

Record of Decision
Implementation of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) 2005 Decisions for the Joint
Strike Fighter (JSF) Initial Joint Training Site (IJTS)
Eglin AFB, Florida

- The Air Force will evaluate, in the SEIS, using all available low level routes

Noise

- Limitations will be imposed on operations to RW 19/01 for JSF (F-35) aircraft pending the outcome of the SEIS and related ROD. In developing the noise impacts discussed in the FEIS, average daily events by runway were allocated and the distribution of flight tracks and distribution of daily operations were determined. The FEIS (Appendix K, pg. K-332, Table 3-1) presents the runway usage and allocation for Eglin Main (Runways 19/01 and 12/30), for all three variants of the F-35. Also, in Appendix K, the FEIS addresses the daily operations for each runway onto different flight tracks. Since the over flights are what causes the direct noise impacts over Valparaiso, the Air Force will limit JSF operations over Valparaiso to avoid new noise impacts to the maximum extent possible. RW 12/30 will be the primary runway for JSF operations at Eglin Main Base. The local Eglin AFB flying instruction Air Armament Center Instruction (AACI) 11-201 will be amended to include JSF operations and will include the following guidance and limitations:
 - RW 12/30 is the primary runway at Eglin Main Base for F-35 operations.
 - RW 19 Operations: other than takeoffs, includes only those flight operations necessary for emergencies, unplanned contingencies, and weather affecting aircraft performance limitations and requirements. RW 01 Operations: other than approaches and landings, includes only those flight operations necessary for emergencies, unplanned contingencies, and weather affecting aircraft performance limitations and requirements. These limited RW 19/01 operations are to ensure flight safety and/or protect persons or property from harm.

Transportation

- The Air Force, along with appropriate local and state authorities, will participate in any study for the improvement of existing marginal road conditions. However, any improvement of the current roads, such as widening to six lanes, would not be within the financial means or existing authority of the Air Force. Nonetheless, if such actions do not cause adverse mission impacts, and the Air Force has the authority to do so, it would be willing to grant the necessary right-of-way easements for such improvements over Air Force property as may be necessary to implement road improvements.

Physical Resources

To minimize the potential for impacts to groundwater, wetlands, floodplains, and other surface water resources in interstitial areas, the following management requirements will be employed:

- Do not extract over 500 gallons of water per day from the streams for any reason.
- Do not alter natural flow patterns of streams by diverting water, causing siltation, or damming any portion of the stream or its tributaries.
- Wheeled vehicles will keep to existing trails/roads, except for missions that have been approved for off-road vehicle use.

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Biological Resources (JSF Flight Training Alternatives)

- The Air Force will restrict low-level aircraft flights within 1,000 feet of the eagle nest on Eglin Main Base during the breeding season (1 October to 15 May).
- Develop wildfire operational plans with Eglin's Natural Resources Section to identify high wildfire risk conditions and notification procedures that units will follow to engage fire response personnel when needed.
- Follow Eglin's Wildfire Specific Action Guide Restrictions.

UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

Some of the BRAC 2005 activities are projected to result in disturbance and/or noise within areas not previously or recently subject to these effects. To the extent possible, mitigation measures, such as those identified in Section 2.10.2, will be applied to reduce potential effects to acceptable levels. However, some impacts that cannot be mitigated will occur. Some of these impacts will be considered adverse or annoying to individuals potentially affected. Potential impacts that could occur and cannot be mitigated include the following:

- Receptors (people, animals, and structures) in neighboring communities and beneath special use airspace will experience louder and more frequent overflights than they have in the past. This increase in frequency and intensity of noise is expected to lead to increased annoyance. [As written previously, this said nothing about noise over Val-P.]
- Noise from flight training operations in the MTRs, MOAs, and Eglin Main, Duke Field, and Choctaw Field will have the potential to have a disproportionate adverse impact on affected minority and low-income populations. These flight operations will also have the potential to present a special risk to children as there are several schools and day care facilities that will be affected by these noise levels.
- The number of high-explosives munitions noise events will increase. [Just re-ordered the bullets so that the two noise bullets are adjacent.]
- The existing capacity of regional landfills will be reduced due to the solid waste generated.
- Hazardous and nonhazardous waste will be generated as a result of maintenance functions associated with new training units on the base.
- Munitions fragments and metallic residues will be generated and deposited on the Range as a result of training missions.
- The ability to conduct prescribed burns will decrease, resulting in habitat degradation.
- Land clearing will result in a very small reduction in forested areas.
- Individual species will be affected by land clearing, construction, daily cantonment operations, ground operations, air operations, water operations, munitions use, and pyrotechnics use.
- Stormwater runoff and associated erosion will increase due to construction.
- A number of roadway segments will deteriorate further.

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- Air emissions will increase temporarily during construction.
- There is potential for an increase in the number of bird-aircraft strikes and aircraft mishaps resulting from the increased number of annual sorties for all aircraft at the base.

DECISION

After consideration of relevant operational, environmental, economic and technical factors discussed in this ROD; BRAC 2005 requirements and environmental consequences explained in the Final EIS; inputs from the public and from regulatory agencies; and other relevant factors, the Air Force has decided to implement a portion of the proposed JSF IJTS.

The Air Force has decided to implement a beddown decision for 59 F-35 PAA and the associated cantonment construction that BRAC 2005 requires by 15 September 2011. In short, the beddown decision is being limited to allowing delivery of 59 F-35 PAA until a SEIS is completed. A decision, if at all, on whether to beddown additional aircraft will be deferred until completion of subsequent environmental analysis. Although this beddown decision is being limited to 59 F-35 PAA, the scope of the decision on flight training operations and mitigations for the aircraft being bedded down in this ROD is further limited by the actual aircraft acquisition and delivery program of record.

The initial F-35 aircraft (scheduled to begin arriving in early 2010) are required to train the initial cadre of instructors and students. The number of annual operations will grow incrementally and are expected to not exceed: 6,500 in 2010; 40,000 by the BRAC implementation deadline of 15 September 2011; and 60,000 in 2012, two years after expected completion of the SEIS. In 2010, this represents less than 5 percent of the operations analyzed in Flight Training Alternative 1. In 2011, it is less than 20 percent of the operations analyzed. In 2012, it is less than 27 percent of the operations analyzed. The type of operations will be the same as those analyzed in Flight Training Alternative 1, except that the initial training syllabi may be more limited than the full range of operations analyzed, and/or the aircraft may not be initially certified to perform the full range of operations analyzed for that alternative. The number, type, and location of operations for the full 59 F-35 aircraft will be addressed in the SEIS which is expected to be completed in approximately September 2010.

Due to the potential noise impacts both on and off Eglin AFB that the Air Force desires to consider more fully, there will be temporary operational limitations imposed on JSF flight training activities to both avoid and minimize noise impacts. Those limitations will remain in place until the SEIS has been completed and the Air Force has decided how best to proceed with BRAC operational requirements. These limitations take advantage of the gradual build-up of F-35s beginning in 2010. These limitations are not, however, practical for use on a long-term basis. Ultimately, cancellation or modification of these limitations will be required to accommodate the 59 F-35 PAA beddown, as well as potential beddown of up to 107 F-35 PAA, should that decision be made in the future. Where the maximum supportable numbers of F-35 aircraft might ultimately beddown on the Eglin Reservation, how they could be operated, and the degree to which other mitigations are possible are all subjects to be addressed in the forthcoming SEIS.

Initial JSF basing will provide "train-the-trainer" requirements for the aircraft and associated training operations to meet the essential BRAC capability to establish the flying training portion of the JSF IJTS at Eglin AFB. Until the completion of the SEIS, initial aircraft will be operated in accordance with operational restrictions designed to minimize noise impacts over the City of