FINAL Finding of No Significant Impact

for Vegetation Obstruction Removal

at Wright Army Airfield / MidCoast Regional Airport,

Fort Stewart, Georgia

FINAL FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

During a recent Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) survey, trees and vegetation were identified as obscuring aircraft approach zones at Wright Army Airfield (WAAF) / MidCoast Regional Airport (MCRA), located on Fort Stewart, Georgia. The runway approaches, supporting both Army operations and civilian use, are out of compliance with FAA regulations and United Facilities Criteria (UFC 3-260-01), and until removed, night flights will be restricted for safety reasons.

The Environmental Assessment analyzes the potential environmental impacts of implementing the proposed action and the no action alternative.

2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide FAA-acceptable runway approaches for the safety of aircraft and passengers flying in and out of WAAF / MCRA.

3.0 PROPOSED ACTION

The U.S. Army proposes to remove trees and vegetation within areas of runway approaches that are considered obstructions to aircraft ascending and descending into WAAF / MCRA. Areas of obstruction removal are identified as Priority No. 1 and Priority No. 2. The Priority No. 1 areas (totaling approximately 112 acres) are of immediate concern to the safety of aircraft approaching and taking off from the runways. The Priority No. 2 areas require removal of trees that will imminently become vertical safety obstructions within the runway approach zones of approximately 375 acres.

Clearing operations in both priority areas will be implemented with erosion and sedimentation control measures in accordance with the State of Georgia.

4.0 NO ACTION (STATUS QUO) ALTERNATIVE

Under the status quo alternative, the work identified for the Priority No. 1 areas would take place, considering it is an activity associated with the continued maintenance of the airfield. The Priority No. 2 areas would not be cleared of imminent vertical safety obstructions as those areas have not been routinely maintained and have not been recently disturbed.

This alternative provides a “benchmark” to compare the magnitude of environmental effects of the proposed action alternative.

5.0 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

A total of three resource categories were evaluated for their potential to be impacted by the proposed action and status quo alternative: 1) water resources (including surface water quality and wetlands); 2) biological resources (including timber resources and protected species); and 3) safety.

Implementing the proposed action or maintaining the status quo will require management commitments in accordance with the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and Occupational Health and Safety Act. Avoidance of a fenced EOD area and prior coordination with the local Safety Office is also necessary.

The Government will conduct periodic inspections of the project site during implementation. If violations to surface waters or wetland areas occur, corrections will be made immediately on site. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued concurrence of the proposed action in an October 28, 2013 letter that can be found in Appendix B. The 14-day waiting period has ended on the notice of intent packet containing the Georgia Environmental Protection Division-approved erosion and sedimentation control plan, and the Installation Safety Office will review and is required to approve the contractor's safety plan.

The Table below summarizes the potential environmental impacts provided the aforementioned requirements are implemented as part of the proposed action or status quo alternative.

AREA OF CONCERN	STATUS QUO	PROPOSED ACTION	CUMULATIVE
Surface Water Quality	Minor	Minor	Minor
Wetlands	Negligible	Negligible	N/A
Protected Species	Negligible	Minor	Minor
Timber Resources	Negligible	Negligible - Beneficial	N/A
Aviation Safety	Moderate	Beneficial	Moderate (status quo) Beneficial (proposed action)
Construction Safety	Negligible	Negligible	N/A

6.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Draft Finding of No Significant Impact and Environmental Assessment were available for public review from August 28 through September 26, 2013 at the following web address: http://www.stewart.army.mil/dpw/PC_NEPA.asp.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Regulatory Office submitted a letter to the Installation on October 10, 2013, suggesting a wetland delineation to define the jurisdictional limits of the proposed action to prevent any unforeseen problems that may occur as the action is implemented. As such, the Installation will conduct a jurisdictional wetland delineation of the proposed action alternative prior to vegetation removal in potential wetland areas. A copy of this letter may be found in Appendix C.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Implementation of the proposed action, with the environmental requirements stipulated above, will not have a significant environmental impact within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act, and preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement Is not required. I have selected implementation of the proposed action alternative as the recommended course of action.

Date: 5 NOV 13

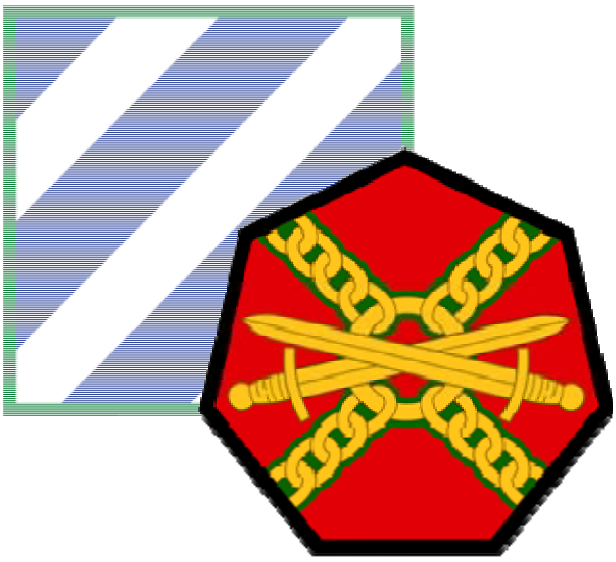
KEVIN F. GREGORY
Colonel, U.S. Army
Commanding

Environmental Assessment

for Vegetation Obstruction Removal

at Wright Army Airfield / MidCoast Regional Airport,

Fort Stewart, Georgia



In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

for VEGETATION OBSTRUCTION REMOVAL

AT WRIGHT ARMY AIRFIELD / MIDCOAST REGIONAL AIRPORT

FORT STEWART, GEORGIA

Environmental Review:

Thomas C. Fry Date: 10/30/2013

THOMAS C. FRY

Chief, Environmental Division

Directorate of Public Works

Reviewed by:

for Jan Danner Date: 10/31/2013

ROBERT R. BAUMGARDT

Director, Public Works

Approval:

Date: 5 NOV 13

KEVIN F. GREGORY

Colonel, US Army

Commanding

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1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Army proposes to clear aircraft safety obstructions at Wright Army Airfield (WAAF) / MidCoast Regional Airport (MCRA) located within the Fort Stewart boundary (Figure 1-1). During a recent Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) survey, trees and vegetation were identified as obscuring aircraft approach zones of the airfield. The runway approaches are out of compliance with FAA regulations and United Facilities Criteria (UFC 3-260-01), and until removed, night flights will be restricted for safety reasons.

WAAF / MCRA is a fully operational joint military and civilian use airfield, and it serves military aviation training as well as access by Liberty County to Level II airport facilities (schedules facilitated airport instead of a non-coordinated airport).

This Environmental Assessment (EA) is prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 32 Code of Federal Regulations Part 651 (the Army's NEPA implementing regulation).

1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide FAA-acceptable runway approaches for the safety of aircraft and passengers flying in and out of WAAF / MCRA.

1.3 SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE EA

This EA analyzes the potential environmental impacts of implementing the proposed action and the no action alternative. Potential cumulative environmental impacts from ongoing and planned construction at WAAF / MCRA will also be addressed in this EA. Environmental consideration of these additional activities are evaluated in prior and continuing NEPA analyses that have been and are being prepared for Gray Eagle activities and joint-use efforts by Liberty County at WAAF / MCRA. The proposed action would be implemented with consideration of these cumulative sensitive environmental resource impacts.

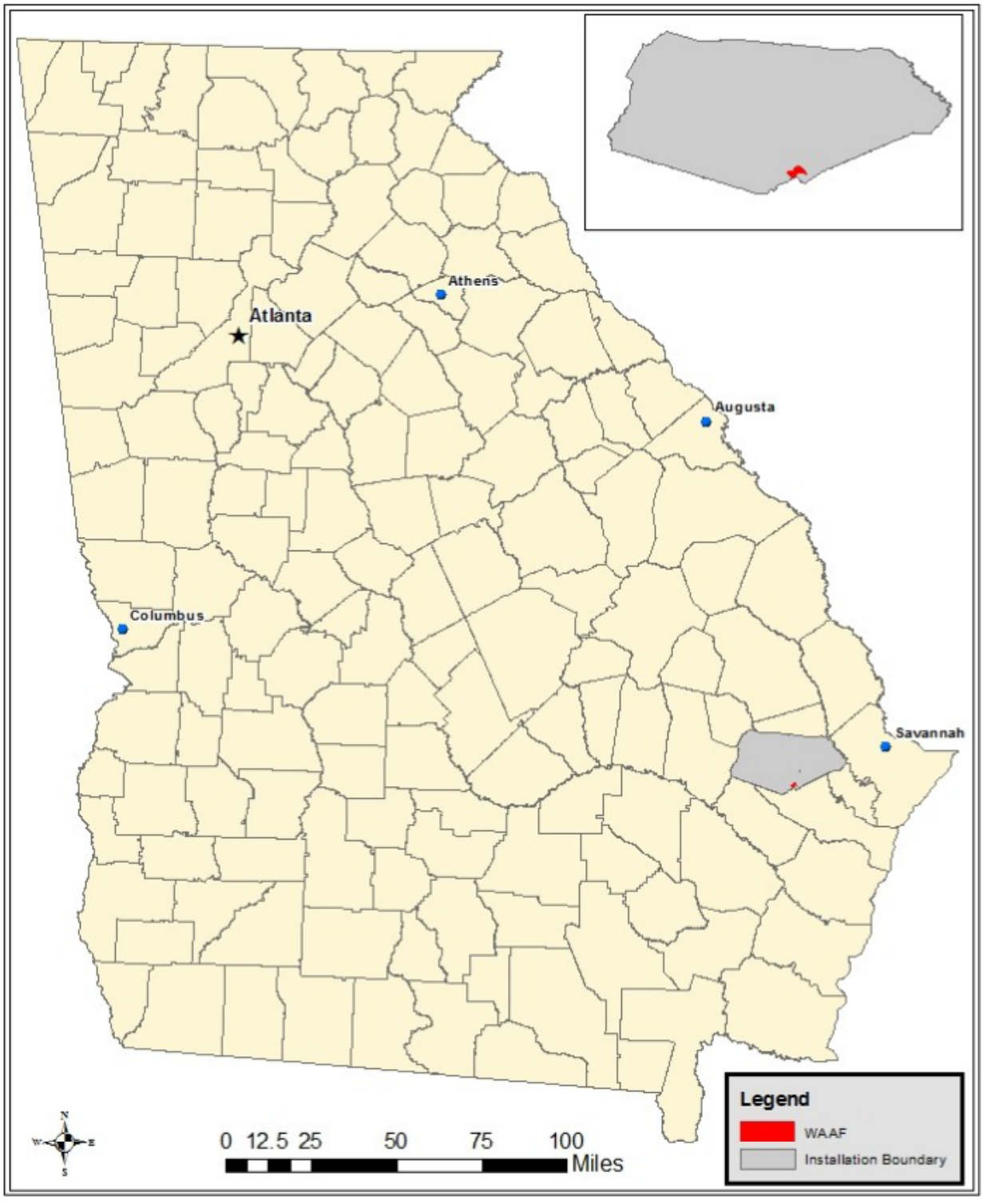

Figure 1-1. Location of Fort Stewart and WAAF / MCRA

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

2.1 PROPOSED ACTION

The U.S. Army proposes to remove trees and vegetation within areas of runway approaches that are considered obstructions to aircraft ascending and descending into WAAF / MCRA. Areas of obstruction removal are identified as Priority No. 1 and Priority No. 2 (Figure 2-1). The Priority No. 1 areas are of immediate concern to the safety of aircraft approaching and taking off from the runways. These Priority No. 1 areas will undergo tree and vegetation removal of approximately 112 acres. The Priority No. 1 areas will also entail grubbing and grading, with the exception of wetland areas, which will be avoided (discussed in Section 3.4.1.2). Merchantable timber does not exist in the Priority No. 1 areas and will not be harvested by the Government. Typically, the Priority No. 1 areas are maintained every 5-7 years.

The Priority No. 2 areas require removal of trees that will imminently become vertical safety obstructions within the runway approach zones of approximately 375 acres. These areas are not maintained regularly and are have not been recently disturbed (historic aerial photographs show that some timber within the Priority No. 2 areas appear to have been removed between 1940 and the late 1950s). Soil disturbance and the introduction of fill material will not occur in the Priority No. 2 areas. Merchantable timber and suitable vegetative biomass material exists in these areas and will be harvested by the Government during the vegetative removal process (see Section 3.4.2.2 for additional information).

Clearing operations in both priority areas will be implemented with erosion and sedimentation control measures in accordance with the State of Georgia.

2.2 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE (STATUS QUO)

Under the status quo alternative, the work identified for the Priority No. 1 areas would take place, considering it is an activity associated with the continued maintenance of the airfield. The Priority No. 2 areas would not be cleared of imminent vertical safety obstructions as those areas have not been routinely maintained and have not been recently disturbed. The Priority No. 2 areas would soon become noncompliant with FAA safety regulations and flight operations for both military and civilian uses would be hindered.

This alternative provides a “benchmark” to compare the magnitude of environmental effects of the proposed action alternative.

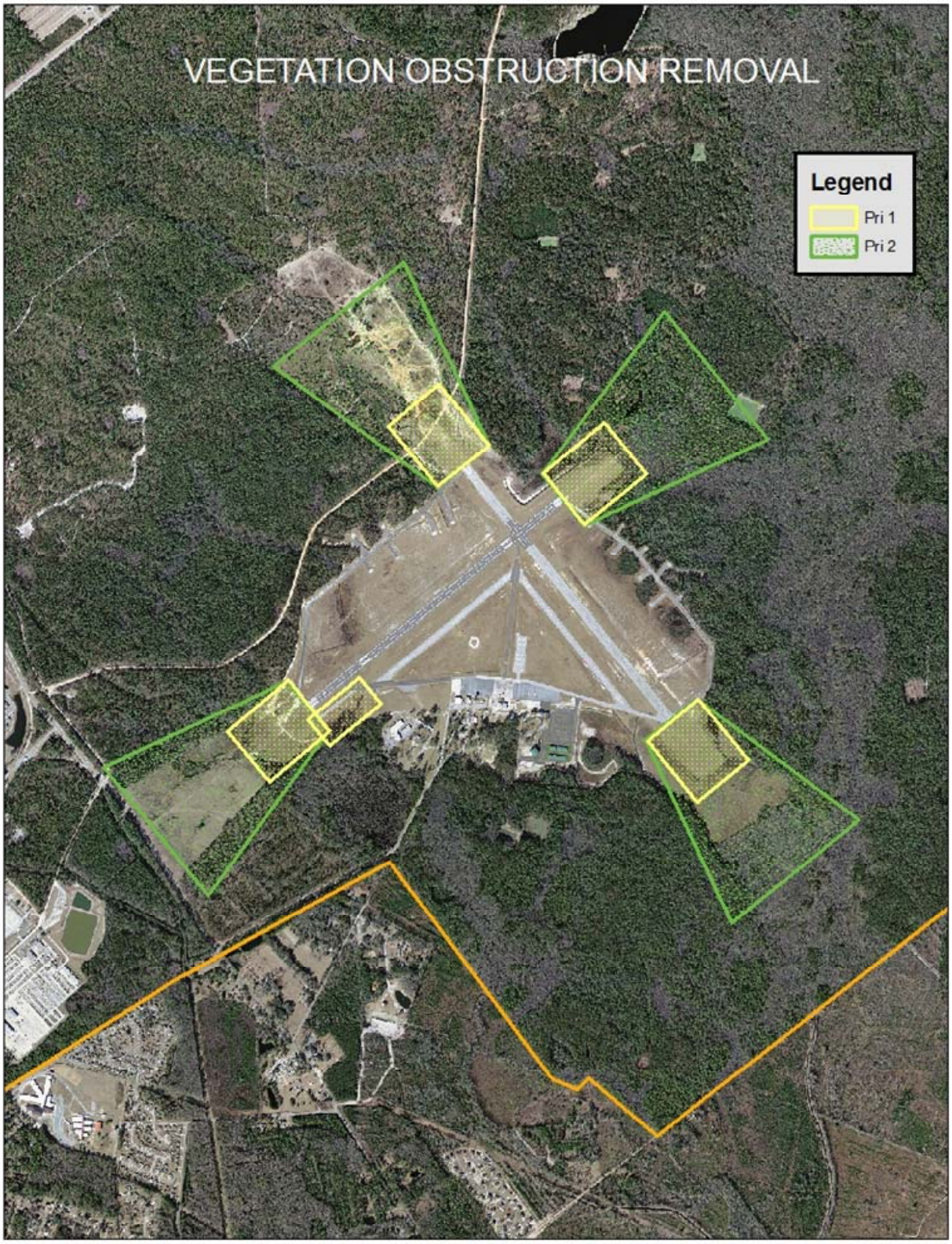

Figure 2-1. Vegetation Obstruction Removal Priority No. 1 and No. 2 Areas

3.0 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the affected environment within the proposed action's region of influence. Potential direct and indirect impacts to the affected environment are discussed as they relate to the proposed action and no action (status quo) alternative, as well as cumulative environmental impacts from ongoing and planned activities at WAAF / MCRA. This analysis enables decision-makers to compare the magnitude of environmental impacts with the baseline (status quo).

The information presented in this chapter is derived from local environmental resource subject matter experts and from previously completed NEPA documentation and ongoing NEPA analyses of current and reasonably foreseeable future actions at WAAF / MCRA.

Nearby activities to the proposed action include facility and infrastructure construction supporting Gray Eagle unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) operation and maintenance and civilian use upgrades including a runway extension and other airfield improvements. See Figure 3-1 which shows the proposed action Priority No. 1 and No. 2 areas, Gray Eagle UAV-related construction (ongoing and planned), and civilian use upgrades (reasonable foreseeable future action).

3.2 MEASURING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The primary purpose of preparing an EA is to provide evidence and analysis for determining if significant or potential significant direct, indirect, or cumulative environmental impact(s) are anticipated from a proposed action and a threshold level of significance (TLS) is surpassed for each resource. Direct impacts are those caused specifically by the proposed action and that occur at the same time and place. Indirect impacts are also caused by the proposed action but later in time or farther in distance. Cumulative impacts "result from the incremental impact of the action" when added to "other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or what person undertakes such other actions" (Canter et. al, 2007).

An analysis of each alternative is conducted to a measure of the intensity of anticipated environmental impacts can be fully disclosed, which allows the decision-maker to weigh each alternative prior to reaching a decision. The levels of intensity of potential impacts are described as follows:

- *Negligible.* This term indicates the environmental impact is barely perceptible or measurable; remains confined to a single location; and will not result in a sustained recovery time for the resource impacts (days to months).

- *Minor.* This term indicates the environmental impact is readily perceptible and measureable; however, the impact will be temporary and the resource should recover in a relatively short period of time (days to months).

- *Moderate.* The term indicates the environmental impact is perceptible, measurable, and may not remain localized, thus also impacting areas adjacent to the proposed action. Under the impact, recovery of the resource may require several years or decades.

- *Significant.* This term indicates the threshold of intensity associated with an environmental impact has been exceeded (i.e. TLS). This threshold is defined by a potentially substantial and permanent adverse change in or loss of resources within the context of the project. In the absence of mitigation or avoidance, a significant impact would trigger the dismissal of the alternative or preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

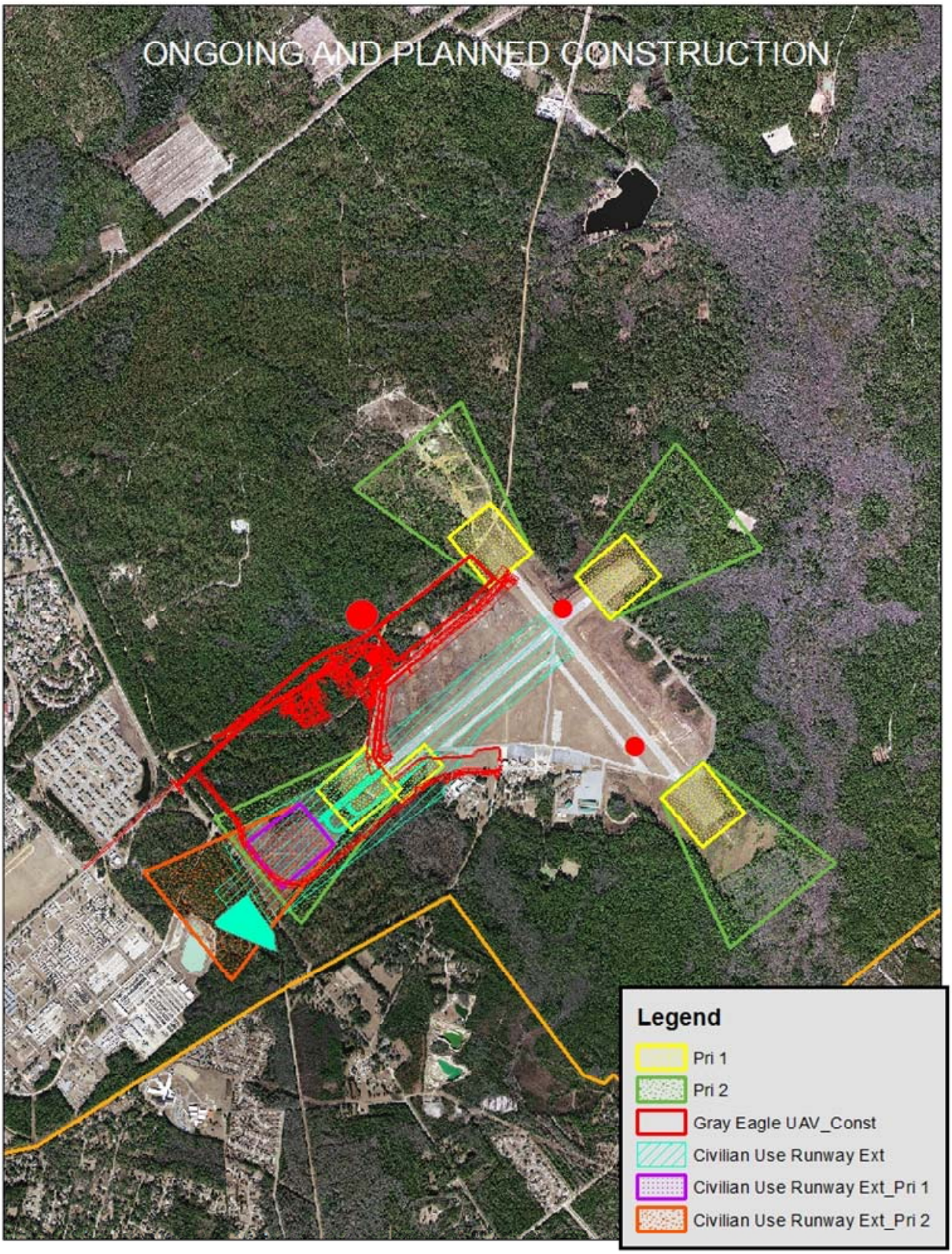

Figure 3-1. Ongoing and Planned Construction at WAAF / MCRA

3.3 RESOURCES ANALYZED

A total of three resource categories were evaluated for their potential to be impacted by the proposed action and status quo alternative: 1) water resources (including surface water quality and wetlands); 2) biological resources (including timber resources and protected species); and 3) safety.

The environmental resources on Fort Stewart which have no potential effects from the proposed action (direct, indirect, or cumulative) include groundwater quality, 100-year floodplains, cultural resources, air quality, utilities, recreation and visual resources, and socioeconomics and environmental justice. The basis for excluding these resources is presented in Appendix A.

3.4 RESOURCE ANALYSIS

3.4.1 WATER RESOURCES

Analysis of water quality generally focuses on the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of water resources. The Clean Water Act (CWA; 33 USC § 1251 et seq) of 1972 is the primary Federal law that protects the nation's waters, including lakes, rivers, aquifers, and wetlands. The primary objective of the CWA is to restore and maintain the integrity of the Nation's waters. "Jurisdictional Waters of the U.S." are regulated resources and are subject to Federal authority under § 404 of the CWA. This term is broadly defined to include navigable waters (including intermittent streams), impoundments, tributary streams, and wetlands.

3.4.1.1 Surface Water Quality

Affected Environment. The eastern portion of the Garrison area, including WAAF / MCRA, drains to Goshen Swamp, which drains to Peacock Creek (Figure 3-2). Peacock Creek is a 303(d) impaired water body designated by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Peacock Creek and its tributaries are identified as impaired because they exceed fecal coliform standards and have low dissolved oxygen concentrations.

Effective implementation of timber harvest erosion and sedimentation control best management practices (BMPs), National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirements, site-specific erosion and sedimentation pollution control (ESPC) plan, and pre- and post-construction BMPs reduce the potential adverse impacts to surface water bodies. The Installation has a resident Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) advisor who provides technical expertise during preparation of ESPC plans. During this process, the Installation's stormwater specialist and NRCS advisor review ESPC plans for compliance with the Clean Water Act (CWA) and Georgia Erosion Sedimentation Control Act. These technical experts consistently inspect and monitor on-going construction projects to assure compliance and that BMPs are maintained.

***Direct and Indirect Impacts to Surface Water Quality*.** The proposed action and status quo alternative will result in minor adverse surface water impacts. The contract execution documents will require the contractor to adhere to a Government design which will include an erosion and sedimentation control plan and Notice of Intent to the Georgia DNR prepared in accordance with the requirements outlined in the second paragraph of

Section 3.4.1.1. Periodic Government inspections will also be conducted throughout the course of vegetation removal and grubbing and grading operations to verify compliance through turbidity sampling and E&S BMP checks, and maintaining required buffer areas of State Waters. Timber harvesting and suitable biomass vegetation removed will also be required to implement and maintain BMPs to minimize / prevent adverse impacts to surrounding surface water. The Government will mandate that violations be immediately corrected by the contractor.

Cumulative Impacts to Surface Water Quality. Off-site activities that could contribute to Peacock Creek exceeding the State's fecal coliform standards and DO limits include septic systems, sanitary sewer overlows, rural nonpoint sources, and animal wastes. Contributing on-site activities include urban nonpoint sources, such as construction, roadside ditches, nutrient loads from residential landscapes, WAAF wastewater treatment plant land application system (LAS), Evans Army Airfield wastewater LAS, Georgia Army National Guard Training Center vehicle wash facility, and animal wastes.

Effective implementation of the timber harvest BMPs, NPDES permit requirements, site-specific erosion and sedimentation pollution control (ESPC) plan, and pre- and post-construction BMPs reduce the potential adverse impacts to surface water bodies. As described above, contractors will be required to adhere to Government-prepared E&S plans and will be subject to periodic compliance inspections. Designs for ongoing and planned activities have been prepared to maintain pre-construction hydrology during and after construction. A site- or activity-specific stormwater pollution prevention plan will be prepared and implemented as each nearby facility becomes operational. Minor adverse cumulative impacts are anticipated when the proposed action or status quo alternative is added to ongoing and planned activities.

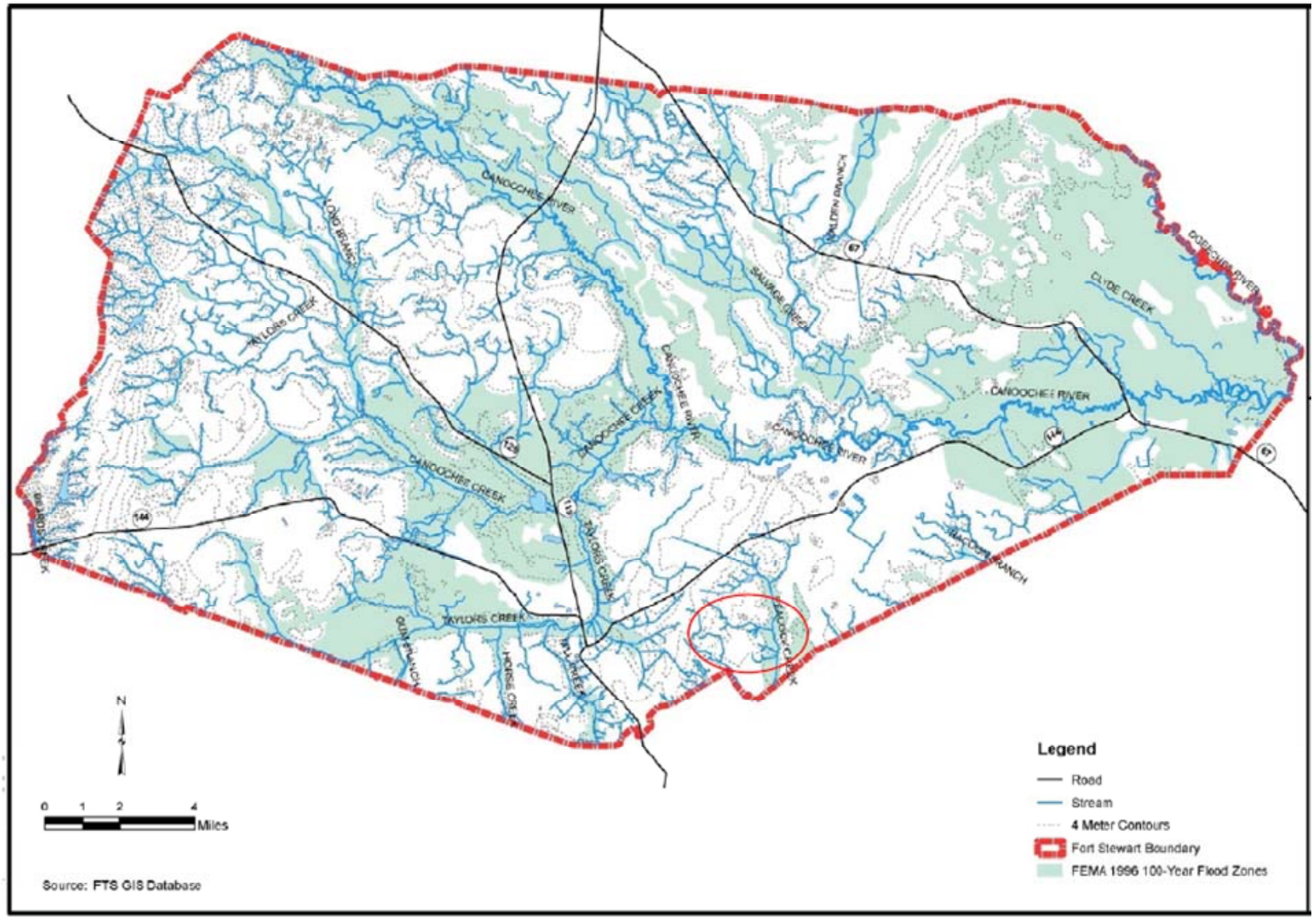

Figure 3-2. Surface Waters in the Region of Influence, WAAF / MCRA

3.4.1.2 Wetlands

Affected Environment. Lands subject to regulation as wetlands under §404 of the Clean Water Act (jurisdictional wetlands) are defined as "Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions." The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) administers the §404 permitting program on behalf of the Federal Government. It is responsible for reviewing proposals and issuing permits to discharge dredged and fill materials into any jurisdictional wetlands.

Wetlands serve as venues of water conveyance (feeding ponds, lakes, rivers, and coastal seas) and flood control, filter and purify water, reduce storm damage by absorbing the strength of violent weather events, and provide habitat, feeding, and breeding ground for a vast array of plant and animal life. Fort Stewart's position on the Atlantic Coastal Plain, with its low elevation, generally flat topography, and high water table, makes wetlands prominent and defining features on the Installation. Approximately 90,000 acres on Ft Stewart are wetlands. Typical wetland types at Ft Stewart include blackwater swamps, bay forests, streamhead pocosins, wet pine flatwoods and cypress gum ponds.

Wright AAF is located in an area of Ft Stewart that contains an abundance of wetlands. Mixed pine/hardwood communites are located throughout the area, indicative of those found along sand ridges in the Atlantic Coast Flatwoods. Dominant canopy species include longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*), loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) and water oak (*Quercus nigra*). The sub-canopy is dominated by live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) and black-jack oak (*Quercus marilandica*), and a well-developed shrub layer and woody vine layer. The canopy within the mixed pine/hardwood wetland areas contain predominantly sweetgum, red maple, loblolly pine, longleaf pine, black gum (*Nyssa* sylvatic), bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), pond cypress (*Taxodium ascendens*), loblolly bay (*Gordonia lasianthus*), and laural oak (*Quercus laurifolia*). The subcanopy is dominated by American holly (*Ilex opaca*), red bay (*Persea borbonia*), and magnolia bay (*Magnolia virginiana*). Figure 3-3 shows the wetland systems within the affected environment.

***Direct and Indirect Impacts to Wetlands*.** Neither the proposed action nor the status quo alternative will involve the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S., including streams and wetlands. Excluding U.S. waters, the Priority No. 1 areas will be grubbed and graded. Ground disturbance and soil compaction will be minimized via the use of handheld equipment (for example, a chainsaw) when entering wetland areas to remove a vertical vegetative obstruction. Intensive mechanical site preparation (i.e. shearing, root raking, soil disturbance) will not be employed in wetland areas. As such, the work described under the proposed action and status quo alternative fall within the purview of Nationwide Permit (NWP) No. 3(c). This NWP authorizes work necessary to conduct this type of activity so long as appropriate measures are taken to maintain normal downstream flows and minimize flooding to the maximum extent practicable. Although not expected if the proposed action or status quo alternative are implemented, temporary fills must be removed in their entirety and the affected areas returned to pre-construction elevations and revegetated as appropriate.

Wetland areas will be flagged / marked on the ground to assist contractors in understanding the physical demarcation of wetlands versus upland within the Priority No. 1 and No. 2 areas. Periodic inspections of wetland areas will occur throughout the duration of grubbing and grading operations and vegetation/timber removal activities to ensure the work does not have more than a de minimis (i.e. inconsequential) effect on the area by causing an identifiable individual or cumulative adverse effect to the aquatic function.

***Cumulative Impacts to Wetlands*.** Cumulative impacts to wetland resources are not anticipated as a result of the proposed action or status quo alternative because direct and indirect impacts are not expected.

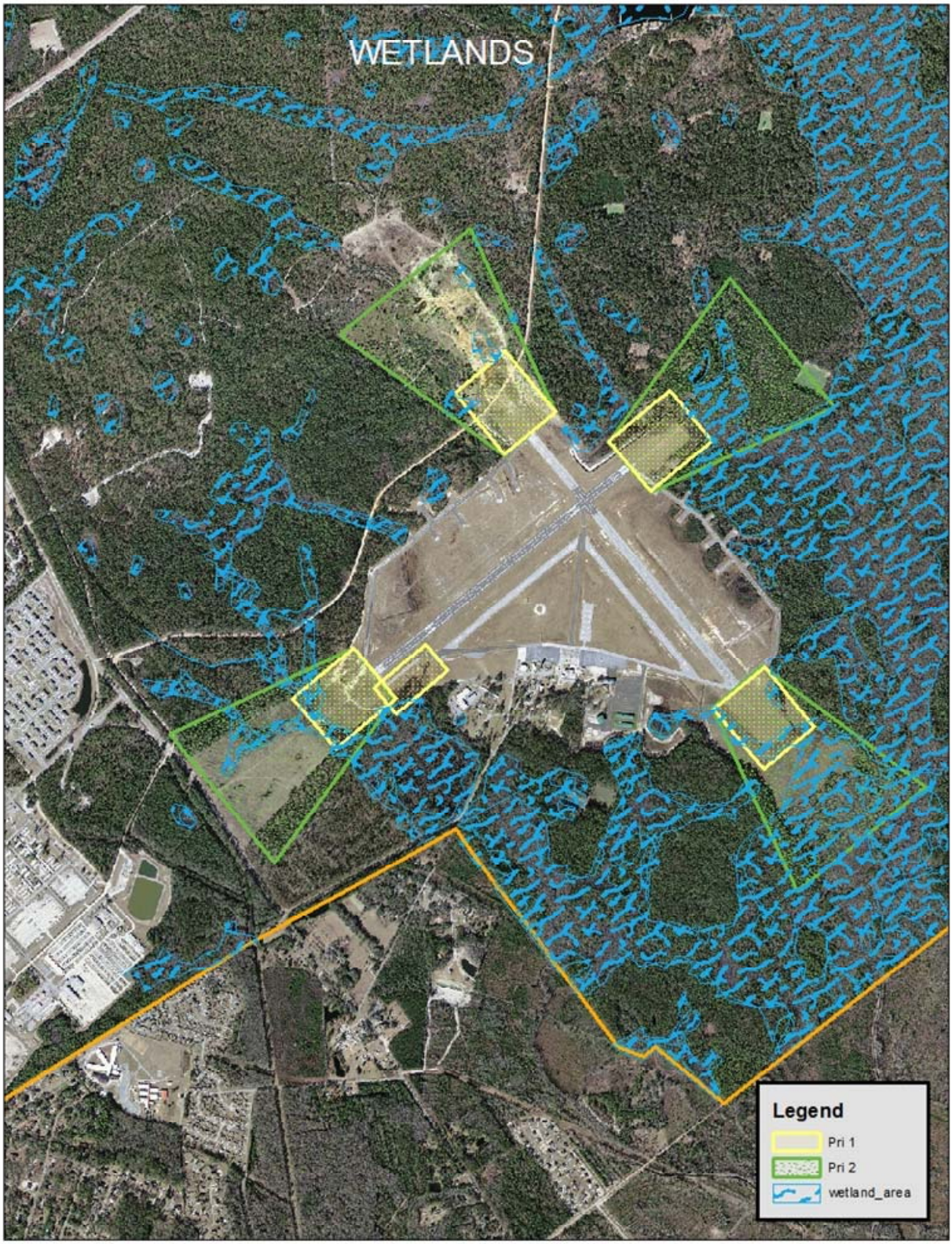

Figure 3-3. Wetland Areas at WAAF / MCRA

3.4.2 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Protected species are defined as those listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act; listed by Georgia's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as rare, unusual, endangered, or threatened; designated as a special species of concern by the Georgia Natural Heritage Program; or proposed for listing by the DNR or USFWS. Of the protected species known to occur on Fort Stewart, red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) habitat is within the affected environment of the proposed action. No other Federal or state special status species are within the area of potential effect.

Fort Stewart supports one of the largest forest resources program in the Department of Defense. The primary purpose of the program is to manage Fort Stewart's forested lands to support the Army training mission, to protect and improve threatened and endangered species habitat, and to enhance ecosystem integrity through sound forest management practices.

The Installation contains Georgia's largest remaining forest of longleaf pine, which is essential habitat for the RCW. All thinning operations include the requirements to favor the retention of longleaf pine over other pine species, as well as provide natural longleaf regeneration areas adjacent to existing longleaf seed sources. Re-establishment of longleaf pine occurs on approximately 200 acres of forestland per year.

Additional objectives include the production of commercial forest products and conducting a chip and haul program, which recycles otherwise unusable timber debris by converting it into a sustainable resource. The timber debris chipped as part of the chip and haul program provide fuel to operate Fort Stewart's Central Energy Plant (CEP).

3.4.2.1 Protected Species

Affected Environment. Red-cockaded woodpecker habitat is found within portions of the runway approaches of WAAF / MCRA. The quality of foraging habitat varies depending upon vegetation in the understory, weather, soils, season, and fire frequency and intensity. The highest populations of RCWs occur on areas with active prescribed burning programs that control hardwoods (frequency of every 2-3 years). Wooded areas near WAAF / MCRA are not actively prescribed-burned due to smoke concerns around the airfield that could increase aircraft safety risks.

Direct and Indirect Impacts to Protected Species. If the status quo were maintained without implementing the proposed action, adverse impacts to the RCW habitat would be negligible and would not require prior consultation with the USFWS. Portions of the Priority No. 2 areas (approximately 75 acres) contain RCW habitat, as shown in Figure 3-4. Implementing the proposed action required informal consultation with the USFWS. A Biological Assessment (BA) was prepared to thoroughly examine these impacts and was submitted to the USFWS for their review on September 11, 2013. Impacts from the proposed action are expected to result in minor adverse effects to the RCW, as it will not impact any RCW forage partitions or critical habitat. The USFWS rendered its approval on October 28, 2013 and concurred that the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect Protected Species. The BA and response from the USFWS is included in Appendix B.

Cumulative Impacts to Protected Species. The construction and operation of the ongoing and future Gray Eagle facilities will remove approximately 60 acres of RCW habitat. The planned civilian joint-use infrastructure will not require removal of RCW habitat. These actions will not adversely impact any cavity or start trees. Total cumulative impact will, therefore, entail 135 acres of displaced or unmanageable habitat for the RCW. These actions cumulatively will not impact any RCW forage partitions and Fort Stewart still expects to continue its achievement of 350 potential breeding groups (the recovery benchmark). As such, cumulative minor adverse impacts to the RCW are expected.

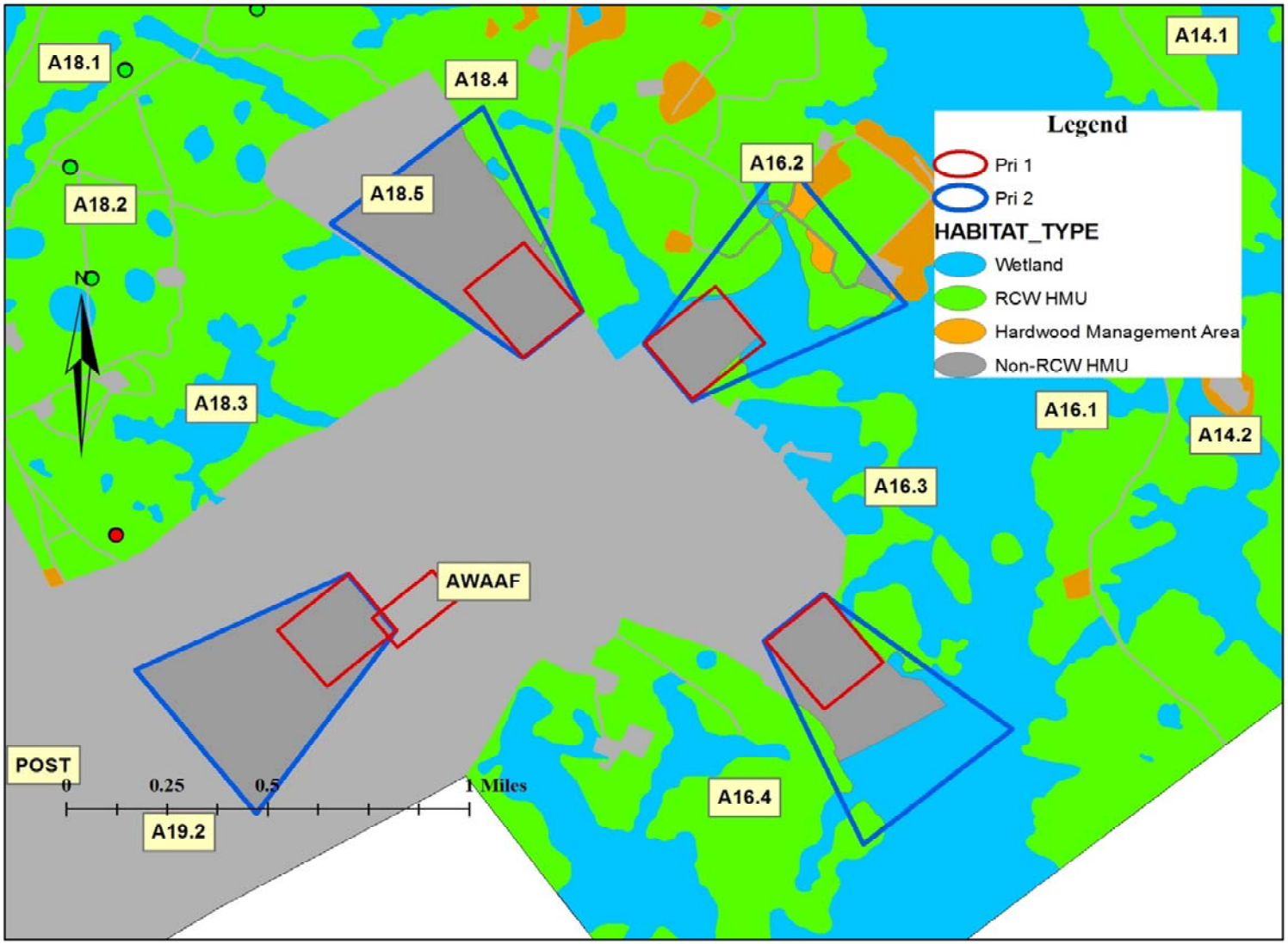

Figure 3-4. RCW Habitat Areas

3.4.2.2 Timber Resources

Affected Environment. The Priority No. 1 areas are previously disturbed. Vegetation consists of scrub shrub and wetland vegetation characterized by a mixed community of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants typical of hydrophytic ("water-plant") vegetation in the southeastern United States, which are those plants preferring a wet environment. The Priority No. 2 areas consist of undisturbed forested areas characterized by upland mixed pine/hardwoods and wetland hydophytic vegetation.

***Direct and Indirect Impacts to Timber Resources*.** The vegetation that would be removed within the Priority No. 1 areas provide no commercial value and are not suitable for the chip and haul program. The Priority No. 1 footprint is also not managed for longleaf regeneration. The status quo alternative, therefore, will result in negligible impacts to timber resources. Approximately 135 acres of merchantable timber exists within the Priority No. 2 footprint and would be harvested by Fort Stewart. Residual timber debris from the harvest would be hauled to an existing designated area within the Installation's cantonment area where chipping operations would convert the material into woodchips for fueling the CEP. Additional vegetative debris from non-merchantable timber removal within approximately 153 acres of the Priority No. 2 area will also be added to the chip and haul program. Beneficial impacts are anticipated as a result of timber sales, providing funding for all Department of the Army forestry and natural resource management programs. Negligible impacts to the forest longleaf pine inventory are also expected from implementation of the proposed action.

Cumulative Impacts to Timber Resources. Cumulative impacts to timber resources are not anticipated as a result of the proposed action or status quo alternative because adverse direct and indirect impacts are not expected.

3.4.3 SAFETY

The "Army Safety Program," AR 385-10, governs Army policies, responsibilities, and procedures to protect and preserve Army personnel and property against accident loss. The regulation provides for operational safety and mandates compliance with applicable safety laws and regulations. Related key effects include and aviation safety (meeting FAA and UFC requirements) and construction safety.

3.4.3.1 Aviation Safety

Affected Environment. The air safety component of the Installation Compatible Use Zone (ICUZ) identifies areas around the airfield where a mishap would be most likely to occur and assess the likely impact of any single accident. The following ICUZ air safety zones exist around WAAF:

- **Clear Zone.** The Clear Zone is an area 1,000 feet wide by 3,000 feet long at the immediate ends of the runway. The accident potential in this area is sufficient to recommend prohibiting any structures in the Clear Zone.

- **Accident Potential Zone I.** Accident Potential Zone I is less critical than the Clear Zone but still possess significant potential for accidents. A variety of industrial, manufacturing, transportation, open space, and agricultural uses can exist safely within this 1,000-foot-wide-by-2,500-foot-long area just beyond the Clear Zone. However, uses that concentrate people in small areas, such as higher density housing, pose a conflict with the safety risks of this zone.

- **Accident Potential Zone II.** Accident Potential Zone II is the least critical of the three air safety zones but still carries some risk of an accident. Accident Potential Zone II is 1,000 feet wide and extends 2,500 feet beyond Accident Potential Zone I. Compatible land uses include those of Accident Potential Zone I as well as low-density single family residential and lower intensity commercial activities. High-density functions such as multistory buildings and places of assembly (such as theaters, schools, churches, and restaurants), however, raise compatibility issues.

***Direct and Indirect Impacts to Aviation Safety*.** The proposed action will increase aviation safety by bringing WAAF / MCRA into compliance with FAA and UFC requirements for civilian-use and army airfields. All flight vegetative obstructions would be removed within the entire Clear Zone, causing a beneficial impact for pilots and passengers during flight operations. The status quo alternative will have moderate adverse impacts to aviation safety. Only 20 percent of obstructions within the Clear Zone would be removed as a result of this alternative. While maintaining the status quo will remove hazards that are in closer proximity to the runway, when compared to the Priority No. 2 areas, flight safety risks from vegetation will not be completely eliminated within the Clear Zone.

Cumulative Impacts to Aviation Safety. Cumulative beneficial impacts are expected from the proposed action. Military flight operations of the Gray Eagle UAV from WAAF / MCRA will also benefit with the removal of any vegetative flight obstruction. Cumulative moderate adverse impacts from implementation of the status quo alternative would

occur. Removing only 20 percent of the vegetative obstructions within the Clear Zone will not eliminate accident potential from these types of hazards.

3.4.3.2 Construction Safety

Affected Environment. Workers must comply with Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) standards.

Direct and Indirect Impacts to Construction Safety. The proposed action and status quo alternative are expected negligible impacts to workers, provided the following requirements are met:

- Contractors are expected to perform work in accordance with OSHA regulations. Before commencing, all activity must be coordinated between contractors and the Safety Office. Contractors must have a Health and Safety plan that is approved by the Safety Office prior to land disturbance. The plan must sufficiently address potential safety risks and response actions, including the discovery of potential military explosives of concern (MEC). It is recommended that all personnel working on site take MEC awareness training / safety briefing.

- Appropriate measures must be implemented to limit unauthorized persons from accessing the site, to further minimize potential safety risks.

- A fenced in Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) area must remain off-limits during implementation of the proposed action or status quo alternative. This EOD area is under a land-use control that prohibits timber removal described in the proposed action. See Figure 3-5, showing this area that must be avoided.

Cumulative Impacts to Construction Safety. Cumulative impacts are not expected because direct and indirect impacts to construction safety are expected to be negligible.

Figure 3-5. Fenced EOD Area Requires Avoidance (see orange block)

3.5 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Implementing the proposed action or maintaining the status quo will require management commitments in accordance with the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and Occupational Health and Safety Act. Avoidance of a fenced EOD area and prior coordination with the local Safety Office is also necessary.

The Installation will prepare a jurisdictional wetland delineation of the proposed action and status quo alternatives prior to the start of vegetation removal within potential wetland areas. The Government will conduct periodic inspections of the project site during implementation. If violations to surface waters or wetland areas occur, corrections will be made immediately on site.

The 14-day waiting period has ended on the notice of intent packet containing the Georgia Environmental Protection Division-approved erosion and sedimentation control plan (E&SCP). The contractor and timber harvesting activities will be required to adhere to the E&SCP and will undergo periodic inspections by Government personnel.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has issued its concurrence of the proposed action and status quo alternatives. See Appendix B for this information.

The Installation Safety Office must approve the contractor's safety plan prior to commencing work.

Table 3-1 summarizes the potential environmental impacts provided the aforementioned requirements are implemented as part of the proposed action or status quo alternative.

AREA OF CONCERN	STATUS QUO	PROPOSED ACTION	CUMULATIVE
Surface Water Quality	Minor	Minor	Minor
Wetlands	Negligible	Negligible	N/A
Protected Species	Negligible	Minor	Minor
Timber Resources	Negligible	Negligible - Beneficial	N/A
Aviation Safety	Moderate	Beneficial	Moderate (status quo) Beneficial (proposed action)
Construction Safety	Negligible	Negligible	N/A

Table 3-1. Summary of Anticipated Effects

No significant or potentially significant cumulative impacts are expected to any resource.

4.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Draft EA and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) were available for public review from August 28 – September 26 at the local public libraries in Hinesville and Savannah and at the Post Library on Fort Stewart. These documents were also available for review on the Fort Stewart website.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Regulatory Office submitted a letter to the Installation on October 10, 2013, suggesting a wetland delineation to define the jurisdictional limits of the proposed action to prevent any unforeseen problems that may occur as the action is implemented. As such, the Installation will conduct a jurisdictional wetland delineation of the proposed action alternative prior to vegetation removal in potential wetland areas. A copy of this letter may be found in Appendix C.

5.0 REFERENCES CITED

Canter, L., Chawla, M., Webster, R. 2007. NEPA Analysis Guidance Manual. U.S. Army Environmental Command. Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD.

Department of Defense. United Facilities Criteria 3-260-01, Airfield and Heliport Planning and Design. 2008.

APPENDIX A

RESOURCES WITH NO POTENTIAL EFFECTS FROM THE PROPOSED ACTION

As mentioned in Section 3.3, the environmental resources on Fort Stewart to which no potential effects from the proposed action are predicted (direct, indirect, or cumulative) include groundwater quality, 100-year floodplains, cultural resources, air quality, utilities, recreation and visual resources, and socioeconomics and environmental justice. The basis for excluding these resources is described below.

Groundwater Quality. Groundwater is not expected to be affected by the proposed action or status quo alternative because pollutant loads potentially found in infiltrating water would be limited, would occur primarily during grading, and would be controlled through erosion and sedimentation control measures. Therefore, the proposed action and status quo alternative will pose little threat to the aquifer water quality.

100-Year Floodplains. There are no 100-year floodplains with the footprint of the proposed action and status quo alternative location according to the 2008 FEMA floodzone map. Therefore, the 100-year floodplain will not be adversely impacted by the proposed action or the status quo alternative.

Cultural Resources. The proposed action and status quo alternative locations have been surveyed for cultural resources and it has been determined that no historic properties will be adversely affected. This finding has been documented in accordance with the Programmatic Agreement between the Installation and the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office regarding compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Air Quality. Fort Stewart's air quality is better than the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Implementation of the proposed action or the status quo alternative would not change long-term pollutant emission rates.

Utilities. Utilities will not be used to implement the proposed action or status quo alternative. A dig permit is a standard practice for ensuring existing utilities that may be found on a construction site are flagged and avoided.

Recreation and Visual Resources. Visibility and visual sensitivity evaluations are based on public viewing opportunities and concern for the potential for changes to the landscape. Although the loss of approximately 400 acres of forested lands would occur under the proposed action, these changes will occur in areas off-limits to the public.

Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice. Completion of the proposed action or the status quo alternative would be accomplished by private contractors. Few to no new jobs would be created, regional population demographics are not expected to change, and the small scale of proposed expenditures would not result in noticeable regional direct or indirect effects to socioeconomic indices.

Because the propose location is entirely within the Installation boundary and no low-income or minority populations or their operations are adjacent to or in the vicinity of the proposed action, environmental justice has been eliminated from further analysis.

APPENDIX B

BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT AND U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE CONCURRENCE LETTER

United States Department of the Interior

Fish and Wildlife Service
105 West Park Drive, Suite D
Athens, Georgia 30606
Phone: (706) 613-9493
Fax: (706) 613-6059

West Georgia Sub-Office
Post Office Box 52560
Fort Benning, Georgia 31995-2560
Phone: (706) 544-6428
Fax: (706) 544-6419

Coastal Sub-Office
4980 Wildlife Drive
Townsend, Georgia 31331
Phone: (912) 832-8739
Fax: (912) 832-8744

October 28, 2013

Mr. Robert R. Baumgardt
U.S. Army Installation Management Command
Directorate of Public Works
1587 Frank Cochran Drive
Fort Stewart, Georgia 31314-5048
Attention: Mr. Tim Beaty

Re: USFWS Log Number 2013-0038

Dear Mr. Baumgardt:

Thank you for your September 11, 2013, letter and attached Biological Assessment concerning the proposed clearing of Aircraft Safety Obstructions in the Approach Lanes at Wright Army Airfield/mid-Coast Regional Airport on Fort Stewart, Georgia. The project area covers 485.7 acres, 321.5 of which are non-forested habitat with the rest forested, in Training Areas A16 and A18 in Liberty County, Georgia. We have reviewed the information you provided and submit the following comments under provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

According to the information you provided, the project will impact only a total of about 76.1 acres of existing red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) Habitat Management Unit. The nearest historical sighting of an eastern indigo snake is 2.5 miles northwest of the proposed project site and the project will not impact any existing gopher tortoise burrows. The nearest historical sighting of a frosted flatwoods salamander is 1.2 miles northwest of the proposed project. The nearest known sighting of foraging wood storks is at least 0.9 miles north of the project site. The nearest smooth coneflower population is 19.3 miles northwest of the project area. Therefore, due to the small amount of habitat that will be impacted, we agree with your determination that this proposed project is not likely to adversely affect any federally listed endangered or threatened species. Also, we believe that the requirements of section 7 of the ESA have been satisfied and no further consultation is required. However, obligations under section 7 of the ESA must be reconsidered if: (1) new information reveals impacts of this identified action that may affect listed species or critical habitat in a manner not previously considered; (2) this action is subsequently modified in a manner which was not considered in this assessment; or (3) a new species is listed or critical habitat determined that may be affected by the identified action.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment during the planning stages of your project. If you have any questions, please contact Robert Brooks of our Coastal Georgia Office at 912-832-8739, extension107.

Sincerely,

Strant Colwell

Strant Colwell
Coastal Georgia Supervisor

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY INSTALLATION MANAGEMENT COMMAND
HEADQUARTERS, US ARMY GARRISON, FORT STEWART / HUNTER army AIRFIELD
DIRECTORATE OF PUBLIC WORKS
1587 VETERANS PARKWAY
FORT STEWART, GEORGIA 31314

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Directorate of Public Works

SEP 1 1 2013

U.S. Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
ATTN: Strant Caldwell
4980 Wildlife Drive, NE
Townsend, GA, 31331

Dear Mr. Caldwell:

Fort Stewart proposes to clear aircraft safety obstructions in the approach lanes at Wright Army Airfield (WAAF)/Mid-Coast Regional Airport (MCRA) in Training Areas Alpha 16 and 18 (Liberty County, Georgia). A Biological Assessment (BA) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Endangered Species Act. The conclusion reached in this BA is that the proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW), wood stork, eastern indigo snake, frosted flatwoods salamander, or smooth coneflower, and will not affect the Atlantic or shortnose sturgeon. Fort Stewart reached its RCW recovery goal of 350 potential breeding groups during the breeding season of 2012 and has enough suitable or potentially suitable RCW habitat to support 657 RCW clusters post project.

If additional information is needed, please contact Mr. Tim Beaty, DPW, Fish and Wildlife Branch at telephone (912) 767-7261. Your continued cooperation and assistance are appreciated.

Sincerely,

Thomas C. Fry
for Robert R. Baumgardt
Director, Public Works

Enclosures

BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Clearing of Aircraft Safety Obstructions in the Approach Lanes at Wright Army Airfield/Mid-Coast Regional Airport

Fort Stewart, Georgia

Prepared By:

GARY C. HART
Wildlife Biologist
Fish and Wildlife Branch
Environmental Division
Directorate of Public Works
Fort Stewart, GA

Reviewed By:

LAWRENCE D. CARLILE
Chief, Planning and Monitoring
Fish and Wildlife Branch
Environmental Division
Directorate of Public Works
Fort Stewart, GA

Submitted By:

TIMOTHY A. BEATY
Chief, Fish and Wildlife Branch
Environmental Division
Directorate of Public Works
Fort Stewart, GA

Approved By:

THOMAS C. FRY
Chief, Environmental Division
Directorate of Public Works
Fort Stewart, GA

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Fort Stewart (FS) proposes to clear the approach lanes at WAAF/MCRA of all safety obstructions (Figure 1). The proposed action will provide Federal Aviation Administration acceptable runway approaches for the safety of aircraft and associated passengers flying in and out of WAAF/MCRA. The project area consists of 485.7 acres of forested and non-forested habitat. The proposed action will involve grubbing and grading, vegetation removal, and the removal of trees that imminently will become vertical safety obstructions within the runway approach zones.

SITE DESCRIPTIONS

Forested habitat within the proposed action area is composed of a canopy dominated by slash pine (*Pinus elliottii*), loblolly pine (*P. taeda*), and pond pine (*P. serotina)* with a mid-story of sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), water oak (*Quercus nigra*), live oak (*Q. virginiana*), wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*), and red bay (*Persea borbonia*). The groundcover is characterized by saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), gallberry (*Ilex glabra*), shiny blueberry (*Vaccinium myrsinites*), huckleberry (*Gaylusaccia frondosa*), runner oak (*Quercus pumila*), and rusty lyonia (*Lyonia ferruginea*). Wetland systems adjacent to the proposed project are dominated by pond cypress (*Taxodium ascendens*), blackgum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), pond pine, red maple (*Acer rubrum*), black titi (*Cliftonia monophylla)*, and red bay. The soil types within the project area are Ocilla loamy fine sand, Mandarin fine sand, Rutlege fine sand, and Stilson loamy sand.

SPECIES CONSIDERED

The following species occur, or may occur, in the proposed action area and were considered in this assessment:

Red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) – Endangered
Wood stork (*Mycteria americana*) – Endangered
Eastern indigo snake (*Drymarchon couperi*) – Threatened
Frosted flatwoods salamander (*Ambystoma cingulatum*) – Threatened
Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus*) – Endangered
Shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*) – Endangered
Smooth coneflower (*Echinacea laevigata*) – Endangered

DISCUSSION

Red-cockaded Woodpecker

Fort Stewart Fish and Wildlife Branch personnel surveyed the project area for red-cockaded woodpeckers (RCW) and RCW cavity trees. There were no RCW cavity or start trees detected in the action area. The foraging partition of RCW Cluster 402 will be impacted by the proposed project (Figure 2). The project will impact 76.1 acres of existing RCW Habitat Management Unit (HMU; 1.2 acres within the foraging partition of Cluster 402), 5.6 acres of upland hardwood, 82.4 acres of lowland hardwood, and 321.5 acres of existing non-forested habitat as

identified in Fort Stewart's Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP; Directorate of Public Works 2001; Figure 2 & 3).

A May 2005 memorandum from Noreen Walsh, Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Atlanta, GA entitled "Implementation Procedures for Use of Foraging Habitat Guidelines and Analysis of Project Impacts under the Red-cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) Recovery Plan: Second Revision" (USFWS 2003) describes parameters and concepts to be considered when federal properties analyze projects that may affect RCWs. There are potentially 5 levels of analysis to consider in the preparation of biological assessments, with the analyses conducted in the following order: 1) foraging partition, 2) group, 3) neighborhood, 4) population, and 5) recovery unit. The results of each level of analysis predicate the necessity to conduct subsequent analyses.

Foraging Partition Level Analysis

The RCW Recovery Plan requires that a foraging analysis be performed for all active RCW clusters that may be impacted by a project using the Foraging Matrix (hereafter, Matrix) analysis tool. Federal agencies must perform an analysis of all affected foraging partitions to determine if they meet the RCW Recovery Standard (RS) of Good Quality Foraging Habitat (GQFH). If foraging partitions do not meet the RS, then the foraging partition must be analyzed to determine if it meets the Managed Stability Standard (MSS). The pre-project foraging partition of Cluster 402 was analyzed and no stand within the foraging partition met the RS (i.e., there were no acres of GQFH), therefore we analyzed the post-project stands receiving direct impact (i.e., loss of 1.2 acres of Cluster 402's foraging partition) using the MSS. Cluster 402 will have 91.3 acres that meets MSS after the proposed project (Table 1, Figure 2). An additional 88.8 acres of foraging habitat occurs in stand 459 that nearly met the MSS. However, it could not be counted because basal area of pines > 10 in. diameter at breast height was 32.1 square feet per acre instead of at least 40 square feet per acre. Because Partition 402 passes MSS, the group, neighborhood, and population analyses are not warranted.

To summarize the impacts of the proposed project on the RCW: Cluster 402 will lose 1.2 acres or 0.6% of foraging habitat from its partition, but will have adequate foraging resources available to it post-project. The proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the RCW. Fort Stewart reached its recovery goal of 350 potential breeding groups during the breeding season of 2012 and has enough suitable or potentially suitable RCW HMU to support 657 RCW clusters post project.

Wood Stork

No wood storks were observed in the proposed project area, nor have they been observed foraging in the action area. Some wetlands will be affected by the proposed action, but the nearest area where foraging wood storks have been observed is approximately 0.9 miles north of the action area in Holbrook Pond (Figure 4). Because of its distance from confirmed wood stork sightings and the implementation of erosion and sedimentation control measures, the proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the wood stork.

Eastern Indigo Snake

The project area does not lie within eastern indigo snake HMU. No eastern indigo snakes have ever been detected in the project area. The nearest known occurrence of an eastern indigo snake is 2.5 miles northwest of the action area in FSTA Bravo 4 (Figure 4). This project will impact gopher tortoise habitat, but will not impact any gopher tortoise burrows (Figure 4). The proposed project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the eastern indigo snake.

Frosted Flatwoods Salamander

The project area does not lie within frosted flatwoods salamander (FFS) HMU and will not impact any FFS pond basins. The proposed project will impact 3.5 acres of the secondary buffer for a potential FFS breeding pond as identified in a FFS habitat review project (Palis 2002). No FFS have ever been detected in the action area. The nearest historical sighting of a FFS is approximately 1.2 miles northwest of the action area in FSTA B4 (Figure 5). Because of the lack of suitable isolated wetlands, its distance from confirmed FFS sightings, and the implementation of erosion and sedimentation control measures, the proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the FFS or the landscape's ability to support FFS.

Atlantic and Shortnose Sturgeon

Telemetry and capture data, which was collected as part of Fort Stewart's shortnose sturgeon monitoring program, indicate that these fish do not travel >2 miles up the Canoochee River or 20 miles up the Ogeechee River from the Canoochee/Ogeechee River confluence. The Canoochee River flows diagonally through the Installation while the Ogeechee River forms much of the Installation's eastern boundary. The proposed project lies >15 miles west of the nearest Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon occurrences on the Canoochee River. Due to unsuitable habitat and the distance between the proposed project area and documented sturgeon sightings, this project will not affect the Atlantic and shortnose sturgeons.

Smooth Coneflower

No smooth coneflowers were observed in the proposed project area and the soils types are unsuitable for this species (USFWS 1995). Fort Stewart's population of the smooth coneflower is located in FSTA F11.1 approximately 19.3 miles northwest of the project area (Figure 6). Because of its distance from the confirmed smooth coneflower population and the acidic soil types, the proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the smooth coneflower.

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

There are no foreseeable state, local, tribal, or private actions that would have a cumulative adverse effect when combined with impacts associated with the proposed action.

CONCLUSION

The proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the RCW, wood stork, eastern indigo snake, FFS, or smooth coneflower. The proposed action will not affect the Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon because habitat in the action area is not suitable for these species. Critical habitat has been proposed for the FFS, but no FFS critical habitat was proposed for designation on Fort Stewart. Other listed species that occur on Fort Stewart have no critical habitat designated, so no critical habitat will be destroyed or modified adversely. The Army did not draw on the regulatory definition of destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat at 50 CFR 402.02 with respect to the conclusions and analysis made in this BA. Instead, the Army has incorporated into the critical habitat effects analysis the conservation of species principals found in the statutory provisions of the Endangered Species Act.

Figure 1. Location of the WAAF/MCRA Approach Lanes, FS, GA.

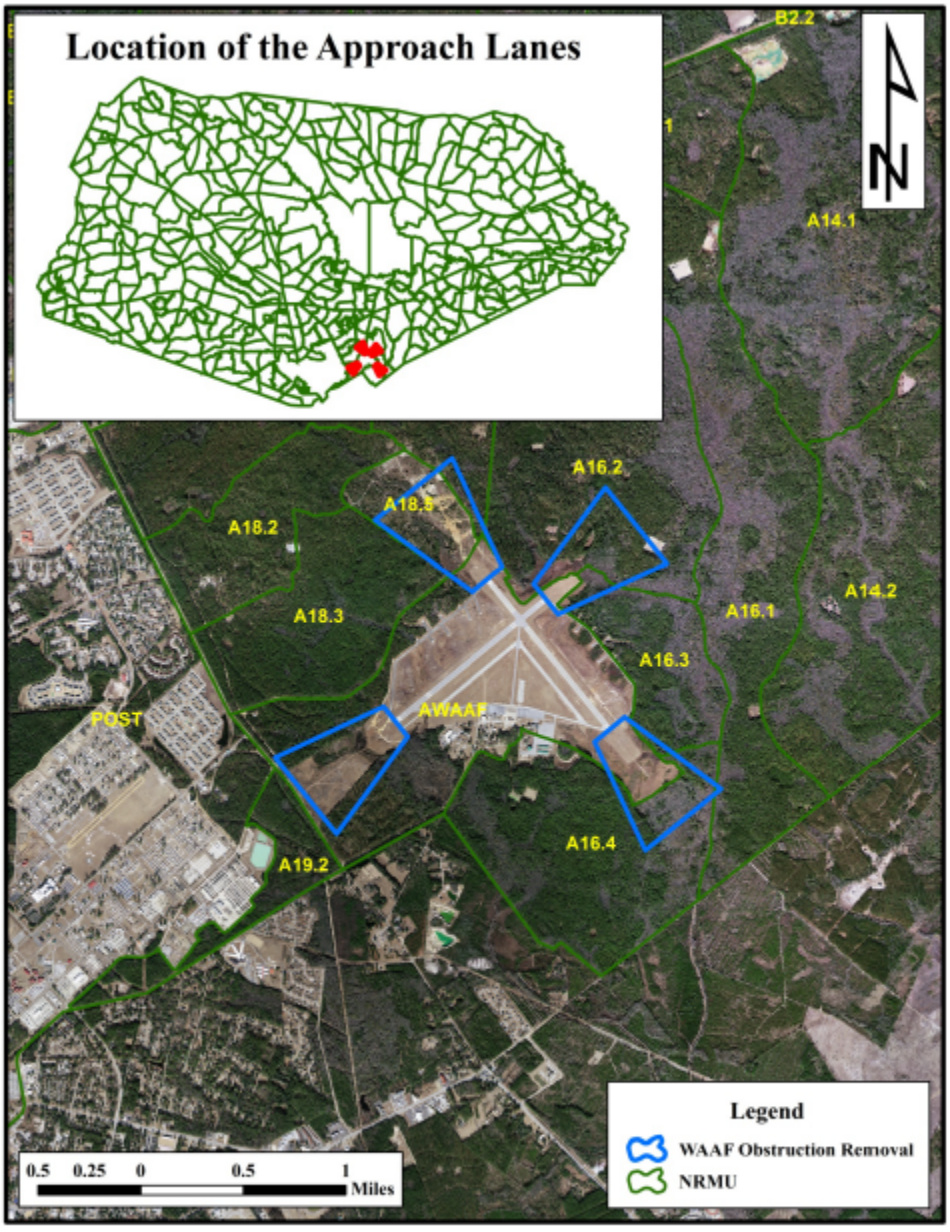

Figure 2. Foraging partition of RCW Cluster 402 and Matrix Stands, FS, GA.

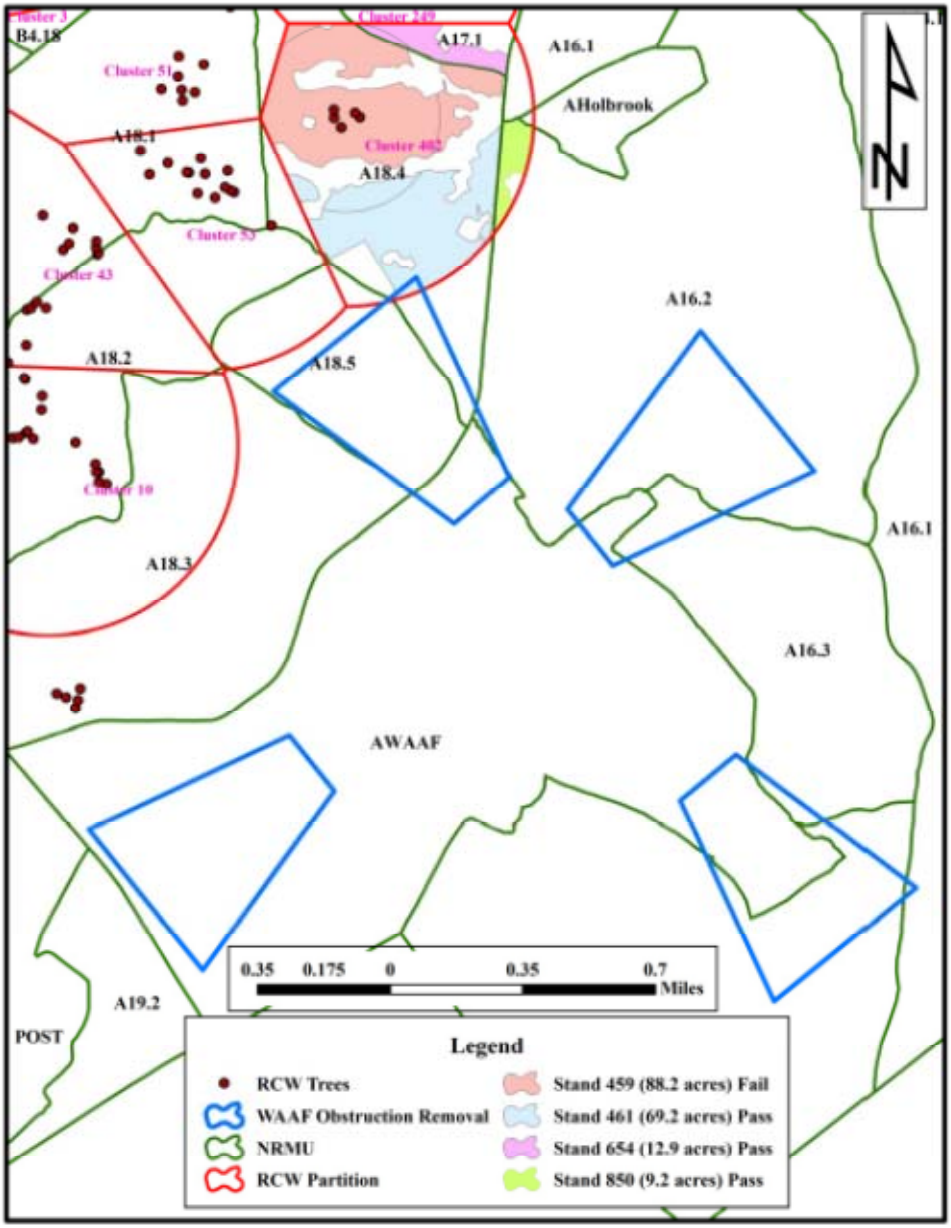

Figure 3. RCW HMU affected by the proposed project, FS, GA.

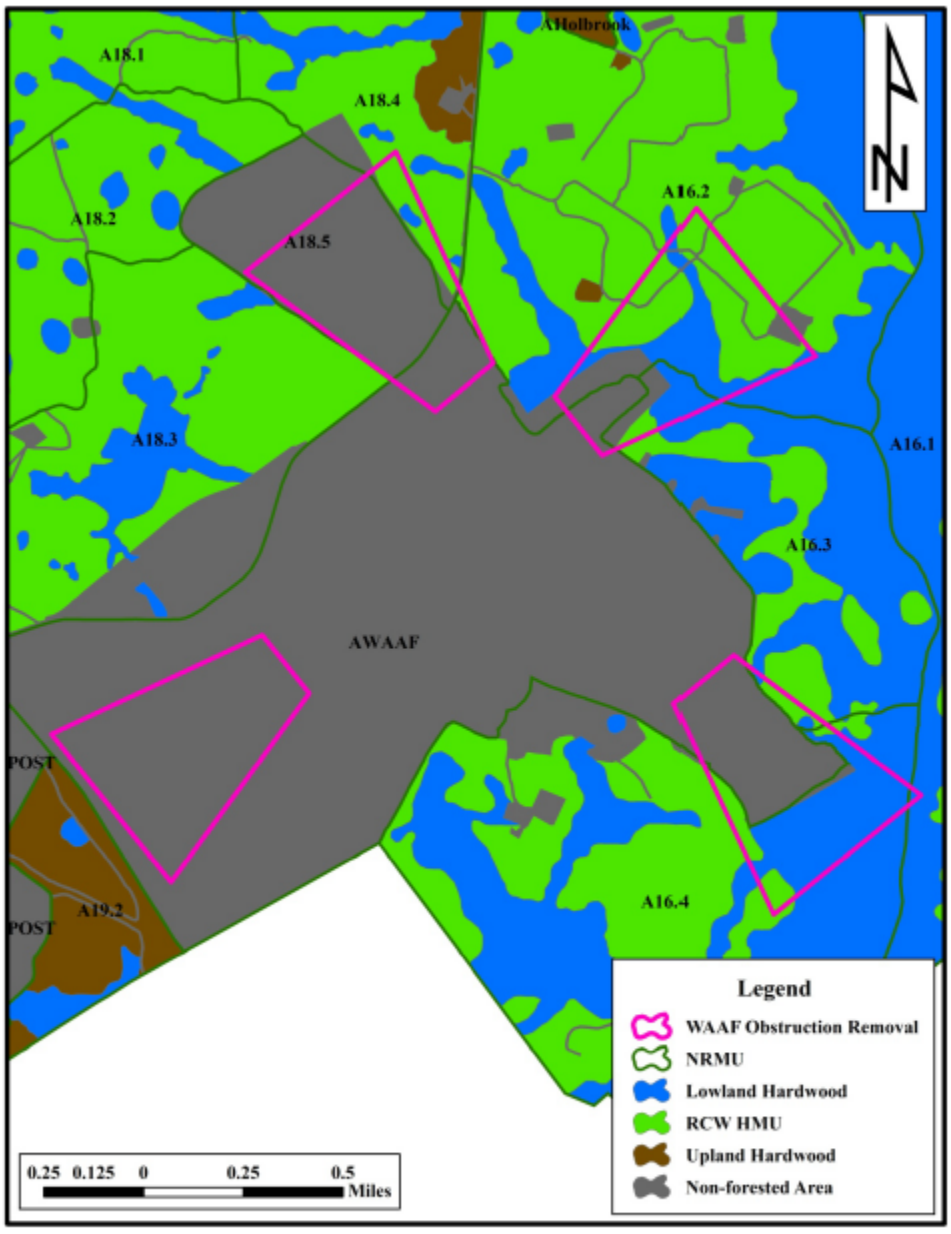

Figure 4. Other TES occurrences within or near the project area, FS, GA.

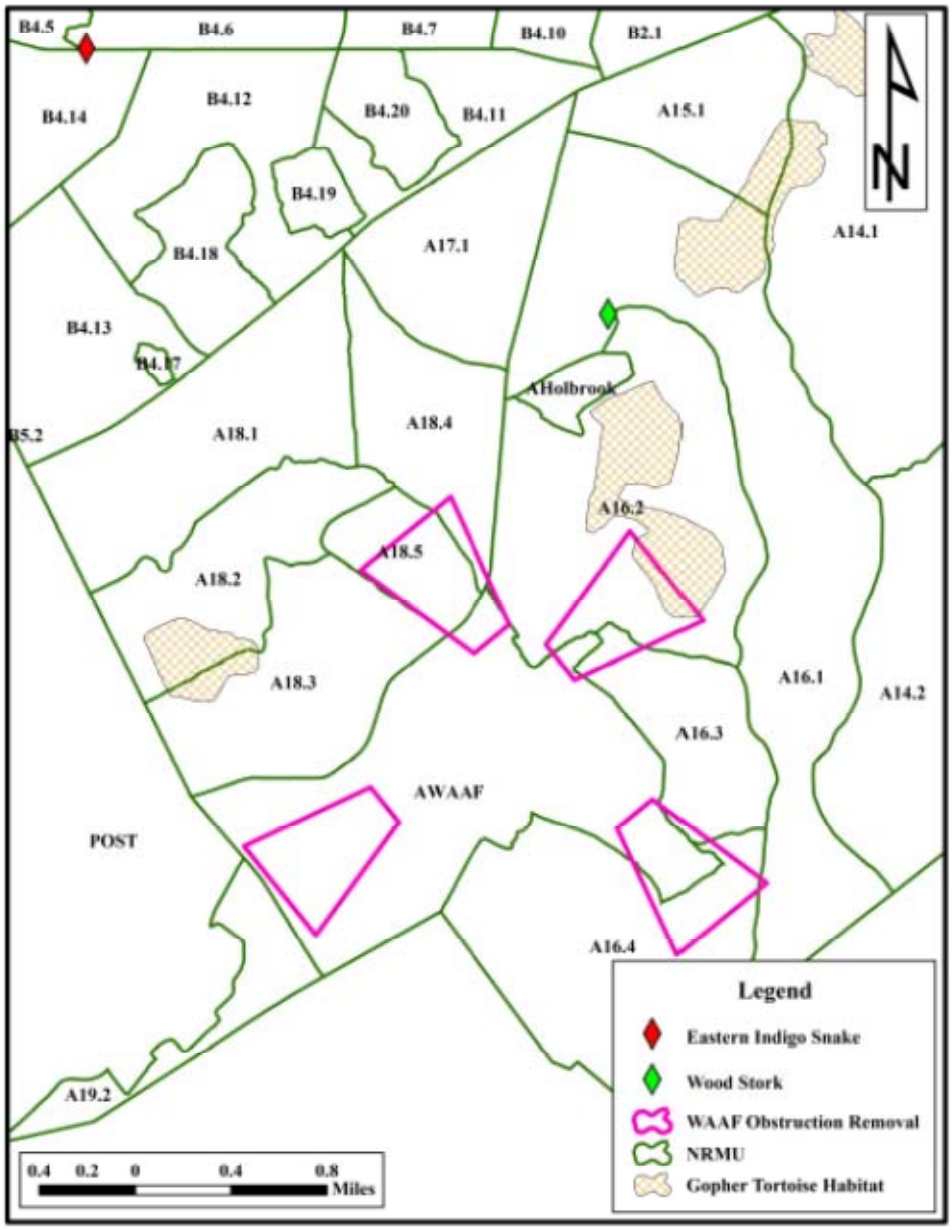

Figure 5. FFS habitat near the project area, FS, GA.

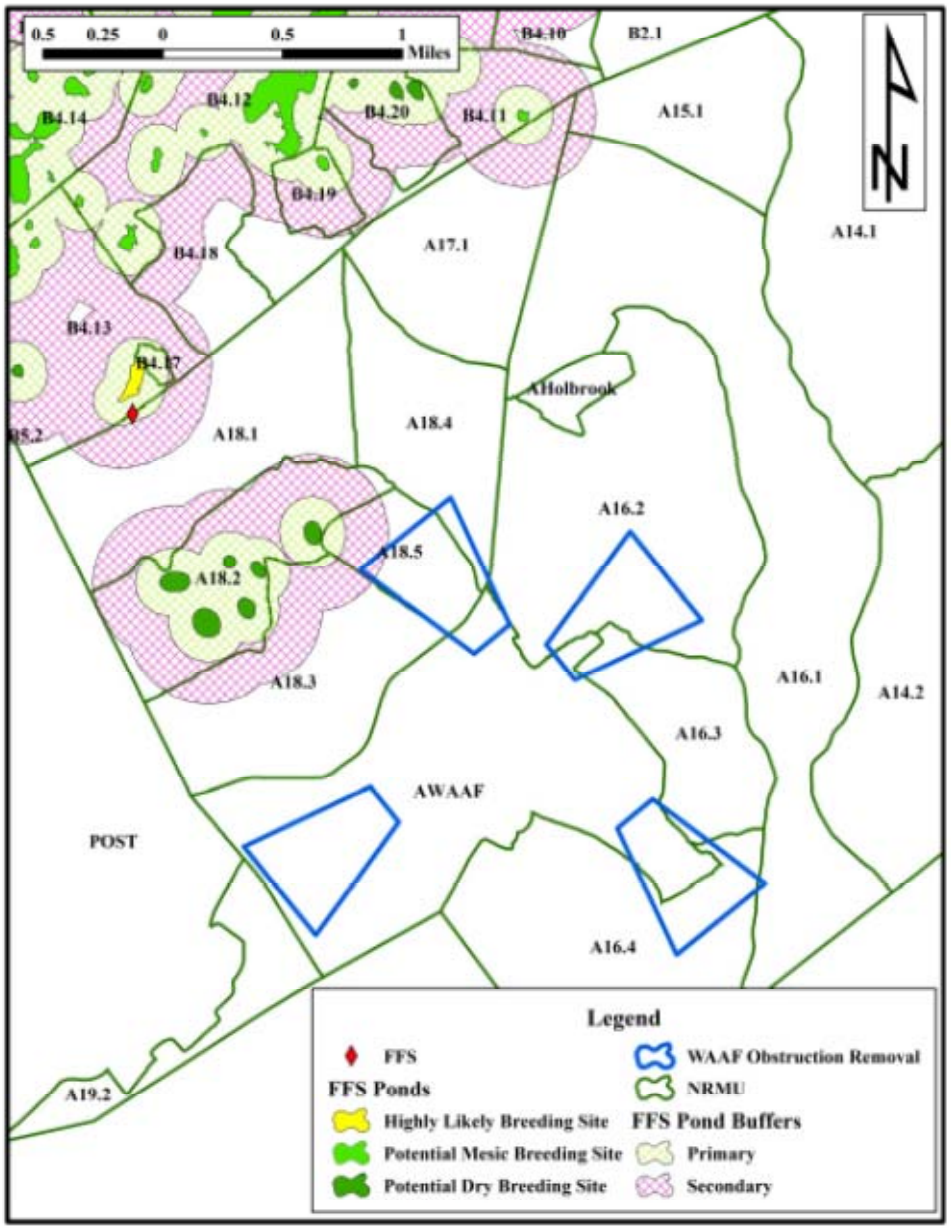

Figure 6. Smooth coneflower population, FS, GA.

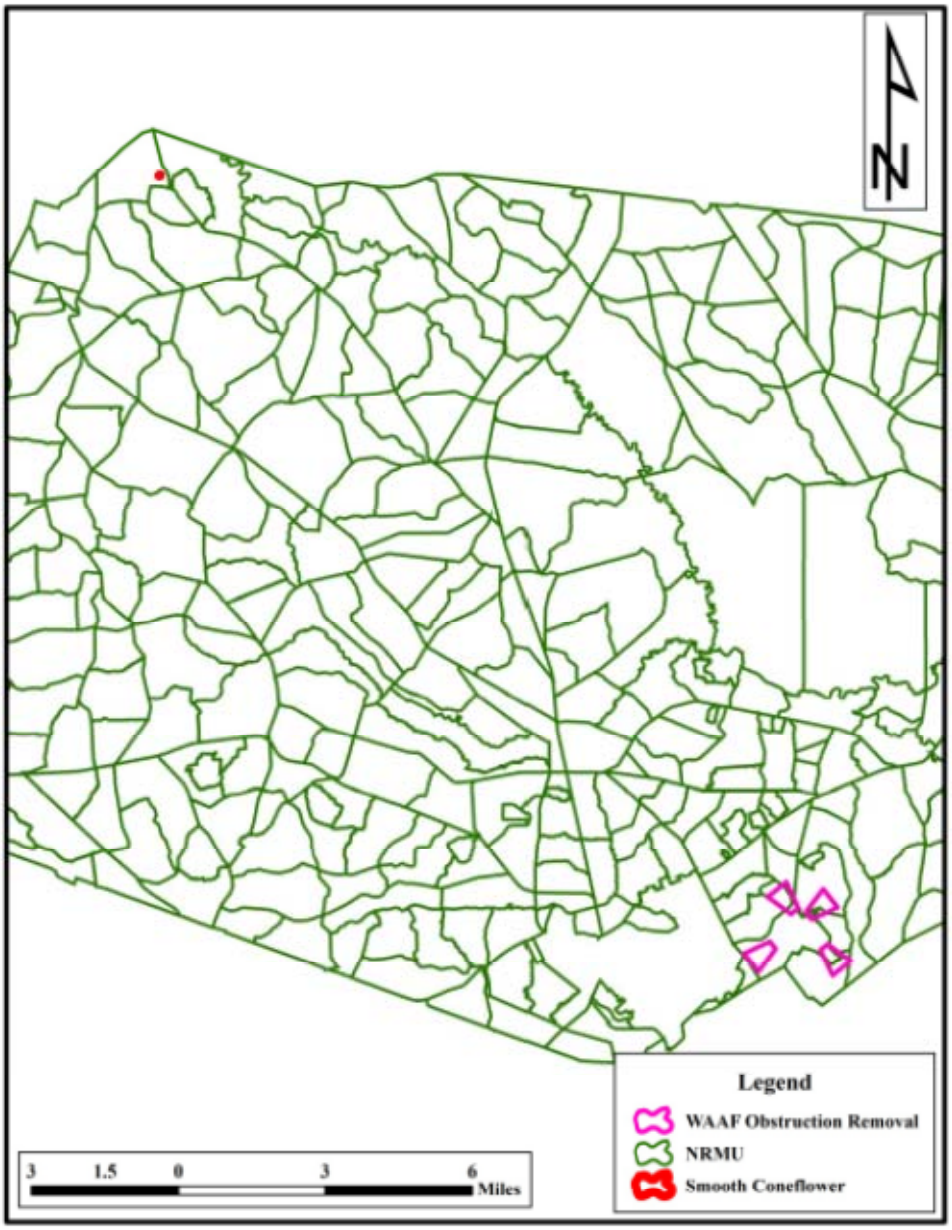

Table 1. Partition Stand Values and Scores for Partition 402 (MSS).

Partition 402 - Stand Values (MS)

08/27/2013
9:18:30AM

Stand ID	Age	PBA >10	PBA <10	Hdwd Midstory	Total BA	% Groundcover*	Burn Interval*	Burn Season*	Total Acres
459	51.00	32.10	1.20	3.00	33.90	9.00	0	0	88.81
461	54.00	41.70	3.70	3.00	47.40	10.00	0	0	69.23
654	49.00	47.50	4.20	3.00	52.60	12.00	0	0	12.94
850	44.00	61.40	9.00	3.00	79.40	12.00	0	0	9.21

** = Recommended Categories*

Partition 402 - Stand Scores (MS)

08/27/2013
9:19:15AM

Stand ID	Age	PBA >10	PBA <10	Hdwd Midstory	Total BA	% Groundcover*	Burn Interval*	Burn Season*	Total Score
459	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass	Fail	NE	NE	NE	Fail
461	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	NE	NE	NE	Pass
654	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	NE	NE	NE	Pass
850	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	NE	NE	NE	Pass

** = Recommended Categories*
NE = Not Evaluated

LITERATURE CITED

Directorate of Public Works. 2001. Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan, 2001-2005. 172 pp. plus appendices.

Palis, John G. 2002. Distribution of Potential Habitat of the Federally Threatened Flatwoods Salamander (*Ambystoma cingulatum*) on Fort Stewart, Georgia. Contract #DAKF10-01-P-0265.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2003. Recovery plan for the red-cockaded woodpecker (Picoides borealis): second revision. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Atlanta, GA. 296 pp.

USFWS. 1992. Endangered and threatened wildlife and plants; *Echinacea laevigata* (smooth coneflower) determined to be endangered. 57 Federal Register, pp. 46340-46344.

APPENDIX C

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS WETLAND REGULATORY DIVISION LETTER

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
SAVANNAH DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
100 W. OGLETHORPE AVENUE
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31401-3640

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

OCTOBER 10 2013

Regulatory Division
SAS-2009-01007

Ms. Amber Franks
Fort Stewart, Directorate of Public Works
1587 Veterans Parkway
Fort Stewart, Georgia 31314

Dear Ms. Franks:

I refer to your August 27, 2013, letter requesting comments from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding "Vegetation Obstruction Removal at Wright Army Airfield (WAAF)/MidCoast Regional Airport." The project site is located off of Fort Stewart (FS) Road 47, at WAAF, within the FS Military Installation, near the City of Hinesville, Liberty County, Georgia (Latitude 31.8849, Longitude -81.5757). This project has been assigned number SAS-2009-01007. Please refer to this number in any future correspondence.

Based on a review of the information provided, it appears that this project may impact waters of the United States, including wetlands. To avoid any unforeseen problems, I recommend that a wetland delineation be accomplished prior to performing any work on this site. By establishing Corps jurisdictional limits, possible problem areas within these sites may be addressed and difficulties avoided during the project development phase. Additionally, if you would like to discuss any of the requirements in regards to our program, policy, and procedures, you may contact us directly.

Thank you in advance for completing our Customer Survey Form. This can be accomplished by visiting: http://per2.nwp.usace.army.mil/survey.html, and completing the survey on-line. We value your comments and appreciate your taking the time to complete a survey each time you interact with our office.

If you have any questions, please call Mr. Donald Hendrix at (912) 652-6210.

Sincerely,

Kimberly L. Garvey
Chief, Permits Section