

DRAFT
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)/
FINDING OF NO PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE (FONPA)
JACKS VALLEY DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT
U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY (USAFA), COLORADO

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Title 23 United States Code § 327; Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Sections (§§) 1500-1508; and the United States Air Force (USAF) Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP), 32 CFR § 989, the USAF has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to identify and evaluate potential effects of district development within Jacks Valley, USAFA, Colorado.

Purpose of and Need for the Proposed Action

The district planning process provides a comprehensive planning framework to identify future priority requirements and goals for development to ensure successful operations, adequate support capacity, and continued ability of the base to support its assigned mission sets. In accordance with the Jacks Valley District Plan (JVDP), the purpose of district development within Jacks Valley is to develop Jacks Valley into a well-connected, safe and secure, premier cadet training site with multipurpose, collaborative spaces, and maximized natural open spaces.

District development within Jacks Valley is needed to provide and maintain facilities and infrastructure that are adequate to support USAFA, and to do so in a manner that:

- Supports USAF mission requirements and future mission capabilities requirements;
- Meets applicable DoD installation master planning criteria consistent with UFC 2-100-01, *Installation Master Planning*, and USAF comprehensive planning policy and directives;
- Meets all applicable DoD, federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, the Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, and Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

In summary, the district development within Jacks Valley is needed to support USAFA capabilities for cadet training, to provide flexibility for future training requirements, and to improve efficiency of infrastructure and training venues within Jacks Valley while protecting cultural and natural resources.

Description of the Proposed Actions and Alternatives

Proposed Actions. USAFA proposes to implement 28 projects for district development within Jacks Valley at USAFA. Nine of the 28 projects would not, individually or cumulatively, have the potential for significant effects on human health and the environment due to the nature of the action and are not analyzed further for environmental impacts in the EA. Nineteen projects carried forward for environmental analysis in the EA include the following types of activities:

- Facility construction and demolition
- Land modification
- Roads and trails improvements
- Utilities and communications installation.

A total of 3,367,251 sq ft (77.3 ac) of disturbance in Jacks Valley would occur from the development projects included in the Proposed Actions. The EA treats each project as a discrete Proposed Action and evaluates each project separately.

Project D1 Alternative. One reasonable alternative was identified for the Project D Proposed Action. Under the Project D1 Alternative, construction of the proposed indoor firing range would take place south of the existing outdoor firing ranges within the Combat Arms Training and Maintenance area, rather than north of the existing outdoor ranges as proposed under the Proposed Action.

No Action Alternatives. Among the alternatives evaluated for each project is a No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternatives allow USAF to substantively analyze the consequences of not undertaking the Proposed Actions rather than to simply conclude no impact and serves to establish a comparative baseline for analysis. Under the No Action Alternatives, USAFA would not implement the proposed district development within Jacks Valley.

Summary of Environmental Effects

The analysis of environmental effects focused on the following environmental resources: land use, biological resources, water resources, geology and soils, cultural resources, noise, air quality, health and safety, hazardous materials and wastes, and infrastructure and transportation. Details of the environmental effects can be found in the *Environmental Assessment for Jacks Valley District Development, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado*, which is hereby incorporated by reference. The analysis in the EA for each of the environmental resource areas concluded that potential environmental effects are not expected to be significant. However, the EA did identify that a portion of Project O is located within a floodplain. Project O proposes returning an unused road to natural conditions. Under Project O, the existing dirt road would be broken up and mixed with topsoil for native seeding and plantings. USAF would implement erosion and stormwater control best management practices during work on this road to minimize any disturbance within the floodplain.

Based on the description of the Proposed Actions as set forth in the EA, all activities were found to comply with the criteria or standards of environmental quality and were coordinated with the appropriate federal, state, and local agencies.

Notice of Potential Floodplain Involvement

As guided by Executive Order 11988, *Floodplain Management* and Air Force Manual 32-7003, *Environmental Conservation*, the USAF hereby provides notice of the potential for floodplain impacts.

Implementation of the Proposed Actions, and specifically Project O, would have an impact on floodplain resources due to the project location. There is no practicable alternative available to avoid affecting floodplains because Project O would return an existing road to natural

conditions; this unused road is in a fixed location and no other alternatives were identified. USAF would implement erosion and stormwater control best management practices to minimize impacts on the floodplain during road demolition, such as stabilizing construction entrances; covering soil stockpiles; installing inlet and outlet protection, silt fencing, berms, swales, basins, and traps; employing slope stabilization; and using erosion control blankets. After road demolition, this area would be allowed to return to natural habitat through native seeding and plantings, which have long-term beneficial impacts on the floodplain. The only practicable alternative is the Proposed Action, as described.

Public Review / Interagency Coordination

Early public notice detailing the Proposed Action would occur within floodplains was published in *The Colorado Gazette* and *Our Community News* on June 5, 2021 to solicit public concern; no comments were received.

Finding of No Significant Impact/Finding of No Practicable Alternative

Based on the information and analysis presented in the attached EA, I conclude that the Proposed Actions would not have significant environmental impacts. Accordingly, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is unnecessary. Pursuant to Executive Order 11988, and considering all supporting information, I find there is no practicable alternative to the Proposed Actions, including Project O, which will impact floodplains, as described in the attached EA. I find use of proposed best management practices during implementation of Project O includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to the floodplain. This finding fulfills both the requirements of the referenced Executive Order and the EIAP regulation, 32 CFR § 989.14 for a Finding of No Practicable Alternative.

This analysis fulfills NEPA, the President’s Council on Environmental Quality 40 CFR §§1500 – 1508, USAF regulation 32 CFR §989, and Executive Order 11988, *Floodplain Management*. The signing of this FONSI completes the environmental impact analysis process.

RICHARD M. CLARK
Lieutenant General, USAF
Superintendent

Date

Attachment: *Environmental Assessment for Jacks Valley District Development, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado.*