

**DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)**  
**FOR THE PROPOSED BEDDOWN OF AEROMEDICAL EVACUATION SQUADRON**  
**#10**

*This FONSI is a draft based upon input generated to date and prior to the public review. The Draft FONSI and Environmental Assessment may be changed based upon public review of the documents. Consistent with the requirements of 32 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 989.15(e), this DRAFT FONSI is being made public.*

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR1500-1508) implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Department of the Navy (Navy) implementing requirements 32 CFR 775, and Department of Air Force (Air Force) implementing requirements 32 CFR 989, the National Guard Bureau (NGB) as the lead agency with cooperation from the Navy gives notice that an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to evaluate potential consequences to the human and natural environment associated with the beddown of an Air National Guard (ANG) Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron (AES), AES #10, at one of six candidate locations.

**PURPOSE/NEED**

The purpose of this federal action is to base a new AES at one of six candidate locations, an action which would include infrastructure improvements and personnel expansion. The action is needed for the Air Force to meet mandatory 'dwell rates' – the ratio of the amount of time service members are deployed relative to the time in their home station. The current nine AESs are insufficient to achieve this compliance; an additional squadron is needed.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES**

In March of 2020, the Secretary of the Air Force (SecAF) announced seven ANG candidate bases for one ANG AES basing action, AES #10: Stewart Air National Guard Base (ANGB), NY (105<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing [105 AW]); Great Falls ANGB, Great Falls, MT (120 AW); Naval Air Station (NAS) Joint Reserve Base (JRB) Fort Worth, TX (136 AW); Rosecrans ANGB, MO (139 AW); Reno/Tahoe ANGB, NV (152 AW); Mansfield Lahm ANGB, OH (179 AW); and Peoria ANGB, IL (182 AW). The 179 AW at Mansfield Lahm ANGB was converted to a Cyber Warfare Wing and divested its C-130 aircraft, so the base can no longer support the AES mission. Accordingly, the 179 AW was removed from further consideration and only six ANG candidate bases were considered in the EA.

The AES mission could add up to 120 jobs to the selected base. An increase in flight hours is not expected for a potential new mission beddown because the AES training missions will utilize existing crew training flights.

Each candidate location has two courses of action (COAs) to accommodate the AES. COA 1 is the initial implementation plan, which identifies the minimum base facility modifications or improvements required to achieve Full Operations Capacity (FOC). COA 2 is the ten-year capital improvement plan, which identifies further base facility modifications or improvements that may occur for the unit to recruit and successfully execute the AES mission set for the next 10 years.

<b>Preferred Alternative</b>	<b>COA 1: Low Cost/FOC Beddown Option</b>	<b>COA 2: Ten Year Capital Improvement Plan</b>
136 AW – NAS JRB Fort Worth, TX	Upgrade Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) in B1678. Minor renovation work inside B4175.	Fully renovate B4175. No new impervious surface.

<b>Alternatives</b>	<b>COA 1: Low Cost/FOC Beddown Option</b>	<b>COA 2: Ten Year Capital Improvement Plan</b>
105 AW – Stewart ANGB, NY	Renovate B107 from an industrial facility to an administration and storage/support facility for AES mission.	Partially demolish B107 and rebuild on site. This would involve constructing a single facility to house the AES, the chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Package (CERF-P) unit, the base Fitness Center, and the Wing Inspector General (IG). The IG and initial operating capacity (IOC) AES admin function would be housed in temporary construction trailers during the project. This COA eliminates nearly 24,760 SF of impervious surface.
120 AW – Montana ANGB, MT	Renovate B41, which currently has approximately 15,800 SF of underutilized space.	Demolish B41 and construct new building on site of developed property. No new impervious surface.
139 AW – Rosecrans ANGB, MO	Supply function in B4 would move to B58. Renovate interior of B4 for AES. Create concrete drive access for overhead doors and replace existing asphalt pavement with concrete equipment pads for relocated equipment.	Continue using B4. No new impervious surface.

<b>Alternatives</b>	<b><i>COA 1: Low Cost/FOC Beddown Option</i></b>	<b><i>COA 2: Ten Year Capital Improvement Plan</i></b>
152 AW – Reno/Tahoe ANGB, NV	Renovate B76, including replacement of roof and fire suppression system.	Demolish B10 and construct new facility on former B10 footprint. No new impervious surface. (Removed from further analysis due to non- viability of proposed site)
182 AW – Peoria ANGB, IL	Renovate B830 for AES mission. B536 and B734 would also be renovated to accommodate personal relocated due to B830 renovation.	ADAL B536 with expansion onto previously disturbed land and turf grass. Expansion will result in approximately 780 SF of new impervious surface.

The No Action Alternative is required by 40 CFR 1502.14(d). Under the No Action Alternative, each base would remain in the current condition, existing facilities would not be renovated or modified to accommodate the AES #10, and staffing levels would remain the same. This will not meet the purpose/need; however, it is carried forward for analysis per CEQ regulations and as a baseline for comparing the other alternatives. This also provides decision makers an opportunity to not implement the Proposed Action Alternative.

## **AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND CONSEQUENCES**

Per CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1500), federal agencies may focus their NEPA analysis on those resource areas that could be affected and omit discussions of resource areas that would not be affected by a Proposed Action (40 CFR 1501.7[a][3]). The following resources were further analyzed for potential impacts.

**Safety.** Under the Proposed Action, no significant impacts to safety would occur. All construction projects would follow applicable safety requirements.

**Noise.** Under the Proposed Action, no significant impact to noise receptors, including residences, would occur. Construction-related noise would have minor, temporary effects on the noise environment in the vicinity of the Proposed Action area. Given the type of construction activities (sporadic, during daytime hours, short-term, etc.), no significant impacts to residences would occur. There are no long-term significant impacts to noise receptors under the Proposed Action as exiting flight operations would not change. Therefore, the Proposed Action would have no significant impacts to noise receptors.

**Land Use.** Under the Proposed Action, there would be no impacts to land use. All projects occur within existing base boundaries and are consistent with existing base land uses.

**Visual Resources.** Under the Proposed Action, there would be no impacts to visual resources.

**Water Resources.** Under the Proposed Action, best management practices (BMPs) required by state and federal laws would be implemented to protect any nearby surface waters and wetlands during construction and operation. Prior to construction, silt fencing would be installed around the perimeter of the construction areas to minimize erosion and to ensure all sediment generated remains on site. After construction, all areas disturbed during all phases of construction and demolition including staging areas will be reseeded with grass species to stabilize soils. Therefore, no significant impacts to water resources are expected.

**Transportation and Circulation.** Under the Proposed Action, installations would experience temporary construction-related traffic from the projects. Localized impacts would be minor due to the volume of traffic involved.

**Air Quality.** Under the Proposed Action, no significant impacts to air quality would occur. A Record of Conformity Analysis is included for Reno, Fort Worth, Great Falls, and Stewart; these bases are in non-attainment or maintenance areas for one or more criteria pollutant. A Record of Air Analysis is included for Peoria, and Rosecrans; these bases are in attainment areas. The emissions for each base, including all proposed actions over the period of implementation, are shown to be significantly less than the de minimis and insignificance levels. Because estimated emissions for do not exceed significance criteria, no further analysis, including conformity determination for Reno, Fort Worth, Great Falls, and Stewart, is required. Dust and combustion emissions from construction-related activities would create short-term air emissions; however, implementation of standard dust minimization practices would serve to reduce the amount of dust generated during construction.

**Geological Resources.** Under the Proposed Action, construction activities would include soil disturbance either through demolition or ground clearing for preparation of construction. BMPs such as erosion controls and prompt stabilization of open earthwork would be implemented to minimize erosion and to ensure sediment does not leave the work site. In addition, soil disturbance activities would be short-term and temporary. There are no long-term significant impacts to geological resources under the Proposed Action. Therefore, the Proposed Action would have no significant impacts to geological resources.

**Biological Resources.** The Proposed Action would have no impact to important or sensitive biological resources. Threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species that could be affected by the Proposed Action are summarized in *Table 3-10* of the EA (no critical habitat is within any of the Proposed Action areas). Based on the lack of suitable habitat for any listed species within the areas, implementation of the proposed action would have “No Effect” to any federally listed species or critical habitat under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) generally does not provide concurrence on “No Effect” determinations so concurrence is not required to conclude coordination under Section 7 of the ESA; however, the various USFWS field offices will have a chance to review this

environmental assessment during public review and may provide comments on the no effect determinations for federally listed species.

**Cultural Resources:** No impacts to cultural resources are anticipated from the Proposed Action. At 136 AW at NAS JRB Fort Worth, TX, the exterior of B4175 was determined eligible for listing in the NRHP in 1994 (the interior was determined ineligible for listing the NRHP in 2022 in consultation with the TX State Historic Preservation Office). On November 7, 2022 the Texas SHPO concurred with the finding that the Proposed Action would have no adverse effects on historic properties as the Proposed Action will not be altering the characteristics that make that building eligible for inclusion in the NRHP. No other architectural or archaeological properties are within the Area of Potential Effect (APE), nor is the APE within a historic district.

For the other installations, no NRHP-listed or eligible properties or traditional resources were located within the APEs and the determination of effect for those installations was “no historic properties affected as no historic properties are present within the APE”.

**Socioeconomics.** The Proposed Action would have a beneficial impact to socioeconomics. Creation of the AES would bring a long-term opportunity for local jobs.

**Hazardous Materials and Wastes, Solid Waste, and Other Contaminants:** The Proposed Action is not expected to result in significant impacts relating to hazardous materials, hazardous waste, solid waste, and other contaminants. All of the alternatives have the potential to reduce the amount of hazardous materials and wastes at the base, by asbestos abatement or PFAS-contaminated soil removal. All hazardous materials and waste would be stored and handled in compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, and the procedures outlined in the base’s HWMP. Offsite transportation of hazardous waste, if any is required, would be done by a transporter with a hazardous waste identification number, licensed and insured to manage hazardous waste.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

NEPA 40 CFR 1500-1508, 32 CFR 989, and 32 CFR 989 require public review of the EA before approval of the FONSI and implementation of the Proposed Action. Notice of Availability for public review of the Draft EA was published on [MONTH DAY YEAR] in the Federal Register and the following newspapers: Reno Gazette Journal, Fort Worth Star Telegram, Peoria Journal Star, St. Joseph News-Press, Times Herald-Record, Great Falls Tribune, and Mansfield News Journal. The Draft Environmental Assessment was made available for review electronically at <https://www.lrc.usace.army.mil/Air-National-Guard-Environmental-Assessments/> and at the following libraries:

Washoe County Library - Downtown Reno	301 Soth Center Street, Reno, NV 89501
Forth Worth Public Library	500 W. 3rd Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102

Alpha Park Public Library	3527 South Airport Road, Bartonville, IL 61607
St. Joseph Public Library	927 Felix Street, St. Joseph, MO 64501
Newburgh Free Library	124 Grand Street, Newburgh, NY 12550
Great Falls Public Library	301 2nd Ave North, Great Falls, MT, 59401

Through the Interagency and Intergovernmental Coordination for Environmental Planning Process, the NGB notified relevant federal, state, and local agencies (listed in Appendix A) and allowed them sufficient time to disclose their environmental concerns specific to the Proposed Action. Comments received from agencies and the public have been addressed and incorporated, as appropriate, into the Final EA. Public comments are in Appendix A of the Final EA.”

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

After careful review of the potential impacts of this Proposed Action as assessed in the *Environmental Assessment, Strategic Basing Process, Air National Guard, Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron*, we have concluded that the proposed activities to beddown AES #10 at 136 AW, NAS JRB Fort Worth would not have a significant impact on the quality of the human or natural environment by itself or considering cumulative impacts. Accordingly, the requirements of CEQ regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508), 32 CFR 775, and 32 CFR 989, *et. seq.* have been fulfilled, and an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

**Commitment to Implementation:** The NGB and the Navy affirm their commitment to implement this EA in accordance with NEPA. Implementation is dependent on funding.

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Chief, Asset Management Division

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Date

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Commander, Navy Region Southeast

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Date