

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

1.0 NAME OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA) FOR ACQUISITION OF RESORT PROPERTY IN INDIAN SPRINGS, NEVADA

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action includes acquisition of approximately 16.9 acres of resort property in Indian Springs, Nevada. The activities associated with the acquisition would include the demolition of all existing privately owned buildings and structures, underground fuel tank abatement, land restoration, and construction of a new boundary fence along the perimeter of the proposed land to be acquired.

Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1, the USAF proposes to acquire 11.75 acres through a partial leasehold interest with a 175-foot stand-off. This alternative would include the demolition of all privately owned buildings and structures, underground fuel tank abatement, land restoration, and construction of a new boundary fence, which may be performed in whole or in part as determined through the lease terms and conditions. The remaining parcel of 5.15 acres, which includes the casino, hotel, and gas station, would not be demolished. Approximately 1.75 acres currently located west of the hotel could be reserved as a public access park, which would be available for use by the Indian Springs community.

Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, the USAF proposes to acquire a partial stand-off easement from the ownership of the property. This 3.2-acre easement extends 125 feet on the west and 65 feet on the north. The work associated with this alternative would include removal or demolition of the existing boundary fence, buildings, and improvements that are located in the easement area, as well as the construction of a new perimeter fence and the installation of landscaping on the proposed acquired land.

Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3, the 16.9 acres would not be acquired, and surveillance/monitoring of the area would continue. In addition, the existing perimeter fence would be renovated, or a new perimeter fence would be constructed. Due to the fact that this alternative would not increase the footprint of Creech AFB, it would not require the removal or demolition of any buildings on the property. However, since the USAF is not acquiring any land, this alternative would not accomplish the goal of increasing the security buffer on the south boundary of the base.

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, there would be a negative impact to the USAF due to Creech AFB's inability to comply with Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection guidelines. There would be no impact to the 16.9-acre property, as it would remain in its present condition.

3.0 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The EA provides an analysis of the potential environmental consequences resulting from implementing the Proposed Action and Alternative Actions. Nine resource categories were thoroughly analyzed to identify potential impacts. According to the analysis in this EA, implementation of the Proposed Action or Alternative Actions would not result in significant impacts to any resource category or significantly affect existing conditions at Creech AFB or Indian Springs, NV. The following summarizes and highlights the results of the analysis that initial evaluation indicated could be affected by the Proposed and Alternative Actions.

Land Use. Under the Proposed Action and Alternative 1, Creech AFB would benefit due to the increased security buffer provided by the change in land use; however, moderate negative impacts would occur to the town of Indian Springs because the project area comprises a considerable portion of the commercially zoned land in the town. Under Alternative 2, Creech AFB would minimally benefit from the small security buffer, and negative impacts to Indian Springs land use would be minimal since the majority of the land would still be available and used for commercial/residential purposes. Alternative 3 would create minimal change in land use for Creech AFB and Indian Springs. The No Action Alternative would create no changes in land use for both Creech AFB and Indian Springs.

Socioeconomics. Under the Proposed Action, there would be short-term positive effects on the town of Indian Springs due to the creation of jobs for demolition and construction. However, there would be moderate negative effects to employment and the local economy because the businesses currently occupying the land would be closed. Under Alternatives 1 and 2, short-term, positive effects would be similar to the proposed action, and since the businesses currently occupying the space would remain open, no long-term impacts would occur. No changes would occur to socioeconomics under Alternative 3 and the No Action Alternative.

Cultural Resources. Overall, there would be no adverse effects to cultural resources under the Proposed Action or any of the alternative actions. In the event that any cultural resources are found during demolition and construction, procedures will be in place to minimize any potential impacts.

Biological Resources. There would be no adverse impacts to vegetation, wildlife, wetlands, or special status species from implementation of the Proposed Action or any of the alternative actions. Disturbed vegetation would be kept to the minimum required to complete the project, and restoration would occur upon completion. Wildlife and wetlands would not be significantly affected since there is very little significant habitat available, and there are no wetlands near the project area. The site does not include known desert tortoise or burrowing owl habitat, and it is highly unlikely that either species would be present in the project area due to continued disturbance and activity in the area.

Water and Soil Resources. Water and soil resources would not be adversely affected under implementation of the Proposed Action or any of the alternative actions. The potential effects on water quality would be mitigated by using standard construction practices. Soil at the site would be temporarily disturbed, but no long-term effects would occur. Therefore, any effects to water and soil resources would be considered minimal.

Air Quality. Under the Proposed Action or any of the alternative actions, there would not be any significant effects to air quality. Both Indian Springs and Creech AFB are considered in attainment for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) criteria air pollutants. Since the estimated emissions during demolition and construction would be below NAAQS, effects to air quality are considered minimal.

Hazardous Materials and Waste. There is a possibility of short-term negative effects to hazardous materials and waste due to the presence of asbestos containing material

(ACM) and underground storage tanks (USTs) under the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2. Since ACM is present on site, an asbestos abatement professional should be on-site to ensure proper removal and disposal. In addition, the removal of the USTs should be performed by professionals to ensure the site is not contaminated by the contents. With careful action by professionals, any environmental effects due to hazardous materials would be minimal. No impacts would occur under Alternative 3 and the No Action Alternative.

Safety. Under the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, Alternative 2, and Alternative 3, there are potential short-term safety concerns during demolition and construction. However, by coordinating with the Creech AFB safety officer and following USAF and OSHA safety requirements, any effects to compromise safety would be minimal.

Noise. Noise levels would not be adversely affected by the implementation of the Proposed Action and the alternative actions. The demolition and construction activities would increase the noise levels; however, this increase would be short-term and would have a minimal effect on noise levels. In the long-term, noise levels at the project site would remain unchanged.

4.0 FINDINGS

Finding of No Significant Impact: Based on information and analysis presented in the EA, conducted in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act as amended, the Council on Environmental Quality regulations, and USAF implementing regulations set forth in 32 CFR 989, *Environmental Impact Analysis Process*, and review of the public and agency comments submitted during the 30-day public comment period, I conclude that implementation of the Proposed Action and any of the alternative actions would not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human or natural environment. For these reasons, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is warranted and preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for this action.



STEVEN D. GARLAND
Colonel, USAF
Commander

14 DEC 11
Date