

## **Record of Decision**

### **Air Force Special Operations Command Assets Beddown Cannon AFB, New Mexico**

This document records the decision of the United States Air Force (Air Force) with regard to the beddown of Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) assets at Cannon Air Force Base (AFB). In making this decision, the information, analyses, and public comments contained in the *Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for AFSOC Assets Beddown at Cannon AFB, New Mexico* were considered, along with other relevant matters.

This Record of Decision (ROD) is prepared in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) at Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1505.2, *Record of Decision in Cases Requiring Environmental Impact Statements* (40 CFR §1505.2). Specifically, this ROD:

- States the Air Force's Decision (page 11);
- Identifies all alternatives considered by the Air Force in reaching the decision (see pages 3 - 5) and specifies the environmentally preferable alternative (see page 6);
- Identifies and discusses relevant factors (*e.g.*, statutory mission, national security policy, operational, environmental, economic and technical) that were considered in making the decision among the alternatives and states how those considerations entered into this decision (see pages 5, 6, and throughout this ROD); and
- States the mitigations adopted, determines whether all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the selected alternative have been adopted, and summarizes the applicable monitoring and enforcement program adopted for the applicable mitigation (see pages 6 - 10).

#### **BACKGROUND**

Pursuant to the requirement of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission Recommendation #100, as set forth in the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission Report to the President, to seek and consider designating a new mission for Cannon AFB, NM, prior to December 31, 2009, the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) approved the proposal presented to him on June 19, 2006 by the Secretary of the Air Force and designated the AFSOC mission to Cannon AFB (Department of Defense [DoD] 2005).

To carry out the SECDEF mission designation, the United States Air Force (Air Force) proposes to transfer aircraft and personnel from Hurlburt Field, Florida, and/or other existing operational locations, to Cannon AFB. This action would involve construction and modifications to facilities at Cannon AFB and Melrose Air Force Range (AFR) through Fiscal Year (FY) 2013. AFSOC also proposes to begin utilizing the 60,010-acre Melrose AFR, existing military training airspace, Military Training Routes (MTRs), and other locations for personnel training. Scheduling authority for Special Use Airspace (SUA) and MTRs currently coordinated

by the 27<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing (27 FW) would be transferred to an AFSOC Special Operations Wing (SOW) at Cannon AFB.

AFSOC anticipates additional growth from now through FY 2014. Force structure increases and additional training requirements require new base and range facilities. AFSOC needs another base for the following reasons:

- a. Quality of training in the southeast United States is not representative of ongoing real-world deployments that support the War on Terrorism.
- b. Increased competition for Eglin range time with the proposed addition of the new F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Integrated Training Center and other BRAC actions would limit AFSOC training.
- c. Locating a MAJCOM at a single base -- Hurlburt Field -- makes it vulnerable to a catastrophic event (i.e., Hurricane Andrew or Katrina).

The Proposed Action fulfills the SECDEF designation of AFSOC as the new mission for Cannon AFB and resolves AFSOC's needs. The final BRAC report (2005) from the BRAC Commission to the President recommended Cannon AFB remain open until at least 31 December 2009. In the interim, the SECDEF was to seek other missions for assignment to Cannon AFB. Missions for Cannon AFB were sought and evaluated consistent with the recommendations of the BRAC Commission. As a result of this search, AFSOC was designated as the new mission for Cannon AFB. AFSOC would benefit from additional facilities and training opportunities. The SECDEF designation of AFSOC assets to Cannon AFB addresses the 2005 BRAC Commission's recommendation and effectively utilizes an existing base, and, in addition, nearby Melrose AFR provides training for AFSOC assets.

The beddown and training of AFSOC assets at Cannon AFB, at Melrose AFR, and within Cannon AFB associated airspace permit AFSOC assets to meet expanding mission requirements. These requirements include the types of terrain, aircraft, operating conditions, and targets currently and projected to be part of AFSOC operations. Training for Cannon AFB assets will involve all phases of the operational use of personnel, equipment, and munitions, including weapons and tactics test and evaluation. Operational training includes forward presence and engagement, information operations, precision employment and strike, and SOF mobility.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

The public involvement process and Interagency and Intergovernmental Coordination for Environmental Planning (IICEP) and agency consultation accomplished by the Air Force is discussed in the Final EIS (Section 2.5 and Appendix C). The major elements of public involvement are:

- Issuance of a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS in the *Federal Register* (Vol. 71, No. 164, Page 50048) on 24 August 2006;
- Performing public and agency scoping from August 25 through October 5, 2006, including public meetings in Clovis, Clayton and Fort Sumner, New Mexico, on September 18, 19 and 20 respectively (Appendix C summarizes issues raised during public scoping);

- Contacting interested persons, agencies and tribes as part of the scoping process directly by mail in September 2006 informing them of the project, potentially affected areas and the opportunities for public involvement (Appendix C);
- Issuance of a Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft EIS in the *Federal Register* (Vol. 72 , No 61, Page 15135) on March 30, 2007, thus initiating the 45-day public review period of the Draft EIS. The Air Force actively solicited comments during this review period (March 30, 2007 through May 14, 2007);
- Conducting public hearings in Clovis, Fort Sumner and Clayton, New Mexico, on April 17, 18 and 19, 2007 respectively, to present the Draft EIS, environmental analysis, and opportunities for public and agency involvement (Chapter 7 presents Comments and Responses); and
- Issuance of a Notice of Availability of the Final EIS and start of the 30-day wait period in the *Federal Register* (Vol. 72, No 139, Page 39808) on July 20, 2007

The Air Force considered relevant issues raised during the agency and public review period for the Draft EIS. A total of 131 members of the public and agency representatives attended the three public hearings. At the hearings, 19 members of the public provided oral comments and 11 people provided written comments. Eighteen additional comments were received during the comment period. These comments, the transcripts of the public meeting, and responses to comments are contained in Chapter 7.0 of the Final EIS.

The Air Force consulted and coordinated with Federal and State agencies throughout the environmental impact analysis process. Agencies reviewing biological and cultural resources were contacted early in the process through IICEP, as well as the Draft and Final EIS notification. Federal and State agency response letters explaining no objection to the proposed action are contained in Chapter 7.

The Final EIS includes identification of mitigation measures to reduce environmental consequences, public and agency comments and responses to comments.

## **ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED**

The beddown proposal transfers approximately 108 AFSOC Primary Aircraft Inventory (PAI) to Cannon AFB over a period of approximately 6 years. Approximately 25 to 33 percent of the aircraft could be deployed from Cannon AFB at any given time. AFSOC mission aircraft include C-130 aircraft with varying mission requirements, CV-22 tilt-rotor aircraft, Predator Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), and additional miscellaneous aircraft.

**Two alternatives were assessed for facilities at Cannon AFB:** The preferred East and West Airfield Alternative and the West Flightline Alternative.

The preferred alternative is the East and West Airfield Alternative. Under the East and West Airfield Alternative, construction and renovation would occur at Cannon AFB between 2008 and 2013 involving approximately \$435 million in military construction (MILCON) funds plus \$530 million of operations and maintenance (O&M) funding. However, of these amounts,

only a portion would be unique to the AFSOC assets beddown at Cannon AFB. The majority of this money has already been budgeted for operations regardless of basing location because resources of this magnitude will be required regardless of where the AFSOC assets for required expansion are based. Facility construction would affect approximately 342 acres of previously disturbed areas in the west flightline area and approximately 284 acres of previously disturbed unimproved grasslands in the east flightline area.

Under the West Flightline Alternative, construction and renovation would occur at Cannon AFB between 2008 and 2013 utilizing approximately \$310 million in MILCON funding plus \$530 million of O&M. This construction would occur within approximately 342 previously disturbed acres on the west flightline side of the base. Again, the majority of this money is already programmed for operations regardless of basing. Again, resources of this magnitude are going will be required regardless of where the AFSOC growth is based.

AFSOC asset beddown schedules for construction, aircraft, and personnel are dependent upon congressional appropriations. Mission personnel assigned to Cannon AFB and construction personnel could increase from 4,467 personnel to 5,680 between FY 2005 and FY 2011. A dip in personnel could occur in FY 2007 to 3,186 personnel assigned.

**Two alternatives were assessed for Melrose AFR:** The preferred Two-Target Alternative and a Three-Target Alternative. Melrose AFR training under either alternative would occur within the 60,010 acres that constitute the range. The preferred Two-Target Alternative has two new live-fire target complexes. The Three-Target Alternative would create three new live-fire target areas. Either alternative would involve live munitions from 30 millimeter (mm) up to 105 mm high-explosive (HE) and incendiary munitions from AC-130 gunships. The use of these munitions within Melrose AFR would affect management of the training range and grazing allotments. Melrose AFR is currently divided into Exclusive-Use, Restricted Leasing for agriculture, and Unrestricted Leasing for agriculture. The Exclusive-Use area contains current targets for F-16, other aircraft, AFSOC SOF, and other personnel training. Exclusive-Use areas would be expanded for safety around live-fire targets.

An estimated \$30 million of MILCON projects on the range would include new fire management capabilities, construction of new targets, and other improvements. A prepared aircraft and helicopter landing zone/drop zone (LZ/DZ) affecting approximately 50 acres will be located on the range away from live-fire targets. Vertical landing aircraft such as the CV-22 could also land at unprepared locations on the range. The current small arms range would be enhanced to support SOF and Army National Guard training.

Cannon AFB schedules the restricted airspace supporting Melrose AFR, Military Operations Areas (MOAs), and MTRs. AFSOC aircraft missions require an annual average of 40 percent of their flights to occur during "environmental night" (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.). Night flights on some MTRs could increase from effectively none to 1,000 or more per year. MTR training flights would normally be from 4 to 5 hours with aircraft between 100 and 1,000 feet above ground level (AGL) and usually at 250 feet AGL or higher. Air refueling tracks would be coordinated with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as the existing aerial refueling (AR) track (AR-602) is at too high an altitude for some AFSOC aircraft.

Defensive chaff and flares would be used by AFSOC aircraft during training. AFSOC training is projected to use 36,000 chaff bundles and 24,000 defensive flares annually. The distribution of chaff and flare use would change, with an estimated four times the current number of chaff bundles and flares used in restricted airspace over Melrose AFR and a proportionate decrease in chaff and flare use within the MOAs. The minimum altitude for M-206 or equivalent defensive countermeasure flare release in assessed NMTRI Special Use Airspace (SUA) outside Melrose AFR continues to be above 2,000 feet AGL. When the National Fire Danger Rating System indicates high fire conditions or above, the minimum altitude for flare release in SUA outside Melrose AFR shall be raised to above 5,000 feet AGL. Flares and other munitions would be used over Melrose AFR in accordance with the Melrose AFR Operations Condition Matrix Restrictions derived from the new Cannon AFB responsibilities and procedures supplement to AFI 13-212 for the maintenance and use of Melrose AFR.

AFSOC proposes establishing a transit area for the Predator UAS between the restricted airspace associated with Cannon AFB and restricted airspace associated with Melrose AFR. This airspace could be transited under a Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (COA) issued by the FAA. The Predator UAS is not authorized to fly in the National Airspace System without meeting an equivalent level of safety to the “see and avoid” requirements of Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) 91-113.

SOF missions include infiltration, exfiltration, re-supply, and refueling. Training activities include additional LZs, DZs, and water training locations for infiltration and amphibious training. Operational and safety consideration require that LZ, DZ, or water training be located in an area free from obstructions, be within a one to two-hour drive from Cannon AFB, avoid populated, noise-sensitive, or residential areas, and be located in a relatively flat area away from city lights. All applicable environmental analyses and permitting would be followed in LZ, DZ, or water training site selection. This analysis would be completed once developmental CV-22 operational capabilities and requirements for LZs/DZs are refined.

The **No Action Alternative** included in the EIS addresses the conversion of Cannon AFB with a SECDEF mission designation to AFSOC, but no action to transfer AFSOC assets to Cannon AFB. For the purposes of this analysis, No Action would result in no movement of AFSOC assets to Cannon AFB and AFSOC would maintain and operate the base. With regards to Melrose AFR, no Cannon AFB assets would train at the range. New Mexico Air National Guard (NMANG) and transient aircraft would continue to use the airspace and Melrose AFR. The No Action Alternative would reduce personnel levels to approximately 150 between 2007 and 2009. These 150 personnel would support base infrastructure and range operations. Flight operations would consist of transient aircraft.

## **RELEVANT NATURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC, AND TECHNICAL FACTORS**

This section summarizes the natural, environmental, economic, and technical factors considered in making the decision among alternatives. Public and agency scoping focused the analysis of the EIS on the following natural, environmental, and economic resources: airspace management and air traffic control, noise, safety, air quality, physical (including hazardous materials and waste), biological, cultural, land use, ranching, transportation, and recreation,

socioeconomics and environmental justice. The technical analysis produced the following results for the base, range, and airspace.

### **Cannon AFB**

Cannon AFB economic activity would increase in Curry and Roosevelt counties. Noise, safety, transportation, and other resources around and on the base would not be impacted. No significant impacts to biological or cultural resources are anticipated. Planned base facilities would safely handle hazardous materials and munitions for AFSOC operations. An FAA Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (COA) is proposed to permit UAS transit from Cannon AFB to Melrose AFR.

### **Melrose AFR**

Melrose AFR training would increase targets, exposed soils, munitions debris, noise, and safety requirements on the range. Munitions noise, especially during night hours, could impact some residences on the periphery of the range. Expansion of the Exclusive-Use area on the range would impact lessees who use portions of the range for grazing and agriculture. Although part of the proposed action, AFSOC decided to not include 25mm munitions for live fire training on the range following public input on the Draft EIS. Elimination of the 25mm munitions produces a smaller safety footprint and reduces the amount of exclusive use area and the overall impact upon lessees. Fire risk would increase with the use of live munitions. The Cannon AFB Local Range Supplement (AFI 13-212) will describe the expanded fire management practices and capabilities to reduce fire risk on the range. Natural, biological, or cultural resources would not be significantly impacted by the change in training.

### **Airspace**

Military Operations Area (MOA) and Military Training Route (MTR) overflight activity would increase. Noise levels on MTRs and under MOAs would noticeably increase and would be expected to result in some increased annoyance to individuals under the airspace. No significant impact to civil aviation is anticipated from training missions. Use of water areas, landing zones, and drop zones for training would increase localized activity and noise.

Cumulative federal and non-federal actions, in combination with AFSOC beddown and training, would not be expected to result in significant impacts to areas affected by the beddown or training of AFSOC assets.

## **ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

For most environmental resources at Cannon AFB, Melrose AFR, and training airspace, the No Action Alternative would be the environmentally preferred alternative. For socioeconomics and environmental justice at Cannon AFB, the East and West Airfield Alternative is the environmentally preferred alternative.

## **MITIGATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES**

Mitigation and management measures for the proposed beddown of AFSOC assets have been identified and will be carried forward in implementing the selected alternative.

Management measures are defined for the purposes of this EIS and ROD as those measures incorporated in the design of the preferred alternative to avoid, minimize, or reduce the impacts to most of the resource areas. These management measures are primarily discussed in the EIS Chapter 2.0. The EIS Chapters 3.0, 4.0, and 5.0 include management and mitigation measures required by regulation or agency guidance (even though impacts may not be significant) for each relevant resource. Management measures also include the planning and implementation of efforts to restore degraded ecosystems, where applicable.

Mitigations may also include permit requirements, Best Management Practices (BMPs), New Mexico State regulatory requirements for fugitive dust, burn permits, and Memoranda of Understanding between agencies.

CEQ regulations (at 40 CFR § 1508.20) define mitigation as follows:

1. **Avoiding** the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.
2. **Minimizing** impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action, and its implementation.
3. **Rectifying** the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment.
4. **Reducing or eliminating** the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action.
5. **Compensating** for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

Avoiding, minimizing, or reducing potential environmental impacts was a priority guiding the design, development, and scoping of the alternatives during the initial development of this project.

The Air Force shall develop or require their contractors to develop as required, plans to address and monitor specific mitigations selected for implementation. These plans, for example, may include a Temporary Erosion Sediment Control Plan, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), and a Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plan. These plans may be in addition to, and complement, any permits that may be issued to the Air Force for the project.

### ***Management Actions***

The following includes a description of the practicable management actions to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, or compensate for potential impacts:

- Certificate of Waiver or Authorization measures from the FAA will be employed to minimize conflicts of UAS operations with general aviation outside restricted or Class D airspace. (Section 2.3.3)
- After-dark training will be scheduled to occur as much as possible before 10:00 pm to reduce disturbances to residents and species. Noise sensitive avoidance areas will be reviewed and updated. (Sections 4.1.3 and 5.6.3.1)

- AFSOC will confer and cooperate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to develop appropriate and reasonable conservation measures to minimize, mitigate, and identify significant adverse effects on a population of migratory bird species of concern. LZ/DZ biological and cultural surveys consistent with the site selection criteria will be performed. (Sections 2.3.4, and 3.6)
- Water training activities will be scheduled to the extent possible to reduce potential impacts on migratory bird species of concern and recreational and residential areas bordering on lakes, especially during holidays or high use periods. Water safety training craft will use existing access locations and all elements used in the training activities will be retrieved to reduce potential impacts to soil, lakeshores, reservoirs, and lakeshore cultural or paleontological resources. (Sections 2.3.4 and 5.2.3.1)
- Sortie operations over the Pecos Wilderness Area Class I area will be conducted at altitudes above 2,000 feet AGL to reduce the effect of potential aircraft emissions on ground-level pollutant concentrations within this area (Section 5.4.3.1).
- A new Cannon AFB responsibilities and procedures supplement to AFI 13-212 for the maintenance and operation of Melrose AFR will be prepared (Section 2.2).
- During construction activities dust suppression, soils stabilization, and revegetation will be applied to areas disturbed to prevent soils migration. Personnel will be required to notify the Air Force archaeologist in the event of inadvertent discoveries of cultural artifacts during construction. Cannon AFB will take action in accordance with the Cannon AFB Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP). (Sections 3.4.3, 3.7.3, and 4.5.3.1).
- Construction of Cannon AFB facilities will be consistent with long-term planning goals. Information on potential AFSOC personnel and growth is provided to support regional planning and transportation to meet anticipated demands. Melrose AFR potentially-affected lands are identified for lessee grazing decisions: (Sections 2.1.3, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, and 3.9.3).

### ***Mitigation Actions***

Cannon AFB has committed to a variety of management actions associated with the use of defensive countermeasures where approved within Cannon AFB-managed training airspace. These actions were formalized in a mitigation plan prepared subsequent to the New Mexico Training Range Initiative (NMTRI) ROD (13 February 2007). The following includes a description of the mitigation actions to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, or compensate for potential impacts:

- Cannon AFB will provide a contact telephone number for ranchers to call to identify large cattle concentrations during seasonal ranching operations. When informed of such concentrations, training operations will avoid to the extent possible low-level overflights of such concentrations (Section 5.9.3.1).



- All pilots receive a Local Area Orientation brief prior to conducting operations in Cannon AFB-managed training airspace. Aircrews not assigned to Cannon AFB are provided the web link to the Local Area Orientation airspace brief. The briefing includes information on the local airspace, including operating altitudes, aircraft restrictions, and type of chaff and flare authorized for use. The Cannon Operations Support Squadron webpage publishes the current National Fire Danger Rating System indication, specifying which expendables may currently be used in Cannon AFB-managed training airspace (Section 2.8.3). The minimum altitude for defensive countermeasure flare release in NMTRI Special Use Airspace (SUA) outside Melrose AFR continues to be above 2,000 feet AGL (flares burn out after falling approximately 400 feet) (Section 2.8.3).
- When the National Fire Danger Rating System indicates high fire conditions or above, the minimum altitude for flare release in SUA outside Melrose AFR shall be raised to above 5,000 feet AGL. As part of the above referenced flight briefing, all aircrews will check the National Fire Danger Rating System status for Pecos MOA and comply with the appropriate altitudes for flare expenditures. Flare releases over Melrose AFR would be in accordance with the Melrose AFR Operations Condition Matrix Restrictions derived from the new Cannon AFB responsibilities and procedures supplement to AFI 13-212 for the maintenance and use of Melrose AFR (Section 2.8.3).
- Cannon AFB has established Mutual Aid Agreements with civilian communities or other government agencies to supplement internal levels of fire protection staffing and equipment. Cooperation with local agencies for mutual aid response to fires will continue. Cannon AFB currently has Mutual Aid Agreements with seven surrounding communities, including Broadview, Clovis, Floyd, House, Melrose, Portales, and Texico. The Cannon Civil Engineer Squadron, Fire and Emergency Services Flight, maintains these agreements. Additional mutual aid response and coordination will be in accordance with formal Military Support to Civil Authorities guidance (Section 2.8.3).
- An education program for fire departments in the communities surrounding Cannon AFB, including those beneath airspace assessed for flare use, will continue to include information on flares. The Cannon Civil Engineer Squadron Fire and Emergency Services Flight provides educational training with the fire departments serving the communities. This training includes precautions for emergency response to chaff/flares, to include identification, proper disposal and recovery of residual materials and dud flares (Section 2.8.3).
- Records of defensive countermeasure (chaff and flares) use will reflect, to the maximum extent practicable, all defensive countermeasures expended in airspace assessed for use of defensive countermeasures. Cannon Operations Group will be responsible for recording defensive countermeasure expenditures and will maintain annual records. Records include the type of countermeasures used, the period of use, and the airspace in which the countermeasures were used, for both Cannon AFB and transient aircraft (Section 2.8.3).
- Response and recovery procedures for defensive countermeasure residual materials and dud flares discovered off-range are employed, including:
  - Use of Cannon AFB personnel to identify, render safe if necessary, and remove if feasible, any chaff or flare residual materials and dud flares discovered off-range.

In particular, Cannon personnel will render safe any chaff or flare residual materials and dud flares, discovered off-range, which pose an imminent and substantial threat.

- Disseminate information annually to the public through Cannon AFB Public Affairs concerning precautions with dud flare and residual materials.
- Establish Cannon AFB Public Affairs as the initial point of contact for members of the public who discover a dud flare or residual material resulting from the use of chaff and flares. Cannon Public Affairs will immediately notify Cannon Judge Advocate and Civil Engineer Squadron response personnel who will coordinate a response and work to resolve issues as required.
- Ensure that claims of potential loss or damage due to training operations will be referred to the Cannon AFB Judge Advocate for appropriate processing.

## **UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS**

Some of the AFSOC training activities are projected to result in disturbance and/or noise within areas not previously or recently subject to these effects. In other cases, AFSOC training would continue to result in activities that have been identified as an annoyance during scoping meetings. To the extent possible, mitigation and management measures, such as those identified above and in EIS Sections 2.8.2 and 2.8.3, would be applied to reduce potential effects to acceptable levels. However, some impacts that cannot be mitigated would occur. These impacts, while not likely to be significant to environmental resources, could be considered significant or annoying to individuals potentially affected.

Potential impacts that could occur and cannot be mitigated include the following:

- Noise from low-level training overflights would be heard on MTRs (Section 5.2.3).
- Available lakes would receive some impacts from water training to biological species, recreationists, and residents (Sections 5.6.3.1 and 5.8.3.1).
- Training missions would increase noise during environmental night (between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.) (Sections 4.2.3 and 5.2.3).
- Chaff and flare debris, although reduced from existing levels, would continue to be deposited outside Melrose AFR under training airspace where chaff and flare use has been assessed (Section 5.6.3.1).
- Munitions chemicals and materials would be deposited at target areas and such chemicals could eventually affect soils or water resources on the range (Section 4.5.3).
- Noise from munitions would be audible off range (Section 4.2.3).
- New live-fire target restrictions on Melrose AFR for required AFSOC training and safety would change land use and ranching operations on Melrose AFR (Section 4.8.3).
- Individual species would be affected by changes in Melrose AFR and/or water training activities (Sections 4.6.3.1, 4.6.3.2, and 5.6.3.1).

- Increased numbers of temporary workers have the potential to increase the need for local safety and protection services (Section 3.9.3.1).
- Expanded student population would increase the requirement for school services (Section 3.9.3.1).
- Increased demand for construction resources could result in a short-term increase in construction costs (Section 3.9.3.1).

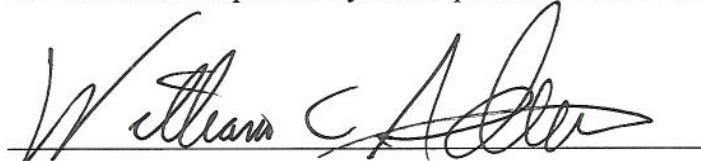
## CUMULATIVE AND FUTURE ACTIONS

The cumulative effects analysis (Section 6) evaluates past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions and determines no significant cumulative effects are anticipated. The Air Force recognizes future actions may be planned for Cannon AFB and the region; however, the Air Force cannot speculate on the impacts of preliminary proposals that may be under development at the very early discussion stage and not presently capable of meaningful analysis.

## DECISION

After consideration of relevant operational, environmental, economic and technical factors discussed in this ROD, environmental consequences explained in the Final EIS, inputs from the public, inputs from regulatory agencies, and other relevant factors, the Air Force has decided to implement the Preferred Alternative (East West Airfield Alternative at Cannon AFB, the Two Target Alternative at Melrose AFR, and the use of Cannon scheduled airspace).

The decision takes into account the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts from the alternative. The Preferred Alternative includes all practicable means to avoid, minimize or mitigate environmental harm. Although measures/mitigations are included as part of this decision, identified measures/mitigations could be reexamined and reevaluated in any future environmental impact analyses for potential future Federal actions.



**William C. Anderson**  
**Assistant Secretary of the Air Force**  
**(Installations, Environment & Logistics)**

20 August 2007

**Date**