

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

**ADOPTION OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE'S ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE AIRSPACE INITIATIVE
FOR MOODY AIR FORCE BASE, GEORGIA**

AND

**RECORD OF DECISION FOR FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION ACTION TO
ESTABLISH AND MODIFY SPECIAL USE AIRSPACE AT MOODY AIRSPACE
COMPLEX**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document serves as the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) adoption of the Department of the Air Force (DAF) Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Comprehensive Airspace Initiative for Moody Air Force Base, Georgia (GA) pursuant to section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [C.F.R.] Parts 1500-1508) implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA, FAA Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*, FAA Order JO 7400.2P, "*Procedures for Handling Airspace Matters*," and other applicable agency guidance. This document has been prepared in accordance with FAA Order 1050.1F.

The Moody Air Force Base (AFB) EIS was published on May 19, 2023, and the Record of Decision (ROD) was issued on August 15, 2023.

The mission of the Air Force is to fly, fight, and win. To accomplish this mission, combat pilots and aircrews must adequately train to attain and sustain proficiency on tasks they must execute to survive and win during times of conflict. Aircrews at Moody AFB require training operations at low altitude to gain operational proficiency and meet their mission objectives for combat readiness.

Moody AFB is the home for the 23d Wing (23 WG). The current mission of the 23 WG at Moody AFB is to organize, train, and equip the Flying Tigers to employ and execute the global precision attack, personnel recovery (PR), and agile combat support service core functions to meet worldwide Combatant Commander requirements. The 23 WG organizes, trains, and employs combat-ready A-10C, HC-130J, and HH-60G aircrews and the Guardian Angel Weapons System and consists of approximately 5,500 military and civilian personnel, including a geographically separated unit in Florida. At Moody AFB, the 23 WG comprises the following five Groups located at Moody AFB, Georgia: 347th Rescue Group (RQG); 23rd Fighter Group (FP); 23rd Mission Support Group; 23rd Medical Group; and 23rd Maintenance Group.

When active, the Moody Airspace Complex's low-altitude MOAs and Restricted Areas operate constantly with aircraft continually rotating into and out of the Special Use Airspace (SUA) to accomplish as much training as possible in a given day. When unable to operate in the Moody Airspace Complex low-altitude SUA, aircrews conduct modified training maneuvers in the mid-altitude MOAs and Restricted Areas. Although there is cost and effort expended toward this training in the mid-altitude SUA, minimal benefits are realized from these training operations in promoting mission proficiency because modified training at higher altitudes does not adequately simulate real-world combat scenarios. The low-altitude MOAs to be established and modified pursuant to this ROD would accommodate effective low-altitude flight training for Moody AFB aircrews to achieve real-world combat readiness and survivability. The low-altitude MOAs would more appropriately align with the training missions at Moody AFB.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Moody AFB is located in south-central Georgia near Valdosta in Lowndes County. The Moody Airspace Complex, which overlies Moody AFB and portions of south Georgia and north Florida, supports training in the SUA associated with the Moody Airspace Complex for Close Air Support (CAS) and Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) missions for combat support of US forces and allies. The Moody Airspace Complex overlies all or a portion of the following 28 counties in Georgia (Atkinson, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brooks, Clinch, Coffee, Colquitt, Cook, Crisp, Dooly, Dougherty, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lee, Lowndes, Mitchell, Sumter, Thomas, Tift, Turner, Ware, Wilcox, and Worth) and Florida (Columbia, Hamilton, Jefferson, and Madison).

The Moody Airspace Complex consists of 11 MOAs; Restricted Areas R-3008A, R-3008B, R-3008C, and R-3008D; and Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspace. The complex supports training for CAS and CSAR missions for combat support of United States (US) forces and allies. From 1990 to 2018, the focus of US Air Force training operations was against low-threat enemies, which kept most aircraft training above 10,000 feet above ground level (AGL) to avoid the threat. The National Defense Strategy of 2018, however, refocused the DAF's training to engage near-peer, high-threat enemies. This requires training at low altitudes to avoid the threat envelope of modern surface-to-air missiles. Currently, 67 percent of the total training operations for Moody AFB units occur in low-altitude airspace (less than 8,000 feet mean sea level [MSL]), but low-altitude airspace makes up only 17 percent of the Moody Airspace Complex. For some units, between 85 and 90 percent of their mission training requirements are conducted at altitudes too low to be accommodated by the majority of SUA in the Moody Airspace Complex. This severely limits these units' abilities to meet their proficiency requirements. To accommodate this, the various units operating at Moody AFB either vie for the opportunity to train in the limited Moody Airspace Complex low-altitude MOAs and Restricted Areas or attempt to schedule low-altitude SUA at other installations in the southeast region where the units based at those locations have mission priority over the Moody AFB training needs.

The FAA has evaluated the Moody AFB EIS for the DAF's implementation of the comprehensive airspace initiative at Moody AFB, Georgia. This FAA Record of Decision adopts the Moody AFB EIS and takes full responsibility for the scope and content that addresses the proposed comprehensive airspace initiative for Moody AFB, Georgia.

2.1 Environmental Impact Statement Process

Having *jurisdiction by law* over the National Air Space (NAS), the FAA performs its role as a cooperating agency for the establishment and designation of SUA in accordance with the NEPA implementing regulations at 40 CFR Section 1501.8(a) on cooperating agencies; FAA's NEPA implementing Order 1050.1F, paragraph 8-2 – *Adoption of Other Agencies' NEPA Documents*; and FAA Order 7400.2, Chapters 21 and 32, Appendix 8 – *FAA Special Use Airspace Environmental Processing Procedures*, which outlines the process by which the FAA works with the DoD on projects involving DoD use of SUA, and the guidelines set forth in the October 17, 2019 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between FAA and DoD *Concerning Environmental Review of Special Use Airspace Actions* (Appendix 7 to FAA Order 7400.2, Chapter 32), and. See, https://www.faa.gov/documentLibrary/media/Order/7400.2P_Basic_dtd_4-20-23--COPY_FINAL.pdf and https://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/orders_notices/index.cfm/go/document.current/documentnumber/1050.1

While Appendix 8 of FAA Order 7400.2 indicates that the airspace review and approval process and environmental impacts review should be conducted concurrently as much as possible, they are still separate processes. FAA's approval of either the DoD's aeronautical (SUA) request or the DoD's NEPA analysis does not automatically confer approval of the entire proposal. See FAA Order 7400.2, Chapter 21 (Sections 3, 4, 5, and 6), and Appendices 7 and 8 for additional details on the SUA request and approval process, and coordination of NEPA documentation for projects involving the use of SUA between FAA and DoD. https://www.faa.gov/documentLibrary/media/Order/7400.2P_Basic_dtd_4-20-23--COPY_FINAL.pdf

As the lead agency, the DAF published the EIS in accordance with NEPA and in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the FAA and Department of Defense (DOD) for Environmental Review of Special Use Airspace Actions, dated October 17, 2019.

By letter dated August 20, 2019 (see EIS, Volume I, Section 1.5.1), the DAF requested participation from the FAA as a cooperating agency (see 40 CFR § 1501.6) in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for Moody AFB. By letter dated August 28, 2019 (see EIS, Volume I, Section 1.5.1), the FAA, having responsibility for approving special use airspace under 49 United States Code (U.S.C.) section 40103(b)(3)(A), accepted cooperating agency status.

The DAF published a Draft EIS for the Moody AFB comprehensive airspace initiative on September 25, 2020. As a cooperating agency, the FAA participated in the preparation of the Draft EIS, including reviewing drafts and providing input. Although only a 45-day review period is required for the Draft EIS, the DAF elected to have a 60-day public comment period, ending on November 24, 2020. Therefore, the public comment period on the Draft EIS ran from September 25, 2020 to November 24, 2020.

During the comment period, the DAF held a series of public meetings. The DAF utilized several methods to notify the public of opportunities for involvement and comment during the public

review period. These methods included:

- A Notice of Availability in the Federal Register to announce the DEIS was available for review;
- A mailing of notification letters to government agencies, special interest groups, and local landowners/residents;
- A public website;
- Press releases;
- Newspaper advertisements;
- A public hearing; and
- Government-to-Government Meetings

Details of these notification methods were outlined in Appendix A, *Public Involvement*, of the EIS.

The comments and responses to the Draft EIS are contained in Appendix A, *Public Involvement*, of the EIS. A total of 95 comment submittals were received, the majority of public comments received were directed at the structure of the DAF's proposal, impacts on airports and civilian aviation within and proximate to the Moody Airspace Complex, impacts on biological resources, impacts on socioeconomics from perceived changes in general aviation requirements, and noise (see EIS, Appendix A, Sections A-7 and A-8). The DAF consulted with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Ecological Services, USFWS Refuge Division, Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), Florida SHPO, Georgia Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Seminole Tribe of Florida Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), Cherokee Nation THPO, Alabama Coushatta Tribe of Texas, Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, Caddo Nation, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, Kialegee Tribal Town, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Muscogee Nation of Florida, Poarch Band of Creeks, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, Thlopthlocco Tribal Town, and United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indian.

The EIS was issued on May 19, 2023, and it fully analyzed the potential environmental impacts of the alternatives. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published its receipt of the EIS in the Federal Register on May 19, 2023 (88 FR 32215). A 30-day waiting period took place between May 19, 2023 and June 20, 2023. All practical means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the Preferred Alternative that were identified in the EIS have been adopted by the DAF.

The DAF signed its Record of Decision on August 15, 2023. The Record of Decision identifies the DAF decision on five alternatives analyzed in the EIS. The Notice of Availability for the Record of Decision was published in the Federal Register on September 12, 2023 (88 FR 62553).

2.2 FAA Aeronautical Process¹

The aeronautical process typically takes place contemporaneously with the environmental process for SUA actions.

The aeronautical proposal consists of creating new low-altitude Military Operations Areas (MOAs) beneath the existing Corsair North, Corsair South, Mustang, Warhawk MOAs, and Restricted Area R-3008C, and lower the floor of Moody 2 North MOA in the Moody Airspace

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Complex. Moody Air Force Base (AFB) would assign and schedule the new low-altitude MOAs to provide adequate low-altitude floors for training operations at low altitude, including close air support (CAS), personnel recovery (PR), and combat search and rescue (CSAR) training mission objectives at the installation. However, the airspace would result in the redistribution of airport operations from existing low-altitude SUAs (i.e., Moody 2 North MOA, Moody 2 South MOA, and R-3008A, R-3008B, and R-3008C) to the new low-altitude MOAs (see EIS Volume III, Appendix H).

¹ *FAA Joint Order 7400.2, Appendix 4. FAA Procedures for Processing SUA Actions* describes how the steps of the FAA aeronautical and environmental processes overlap.

3.0 PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action is to conduct military flight training operations at low altitude, including close air support (CAS), personnel recovery (PR) and combat search and rescue (CSAR) training, to allow aircrews to realistically train in executing combat maneuvers. The EIS evaluated several alternatives for the Proposed Action, including a No Action Alternative. The proposed legal descriptions of the MOAs to accommodate the Proposed Action under the selected alternative (Modified Alternative 1) are provided below:

Corsair South Low MOA (NEW)

- Boundaries.** Beginning N31°00'00.00" W83°52'59.00" to N31°00'00.00" W83°28'01.00" to N30°37'00.00" W83°21'20.00" to N30°38'01.00" W83°43'00.00" to the point of beginning. Excluding the airspace 1500' AGL and below within 3 NM radius of Thomasville Regional Airport (TVI) and Quitman Brooks County Airport (4J5).
- Altitudes.** 1,000 feet AGL to but not including 8,000' MSL.
- Times of designation.** 0800-0100L Monday- Thursday; 0800-2200 Friday; closed Saturday, Sunday, holidays; other times by NOTAM 6 hours in advance.
- Controlling Agency.** FAA, Jacksonville ARTCC
- Using agency.** U.S. Air Force, 23d Wing, Moody AFB, GA.

Corsair North Low MOA (NEW)

- Boundaries.** Beginning N31°12'02.00" W83°58'26.00" to N31°21'45.00" W83°45'00.00" to N31°23'15.00" W83°44'14.00" to N31°20'00.00" W83°33'50.00" to N31°00'00.00" W83°28'01.00" to N31°00'00.00" W83°52'59.00" to the point of beginning. Excluding the airspace 1500' AGL and below within 3 NM radius of Spence Airport (MUL), Cook County Airport (15J) and Moultrie Regional Airport (MGR).
- Altitudes.** 1,000 feet AGL to but not including 8,000' MSL.
- Times of designation.** 0800-0100L Monday- Thursday; 0800-2200 Friday; closed Saturday, Sunday, holidays; other times by NOTAM 6 hours in advance.
- Controlling Agency.** FAA, Jacksonville ARTCC
- Using agency.** U.S. Air Force, 23d Wing, Moody AFB, GA.

Mustang Low MOA (NEW)

- Boundaries.** Beginning N31°35'30.00" W83°37'49.00" to
N31°35'30.00" W83°23'08.00" to
N31°29'40.00" W83°23'00.00" to
N31°34'06.00" W83°37'55.00" to the point of beginning.
- Altitudes.** 1,000 feet AGL to but not including 8,000' MSL
- Times of designation.** 0800-0100L Monday- Thursday; 0800-2200 Friday; closed Saturday, Sunday, holidays; other times by NOTAM 6 hours in advance.
- Controlling Agency.** FAA, Jacksonville ARTCC
- Using agency.** U.S. Air Force, 23d Wing, Moody AFB, GA.

Warhawk Low MOA (NEW)

- Boundaries.** Beginning N31°35'30.00" W83°23'08.00" to
N31°35'30.00" W83°01'04.00" to
N31°18'41.00" W82°44'35.00" to
N31°22'59.00" W83°09'40.00" to
N31°29'40.00" W83°23'00.00" to the point of beginning.
Excluding the airspace 1500' AGL and below within 3 NM radius
of Douglas Municipal Airport (DQH).
- Altitudes.** 1,000 feet AGL to but not including 8,000' MSL
- Times of designation.** 0800-0100L Monday- Thursday; 0800-2200 Friday; closed Saturday, Sunday, holidays; other times by NOTAM 6 hours in advance.
- Controlling Agency.** FAA, Jacksonville ARTCC
- Using agency.** U.S. Air Force, 23d Wing, Moody AFB, GA.

Grand Bay MOA (NEW)

- Boundaries.** Beginning N31°04'01.00" W83°01'00.00" to
N30°51'01.00" W83°01'00.00" to
N30°51'01.00" W83°08'00.00" to
N30°53'31.00" W83°09'00.00" to
N30°54'31.00" W83°06'00.00" to
N31°01'31.00" W83°06'00.00" to
N31°02'01.00" W83°09'00.00" to
N31°04'01.00" W83°08'00.00" to the point of beginning.
Excluding that airspace 500 feet AGL and below within one
nautical mile of Lakeland, GA. (One-nautical-mile radius
centered at lat. 31°02'31"N., long. 83°04'15"W.).
- Altitudes.** 100 feet AGL to but not including 500 feet AGL.
- Times of designation.** 0800-0100L Monday- Thursday; 0800-2200 Friday; closed Saturday, Sunday, holidays; other times by NOTAM 6 hours in advance.
- Controlling Agency.** Moody AFB Radar Approach Control
- Using agency.** U.S. Air Force, 23d Wing, Moody AFB, GA.

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Moody 2 North MOA (MODIFIED)

- Boundaries.** Beginning N31°18'01.00" W82°51'00.00" to N31°14'01.00" W82°49'00.00" to N31°01'36.00" W82°39'00.00" to N30°57'01.00" W82°39'00.00" to N30°57'01.00" W83°01'00.00" to N31°21'01.00" W83°01'00.00" to the point of beginning. Excluding the airspace 1500' AGL and below within 3 NM radius of Homerville Airport (HOE)
- Altitudes.** 100 feet AGL to but not including 8,000' MSL
- Times of designation.** 0800-0100L Monday- Thursday; 0800-2200 Friday; closed Saturday, Sunday, holidays; other times by NOTAM 6 hours in advance.
- Controlling Agency.** FAA, Jacksonville ARTCC
- Using agency.** U.S. Air Force, 23d Wing, Moody AFB, GA.

4.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

The Proposed Action would support various low-altitude close air support and low-altitude engagement and attack and personnel recovery/combat search and rescue training missions at Moody AFB, Georgia. The new and modified low-altitude MOAs provide airspace capacity within which the A-10C, HH-60G, HC-130J, A-29, and 820 BDG aircrews at Moody AFB can optimize their low-altitude mission readiness training. The new and modified low-altitude MOAs address the inadequate Moody AFB-controlled low-altitude airspace available for training missions operating at low altitudes from Moody AFB. Optimizing the Moody Airspace Complex enables effective low-altitude training for Moody AFB aircrews to achieve real-world combat readiness and survivability.

5.0 EIS ALTERNATIVES

The DAF considered five alternatives to support the low-altitude training requirements at Moody AFB. Three of the action alternatives would configure new low-altitude MOAs immediately underneath and within the lateral confines of the existing Corsair North, Corsair South, Mustang, Thud, and Warhawk MOAs and Restricted Area R-3008C, and lower the floor of Moody 2 North MOA in the Moody Airspace Complex. A fourth action alternative, Modified Alternative 1, is a variation of Alternative 1 originally described in the Draft EIS developed in response to input from the FAA and public comments received on the Draft EIS. Modified Alternative 1 would reduce the scale of the Alternative 1 low-altitude airspace configuration based on coordination between the DAF and the FAA during the airspace proposal process. Under Modified Alternative 1, the DAF and FAA would chart new low-altitude MOAs beneath the existing MOAs and Restricted Areas of the Moody Airspace Complex similar to those described by Alternative 1, but with different lateral boundaries (see EIS, Volume I, Section 2.4, pages 2-12 through 2-39).

All four action alternatives would result in the redistribution of aircraft operations from existing low-altitude SUA to new low-altitude MOAs. It is not anticipated that any increases in overall operations would occur due to this redistribution; instead, airspace scheduling conflicts would be eliminated, the timing of training operations would be shifted to more daytime hours, and training requirements at low altitude would be spread over a greater area of airspace instead of being concentrated entirely in Moody 2 North and Moody 2 South MOAs and the Restricted Areas R-3008A, R-3008B, and R-3008C. All four action alternatives would change the times of use for the Corsair North, Corsair South, Moody 2 North, Moody 2 South, Mustang, Thud, and Warhawk MOAs. The times of use for the Corsair North, Corsair South, Hawg North, Hawg South, Mustang, Thud, Sabre, and Warhawk MOAs would change from 0700 to 0200 hours Monday through Friday and all other times by notice to air missions (NOTAM) 6 hours in advance to 0800 to 0100 Monday through Thursday, 0800 to 2200 hours Friday, and all other times by NOTAM 6 hours in advance. The times of use for the Moody 2 South MOA would change from 0600 to 0200 hours Monday through Friday and all other times by NOTAM 6 hours in advance to 0800 to 0100 Monday through Thursday, 0800 to 2200 hours Friday, and all other times by NOTAM 6 hours in advance. The times of use would change for the Moody 2 North MOA from 0600 to 0200 hours Monday through Friday and all other times by NOTAM 6 hours in advance to 0800 to 0100 Monday through Thursday; 0800 to 2200 hours Friday; closed weekends and holidays; and all other times by NOTAM 6 hours in advance. Under the action alternatives, the times of use for the proposed low-altitude MOAs would be 0800 to 0100 hours Monday through Thursday; 0800 to 2200 hours Friday; closed weekends and holidays; and all other times by NOTAM 6 hours in advance.

Alternative 1 – Create New Military Operations Areas with a 1,000-Foot Floor, Create a New Grand Bay Military Operations Area, and Lower the Floor of Moody 2 North

Military Operations Area: This alternative would create the Corsair North Low, Corsair South Low, Mustang Low, and Warhawk Low MOAs with a floor of 1,000 feet AGL and a ceiling of 7,999 feet MSL beneath and within the lateral confines of the existing Corsair North, Corsair South, Mustang Low, and Warhawk Low MOAs, respectively; create the Thud Low MOA with a floor of 4,000 feet AGL and a ceiling of 7,999 feet MSL beneath and within the lateral confines of the existing Thud MOA; and create the Grand Bay MOA with a floor of 100 feet AGL and a ceiling of 499 feet AGL beneath and within the lateral confines of the existing Restricted Area R-3008C (see EIS, Volume I, Section 2.4.2, page 2-17, Figure 2.4-3).

This alternative would lower the floor of Moody 2 North MOA from 500 feet AGL to 100 feet AGL. This alternative would modify the Banks Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) exclusion zone, which was created by the ROD to the 1986 Winnersville EIS, by lowering the floor of most of the exclusion zone except for the portion over the open water area (an area of approximately 900 acres that includes all open water and adjacent shoreline) of the Banks Lake NWR from 1,500 feet AGL to 500 feet AGL. All other existing operational restrictions would remain unchanged. Alternative 1 would allow for the redistribution of approximately 31 percent of the existing operations in Moody 2 North and Moody 2 South MOAs into the proposed low-altitude MOAs. Alternative 1 would reduce the utilization within Moody 2 North and South MOAs from 89 percent to 61 percent, which would relieve the congestion within these MOAs (see EIS, Volume I, Section 1.2.2, page 1-5).

Modified Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative) – Create New Military Operations Areas with a 1,000-Foot Floor with Modified Lateral Boundaries, Create a New Grand Bay Military Operations Area, and Lower the Floor of Moody 2 North Military Operations Area:

This alternative would create the Corsair North Low, Corsair South Low, Mustang Low, and Warhawk Low MOAs with a floor of 1,000 feet AGL and a ceiling up to but not including 8,000 feet MSL beneath the existing Corsair North, Corsair South, Mustang Low, and Warhawk Low MOAs, respectively. The Corsair South Low MOA would be within the same lateral confines as the Corsair South MOA; however, the Corsair North Low, Mustang Low, and Warhawk Low MOAs would have reduced lateral confines relative to the overlying Corsair North, Mustang, and Warhawk MOAs. The Warhawk Low and Mustang Low MOAs would always be activated concurrently during training operations. This alternative would create the Grand Bay MOA with a floor of 100 feet AGL and a ceiling up to but not including 500 feet AGL beneath and within the lateral confines of the existing Restricted Area R-3008C. This alternative would not create the Thud Low MOA. This alternative would lower the floor of Moody 2 North MOA from 500 feet AGL to 100 feet AGL (see EIS, Volume I, Section 2.4.3, page 2-23, Figure 2.4-5).

This alternative would modify the Banks Lake NWR exclusion zone, which was created by the ROD to the 1986 Winnersville EIS, by lowering the floor of most of the exclusion zone except for the portion over the open water area (an area of approximately 900 acres that includes all open water and adjacent shoreline) of the Banks Lake NWR from 1,500 feet AGL to 500 feet AGL. All other existing operational restrictions would remain unchanged.

Modified Alternative 1 would allow for the redistribution of approximately 31 percent of the existing operations in Moody 2 North and Moody 2 South MOAs into the proposed low-altitude MOAs. Modified Alternative 1 would reduce the utilization within Moody 2 North and South MOAs from 89 percent to 61 percent, which would relieve the congestion within these MOAs (see EIS, Volume I, Section 1.2.2, page 1-5).

The DAF selected the Modified Alternative 1 as the Preferred Alternative. The Modified Alternative 1 best meets the purpose and need of the Proposed Action and balances environmental impacts with mission requirements.

Alternative 2 – Create New Military Operations Areas with a 2,000-Foot Floor, Create a New Grand Bay Military Operations Area, and Lower the Floor of Moody 2 North Military Operations Area: This alternative would create the Corsair North Low, Corsair South Low, Mustang Low, and Warhawk Low MOAs with a floor of 2,000 feet AGL and a ceiling of 7,999 feet MSL beneath and within the lateral confines of the existing Corsair North, Corsair South, Mustang Low, and Warhawk Low MOAs, respectively; create the Thud Low MOA with a floor of 4,000 feet AGL and a ceiling of 7,999 feet MSL beneath and within the lateral confines of the existing Thud MOA; and create the Grand Bay MOA with a floor of 100 feet AGL and a ceiling of 499 feet AGL beneath and within the lateral confines of the existing Restricted Area R-3008C (see EIS Volume I, Section 2.4.4, page 2-28, Figure 2.4-6). This alternative would lower the floor of Moody 2 North MOA from 500 feet AGL to 100 feet AGL.

This alternative would modify the Banks Lake NWR exclusion zone, which was created by the ROD to the 1986 Winnersville EIS, by lowering the floor of most of the exclusion zone except

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for the portion over the open water area (an area of approximately 900 acres that includes all open water and adjacent shoreline) of the Banks Lake NWR from 1,500 feet AGL to 500 feet AGL. All other existing operational restrictions would remain unchanged (see EIS, Volume I, Section 1.2.2, page 1-5).

Alternative 2 would allow for the redistribution of approximately 16 percent of the existing operations in Moody 2 North and Moody 2 South MOAs into the proposed low-altitude MOAs. Alternative 2 would reduce the utilization within Moody 2 North and South MOAs from 89 percent to 75 percent which would reduce, but not relieve, the congestion within these MOAs.

Alternative 3 – Create New Military Operations Areas with a 4,000-Foot Floor, Create a New Grand Bay Military Operations Area, and Lower the Floor of Moody 2 North

Military Operations Area: This alternative would create the Corsair North Low, Corsair South Low, Mustang Low, Thud Low, and Warhawk Low MOAs with a floor of 4,000 feet AGL and a ceiling of 7,999 feet MSL beneath and within the lateral confines of the existing Corsair North, Corsair South, Mustang Low, Thud, and Warhawk Low MOAs, respectively; and create the Grand Bay MOA with a floor of 100 feet AGL and a ceiling of 499 feet AGL beneath and within the lateral confines of the existing Restricted Area R-3008C. This alternative would lower the floor of Moody 2 North MOA from 500 feet AGL to 100 feet AGL.

This alternative would modify the Banks Lake NWR exclusion zone, which was created by the ROD to the 1986 Winnersville EIS, by lowering the floor of most of the exclusion zone except for the portion over the open water area (an area of approximately 900 acres that includes all open water and adjacent shoreline) of the Banks Lake NWR from 1,500 feet AGL to 500 feet AGL. All other existing operational restrictions would remain unchanged (see EIS, Volume I, Section 1.2.2, page 1-5).

Alternative 3 would allow for the redistribution of approximately 7 percent of the existing operations in Moody 2 North and Moody 2 South MOAs into the proposed low-altitude MOAs. Alternative 3 would reduce the utilization within Moody 2 North and Moody 2 South MOAs from 89 percent to 83 percent (see EIS Volume I, Section 2.4.5, page 2-33, Figure 2.4-7).

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative: No change to the existing airspace operations would occur.

The Moody Airspace Complex would be maintained in its current state and the number of flying hours and existing MOAs would remain the same, resulting in continued significant, long-term, adverse impacts on the flight training operations and training missions at Moody AFB (see EIS, Volume I, Section 2.7, page 2-42).

6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The FAA has completed an independent review and evaluation of the EIS in accordance with the CEQ regulations (see 40 C.F.R. § 1506.3(c)), FAA Order 1050.1F, and FAA Order JO 7400.2P, “*Procedures for Handling Airspace Matters*,” Appendix 8. FAA Order 1050.1F, Chapter 4, identifies the specific environmental impact categories the FAA considers in conducting

environmental reviews under NEPA.

The information below summarizes analyses in the EIS and presents the results of the FAA's independent review and evaluation regarding the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action in each of the impact categories prescribed by FAA Order 1050.1F specific to the DAF's proposal to configure new low-altitude MOAs at Moody AFB.

6.1 Impact Categories Included in Analysis

The EIS analyzed potential environmental impacts associated with each alternative carried forward for analysis. The EIS assessed the following resource areas in detail: airspace; acoustic environment (noise); health and safety; air quality/climate; biological resources; cultural resources; land use and recreation; socioeconomics; and environmental justice (including children's environmental health and safety) (see EIS, Volume I, Section 3.1.1, page 3-1). Some of these resource areas do not directly correspond to impact categories in FAA Order 1050.1F (airspace; health and safety). In addition, some resource areas (impact categories) were not analyzed in detail, such as coastal resources; Department of Transportation Act, Sec. 4(f); farmlands; hazardous materials; natural resources and energy supply; visual effects; water resources (see EIS, Volume I, Section 3.1.2, pages 3-3 to 3-5; Section 6.1, page 6-1).

The following summarizes the results of FAA's independent evaluation of the EIS regarding the Proposed Action and the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed changes to the Moody Airspace Complex. The resources that had the most potential to be affected by the alternatives and were analyzed in- depth are described below:

6.2.1 AIR QUALITY (SEE EIS SECTIONS 3.5 and 4.5)

The FAA significant impact threshold for air quality occurs if the Proposed Action results in one or more of the six criteria pollutants exceeding the established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) or Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) thresholds. Per the analysis above, the FAA has determined none of the six criteria pollutants or PSD thresholds will be exceeded and that the project will not have significant impacts on air quality.

Proposed Action

Modified Alternative 1

Modified Alternative 1 would have long-term, minor, adverse impacts on air quality. Impacts would occur from incremental increases in emissions from additional air operations when compared to existing training and a distribution of existing air operations below the mixing height into the proposed low-altitude MOAs. The emissions from Modified Alternative 1 would be below the PSD thresholds and would not contribute to a violation of any federal, state, or local air regulations (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.5.3, and Table 4.5-3).

Alternatives

Alternative 1

Alternative 1 would have long-term, minor, adverse impacts on air quality. Impacts would occur from incremental increases in emissions from additional air operations when compared to existing training and a distribution of existing air operations below the mixing height into the

proposed low-altitude MOAs. The emissions from Alternative 1 would be below the PSD thresholds and would not contribute to a violation of any federal, state, or local air regulations (see EIS, Volume I, Section 4.5.2, and Table 4.5-1).

Alternative 2

As with Alternative 1 and for similar reasons, Alternative 2 would have long-term minor adverse impacts on air quality. Impacts would occur from incremental increases in emissions from additional air operations when compared to existing training and a distribution of existing air operations below the mixing height into the proposed MOAs. The emissions from Alternative 2 would be below the PSD thresholds and would not contribute to a violation of any federal, state, or local air regulations (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.5.4, and Table 4.5-4).

Alternative 3

Alternative 3 would have long-term negligible adverse impacts on air quality. Impacts would occur from small changes in air operations above the mixing height when compared to existing training. These changes would be due to the redistribution of existing air operations into the proposed Corsair North Low, Corsair South Low, Thud Low, Mustang Low, and Warhawk Low MOAs. There would be no changes in air operations below 3,000 feet AGL and no changes in emissions below the mixing height. Alternative 3 would have no effects on air quality in any area beneath the Moody Airspace Complex, and air quality would be comparable to existing conditions. The emissions from Alternative 3 would be below the PSD thresholds and would not contribute to a violation of any federal, state, or local air regulations (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.5.5).

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would result in no effect on air quality. There would be no long-term changes in emissions due to the Proposed Action. Ambient air quality would remain unchanged when compared to existing conditions (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.5.6).

Conclusion

Based on the FAA's independent review and evaluation, the FAA concludes the Proposed Action would have no significant impacts on air quality when compared with the no action alternative.

6.2.2 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES (INCLUDING FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PLANTS) (SEE EIS SECTIONS 3.6 and 4.6)

The FAA's significance threshold for ESA species occurs when the US Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fishery Service determines that the proposed action would be likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the species in question or would result in the destruction or adverse modification of federally-designated critical habitat in the affected area.

This project was entered into the USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) system to initiate consultation with USFWS. The DAF made a may affect but not likely to adversely affect determination on the wood stork and determined that the Proposed Action would have no effect on any other federally listed species. The DAF conferenced with the USFWS on the effects of aircraft operations at the Moody AFB airfield, aircraft training operations, and the airspace modification proposal on the tricolored bat, which is proposed for listing, and monarch

butterfly, which is a candidate species. The DAF made a not likely to jeopardize the continued existence determination for the tricolored bat and monarch butterfly. USFWS concurred with these determinations on February 24, 2023 (see EIS, Volume 1, Appendix E).

Under Section 7 consultation of the ESA, federal agencies are required to determine whether their actions may affect listed species or designated critical habitat. If the Proposed Action may affect listed or proposed listed species or designated critical habitat, federal agencies must provide a summary of effects determination to the USFWS and request concurrence with the findings. The findings of the summary of effects analysis classifies effects by the following determinations:

- No effect. There will be no impacts positive or negative to listed or proposed resources. No concurrence from the USFWS is required.
- May affect, but is not likely to adversely affect. All effects are beneficial, insignificant, or discountable. Beneficial effects are those that have positive effects to the species or habitat. Insignificant effects relate to the size of the impact and include those effects that are not measurable or cannot be evaluated. Discountable effects are those unlikely to occur. These determinations require concurrence from the USFWS.
- May affect, and is likely to adversely affect. Listed or proposed listed species or designated critical habitat are likely exposed to the Proposed Action and will respond in a negative manner to the exposure.

In compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the DAF, as the designated Lead Agency, consulted with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on the potential effects of the Preferred Alternative on threatened and endangered species. The DAF received concurrence on 1 June 2020 from the USFWS (Final EIS, Volume II, Appendix E) on the DAF's determination that the Preferred Alternative "may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect" the threatened wood stork (*Mycteria americana*). Since that time, the USFWS determined that the tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*) and the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) warrant listing under the Endangered Species Act; the tricolored bat is proposed for listing as endangered, and the monarch butterfly is an official candidate for listing. Species proposed for listing are not afforded protection under the Endangered Species Act; therefore, the DAF conferenced with the USFWS on the effects of aircraft operations at the Moody AFB airfield, aircraft training operations, and the airspace on these two species. On February 24, 2023, the USFWS provided concurrence with the DAF's determination of "not likely to jeopardize" the continued existence of the tricolored bat and monarch butterfly (see EIS, Volume II, Appendix 9 E). As soon as the listing of these species becomes effective, the prohibitions against jeopardizing their continued existence and "take" will apply, and DAF will initiate Section 7 consultation with the USFWS.

Alternatives

Alternative 1. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 1,000-Foot Floor

Impacts on wildlife from noise due to aircraft operations in the proposed low-altitude MOAs would be minor because the noise environment would not change substantially under Alternative 1.

Individual overflights at altitudes of 1,000 feet AGL would disturb wildlife both through increased sound and the visibility of aircraft movement to wildlife, causing startle behavioral responses. However, the low-altitude training events would be shifted to the proposed low-altitude MOAs, increasing the available area for approximately the same number of low-altitude training events

annually; it is highly unlikely that wildlife would be exposed to a single training event during critical species life-cycle events.

A slight increased risk of bird/wildlife aircraft strikes would occur with the redistribution of operations to the proposed low-altitude MOAs, with a higher risk to raptors and wading birds, including migrating sandhill cranes.

No impacts would occur to wildlife from the redistribution of chaff and flares.

Aircraft movement and noise and the use of defensive countermeasures may affect but are not likely to adversely affect listed wood storks and are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the tricolored bat, which is proposed for listing, and the monarch butterfly, which is a candidate species. There would be no effect on listed red-cockaded woodpeckers, indigo snakes, frosted flatwoods salamander, or reticulated flatwoods salamander.

Proposed Action

Modified Alternative 1. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 1,000-Foot Floor with Modified Lateral Boundaries

Impacts on wildlife and threatened and endangered species for the proposed Grand Bay MOA, and the lowering of the floor of the Moody 2 North MOA as well as the shifting of aircraft operations from the Moody 2 South MOA to other proposed low-altitude MOAs would be the same as Alternative 1.

Minor impacts on birds from noise and aircraft movement, including a slightly increased risk of bird aircraft strikes, would occur. No impacts are anticipated on mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.

Impacts on wildlife and threatened and endangered species from the use of defensive countermeasures in the proposed low-altitude MOAs would be the same as Alternative 1.

Noise, aircraft movement at low altitude, and the use of defensive countermeasures may affect but are not likely to adversely affect wood storks and are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the tricolored bat, which is proposed for listing, and the monarch butterfly, which is a candidate species. There would be no effect on red-cockaded woodpeckers, indigo snakes, frosted flatwoods salamander, or reticulated flatwoods salamander (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.6.3).

Alternative 2. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 2,000-Foot Floor

Impacts on wildlife and threatened and endangered species for the proposed Thud Low MOA, Grand Bay MOA, and the lowering of the floor of the Moody 2 North MOA as well as the shifting of aircraft operations from the Moody 2 South MOA to other proposed low-altitude MOAs would be the same as Alternative 1.

Minor impacts on birds from noise and aircraft movement, including a slight increased risk of bird aircraft strikes, would occur. No impacts are anticipated on mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.

Impacts on wildlife and threatened and endangered species from the use of defensive countermeasures in the proposed low-altitude MOAs would be the same as Alternative 1.

Noise, aircraft movement at low altitude, and the use of defensive countermeasures may affect but are not likely to adversely affect wood storks and are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the tricolored bat, which is proposed for listing, and the monarch butterfly, which is a candidate species. There would be no effect on red-cockaded woodpeckers, indigo snakes, frosted flatwoods salamander, or reticulated flatwoods salamander.

Alternative 3. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 4,000-Foot Floor

Impacts on wildlife and threatened and endangered species for the proposed Thud Low MOA, Grand Bay MOA, and the lowering of the floor of the Moody 2 North MOA as well as the shifting of aircraft operations from the Moody 2 South MOA to other proposed low-altitude MOAs would be the same as Alternative 1.

There would be no adverse impacts on birds from noise and aircraft movement. Further, given that training altitudes would always occur at or above 4,000 feet AGL, aircraft movement in these four proposed low-altitude MOAs would have no impacts on mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.

The use of defensive countermeasures may affect but is not likely to adversely affect wood storks. There would be no effect on red-cockaded woodpeckers, tricolored bats, indigo snakes, frosted flatwoods salamander, or reticulated flatwoods salamander (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.6.5.2).

Summary of Effects on State-Protected Species: No state-protected species are likely to be adversely affected by the Proposed Action.

Findings of May Affect but Not Likely to Adversely Affect

Wood Stork. Moody AFB would continue to implement a 500-foot and 1 nm exclusion zone around all known active bald eagle nests and wood stork rookeries within the Moody Airspace Complex. This is a local avoidance procedure and is periodically updated with any reports of newly discovered or surveyed wood stork rookeries in the Moody Airspace Complex (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.6.2.2).

Findings Not Likely to Jeopardize the Continued Existence Determination

The DAF made a not likely to jeopardize the continued existence determination for the tricolored bat and monarch butterfly (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.6.1).

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no shift in low-altitude training operations because there would be no new low-altitude MOAs created. Therefore, there would be no new impacts on wildlife or threatened and listed endangered species (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.6.6).

Mitigation Measures

Use of flares below 2,000 feet increases the risk of fire. If the use of flares is proposed below 2,000 feet in the low-altitude MOAs increasing fire risk, Moody AFB will establish a capability to analyze those fire risks on a site-specific basis.

Moody AFB will implement a public information program in areas where flares are used over non-Department of Defense land to educate the public about the hazards of dud flares and proper procedures to follow if a dud flare is found.

Conclusion

Based on the FAA's independent review and evaluation), the FAA concludes the Proposed Action with the existing and proposed mitigation measures, does not result in significant impacts to biological resources (wildlife) when compared with the no action alternative.

6.2.3 CLIMATE (SEE EIS SECTIONS 3.5 and 4.5 AIR QUALITY)

The FAA has not established a specific significant impact threshold for Climate, which is typically measured in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Although there are no federal standards for aviation related GHG emissions, it is well-established that GHG emissions can affect climate. FAA Order 1050.1F establishes agency-wide policies and procedures for compliance with NEPA and the implementing regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR parts 1500-1508).

There are no significance thresholds for aviation GHG emissions. There are currently no accepted methods of determining significance applicable to aviation projects given the small percentage of emissions they contribute. The estimated level of GHG emissions can serve as a reasonable proxy for assessing potential climate change impacts. GHG are defined as including carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆), in accordance with Executive Order 13514 *Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy and Economic Performance and Draft NEPA Guidance on Consideration of the Effects of Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions, CEQ (2010)*.

EIS Findings

This air quality analysis estimated the magnitude of emissions that would occur from proposed operational activities for each project alternative. At this time, climate change presents a global problem caused by increasing global atmospheric concentrations of GHG emissions, and the current state of the science surrounding it does not support determining the global significance of local or regional emissions of GHGs from a particular action. Therefore, the quantitative analysis of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions in this EIS is for disclosing the local net effects (increase or decrease) of the Proposed Action and alternatives and for its potential usefulness in making reasoned choices among alternatives. Under Alternative 1, there would be an incremental increase in GHG emissions of 517 tons per year of CO₂e (US Air Force 2019).

Georgia and Florida are in the southeast climate region of the United States, an area that climate change leaves exceptionally vulnerable to extreme heat events, hurricanes, and decreased water availability. Average annual temperatures across the southeast during the last century cycled between warm and cool periods, and temperatures increased from 1970 to the present by an average of 2 degrees Fahrenheit (°F). The number of category 4 and 5 hurricanes has increased substantially since the early 1980s compared to the historical records that date back to the mid-1880s. This increase can be attributed to both natural variability and climate change (National

Climate Assessment 2019). Table 4.5-2 lists climate stressors and their potential effects on the air operations in the Moody Airspace Complex (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.5.2). At this time, no future climate scenario or potential climate stressor would have appreciable effects on any element of the Proposed Action. The increase in the number of hurricanes in the southeast would introduce a minor additional risk to the air operations at Moody AFB and within the Moody Airspace Complex.

Proposed Action

Modified Alternative 1. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 1,000-Foot Floor with Modified Lateral Boundaries

Modified Alternative 1 would have long-term, minor, adverse impacts on air quality. Impacts would occur from incremental increases in emissions from additional air operations when compared to existing training and a distribution of existing air operations below the mixing height into the proposed low-altitude MOAs. The emissions from Modified Alternative 1 would be below the PSD thresholds and would not contribute to a violation of any federal, state, or local air regulations (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.5.3, and Table 4.5-3).

Alternatives

Alternative 1. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 1,000-Foot Floor Alternative 1 would have long-term, minor, adverse impacts on air quality. Impacts would occur from incremental increases in emissions from additional air operations when compared to existing training and a distribution of existing air operations below the mixing height into the proposed low-altitude MOAs. The emissions from Alternative 1 would be below the PSD thresholds and would not contribute to a violation of any federal, state, or local air regulations (see EIS, Volume I, Section 4.5.2, and Table 4.5-1).

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gasses (GHGs).

At this time, climate change presents a global problem caused by increasing global atmospheric concentrations of GHG emissions, and the current state of the science surrounding it does not support determining the global significance of local or regional emissions of GHGs from a particular action. Therefore, the quantitative analysis of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions in this EIS is for disclosing the local net effects (increase or decrease) of the Proposed Action and alternatives and for its potential usefulness in making reasoned choices among alternatives. Under Alternative 1, there would be an incremental increase in GHG emissions of 517 tons per year of CO₂e (US Air Force 2019) (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.5.2).

Alternative 2. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 2,000-Foot Floor

As with Alternative 1 and for similar reasons, Alternative 2 would have long-term minor adverse impacts on air quality. Impacts would occur from incremental increases in emissions from additional air operations when compared to existing training and a distribution of existing air operations below the mixing height into the proposed MOAs. The emissions from Alternative 2 would be below the PSD thresholds and would not contribute to a violation of any federal, state, or local air regulations (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.5.4, and Table 4.5-4).

Climate Change and GHGs.

At this time, climate change presents a global problem caused by increasing global atmospheric concentrations of GHG emissions and the current state of the science surrounding it does not support determining the global significance of local or regional emissions of GHGs from a

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particular action. Therefore, the quantitative analysis of CO₂e emissions in this EIS is for disclosing the local net effects (increase or decrease) of the Proposed Action and alternatives and for its potential usefulness in making reasoned choices among alternatives. Under Alternative 2, there would be an incremental increase in GHG emissions of 311 tons per year of CO₂e (US Air Force 2019) (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.5.4).

Alternative 3. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 4,000-Foot Floor

Alternative 3 would have long-term negligible adverse impacts on air quality. Impacts would occur from small changes in air operations above the mixing height when compared to existing training. These changes would be due to the redistribution of existing air operations into the proposed Corsair North Low, Corsair South Low, Thud Low, Mustang Low, and Warhawk Low MOAs. There would be no changes in air operations below 3,000 feet AGL and no changes in emissions below the mixing height. Alternative 3 would have no effects on air quality in any area beneath the Moody Airspace Complex, and air quality would be comparable to existing conditions. The emissions from Alternative 3 would be below the PSD thresholds and would not contribute to a violation of any federal, state, or local air regulations (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.5.5).

Climate Change and GHGs.

Under Alternative 3, there would be no change in GHG emissions when compared to existing conditions. Table 4.5-2 lists climate stressors and their potential effects on the air operations in the Moody Airspace Complex. As with Alternatives 1 and 2 and for similar reasons, no future climate scenario or potential climate stressor would have appreciable effects on any element of the Proposed Action (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.5.5).

No Action

The Proposed Action and alternatives would not increase GHG emissions compared to the No Action alternative.

Conclusion

Therefore, based on the FAA's independent review and evaluation, the FAA concludes the Proposed Action will introduce no more than minimal amounts of greenhouse gasses associated with the Proposed Action as compared to the No Action Alternative.

6.2.4 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ACT, SECTION 4(f) (SEE EIS SECTION 3.1.2)

Designation of airspace for military flight operations is exempt from section 4(f). The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998 (Public Law 105-85) provided that "[n]o military flight operations (including a military training flight), or designation of airspace for such an operation, may be treated as a transportation program or project for purposes of section 303(c) of title 49, United States Code." In addition, the FAA 1050.1F Desk Reference, Exhibit 5-1, "exempts military flight operations and designation of airspace for such operations from Section 4(f)." Nevertheless, the EIS contained a brief analysis of potential impacts to section 4(f) resources as follows:

Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 U.S.C. § 303) protects publicly owned land including public parks, recreation areas, or wildlife and waterfowl refuges of national, state, or local significance, and publicly or privately owned land from an historic site of national, state, or local significance. Section 4(f) provides that the Secretary of Transportation may approve a transportation program or project requiring the use of publicly owned land of a public park, recreation area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge of national, state, or local significance, or land of an historic site of national, state, or local significance, only if there is no feasible and prudent alternative to using that land and the program or project includes all possible planning to minimize harm resulting from the use. Substantial impairment occurs when the activities, features, or attributes of the resource that contribute to its significance or enjoyment are substantially diminished.

The Proposed Action would not require the use or modification of any publicly owned land. In addition, SUA actions are exempt from the requirements of Section 4(f) (FAA 2015) (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 3.1.2).

6.2.5 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS, SOLID WASTE, AND POLLUTION PREVENTION (SEE EIS SECTION 3.1.2)

Solid Waste is defined by the implementing regulations of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) generally as any discarded material that meets specific regulatory requirements, and can include such items as refuse and scrap metal, spent materials, chemical by-products, and sludge from industrial and municipal wastewater and water treatment plants (see 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 261.2 for the full regulatory definition).

Hazardous waste is a type of solid waste defined under the implementing regulations of RCRA. A hazardous waste (see 40 CFR § 261.3) is a solid waste that possesses at least one of the following four characteristics: ignitability, corrosivity, reactivity, or toxicity as defined in 40 CFR part 261 subpart C, or is listed in one of four lists in 40 CFR part 261 subpart D, which contains a list of specific types of solid waste that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has deemed hazardous. RCRA imposes stringent requirements on the handling, management, and disposal of hazardous waste, especially in comparison to requirements for non-hazardous wastes.

Hazardous substance is a term broadly defined under Section 101(14) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) (see 42 U.S. Code [U.S.C.] § 9601(14)). Hazardous substances include:

- any element, compound, mixture, solution, or substance designated as hazardous under Section 102 of CERCLA;
- any hazardous substance designated under Section 311(b)(2)(A) or any toxic pollutant listed under Section 307(a) of the Clean Water Act (CWA);
- any hazardous waste under Section 3001 of RCRA;
- any hazardous air pollutant listed under Section 112 of the Clean Air Act (CAA); and
- any imminently hazardous chemical substance or mixture for which the EPA Administrator has “taken action under” Section 7 of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA).

Please note that the definition of hazardous substances under CERCLA excludes petroleum

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products, unless specifically listed or designated there under.

Hazardous material is any substance or material that has been determined to be capable of posing an unreasonable risk to health, safety, and property when transported in commerce. The term hazardous materials includes both hazardous wastes and hazardous substances, as well as petroleum and natural gas substances and materials (see 49 CFR § 172.101).

Pollution prevention describes methods used to avoid, prevent, or reduce pollutant discharges or emissions through strategies such as using fewer toxic inputs, redesigning products, altering manufacturing and maintenance processes, and conserving energy.

There are no existing contaminated sites are in the proposed study area or in the immediate vicinity of the study area, nor any local capacity for solid and hazardous wastes generated from the Proposed Action or Alternatives.

The Proposed Action and Alternatives does not involve construction or the generation of hazardous waste, solid waste, or pollution prevention.

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impacts from hazardous materials and waste.

Conclusion

Based on the FAA's independent review and evaluation, the FAA concludes the Proposed Action will have no impacts on hazardous materials, solid waste, nor pollution prevention when compared with the no action alternative (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 3.1.2, and Table 3.1-1).

6.2.6 HISTORICAL, ARCHITECTURAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES (SEE EIS SECTIONS 3.7, 4.7, and 5.2.6)

The National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 (Section 106) regulations direct federal agencies to make reasonable and good faith efforts to identify historic properties in regard to a proposed action (36 CFR § 800.4(b)(1)). Federal agencies are to take into account the nature and extent of potential effects on historic properties, and the likely nature and location of historic properties within areas that may be affected. Compliance with Section 106 requires consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and/or the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) if there is a potential adverse effect to historic properties within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) that are on or eligible for listing on the NRHP.

Moody AFB completed consultation with the Florida and Georgia State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) and other identified consulting parties regarding compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA for this Proposed Action (see EIS, Volume 3, Appendix F). The Georgia SHPO provided a finding of no adverse effect to historic properties within the project area, and the Florida SHPO provided a finding of no historic properties affected (see EIS, Volume 3 Appendix F).

Moody AFB conducted government-to-government consultation with 15 federally recognized tribes with a historic or cultural affiliation to the lands covered by the existing Moody Airspace Complex:

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- Muscogee (Creek) Nation
- Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana
- Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town
- Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
- Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
- Poarch Band of Creek Indians of Alabama
- Thlopthlocco Tribal Town
- Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
- Kialegee Tribal Town
- Muscogee Nation of Florida
- Seminole Tribe of Florida
- Caddo Nation
- United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians
- Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas
- Cherokee Nation

The consultations did not identify any resources of traditional, religious, or cultural significance to the Tribes. Responses were received by the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Cherokee Nation and both tribes noted that the Proposed Action lies outside their area of interest (see EIS, Volume 3, Appendix F).

EIS Findings

The Region of Influence (ROI) for this resource includes portions of 24 counties in Georgia and 2 counties in Florida that underlie the proposed new MOAs within the Moody Airspace Complex. A study area that includes a 1-mile buffer around the boundaries of the proposed low-altitude MOAs was applied during the background investigation for previously recorded cultural resources. Upon examining the Proposed Action and alternatives, an Area of Potential Effects (APE) was delineated that was refined from the overall ROI and study area to include only those areas where the potential for effects could occur.

Under Section 106 of the NHPA, an APE is delineated to encompass the area where the undertaking or Proposed Action has the potential to affect historic properties if they exist. Due to a limited increase in the number of flights over the five proposed new low-altitude MOAs (Corsair North Low, Corsair South Low, Mustang Low, Warhawk Low, and Thud Low), the potential for effects in these areas was determined to be negligible to nonexistent. Considering that potential impacts on archaeological deposits would be limited to vibration, the APE for the archaeological sites review was limited to areas that underlie the proposed new Grand Bay MOA and the Moody 2 North MOA (i.e., areas in which the floor for training operations would be lowered to 100 feet AGL from the current floor of 500 feet AGL and potential vibration effects from louder overflights would be greater as a result). Similarly, the APE for the aboveground resources is limited to the Grand Bay and Moody 2 North MOAs. The overflights in those two MOAs, though fewer in number, would have a higher potential for visual and noise effects on historic properties. Therefore, the APE for the cultural resources analysis comprises portions of Atkinson, Clinch, Lanier, and Lowndes counties beneath the Moody 2 North and Grand Bay MOAs, where the proposed low-altitude training floor would lower from 500 feet AGL to 100 feet AGL under all four alternatives. Moody AFB itself is not located within the APE (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 3.7.3).

Alternatives

Alternative 1. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 1,000-Foot Floor

No impacts would occur on cultural resources as there would be no grounddisturbing activities nor alteration of existing structures.

Impacts on historic structures could occur from vibration associated with low-altitude training operations in the Grand Bay and Moody 2 North MOAs. Given that there are no supersonic activities proposed and that only 134 flight operations below 500 feet AGL are proposed in each of the two MOAs annually, there would be no adverse effects on historic properties as a result of vibration from aircraft noise.

Proposed Action

Modified Alternative 1. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 1,000-Foot Floor with Modified Lateral Boundaries

Under Modified Alternative 1, impacts on cultural resources would be the same as described for Alternative 1 (see EIS, Volume II, Appendix F).

Alternative 2. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 2,000-Foot Floor

Under Alternative 2, impacts on cultural resources would be the same as described for Alternative 1.

Alternative 3. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 4,000-Foot Floor

Under Alternative 3, impacts on cultural resources would be the same as described for Alternative 1.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no changes to the existing airspace (see EIS, Volume 1, 4.7).

Conclusion

Based on the FAA's independent review and evaluation, including DAF's consultation, the FAA concludes the Proposed Action will not result in significant impacts on historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural resources when compared to the No Action alternative.

6.2.7 LAND USE (SEE EIS SECTIONS 3.8, 4.8, and 5.2.7)

The FAA has not established a specific significant impact threshold for land use; however, potential impacts to consider include disruption of communities, relocation, and induced socioeconomic impacts.

Land Use

For this analysis, land use describes ownership and management of land that underlies the airspace affected by the Proposed Action and alternatives. This section examines any conflicts that may exist between the Proposed Action and land use plans and policies for the area potentially affected. The compatibility of existing and planned land use with aviation is usually associated with the acoustic environment (noise), which is described in Sections 3.2 and 4.2 (Acoustic Environment) (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 3.8.1.1).

Recreation

Common types of recreation that occur on the land beneath all the proposed airspace areas include hiking; viewing natural features, wildlife, and historic sites; camping; fishing; hunting; driving for pleasure; bicycling; horseback riding; and water activities. Recreational activities that occur within the airspace include soaring and model rocketry. Recreational activities can occur on both public and private lands. The majority of lands under the proposed airspace are private; however, a small portion of land management is undertaken by multiple federal and state agencies. The recreation analysis focuses on public lands and major areas of outdoor recreation beneath the affected airspace (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 3.8.1.2).

EIS Findings

Proposed Action

Modified Alternative 1. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 1,000-Foot Floor with Modified Lateral Boundaries

Impacts from aircraft operations on land use and recreation in the Moody 2 North, Moody 2 South, and Grand Bay MOAs would be the same as described for Alternative 1 because the proposed floor and ceiling altitudes would be the same as Alternative 1 for these MOAs.

The noise levels for all of the proposed low-altitude MOAs would be well below the 65 dBA DNL threshold for incompatible land uses. Fewer designated recreation areas would be impacted from low-altitude operations relative to Alternative 1 as the lateral boundaries of Corsair North Low, Mustang Low, and Warhawk Low MOAs would be reduced.

Impacts from the modification of the Banks Lake NWR exclusion zone would be the same as Alternative 1 and would not generate noise levels above 65 dBA DNL (i.e., the threshold for incompatible land uses).

Alternatives

Alternative 1. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 1,000-Foot Floor

There would be fewer low-altitude operations over the Moody 2 North and Moody 2 South MOAs, reducing the interactions between aircraft and recreational uses.

Aircraft operating below 500 feet AGL could startle livestock and poultry; however, the number of operations annually are low and spread out over large areas. Aircraft movement and noise would not be incompatible with any land uses, including farmland used for domestic livestock.

Although the modification of the Banks Lake NWR exclusion zone would increase the individual aircraft overflight noise, only a fraction of the total low-altitude operations over the Banks Lake NWR would occur below 1,500 feet annually and none of those operations would be below 500 feet AGL. These relatively infrequent, low-altitude aircraft operations over the Banks Lake NWR would not generate noise levels above 65 dBA DNL (i.e., the threshold for incompatible land uses).

Alternative 2. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 2,000-Foot Floor

Impacts from aircraft operations on land use and recreation in the Moody 2 North, Moody 2 South, Grand Bay, and Thud Low MOAs would be the same as described for Alternative 1 because the proposed floor and ceiling altitudes would be the same as Alternative 1 for these MOAs.

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The noise levels for all of the proposed low-altitude MOAs would be well below the 65 dBA DNL threshold for incompatible land uses.

Impacts from the modification of the Banks Lake NWR exclusion zone would be the same as Alternative 1 and would not generate noise levels above 65 dBA DNL (i.e., the threshold for incompatible land uses).

Alternative 3. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 4,000-Foot Floor

Impacts from aircraft operations on land use and recreation in the Moody 2 North, Moody 2 South, Grand Bay, and Thud Low MOAs would be the same as described for Alternative 1 because the proposed floor and ceiling altitudes would be the same as Alternative 1 for these MOAs.

The noise levels for all of the proposed low-altitude MOAs would be well below the 65 dBA DNL threshold for incompatible land uses.

Impacts from the modification of the Banks Lake NWR exclusion zone would be the same as Alternative 1 and would not generate noise levels above 65 dBA DNL (i.e., the threshold for incompatible land uses (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 3.8).

No Action Alternative

There would be no impacts on land use or recreation as there would be no shift in low-altitude aircraft operations to new low-altitude MOAs in the Moody Airspace Complex (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.8).

Conclusion

Based on the FAA's independent review and evaluation, the FAA concludes the Proposed Action will have no significant impacts on land use when compared with the no action alternative.

6.2.8 NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY SUPPLY (SEE EIS SECTION 6.1)

The FAA has not established a specific significant impact threshold for natural resources and energy supply.

EIS Finding

Proposed Action

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations require environmental analyses to identify "...any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources which would be involved in the proposed action should it be implemented" (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1502.16). Irreversible and irretrievable resource commitments are related to the loss in value of an affected resource that cannot be restored as a result of the action (e.g., loss of soil productivity following land development). Irreversible effects result primarily from the use or destruction of a specific resource (e.g., energy and minerals) that cannot be replaced within a reasonable time frame. Irretrievable resource commitments involve the loss in value of an affected resource that cannot be restored as a result of the action.

The Proposed Action would be limited to the establishment of low-altitude Military Operations Areas (MOAs) within the lateral confines of existing Special Use Airspace (SUA) and the lowering of the floor of an existing low-altitude MOA in the Moody Airspace Complex. No ground-disturbing activities would occur, and no new flight operations are proposed. Flight operations and training would require the consumption of fuel and material used in defensive countermeasures; however, no changes in the type or quantity of these materials are proposed. No significant irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources is anticipated from implementing the Proposed Action.

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, there are not any significant impacts to natural resources and energy supply.

Conclusion

Per the discussion above, and based on FAA's independent review and evaluation, the FAA has concluded the Proposed Action will have no significant impacts on natural resources and energy supply when compared with the no action alternative.

6.2.9 NOISE AND COMPATIBLE LAND USE (SEE EIS SECTIONS 3.3, 4.3, and 5.2.2)

The FAA's significance threshold for noise is whether the proposed action would increase noise by DNL 1.5 decibel (dB) or more for a noise sensitive area that is exposed to noise at or above the DNL 65 dB noise exposure level or that will be exposed at or above the DNL 65 dB level due to a DNL 1.5 dB increase, when compared to the no action alternative for the same timeframe.

The ROI for noise includes all areas beneath the existing and proposed Moody Airspace Complex that may experience changes in the overall noise environment or individual aircraft overflights from the Proposed Action.

Methodology and Evaluation Criteria

Noise Contours at Moody Air Force Base and the Grand Bay Range

NOISEMAP Version 7.3 was used to calculate the existing DNL noise contours at Moody AFB and the Grand Bay Range. NOISEMAP accounts for all aircraft activities, including landings, take-offs, in-flight operations, maintenance activities, and engine run-ups. Figure 3.3-4 shows the current DNL noise contours for Moody AFB and the Grand Bay Range plotted in 5 dB increments, ranging from 65 to 85 dBA DNL. The noise contours depict operational conditions as outlined in the 2015 Air Installation Compatibility Use Zone (AICUZ) Study for Moody AFB. There have been no substantial changes in operations or mission at Moody AFB since the noise contours were developed, and they have been carried forward as a comparative existing condition to determine the level of effects under NEPA. The current 65 dBA DNL noise contour extends approximately 2 miles from both ends of the primary runways at Moody AFB, and 1 mile both north and south of the Grand Bay Range. There are no schools or churches within the 65 dBA DNL contour for either Moody AFB or the Grand Bay Range. There are approximately three residences within the 65 dBA DNL contour for Moody AFB, and none within the 65 dBA DNL contour for the range (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 3.3.4.4).

EIS Findings

Proposed Action

Modified Alternative 1. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 1,000-Foot Floor with Modified Lateral Boundaries

Onset-Adjusted Monthly DNL was determined to be the same as the estimated DNL for all proposed operations.

The estimated DNL would range from less than 35.0 dBA in areas beneath mid-altitude MOAs or areas with limited air operations up to 59.7 dBA in the low-altitude training areas surrounding the Grand Bay Range, which would not change when compared to existing conditions.

Areas beneath the Corsair North Low, Corsair South Low, Moody 2 North, Mustang Low, and Warhawk Low MOAs would each experience an increase in sound levels of up to 2.3 dBA DNL and an increase in the percent of highly annoyed persons of up to 0.3 percent (up to 112 persons).

Areas beneath the Moody 2 South MOA would experience a decrease in overall sound level of 1.1 dBA DNL and a reduction in the percent of highly annoyed persons of 0.1 percent (equivalent to 7 persons). Areas beneath the Sabre MOA would remain below 35 dBA DNL. On rare occasions overflights would peak above 75 dBA and 90 dBA SEL and have the potential to interfere with communication and disturb sleep for individuals beneath the proposed low-altitude MOAs; however, individual overflights would not be loud enough or frequent enough to create areas of incompatible land use beneath these proposed MOAs.

The number of individual overflights in the Moody 2 North and Moody 2 South MOAs would decrease substantially. (Table 4.3-2 and Figure 4.3-3).

Alternative 1. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 1,000-Foot Floor

Onset-Adjusted Monthly DNL was determined to be the same as the estimated DNL for all proposed operations.

The estimated DNL would range from less than 35.0 dBA in areas beneath mid-altitude MOAs or areas with limited air operations up to 59.7 dBA in the low-altitude training areas surrounding the Grand Bay Range, which would not change when compared to existing conditions.

Areas beneath the Corsair North Low, Corsair South Low, Moody 2 North, Mustang Low, Thud Low, and Warhawk Low MOAs would each experience an increase in sound levels of up to 2.4 dBA DNL and an increase in the percent of highly annoyed persons of up to 0.3 percent (up to 112 persons).

Areas beneath the Moody 2 South MOA would experience a decrease in overall sound level of 1.1 dBA DNL and a reduction in the percent of highly annoyed persons of 0.1 percent (equivalent to 7 persons).

Areas beneath the Sabre MOA would remain below 35 dBA DNL.

On rare occasions overflights would peak above 75 dBA and 90 dBA SEL and have the potential to interfere with communication and disturb sleep for individuals beneath the proposed low-altitude MOAs; however, individual overflights would not be loud enough or frequent enough to create areas of incompatible land use beneath these proposed MOAs.

The number of individual overflights in the Moody 2 North and Moody 2 South MOAs would decrease substantially.

Alternative 2. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 2,000-Foot Floor

Onset-Adjusted Monthly DNL was determined to be the same as the estimated DNL for all proposed operations.

The estimated DNL would range from less than 35.0 dBA in areas beneath mid-altitude MOAs or areas with limited air operations up to 59.7 dBA in the low-altitude training areas surrounding the Grand Bay Range, which would not change when compared to existing conditions.

Areas beneath the Corsair North Low, Corsair South Low, Moody 2 North, Mustang Low, Thud Low, and Warhawk Low MOAs would each experience an increase in sound levels of up to 2.2 dBA DNL and an increase in the percent of highly annoyed persons of up to 0.5 percent (up to 112 persons).

Areas beneath the Moody 2 South MOA would experience a decrease in overall sound level of 1.1 dBA DNL and a reduction in the percent of highly annoyed persons of 0.1 percent (equivalent to 7 persons).

Areas beneath the Sabre MOA would remain below 35 dBA DNL.

Unlike Alternative 1, individual overflights would be above 2,000 feet AGL and would not be peak above 75 dBA or 90 dBA SEL and would not have the potential to interfere with communication and disturb sleep for individuals beneath the proposed low-altitude MOAs. The number of individual overflights in the Moody 2 North and Moody 2 South MOAs would experience a moderate decrease (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.3.1.2).

Alternative 3. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 4,000-Foot Floor

Onset-Adjusted Monthly DNL was determined to be the same as the estimated DNL for all proposed operations.

The estimated DNL would range from less than 35.0 dBA in areas beneath mid-altitude MOAs or areas with limited air operations up to 59.7 dBA in the low-altitude training areas surrounding the Grand Bay Range, which would be the same as under existing conditions.

Areas beneath the Mustang Low, Thud Low, and Warhawk Low MOAs would each experience an increase in sound levels of up to 2.2 dBA DNL and an increase in the percent of highly annoyed persons of up to 0.3 percent (up to 35 persons).

Areas beneath the Moody 2 North and Moody 2 South MOAs would experience a decrease in overall sound levels but would not experience a change in the percent of highly annoyed persons.

Areas beneath the Corsair North, Corsair South, and Sabre MOAs would remain below 35 dBA DNL.

Unlike Alternative 1, individual overflights would be above 4,000 feet AGL and would not be peak above 75 dBA or 90 dBA SEL, and would not have the potential to interfere with communication and disturb sleep for individuals beneath the proposed low-altitude MOAs (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.3.2).

No Action

There would be no effects on the noise environment because modification to and additions of low-altitude MOAs would not occur in the Moody Airspace Complex (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.3.3).

Conclusion

Based on the FAA's independent review and evaluation, the FAA has determined the Proposed Action will have no significant impacts on noise or noise-compatible land use when compared with the no action alternative.

6.2.10 SOCIOECONOMICS, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, AND CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY RISKS (SEE EIS SECTIONS 3.4 and 4.4)

EIS Findings

Proposed Action

Modified Alternative 1. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 1,000-Foot Floor with Modified Lateral Boundaries

Modified Alternative 1 would not result in significant impacts on the socioeconomics. Overall effects on the population, housing, property values, employment and income within the ROI would be similar to those discussed under Alternative 1. Added fuel and other operational costs for aircraft detouring around the Moody Airspace Complex or through the Sabre MOA to avoid flying through active SUA would be less than those costs described for Alternatives 1, 2, and 3. Because Modified Alternative 1 would affect an estimated 40 percent fewer aircraft than Alternative 1, 27 percent fewer than Alternative 2, and 11 percent fewer than Alternative 3, and aircraft would still be able to use the airspace underlying the Moody Airspace Complex (up to the floor of the proposed 1,000-foot low-altitude MOAs) to transit the region, use of the detours or rerouting options around or through the Moody Airspace Complex would be less than Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.9.3).

Modified Alternative 1 would be limited to airspace and would not result in any disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental impacts on minority, low-income, youth, or elderly populations. Overall effects for the populations under the Moody Airspace Complex would be less than those described for Alternative 1; due to aircraft operations conducted in less low-altitude airspace, the potential impacts on any communities would be less than for Alternative 1.

Socioeconomic Impacts

Population and Housing

County population data for areas under the proposed MOAs are presented in Table 3.9-1. Figure 3.9-1 displays the county areas that underlie each MOA of the Moody Airspace Complex. Population estimates for the ROI are considerate of both the Georgia and Florida state populations, because the Moody Airspace Complex spans counties in both states. In 2017 the population for the ROI was estimated at 796,013 persons, representing 2.6 percent of the total Georgia and Florida populations. The ROI population decreased by 5,138 persons between 2010 and 2017 as a result of the 2010 BRAC and changed mission at Moody AFB. This population decrease represents a 0.6 percent decrease in the population since 2010. Population changes from 2010 to 2017 varied greatly across the affected counties. The populations in several of the counties decreased during that time period (see Table 3.9-1). Turner County, Georgia, showed the lowest growth rate with a 10.0 percent decrease and Lowndes County, Georgia, showed the highest growth rate and increased by 4.3 percent.

Economic Activity

The labor force in the ROI includes 340,704 employable persons, of whom 305,493 are employed. The unemployment rate is 9.4 percent. Median household income in the ROI in 2018 was \$37,002, with a per capita income of \$19,519. Lee County had the highest median income of \$65,018, and Clinch County had the lowest median income of \$21,838 within the ROI. Dougherty County had the highest unemployment rate of 15.8 percent (US Census Bureau 2018). Table 3.9-3 provides employment and income data for the state of Georgia, the state of Florida, and the 28 counties within the ROI.

Moody AFB directly employs more than 5,230 personnel and has a total population of 10,914, including military dependents. The annual payroll of the installation is over \$300 million. As a result of payroll expenditures and the estimated value of indirect jobs in the local area, Moody AFB has an estimated total economic impact of nearly \$448 million on the local economy (Moody AFB 2015).

Air Travel and Transport

Two commercial airports underlie the Moody Airspace Complex, the Valdosta Regional Airport (underlies the Sabre MOA) and Southwest Georgia Regional Airport (the eastern portion of the exclusion zone for this airport underlies Corsair North MOA). The remaining 12 public airports underlying the complex are considered general aviation airports (Georgia Department of Transportation 2018b). Services provided by these airports include local and regional passenger and cargo transport, medical support, glider services, pilot training, crop dusting, and varied capacities for accommodating (with fuel, oxygen, and parking) aircraft transiting the region (see Table 3.2-3). The 15 private airports and heliports underlying the complex provide varied services such as runway and parking for private aircraft owners, crop dusting, medical emergency support, pilot training, private transport, sightseeing, and local travel (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 3.9).

Alternatives

Alternative 1. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 1,000-Foot Floor

The new low-altitude MOAs within the Moody Airspace Complex would not result in significant impacts on socioeconomics. The Proposed Action would not result in changes in population, employment, or income within the ROI. The anticipated long-term, minor to moderate, adverse impacts from training operations would include increased presence of and associated noise from military aircraft flying at lower altitudes in areas underlying the existing Moody Airspace Complex

(see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.9.2).

Alternative 2. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 2,000-Foot Floor

Alternative 2 would not result in significant impacts on the socioeconomics. Overall effects on the population, housing, property values, employment and income within the ROI would be similar to, but less than those discussed under Alternative 1.

Alternative 3. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 4,000-Foot Floor

Alternative 3 would not result in significant impacts on the socioeconomics. Overall effects for the population, housing, property values, employment and income within the ROI would be similar to, but less than, those discussed under Alternative 2.

Environmental Justice Impacts

The FAA has not established a significance threshold for environmental justice. However, a significance factor to consider is whether the action would have the potential to lead to a disproportionately high and adverse impact to an environmental justice population, i.e., a low-income or minority population, due to significant impacts in other environmental impact categories, or impacts on the physical or natural environment that affect an environmental justice population in a way that FAA determines are unique to the environmental justice population and significant to that population.

A total of 25 census tracts were identified as having populations that have a meaningfully higher percentage of minorities when compared with the community of concern (COC) populations, and a total of 16 census tracts were identified as having low-income populations at a meaningfully greater percentage than those of the COC population (see EIS, Volume I, Sec. 3.10.4).

The primary concern for impacts on minority and low-income populations is the potential for increased noise exposure. As indicated in Section 4.3, noise from aircraft overflights in the Moody Airspace Complex would not generate individual acoustic events loud enough to damage hearing or structures (i.e., exceeding 65 dBA DNL). Although aircraft overflights would not be loud enough to damage hearing or structures, individual low-level overflights would be loud and abrupt enough to startle individuals and cause readily perceptible vibrations in homes and buildings directly under flight paths. These effects, however, would be less than significant, and mitigation measures (Section 7) would be put in place to minimize the impact as much as possible (see EIS, Volume 1, Section 4.10).

Modified Alternative 1. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 1,000-Foot Floor with Modified Lateral Boundaries

Modified Alternative 1 would be limited to airspace and would not result in any disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental impacts on minority, low-income, youth, or elderly populations. Overall effects for the populations under the Moody Airspace Complex would be less than those described for Alternative 1; due to aircraft operations conducted in less low-altitude airspace, the potential impacts on any communities would be less than for Alternative 1.

Alternative 1. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 1,000-Foot Floor

Noise levels associated with aircraft training operations under Alternative 1 would be comparable to existing conditions within the Moody Airspace Complex with incremental changes to the overall noise environment. These changes would be due to extending the arrival and departure flight tracks

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for flight safety; mitigation measures would be put in place to minimize the impact to the population such as the time of day of flights and flight frequency. Although, a number of census tracts were identified as environmental justice populations greater than the COC, the Proposed Action would be limited to airspace only, and would therefore not result in any disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects on minority, low-income, youth, or elderly populations.

Alternative 2. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 2,000-Foot Floor

Alternative 2 would be limited to airspace and would not result in any disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental impacts on minority, low-income, youth, or elderly populations.

Alternative 3. Create New Military Operations Areas with a 4,000-Foot Floor

Alternative 3 would be limited to airspace and would not result in any disproportionately high or adverse health or environmental impacts on minority, low-income, youth and or elderly populations.

Children's Environmental Health and Safety Risks

Pursuant to Executive Order 13045, *Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks* 62 *Federal Register* 19885, (April 21, 1997), federal agencies are directed, as appropriate and consistent with the agency's mission, to make it a high priority to identify and assess environmental health risks and safety risks that may disproportionately affect children. The FAA is encouraged to identify and assess environmental health risks and safety risks that the agency has reason to believe could disproportionately affect children. Environmental health risks and safety risks include risks to health or to safety that are attributable to products or substances that a child is likely to come in contact with or ingest, such as air, food, drinking water, recreational waters, soil, or products they might use or be exposed to.

The affected environment for potential impacts for children's environmental health and safety is related to the affected environment for other impact categories (i.e., air quality, noise, etc.). Therefore, the study area for children's environmental health and safety includes the study areas identified for other impact categories that have the potential to impact children's environmental health and safety.

The FAA has not established a significance Threshold for Children's environmental health and safety risk. However, a factor to consider in evaluating significance is whether the action would have the potential to lead to a disproportionate health or safety risk to children.

As noted in Section 4.4 of the EIS the Proposed Action and Alternatives would be limited to airspace only and would not result in disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects on youth or elderly populations (see EIS, Volume I, Sec. 4.4, pages 4-34 through 4-43).

EIS Findings

No significant impacts, including no environmental justice or children's environmental health and safety risks.

Conclusion

Given the findings discussed above, and based on the FAA's independent review and evaluation, the FAA has determined the Proposed Action would have no significant impacts on

socioeconomics, environmental justice, or children's environmental health and safety risks, when compared with the no action alternative.

6.2.11 VISUAL EFFECTS (INCLUDING LIGHT EMISSIONS) (SEE EIS SECTION 3.1.2)

The FAA has not established a specific significant impact threshold for Light Emissions and Visual Resources/Visual Character.

FAA NEPA Desk Reference (FAA 2015) requires a visual effects determination for the extent in which a Proposed Action would generate light emissions creating an annoyance or that would detract or contrast with the visual character of the environment. Under the Proposed Action, low-altitude training operations that currently take place within the Moody 2 North and Moody 2 South MOAs and Restricted Area R-3008 would be redistributed into the proposed low-altitude MOAs; therefore, no substantial increase in low-altitude operations are proposed in the Moody Airspace Complex, including night operations in which safety lights from aircraft could be visible during low altitude operations. Additionally, the use of flares as defensive countermeasures would be redistributed with the proposed shift in training operations. As such, there would be no change in the light emissions in the Moody Airspace Complex but instead a redistribution of where those light emissions would occur. Only a small percentage of all low-altitude operations occur during environmental night (2200 hours to 0700 hours), and safety lights on aircraft would not be different from commercial and civilian aircraft that are common throughout the Moody Airspace Complex. The safety lights on military aircraft would have no effects on the visual character of the environment. Flares would be a temporary source of light emissions, typically burning for approximately 3 to 5 seconds; training operations would not use flares below an altitude of 2,000 feet AGL in the Moody Airspace Complex and there would be no additional use of flares under the Proposed Action; instead 3,052 flares currently being used in the Moody 2 North and Moody 2 South MOAs would be redistributed to the proposed low-altitude MOAs annually. The use of flares would be dispersed across large areas and would be at altitudes that would not be visible during the daytime and visible at night only with very clear night skies. Flare releases would be at very low altitudes (between 2,000 and 4,000 feet AGL) and would not be visible unless the individual observing the flare was proximate to the training event at the time of the release of defensive countermeasures. Therefore, the use of flares in the Moody Airspace Complex under the Proposed Action would not create an annoyance or detract from the visual characteristics of the environment.

There would be no change in the number of low-altitude training operations in the Moody Airspace Complex and the shift in aircraft operations and use of flares would be more greatly dispersed across the SUA. Therefore, there would be no visual effects including a change in light emissions. Accordingly, this impact category was dismissed from detailed analysis.

6.2.12 WATER RESOURCES (INCLUDING WETLANDS, FLOODPLAINS, SURFACE WATERS, GROUNDWATER, AND WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS) & COASTAL RESOURCES (SEE EIS SECTIONS 3.1.2)

The Proposed Action would not change any ground operations and no on-the-ground activities associated with this proposed airspace action would interact with water resources. Potential direct impacts on water resources from the use of defensive countermeasures during training activities include the deposition of residual materials from chaff and flare use, its accumulation in sensitive areas, and the ultimate breakdown of these materials into substrate mediums. Indirect impacts include

fire risk, transportation of these materials to other areas by environmental elements, and the potential for ingestion by sensitive species. Depending on the altitude of release and wind speed and direction, the chaff from a single bundle can be spread over distances ranging from less than a 0.25 mile to over 100 miles. Chaff and flares do not contain materials that would degrade water quality or pose a human health risk (Air Force 1997). In addition, the Proposed Action is not proximate to any coastal areas.

There would be no direct or indirect impacts on water resources or coastal resources from the proposed airspace action, and these impact categories were dismissed from detailed analysis.

5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts result from incremental impacts of an action when combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions (40 CFR 1508.7). Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions over a period of time (CEQ, 1997). Cumulative impacts would occur if incremental impacts of the Proposed Action, added to the environmental impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable similar actions, would result in an adverse effect to resources in the region.

The cumulative impacts analysis focuses on those resource areas that may be significantly impacted by the proposed action, and/or those resource areas currently in poor or declining health or at risk even if proposed action impacts would be relatively small. The resources that meet these criteria are air quality/climate; biological resources; historical, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources; land use and recreation; noise and noise-compatible land use; socioeconomics and environmental justice/children's health and safety risks.

EIS Findings

To ensure an assessment of potential cumulative effects, this analysis in EIS Section 5.0, sought information on past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, both federal and non-federal. Those actions, discussed in the following subsections, warranted consideration due to the potential for spatial or temporal overlap of their effects with those of the Proposed Action, as analyzed in EIS Section 3.

Various sources of information were used to identify past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Public documents and Web sites, discussions with local planning officials, and first-hand knowledge from DAF's staff provided the vast majority of information. Information also was gleaned from public meetings and news announcements.

Air Quality/Climate (See EIS Section 5.2.4)

Past and ongoing activities have contributed to the attainment status of the counties beneath the proposed airspace. All counties are currently in attainment, having air quality that meets the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Considering past, present, and reasonably foreseeable activities, the Proposed Action, and alternatives would not be expected to contribute to significant cumulative effects to air quality or to result in exceedances of the NAAQS.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions would increase slightly, compared to current operations, for Modified Alternative 1 and Alternatives 1 and 2. A comparison of the estimated GHG emissions for Alternative 1, Modified Alternative 1, and Alternative 2 and the No Action Alternative is presented

in Table 5.2-1. Alternative 3 would occur above the mixing height of 3,000 feet AGL and emissions generally do not have effects on individuals on the ground, and this alternative is therefore not shown the table.

Implementation of Alternative 1 would result in the largest increase in GHG emissions and implementing Alternative 3 would have no increase. While climate change results from the incremental addition of GHG emissions from millions of individual sources, the significance of an individual source alone is impossible to assess on a global scale beyond the overall need for global GHG emission reductions to potentially avoid catastrophic global outcomes. Therefore, the quantitative analysis of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions in this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is for disclosing the local net effects (increase or decrease) of the Proposed Action and alternatives and for its potential usefulness in making reasoned choices among alternatives (see EIS, Volume I, Section 5.2.4).

Biological Resources (Including Fish, Wildlife, and Plants) (See EIS Section 5.2.5)

Under all four alternatives, the Proposed Action, in combination with the proposed Unimproved Landing Zone and the Grand Bay Range expansion projects, has the potential to cause cumulative minor, adverse impacts on wildlife through increased disturbance from noise and movement. The use of the Unimproved Landing Zone in combination with a slight increase in the noise environment and more aircraft movement at low altitudes as a result of the Proposed Action could increase the disturbance of birds and mammals under the Moody Airspace Complex in the long term. Further, the removal of vegetation and loss of habitat from the Unimproved Landing Zone and Grand Bay Range expansion projects would disperse wildlife into other areas where low-altitude training operations would occur under the Proposed Action.

No cumulative impacts on threatened and endangered species are anticipated under any of the three alternatives. Moody AFB maintains a program to place low-altitude training exclusion zones over all bald eagle and wood stork nesting sites under the Moody Airspace Complex to avoid both noise and visual disturbances associated with low-altitude operations. Under the Proposed Action, these exclusion zones would continue to be used over any identified active nest site. Moody AFB natural resources managers work with Georgia Department of Natural Resources and US Fish and Wildlife Service personnel to update the nest database annually.

Thus, cumulative effects to wildlife as a result of the Proposed Action when compounded with the aforementioned past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, would not be significant (see EIS, Volume I, 5.2.5).

Historical, Architectural, Archaeological, and Cultural Resources (See EIS Section 5.2.6)

Based on the previously described actions, a list of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions was identified that may contribute to cumulative impacts on known cultural resources, including those known cultural resources that are included in, or determined eligible for inclusion in, the NRHP. The ROI for the analysis of cumulative impacts on cultural resources and historic properties consists of the APE defined for the Proposed Action.

Aircraft training operations in the proposed low-altitude MOAs in combination with other projects identified in the Moody Airspace Complex would have no cumulative impacts on cultural resources. No ground-disturbing activities are proposed, all federal projects are subject

to National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 compliance ensuring the cultural resources are evaluated as part of any present or foreseeably future action, and for all four alternatives, the Proposed Action was determined to not have any adverse impacts on cultural resources.

Therefore, cumulative impacts to cultural resources as a result of implementing the Proposed Action when taken into consideration with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions would not be significant (see EIS, Volume I, Section 5.2.6).

Land Use and Recreation (See EIS Section 5.2.7)

Based on the previously described actions, a list of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions were identified that may contribute to cumulative impacts on land use.

Comprehensive land planning implemented through the South Georgia Regional Commission and through local county comprehensive plans supports planned development through ordinances that ensure land use compatibilities. The South Georgia Regional Commission has been supportive of integrating zoning ordinances that provide for compatibility with the military training mission at Moody AFB and future land development. Specific zoning ordinances have been included in the Comprehensive Plans for Lanier and Lowndes counties to account for the special requirements associated with military training activities in the region. Under all four alternatives, the Proposed Action in combination with the regional land use planning would not cause any cumulative adverse impacts.

There are no proposed projects in the region that would interact with the Proposed Action that would cause cumulative impacts on regional recreational resources. No substantial change in the noise or visual environment would occur as a result of the Proposed Action under any of the three alternatives evaluated and would therefore not have cumulative impacts on recreational opportunities such as hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing, which are prevalent in the region.

Noise and Noise-Compatible Land Use (See EIS Section 5.2.2)

There are no other identified proposed actions in the Moody Airspace Complex that would substantially change the noise environment. Under all four alternatives, the training operations in the proposed low-altitude MOAs would increase noise beneath the MOAs but this increase would not be substantial and would not meet the threshold of annoyance for most receptors. By redistributing the training operations across additional low-altitude MOAs, airspace capacity would be created to fly more aircraft up to the previous congestion levels. Although there are no plans to increase training operations in the Moody Airspace Complex, additional operations would increase noise exposure for businesses and residents even if new aircraft operations generated the same noise as current aircraft. New aircraft could be louder than current aircraft training in the low-altitude MOAs, and the replacement aircraft for retiring aircraft would also likely increase noise levels under the Moody Airspace Complex. Any further Moody Airspace Complex operational changes would be evaluated through additional NEPA analyses. Therefore, the Proposed Action when combined with other cumulative actions would have long-term, minor noise impacts for all four alternatives.

There is no known civilian or Joint-DOD-civilian past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions that would result in significant noise impacts in combination with the proposed actions, although several non-DOD actions could result in increased noise levels. Future civilian projects proposed in long-term planning documents are not yet sufficiently well-defined to allow accurate

prediction of the level of cumulative noise impacts when combined with the proposed actions.

Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice/ Children's Environmental Health and Safety Risks

Socioeconomics (See EIS Sections 5.2.8)

The Proposed Action would create new low-altitude MOAs that would be located over existing public and private civilian airports. When active, the new low-altitude MOAs could impede the transiting of aircraft to and from airports that are proximate to the proposed low-altitude MOAs. Civilian aircraft could incur additional costs in time and fuel associated with transiting around active low-altitude MOAs. If pilots of visual flight rules (VFR) aircraft opt to detour around the airspace complex to avoid periodically active MOAs, the estimated additional flight distance from a detour would be between 34 and 45 nautical miles (nm). This may result in added fuel, additional minutes of flying time, and other operational costs for pilots of the detouring aircraft. Cumulatively, under all four alternatives, with the likelihood for ever-increasing use of civilian airports in south Georgia, the Proposed Action would have a moderate long-term impact on the socioeconomics of the region. The growth of some local public airports could be reduced due to the additional transit times for civilian aircraft. Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) would be issued by Moody AFB to notify civil aviators of planned training operations to reduce scheduling flights through the low-altitude airspace during periods when the proposed low-altitude MOAs would be active (see EIS, Volume I, Section 5.2.8).

Environmental Justice, and Children's Environmental Health and Safety Risks (See EIS Section 5.2.9)

A review of the known past, present, and foreseeable future actions revealed no projects within the ROI that have previously impacted or could impact minority, low-income, or children's populations disproportionately from other members of the local population. Regardless of alternative, the Proposed Action would not have disproportionate impacts on minority, low-income, youth, or elderly populations, and no other projects proposed in the vicinity of the Moody Airspace Complex were identified that would cause disproportionate impacts on these populations. Therefore, there would be no adverse cumulative impacts on environmental justice populations under any of the three alternatives evaluated (see EIS, Volume I, Section 5.2.9).

Conclusion

Based on the FAA's independent review and evaluation, none of the environmental impact categories identified potential significant cumulative impacts associated with the Proposed Action, when compared with the no action alternative.

MITIGATION MEASURES

The following are the protocols and environmental protection measures that will be implemented by the DAF:

- Airspace Users, Underlying Communities, and Airports
Moody AFB, in coordination with Valdosta RAPCON and the Jacksonville Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC), will establish Letters of Agreement with affected public and private airports, as appropriate, to establish ATC procedures for approaches and departures when the low-altitude MOA is active.
- Jacksonville ARTCC can request use of the Thud, Mustang, and Warhawk MOAs to

accommodate air traffic through these areas. Additionally, air traffic along V routes (V-5, V-578, and V-579) transiting the Moody Airspace Complex will be prioritized to the maximum extent practical by the Jacksonville ARTCC and Valdosta RAPCON to maintain an unimpeded and safe flow of aircraft between Valdosta and Atlanta.

- IFR flights will be accommodated by the following:
 - For all IFR traffic arriving or departing the underlying airports, Moody AFB ATC is alerted that MOA clearance will be needed approximately 30 minutes prior to an arrival or departure for an IFR civilian aircraft.
 - Upon notification, ATC relocates or pauses military training activity in an active MOA and deactivates the MOA allowing for the IFR civilian aircraft to transit the airspace.
 - When the civilian aircraft is clear from the airspace, ATC reactivates the MOA for military training activities following the completion of the IFR civilian flight.
 - Most of the airports currently accommodated are not tower controlled, and civilian aircraft depart visual flight rules (VFR) and then call for clearance; at that time ATC clears the MOA of military training activity to provide access for the departing flight, which continues IFR according to its flight plan.

- When Valdosta RAPCON activates or deactivates the MOAs, all surrounding ATC facilities will be notified to alleviate delays for subsequent arriving and transient aircraft. This real-time coordination between agencies is key to managing operations within the Moody Airspace Complex.
- Mid-air collision avoidance brochures will be updated to reflect changes to the Moody Airspace Complex and distributed to airports underlying and proximate to the Moody Airspace Complex.
- For special civilian air operational events, such as the annual Glider Soaring Expo, Lakeland Fun and Sun, annual Sunbelt Agricultural Expo, and the rocketry organizations that sometimes require the use of lower-altitude airspace, Moody AFB ATC and Valdosta RAPCON will develop operational agreements with the users to accommodate their periodic events and avoid conflicts with civilian aircraft operations during these events and military training activities in the proposed low-altitude MOAs.

Biological Resources

- Use of flares below 2,000 feet increases the risk of fire. If the use of flares is proposed below 2,000 feet in the low-altitude MOAs increasing fire risk, Moody AFB will establish a capability to analyze those fire risks on a site-specific basis.
- Moody AFB will implement a public information program in areas where flares are used over non-Department of Defense land to educate the public about the hazards of dud flares and proper procedures to follow if a dud flare is found.

6 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

NEPA Process

The DAF published a Draft EIS for the Moody AFB comprehensive airspace initiative on September 25, 2020. As a cooperating agency, the FAA participated in the preparation of the Draft EIS, including reviewing drafts and providing input. Although only a 45-day review period is required for the Draft EIS, the DAF elected to have a 60-day public comment period, ending on November 24, 2020. Therefore, the public comment period on the Draft EIS ran from September 25, 2020 to November 24, 2020.

During the comment period, the DAF held a series of public meetings. The DAF utilized several methods to notify the public of opportunities for involvement and comment during the public review period. These methods included:

- A Notice of Availability in the Federal Register to announce the DEIS was available for review;
- A mailing of notification letters to government agencies, special interest groups, and local landowners/residents;
- A public website;
- Press releases;
- Newspaper advertisements;
- A public hearing; and
- Government-to-Government Meetings

Details of these notification methods were outlined in Appendix A, *Public Involvement*, of the EIS.

The comments and responses to the Draft EIS are contained in Appendix A, *Public Involvement*, of the EIS. A total of 95 comment submittals were received, the majority of public comments received were directed at the structure of the DAF's proposal, impacts on airports and civilian aviation within and proximate to the Moody Airspace Complex, impacts on biological resources, impacts on socioeconomics from perceived changes in general aviation requirements, and noise (see EIS, Volume I, Appendix A, Sections A-7 and A-8).

The EIS was issued on May 19, 2023, and it fully analyzed the potential environmental impacts of the alternatives. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published its receipt of the EIS in the Federal Register on May 19, 2023 (88 FR 32215). A 30-day waiting period took place between May 19, 2023 and June 20, 2023.

The DAF signed its Record of Decision on August 15, 2023. The Record of Decision identifies the DAF decision on five alternatives analyzed in the EIS. The Notice of Availability for the Record of Decision was published in the Federal Register on September 12, 2023 (88 FR 62553).

FAA Aeronautical Outreach

The FAA participation in the airspace circularization process for the Special Use Airspace proposal was conducted in accordance with FAA Order JO 7400.2. (See EIS, Volume II, Appendix H). As part of the process, the FAA publicly circularized the proposed airspace to solicit

FAA Adoption of the *EIS for the Comprehensive Airspace Initiative for Moody Air Force Base, GA*, and FAA Record of Decision

information to assist in determining what effect it would have to navigable airspace. Twenty (20) comment letters were received, and responses to comments are provided in Appendix A of the EIS (see EIS, Volume 2, Appendix A-10, pages A-441 to A-502).

7 INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

The FAA has reviewed the following information:

1. FAA Cooperating Agency Letter dated August 28, 2019, for the Air Force's preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Comprehensive Airspace Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Special Use Airspace (SUA) at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia.
2. Environmental Impact Statement (EIS for the Moody Air Force Base Comprehensive Airspace Initiative, April 2023
3. Record of Decision (ROD) for Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Department of the Air Force Comprehensive Airspace Initiative, Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, August 15, 2023

9 DECISIONS AND ORDERS

9.1 Adoption

In accordance with CEQ regulation 40 CFR § 1506.3 and FAA Order 1050.1F, Chapter 8, paragraph 8-2, the FAA has conducted an independent review and evaluation of the United States Air Force's Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Comprehensive Airspace Initiative for Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, April 2023, and its supporting documentation, as incorporated by reference. As a cooperating agency, the FAA provided subject matter expertise and closely coordinated with the DAF during the environmental review process, including the preparation of the EIS.

The review included the purpose and need to be served by this project, the alternative means of achieving them, the environmental impacts of these alternatives, the mitigation necessary to preserve and enhance the human environment, and the response to public concerns. There will not be any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects from the implementation of the Proposed Action on minority and low-income populations. Nor will there be any impacts associated with the protection of children from environmental health and safety risks. Public participation in the NEPA process was conducted in accordance with FAA Order 1050.1F and the comments received as described in the Public Involvement section above were considered and adequately addressed.

Based on its independent review and evaluation, the FAA has determined that the EIS and its supporting documentation, as incorporated, adequately assess, and disclose the environmental impacts of the Proposed Action.

Based on this evaluation, the FAA, as the Cooperating Agency, concludes that adoption of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Comprehensive Airspace Initiative for Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, with incorporation of its supporting documentation, is authorized in accordance with 40 CFR Section 1506.3.

In addition, the FAA has determined that there have not been substantial changes to the Proposed Action that are relevant to environmental concerns, and that there are no significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the Proposed Action or its impacts. Therefore, the FAA has concluded that a supplement to the FEIS is not required.

Accordingly, the FAA adopts the FEIS, appendices, and all information identified therein, incorporated by reference, and made publicly available, and takes full responsibility for the scope and content that addresses the Proposed Action. The FAA will notify EPA of this adoption decision in accordance with FAA Order 1050.1F, paragraph 8-2(f).

9.2 Record of Decision

After careful and thorough consideration of the EIS and the facts contained herein, the undersigned finds that the Proposed Action is consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives as set forth in Section 101 of NEPA, as amended, and other applicable environmental requirements and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment or otherwise include any condition requiring consultation pursuant to Section 102(2)(C) of NEPA.

Public participation in the airspace circularization process for the Special Use Airspace proposal was conducted in accordance with FA Order JO 7400.2P, and the comments received concerning potential impacts on aviation were considered and adequately addressed.

The undersigned has carefully considered the FAA's statutory mandate under 49 U.S.C. § 40103 to ensure the safe and efficient use of the national airspace system as well as the other aeronautical goals and objectives discussed in the Final EIS. The undersigned concurs that Modified Alternative 1 for the Proposed Action provides the best airspace combination for meeting the purpose and need of that action, and that all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from that alternative have been adopted.

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to the undersigned by the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, the undersigned approves and authorizes all necessary agency action to Create New Military Operations Areas with a 1,000-Foot Floor with Modified Lateral Boundaries, Create a New Grand Bay Military Operations Area, and Lower the Floor of Moody 2 North Military Operations Area, as described in the Proposed Action.

This decision signifies that applicable Federal environmental requirements relating to the Proposed Action have been met. The decision enables the FAA to complete non-rulemaking actions to establish and modify the MOAs in the Moody Airspace Complex, as described in the Proposed Action.

Approved: _____

Date: _____

Michael R. Beckles
Director, Policy, AJV-P
Mission Support Services
Air Traffic Organization (ATO)
Federal Aviation Administration

Right of Appeal

This Adoption and Record of Decision constitutes a final order of the FAA Administrator and is subject to exclusive judicial review under 49 U.S.C. §46110 by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia or the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the circuit in which the person contesting the decision resides or has its principal place of business.

Any party having substantial interest in this order may apply for review of the decision by filing a petition for review in the appropriate U.S. Court of Appeals no later than 60 days after the order is issued in accordance with the provisions of 49 U.S.C. §46110.