groundwater. With the implementation of BMPs and compliance with permitting requirements, the DAF has not identified any cumulative impacts on earth resources from past, present, and future actions.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES

The Preferred Alternative for the Grassy Pond Recreation Complex is to implement the Proposed Action (Alternative 1).

The difference in impacts between Quiet Pines Golf Course Alternatives 1 and 2 is not significant enough to warrant the selection of one alternative over the other based on impacts. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative at this time is to implement either Alternative 1 or Alternative 2. Alternative selection would be dependent on project planning and will occur prior to beginning development activities.

FINDING OF NO PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE

Executive Order (EO) 11990, *Protection of Wetlands*, (24 May 1977) directs agencies to avoid to the extent possible the long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with the destruction or modification of wetlands and to avoid direct or indirect support of new construction in wetlands wherever there is a practicable alternative. Federal agencies are to avoid new construction in wetlands unless the agency finds there is no practicable alternative to construction in the wetland and the proposed construction incorporates all possible measures to limit harm associated with development in the wetland. Agencies should use economic and environmental data, agency mission statements, and any other pertinent information when deciding whether or not to build in wetlands. EO 11990 directs each agency to provide for early public review of plans for construction in wetlands. In accordance with EO 11990 and 32 CFR Part 989, a FONPA must accompany the FONSI, stating why there are no practicable alternatives to development within or affecting wetland areas.

The Proposed Action would result in impacts to wetlands. The below FONPA is therefore presented with the FONSI, pursuant to EO 11990.

Per 32 CFR 989.14(g), there is no practicable alternative to disturbance of wetlands within the Grassy Pond Recreation Complex. The five docks at the Grassy Pond complex are already installed and present within Grassy Pond; therefore, upgrades within the wetland area are unavoidable. Removal of water hyacinth in Lot Pond is necessary to reinstate the native pond vegetation community and would represent a long-term improvement to the wetland environment. Construction of the boardwalk in the southwest portion of Grassy Pond represents the shortest path to connect the Grassy Pond trail without encroaching on nearby privately owned property. Previous discussions with property owners to develop a land-based connection through private land were unsuccessful. Therefore, construction within the wetland area is necessary. As a result, I find that there is no practicable alternative to implementing Grassy Pond Recreation Complex Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative) within the wetlands.

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 (the Proposed Action) cumulatively with other projects at Moody AFB would not result in significant environmental impacts. Accordingly, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The signing of this Finding of No Significant Impact completes the environmental impact analysis process.

Date 17 March 2025

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