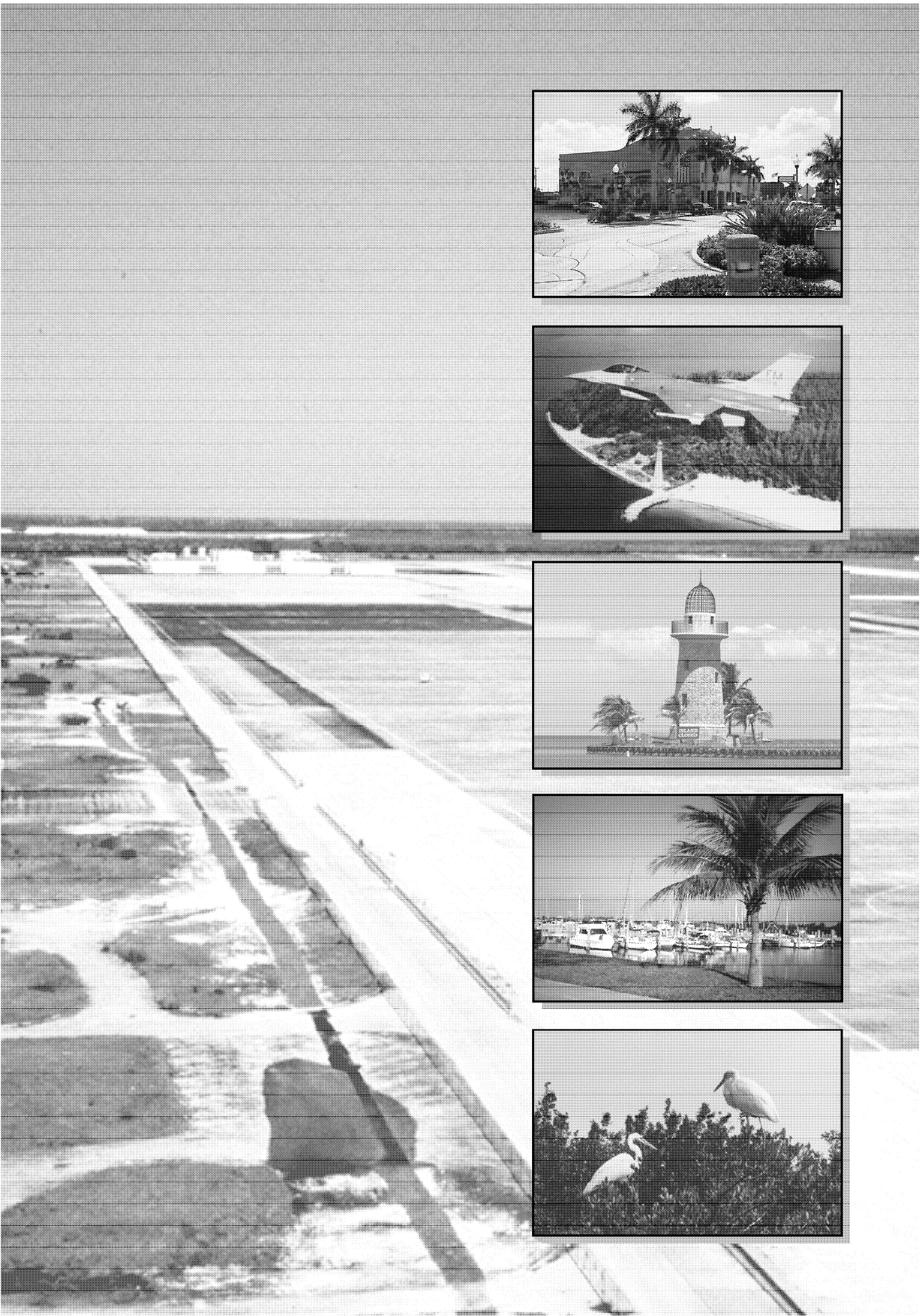
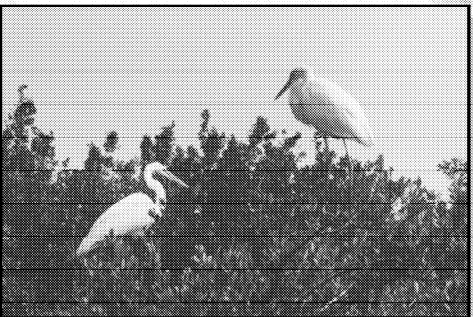


1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION



IN THIS CHAPTER

This Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the disposal of portions of former Homestead Air Force Base (AFB) supplements the Final Environmental Impact Statement prepared by the U.S. Air Force in 1994. The Air Force and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) are preparing this SEIS to provide additional and more current information about the potential environmental impacts from alternatives for disposing of and reusing about 1,632 acres of land at the former base. The National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are also participating in preparing the SEIS.

Following are some key terms used throughout the SEIS:

- ❖ “Surplus” means federal land that is no longer needed by the Air Force. When Homestead AFB was realigned in 1994, the Air Force retained about 868 acres for the Air Force Reserve Station and Florida Air National Guard. Some of the rest of the 2,938 acres were transferred to other organizations, and most of it was declared surplus.
- ❖ “Disposal” means transferring ownership or selling surplus land currently owned by the Air Force to another public or private entity.
- ❖ “Disposal property,” as used in the SEIS, refers to the 1,632 acres that are available for disposal and are the focus of the SEIS analysis.
- ❖ “LRA,” which stands for Local Redevelopment Authority, is the local entity formed by the affected community, recognized by the Department of Defense, and given the responsibility for developing a plan for the reuse of surplus base property. The LRA for former Homestead AFB is Miami-Dade County.
- ❖ “Proposed Action” is the plan developed by the LRA, in this case a commercial airport.
- ❖ “Alternatives” are other potential uses for the disposal property considered in the SEIS.
- ❖ “Scoping” refers to the public meetings and other activities the Air Force and FAA conducted at the beginning of the SEIS to identify potential alternatives and help determine the environmental issues to focus on.

This chapter introduces the SEIS (**Section 1.1**); describes the purpose and need that led to preparing the SEIS (**Section 1.2**); lists the decisions to be made after the SEIS is done (**Section 1.3**); reviews the property disposal process (**Section 1.4**); outlines the steps in the SEIS process, including scoping and public review of the Draft SEIS (**Section 1.5**); lists other federal regulatory requirements related to the SEIS (**Section 1.6**); and describes the organization and contents of the of the SEIS (**Section 1.7**).

1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) examines the potential impacts on the environment resulting from the disposal and consequent reuse of portions of former Homestead Air Force Base (AFB) in southern Florida (**Figure 1.1-1**). Homestead AFB was identified for realignment by the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission in 1993. Then, in February 1994, the U.S. Air Force published the *Final Environmental Impact Statement, Disposal and Reuse of Homestead Air Force Base, Florida* (USAF 1994a) and in October 1994 decided to dispose of property to Miami-Dade County for use as a public airport. The purpose of preparing the SEIS is to provide additional and more current information about the potential environmental impacts of an airport transfer and related disposal alternatives and mitigations. The SEIS is being prepared jointly by the Air Force and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) according to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969; Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing the procedural requirements of NEPA (Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500–1508); Air Force Instruction 32-7061, *The Environmental Impact Analysis Process*; and FAA Orders 1050.1D, *Policies and Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts*, and 5050.4A, *Airport Environmental Handbook*.

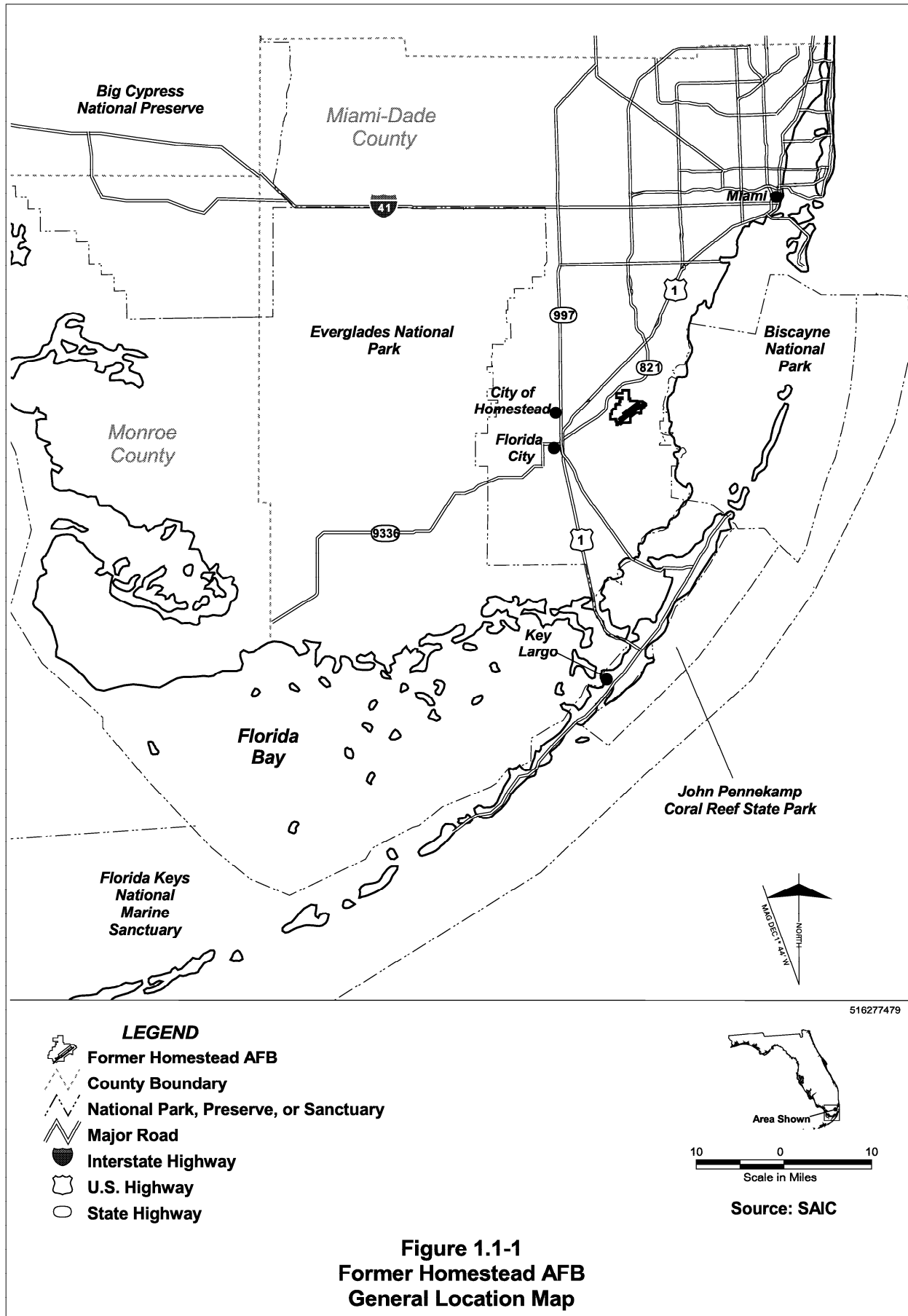
The underlying purpose for considering the Proposed Action and other alternatives described in the SEIS is to fulfill the requirement of disposing of property determined to be excess to military needs. The Air Force has determined that 1,631.8 acres at former Homestead AFB are excess to its needs and surplus to the needs of the federal government. The Air Force seeks to dispose of this surplus property in a manner that supports local community plans for economic revitalization of South Florida and protects Biscayne Bay and the nearby national parks. FAA supports Air Force, community, and park goals and recognizes that Homestead could suitably respond to an aviation need for additional commercial service airport capacity in Miami-Dade County.

The Proposed Action is to transfer 1,631.8 acres of surplus property at former Homestead AFB to Miami-Dade County for use as a commercial airport. In accordance with the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act (DBCRA), Miami-Dade County has been the Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA) responsible for formulating a reuse plan for the former base property. The Proposed Action reflects the LRA's reuse plan. The plan to convert the former base into a commercial airport was developed by Miami-Dade County in 1993–94, and the county has agreed to various modifications since then. The SEIS also addresses other reasonable alternatives. The Proposed Action and other alternatives could be selected in whole, in part, or in combination.

This chapter provides background information about the disposal of Homestead AFB property, describes the purpose and need for this action, reviews the federal decisions to be made pursuant to the SEIS, describes the property disposal and SEIS processes, reviews federal environmental permits and other requirements related to this action, and outlines the organization and contents of the SEIS.

Chapter 2 provides detailed information about the Proposed Action and the alternatives, and it summarizes the environmental impacts in comparative form.

**PURPOSE AND NEED
FOR THE ACTION**



1.1.1 Background

The site of former Homestead AFB was first developed in the 1930s as an airfield for Pan American Air Ferries, Inc. In 1942, the airfield was deeded to the U.S. government and activated as Homestead Army Air Field to provide training for C-54, C-87, and C-46 aircrews. After a hurricane caused major damage in 1945, the base was placed on inactive status and the property transferred to Dade County. The Air Force reacquired and expanded the base in 1953. In 1955, the base was reactivated as a Strategic Air Command installation and was home to the 823rd Air Division, which flew B-47s and later B-52s. In response to the Cuban missile crisis, the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing, with its F-100 aircraft, was assigned and deployed to Homestead AFB in 1962. In 1966, the wing converted to F-4 aircraft, and shortly after in 1968, Tactical Air Command, now Air Combat Command, assumed control of the base, with the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing as the host unit. In 1985, the F-4s were replaced with F-16s.

Most of the facilities on Homestead AFB were destroyed by Hurricane Andrew in 1992. Subsequently, the 1993 Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommended that Homestead AFB be realigned, and their recommendations were required by law to be implemented when Congress did not reject them. Homestead AFB was realigned to Homestead Air Reserve Station (ARS) in March 1994. Of the 2,937.9 acres comprising the base at the time of realignment, approximately 867.7 acres were retained by the Air Force as Homestead ARS, and 382.6 acres were transferred to other entities. Currently, Homestead ARS supports aircraft operations by the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC), Florida Air National Guard (FANG), and U.S. Customs Service.

1.1.2 Previous Environmental Impact Analysis Concerning Property Disposal at Homestead AFB

When Homestead AFB was identified for realignment in 1993, the Air Force began preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) to analyze the environmental consequences of the disposal and reuse of former Homestead AFB property. The Proposed Action in the EIS reflected the local community's goal for base reuse, based on plans developed by the LRA, which initially was the Homestead AFB Reuse Committee and then became Miami-Dade County. Department of Defense (DOD) policy states that the LRA's redevelopment plan will be a primary factor in the development of the Proposed Action, reasonable alternatives, and impact analysis in the NEPA process.

In July 1993, the LRA submitted its draft plan for redevelopment of Homestead AFB, proposing to establish a civil aviation facility with commercial and continued military and other government uses. Later, the *Homestead Air Force Base Re-use and Economic Redevelopment Implementation Plan* was completed. A Draft EIS addressing the proposed plan and other alternatives was distributed for public review and comment in November 1993, and a Final EIS was published in February 1994 (**USAF 1994a**). On October 26, 1994, the Air Force issued a Record of Decision (ROD) concerning disposal of Homestead AFB property (**USAF 1994b**). The ROD identified transfers of parcels to the following organizations:

- Florida Army National Guard
- Department of the Treasury, U.S. Customs Service
- Department of Labor (Job Corps)
- Department of Health and Human Services, on behalf of the Dade County Homeless Trust
- Department of Education, on behalf of the University of Miami and Dade County Public Schools

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION

- Department of the Interior, on behalf of the Miami-Dade County Parks and Recreation Department
- Pan American Horizons Federal Credit Union
- First National Bank of Homestead

The 915 acre airfield and 717 acres of other property available for reuse were identified for transfer to Miami-Dade County under a public airport conveyance. All transfers have now been completed, except for 26 acres for the Miami-Dade County Public Schools and the public airport conveyance to Miami-Dade County. About 717 acres are presently leased to the Miami-Dade County Aviation Department.

1.1.3 Scope of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

In 1996, the Secretary of the Air Force began receiving correspondence from the Everglades Coalition, an organization of 15 environmental groups, about alleged inaccuracies and inadequacies in the Final EIS. The Coalition requested that the Air Force prepare an SEIS. Under CEQ regulations, an agency shall prepare an SEIS if (1) the agency makes substantial changes to a proposed action relevant to environmental concerns, or (2) there are significant new circumstances or information related to the Proposed Action or its impacts. An agency may also prepare an SEIS whenever it determines that the purposes of NEPA would be furthered by doing so. In December 1997, the Air Force and FAA determined that development of a commercial airport at former Homestead AFB warranted further study and began preparation of this SEIS.

The scope of the SEIS is to address relevant new information pertaining to the disposal and reuse of the remaining 1,631.8 acres of surplus property that has not been transferred. This includes the existing airfield (915 acres) and 717 acres that could be developed for aviation, industrial, commercial, or other use. The disposition of 867.7 acres retained by the Air Force, 408.6 acres of surplus land previously conveyed or in the process of being conveyed pursuant to the Air Force's 1994 ROD, and 29.8 acres currently permitted to the Florida Army National Guard will not be affected by the SEIS.

The focus of the SEIS is to provide relevant information on the reasonably foreseeable environmental consequences stemming from the federal decisions concerning the disposal of the remaining 1,631.8 acres of surplus property at former Homestead AFB. The community's Proposed Action in the SEIS continues to be to transfer the surplus property to Miami-Dade County for a commercial airport. The SEIS also considers alternatives involving conveyance of the property involving other uses.

The SEIS, though a supplement to the 1994 Final EIS, has been prepared as a stand-alone document. Factual or analytical changes in one resource area affect the analyses in other areas, and there were enough changes that it was considered simpler and more useable for the public to produce a comprehensive updated analysis than to require readers to possess and use both the supplement and the original EIS. The SEIS is structured, however, to use approximately the same planning time periods as did the original EIS (i.e., the years 2000, 2005, and 2015), and future baseline conditions and environmental consequences are forecast for those time periods to retain comparability. Because an alternative might not achieve its most intensive use by 2015, the SEIS also looks beyond that time period and forecasts activities that could occur at such time as an alternative reached its maximum use, whenever that might be.

1.1.4 Lead and Cooperating Agencies

According to CEQ regulations, two or more federal agencies involved with a proposed action must determine which will be lead agencies and which will be cooperating agencies. A lead agency is the federal agency that has primary responsibility for preparing the EIS. A cooperating agency is a federal agency with either jurisdiction over a proposed federal action or special expertise about the environmental effects caused by the action. The Air Force and FAA are co-lead agencies on this SEIS, the Air Force because of its need to dispose of surplus property at the former base and FAA because of its special expertise and legal responsibility to recommend disposal of surplus property for airport purposes, to manage airspace use, and to fund airport development projects. FAA also has special expertise and legal responsibility related to commercial spaceport operations. Commercial spaceport operations and commercial launch operators must apply to FAA for Site Operator and Launch licenses. Licensing is a major federal action requiring environmental review.

Three other federal agencies are cooperating agencies:

- National Park Service (NPS), because of the proximity of Everglades National Park and Biscayne National Park to former Homestead AFB and NPS' responsibilities to conserve natural and cultural resources.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), because of its concern about species listed under the Endangered Species Act and other biological resources that could potentially be affected by various reuse alternatives and because of the proximity of Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge to the former base.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), because of issues related to the Clean Air Act; Clean Water Act; Resource Conservation and Recovery Act; and Comprehensive Environmental Restoration, Compensation, and Liability Act.

1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION

The requirement to dispose of surplus property at former Homestead AFB stems from the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990. In response to changing international political conditions and the shift toward reduced defense spending, DBCRA required the DOD to realign and reduce its military forces and the infrastructure supporting those forces. DBCRA established new procedures for closing and realigning military installations in the United States, including an independent Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission. Under this law, the Commission reviewed initial recommendations made by the Secretary of Defense and forwarded its list of recommended base closures and realignments to the President. Homestead AFB was on the 1993 Commission's list of recommended realignments, which was accepted by the President and forwarded to Congress on July 8, 1993. Since Congress did not disapprove the recommendations within the time period provided under DBCRA, the recommendations were required by law to be implemented. Therefore, the decision to realign Homestead AFB was final.

DBCRA requirements relating to disposal of the property include:

- Environmental restoration of the property as soon as possible with funds made available for such restoration;
- Consideration of the local community's reuse plan before Air Force disposal of the property; and
- Compliance with federal property disposal laws and regulations.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION

Usually, the disposal of surplus property is performed by the Administrator of General Services. However, DBCRA requires that the Administrator delegate to the Secretary of Defense the authorities to transfer excess property, dispose of surplus property, convey airport and airport-related property, and determine the availability of excess or surplus real property for wildlife conservation purposes. The Secretary of Defense has re-delegated these authorities to the Service Secretaries, including the Secretary of the Air Force.

The FAA is involved in Air Force disposal EISs for installations where the proposed reuse includes a civilian airport. The FAA has special expertise and the legal responsibility to make recommendation to the Air Force for the disposal of surplus property for airport purposes. The Surplus Property Act of 1944 authorizes disposal of surplus real and related property for an airport and requires the FAA to certify that the property is necessary, suitable, and desirable for an airport. The FAA's role as co-lead agency on this SEIS is based on these requirements.

In determining the disposition of the remaining surplus property at former Homestead AFB, the Air Force will require that the airfield continue to be available to AFRC, FANG, and U.S. Customs Service to support their flying missions. The alternatives considered in the SEIS reflect the known range of potential uses from the property disposal options that are available to the Air Force and that meet its purpose and need.

1.3 DECISIONS TO BE MADE

This SEIS has been prepared to assist in distinct, interrelated decisions to be made by the two co-lead agencies, the Air Force and FAA. The Air Force decisions will include the following:

- The entity or entities which will receive the surplus property and the method(s) of property conveyance;
- The terms and conditions, if any, of conveyance; and
- Any other actions to be taken.

If there is an Air Force decision to transfer the property for use as a civil airport or other use that falls under the jurisdiction of FAA, FAA may make a number of decisions pursuant to the SEIS, including the following:

- Unconditional approval of an Airport Layout Plan (ALP) for a one-runway airport at former Homestead AFB.
- Changes in airspace or air route structure that may be needed.
- Construction or modification of air traffic control facilities, terminal radar approach control facilities, or navigational and visual aids to support a one-runway airport.
- Establishment of instrument procedures.
- Approval of operations specifications for air carriers to add service to Homestead.
- Granting of other licenses or approvals that may be required to accomplish reuse of the property.
- Consideration of funding of eligible initial (0–5 years) airport development under the Airport Improvement Plan (AIP) or Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) Program.

The FAA approval action may also include approval of the Airport Certification Manual and Airport Security Plan.

An initial ALP for a commercial airport at former Homestead AFB, designated Homestead Regional Airport (HST), was conditionally approved by FAA in October 1994. Conditional approval means that FAA technical and safety criteria would be met. It does not approve construction of airport facilities. The ALP included plans to expand the airport in the future, including constructing a second runway. This expansion cannot be accommodated within the boundaries of the surplus property available at the former base and its implementation is uncertain. Moreover, there is no foreseeable need for a second runway for decades, perhaps not until about 2038. (For more information about a potential second runway, see Section 2.2.7.) Because a second runway is speculative at this time, it is outside the scope of this SEIS. The federal decisions that will be made pursuant to this SEIS only involve the existing surplus property. Any expansion of the property boundaries in the future would require further FAA approval and additional NEPA analysis and public input.

1.4 PROPERTY DISPOSAL PROCESS

This section briefly reviews the process that will be used by the Air Force in disposing of the remaining surplus property at former Homestead AFB. The Air Force has been engaged in property disposal actions since the base was selected for realignment. In February 1994, the Air Force notified the public and other federal agencies of the availability of property for transfer. This was done through a formal screening process in accordance with Federal Property Management Regulations (FPMR).

Once an Air Force installation such as Homestead AFB has been selected for realignment or closure, the base reuse conversion process begins. The purpose of the Air Force base conversion process is to achieve timely and beneficial reuse of closing and realigning Air Force installations. An LRA is formed by the affected community and given the responsibility for base reuse planning activities at the local level. It may also be formally recognized by the DOD Office of Economic Adjustment. The LRA typically is made up of local city and county officials, public economic development agencies, public utility companies, and concerned residents. The Air Force Base Conversion Agency (AFBCA) is the Air Force agency responsible for working with the LRA and for disposing of installation property available for reuse.

The base conversion process includes three phases:

- Base-wide reuse planning, during which the Air Force identifies the property available for disposal, the LRA prepares a redevelopment plan, and the Air Force identifies any other reasonable alternatives for reuse of the property. It is during this phase that a disposal and reuse EIS is prepared.
- Disposal decision making, when the Air Force makes final property disposal decisions and publishes them in a ROD. This includes reviewing and approving applications to receive property through conveyances that require applications (e.g., property conveyance for public airports, economic development conveyance). The Air Force might not make disposal decisions for the entire property at once and can issue a partial ROD to allow timely and productive reuse of parcels that are ready for transfer.
- Parcel-by-parcel decision implementation, which lasts until all property available for reuse has been disposed of. This phase also includes any environmental cleanup activities that must be completed by the Air Force before deed transfer can occur. When immediate deed transfer is not possible, the Air Force can encourage reuse and redevelopment by entering into lease agreements.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION

At former Homestead AFB, the Air Force is currently in all three phases of the process for portions of the property. Initial base-wide planning was conducted in 1993 and 1994 and culminated in the Final EIS published in February 1994. The ROD that was executed subsequent to that EIS has resulted in transfer of approximately 382.6 acres for reuse. The third phase of the process has thus been completed for those parcels. Another 26 acres are currently awaiting transfer. The Air Force has also proceeded with environmental cleanup activities that must be accomplished prior to deed transfer.

With this SEIS, the Air Force is returning to the first and second phases of the process for the remaining 1,631.8 acres of surplus property. The property disposal alternatives currently under consideration for this land reflect specific proposals and other viable options identified by the Air Force through discussions with interested parties, public scoping, and other efforts. The outcome of this process will be a supplemental ROD addressing the disposal of the remaining 1,631.8 acres.

The Secretary of the Air Force generally may dispose of surplus property in the following ways.

Public Benefit Conveyance. Under federal law, organizations with appropriate authority may apply for base lands under specified statutory procedures. Property conveyed by public benefit conveyances must be used for such public uses as airports, homeless assistance, public health, education, historic monuments, parks and recreation, correctional facilities, ports, highways, or wildlife conservation. Approved recipients may receive these conveyances at no cost or a substantial discount below fair market value. A public airport conveyance can be obtained at no cost with the support of the FAA.

Economic Development Conveyance (EDC). The EDC was created as a method for transferring real property to an LRA to help spur local economic development and job creation. EDCs are authorized to be done only with an LRA, and the transfers are done at no cost.

Negotiated Sale. In certain circumstances, sales to public or private entities may be negotiated for fair market value.

Competitive Sale or Auction. A competitive sale by sealed bid or auction makes the property available to any interested party.

The Secretary of the Air Force has full discretion in determining how the Air Force will dispose of the property. DBCRA requires the Air Force to comply with federal property disposal laws and FPMR. If surplus property is conveyed to a local agency for a public airport, FAA is the federal agency that would enforce deed covenants requiring the property to be used for airport purposes. FAA may later provide airport improvement program grants to the airport operator.

The State of Florida also has a process for dealing with base closures and realignments (Florida Statute Title 19, Chapter 288, Part 10, Defense Conversion and Transition). The process includes optional procedures for assisting communities in base reuse planning; requirements for state agencies and departments to consult with appropriate federal agencies, local governments, and federally recognized community base reuse commissions; procedures for interested state agencies and departments to acquire or use property on realigned military bases; and a grant program.

1.5 SEIS PROCESS

CEQ regulations provide instructions on integrating the NEPA process in federal agency planning, define criteria for determining when an EIS should be prepared, and describe the responsibilities of lead and cooperating agencies in the preparation of an EIS. They also define the contents of an EIS, include requirements for public involvement in the NEPA process, and indicate when supplemental EIS should be prepared.

There are five main steps in preparing an EIS:

1. The process begins with the publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare the EIS. This formal announcement signifies the beginning of the scoping period, during which the major environmental issues to be addressed in the EIS are identified.
2. Inputs received during scoping are used to help define the issues to be addressed and the alternatives to be analyzed. Data collection and analysis are performed, and a Draft EIS is prepared. The Draft EIS is distributed to interested officials, agencies, groups, and individuals and made available in libraries in the affected area for public review and comment.
3. The public review period for the Draft EIS is initiated with the publication of a Notice of Availability (NOA). The review period must be no less than 45 days. During that period, the agency generally conducts public meetings to receive oral comments, as well as accepting written comments on the document.
4. The comments received during the public review period are reviewed, and the EIS is revised as appropriate. The Final EIS is prepared and contains all comments on the draft submitted during the public comment period, as well as responses to the substantive issues raised in the review. The Final EIS is distributed to interested officials, agencies, groups, individuals, and libraries.
5. Following publication of an NOA for the Final EIS, the federal agency must wait at least 30 days prior to making a decision. A ROD is then completed and published, detailing the federal decisions that were made pursuant to the EIS and describing any mitigation measures incorporated as part of the decision.

This is the process that was followed by the Air Force in preparing the original EIS on the disposal and reuse of Homestead AFB property. The process for preparing an SEIS is essentially the same, except that no additional scoping is required. Nevertheless, for this SEIS, the Air Force and FAA elected to perform supplemental scoping.

1.5.1 Issues and Alternatives Identified in Scoping

Scoping for the SEIS began with the publication of an NOI on February 27, 1998. The formal scoping period was initially scheduled to run through April 15, 1998, and then extended until July 10, 1998. Six public meetings were held on April 14 and 15 and June 24 and 25 in the cities of Homestead and Miami to solicit comments and concerns from the general public on the disposal and reuse of former Homestead AFB property. Representatives of the Air Force and FAA presented an overview of the meeting's objectives, agenda, procedures, and the process and purpose for the development of the SEIS. A total of 650 people attended the meetings, and 195 gave testimony. In addition, over 20 focused scoping meetings were held with a wide variety of state agencies, community representatives, and other interest groups to provide maximum opportunity for people to participate in defining the scope of the SEIS and the alternatives to be considered. By the end of the formal scoping period, over 300 written comments had also been received.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION

The main inputs and issues received during scoping for the SEIS are described below.

Several proposals and ideas were presented for alternative uses for the surplus property, including a proposal to develop a Commercial Spaceport at the former base. Other suggestions included a research center, a small aviation airport, a theme park for ecotourism, and an aircraft maintenance facility. These proposals and ideas were incorporated in the alternatives and independent land use concepts developed for analysis, which are described in **Chapter 2** of the SEIS.

Commentors described the need for economic revitalization in south Miami-Dade County in the wake of Hurricane Andrew and the down-sizing at Homestead AFB. Commentors requested that the socioeconomic analysis address employment, income, housing, and other indicators of economic health. Specific areas of concern included impacts on the agriculture and tourist industries of south Florida. **Section 3.1** of the SEIS describes current economic conditions in the region, and **Section 4.1** addresses the anticipated economic effects associated with the reuse alternatives.

Aircraft noise was identified as an issue of concern, especially for its impacts on Biscayne and Everglades National Parks and on wildlife. Commentors expressed concern that the increased noise would deter people from visiting the parks. Others indicated that the SEIS noise analysis should provide input to a noise management plan to be implemented by Miami-Dade County. The SEIS provides a discussion of noise conditions and anticipated effects in **Sections 3.5 and 4.5**. Effects of aircraft noise on the parks are described in **Sections 4.6 and 4.14**, and effects on wildlife are addressed in **Section 4.11**.

Potential effects on water quality and water consumption were identified as issues. Specifically, commentors were concerned about existing and future contamination of Military Canal and effects on Biscayne Bay, an Outstanding Florida Water. Questions were raised about the effect of increased water consumption on water supplies and impacts of increased paving on aquifer recharge. Some asked whether plans for a stormwater treatment area would be compatible with airport operations. Concerns were also raised about aircraft fuel spills. **Sections 3.10 and 4.10** of the SEIS address impacts on water resources, including water quality in Biscayne Bay.

Safety concerns included bird-aircraft strike hazards and potential hazards associated with locating a commercial airport in proximity to the Turkey Point Nuclear Power Plant. These issues are discussed in **Sections 3.4 and 4.4**.

Concerns were expressed about increased traffic congestion and its potential to hinder evacuation of the Florida Keys during an emergency. A concern was also expressed about the effect of project-induced increases in population growth on evacuation capabilities. These issues are discussed in **Sections 3.2 and 4.2**.

Concerns were expressed about past contamination of Military Canal and Air Force plans for remediation. The Air Force is currently in the process of determining appropriate cleanup requirements through a separate process outside the scope of this SEIS. **Sections 3.7 and 3.10** of the SEIS discuss the status of ongoing cleanup activities for Military Canal and former Homestead AFB property, and **Sections 4.7 and 4.10** address relevant factors that have a bearing on reuse of the surplus property.

Other issues included impacts of aircraft pollutant emission on air quality (addressed in **Sections 3.8 and 4.8**); impacts on wildlife habitat and wetlands (addressed in **Sections 3.11 and 4.11**); land use compatibility and conversion of farmland to development (addressed in **Sections 3.6 and 4.6**); and the need to expand utilities services (addressed in **Sections 3.3 and 4.3**).

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION

The scoping comments included requests that the SEIS address the potential for a commercial airport at former Homestead AFB to be expanded in the future, with the construction of a second runway and the associated increase in aircraft operations. Although future expansion beyond the boundaries of the surplus property available for reuse is outside the scope of this SEIS, the possibility of such an expansion is recognized in **Chapter 2** and discussed in the analysis of environmental consequences in **Chapter 4** of the SEIS.

Other comments included a request to consider alternative locations for a commercial airport in south Florida, other than Homestead. Because the purpose of the SEIS is specifically to address the disposal of property at former Homestead AFB, the development of an airport at another location is not within the scope of this document. Section 2.7 discusses some considerations relevant to the availability of other suitable locations for an airport in Miami-Dade County. The SEIS does consider alternative uses of the former base property, other than a commercial airport, which are described in **Chapter 2**.

1.5.2 Public Review of the Draft SEIS

A Draft SEIS was distributed for public review and comment on December 29, 1999. An advance mailer was sent to approximately 1,400 individuals and organizations in November 1999 to alert them to the pending publication of the Draft SEIS and to identify those who wished to receive a copy of the Draft SEIS. A 60-day formal public comment period started with publication of a Notice of Availability (NOA) in the *Federal Register* on January 7 and ended March 7, 2000. Notifications of the availability of the Draft SEIS were also published in eight newspapers in south Florida, including two Spanish language papers, during the week of January 3, 2000. Press releases were sent to approximately 100 print and broadcast media outlets and reporters.

More than 700 copies of the Draft SEIS and 1,500 copies of the Summary were distributed during the public review period. In addition to the copies sent to individuals, interest groups, and government agencies, copies of the Draft SEIS and a Technical Memorandum on Noise were placed in the following area libraries for public reference:

Dade County Library
Florida City Library
Florida International University
Homestead Branch Library
Key Largo Branch Library
Miami-Dade Community College
Homestead Campus Library

Miami-Dade Community College
North Campus Library
Opa-Locka Public Library
South Dade County Library
South Miami Branch Library
State Library of Florida
University of Miami

During the public review period, five public hearings were held in south Florida to provide an opportunity for interested individuals to learn about the Draft SEIS and give comments on its contents and on the alternatives analyzed. The first public hearing was held in the City of Homestead during the evening of February 1, 2000. Two hearings were held in Kendall on February 2, and two in Miami on February 3. The dates, times, and locations of the public hearings were advertised during the week of January 17 in the eight newspapers that advertised the availability of the Draft SEIS. Press releases were also distributed to the same media contacts. An estimated 2,000 people attended the hearings over the three-day period; 361 provided oral testimony, and 144 submitted written comments at the hearings. Verbatim transcripts were taken of each of the hearings and are included in Volume III: Comments on the Draft SEIS.

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In addition to the comments provided at the public hearings, more than 3,000 letters and 5,000 postcards were received, along with several petitions containing over 7,600 signatures. Copies and samples of these written comments are included in Volume III. Many of the oral and written comments expressed opinions about the Proposed Action and alternatives. About 200 persons and organizations wrote to express support for the proposed commercial airport, and over 2,000 expressed opposition to the airport or supported another alternative. Petitions containing over 4,800 signatures supported the Proposed Action for a commercial airport. Petitions containing more than 2,800 signatures were opposed to the Proposed Action. In addition, more than 5,000 postcards were received opposing the Proposed Action.

All comments received during the public review period were reviewed by the Air Force and FAA, and revisions have been made to the SEIS to incorporate new information, correct information, or further clarify the analysis. In addition, Volume III presents responses to comments that raised questions about the content of the Draft SEIS and the analysis of the alternatives. The most common comments concerned the NEPA process, the public hearings, secondary growth, cumulative impacts, south Florida ecosystem restoration issues, the property disposal process, and impacts on water resources, socioeconomics, noise, safety, and biological resources.

1.5.3 Changes Between the Draft and Final SEIS

Among the inputs received during the public comment period was a new reuse proposal submitted jointly by Collier Resources Company and the Hoover Environmental Group. The Final SEIS describes this proposal under the Mixed Use alternative in **Section 2.4** and addresses its environmental consequences in each section of **Chapter 4**. This new plan is apparently intended to replace both the Collier proposal and the Hoover plan analyzed in the Draft SEIS. Those original plans also remain in the Final SEIS as a basis for comparison and to retain an analysis of the full range of reuse possibilities.

Variations of the alternatives analyzed in the SEIS are recognized as possible. For example, were the Air Force to decide not to implement the Proposed Action or the Commercial Spaceport alternative, it would retain and operate the airfield. In that circumstance, the Mixed Use alternative analyzes four different scenarios of uses that could result from disposing of the remaining surplus property. In addition to those scenarios, the SEIS now recognizes that the surplus property might also be transferred to Miami-Dade County for similar mixed-use redevelopment. Also, elements of the Proposed Action and the Mixed Use alternative might possibly be combined. For example, were the Air Force to decide to retain the airfield and convey the remaining surplus property to the county as described above, it might also allow limited commercial aircraft use of the Air Force's retained airfield (called "joint use"). Possibilities such as these are variations on the disposal outcomes examined in the SEIS and do not involve any new potential uses or environmental impacts outside the range of those that have been analyzed. Other variations may also be possible.

Other changes that have been made to the SEIS include the following:

- The Air Force's and FAA's (co-lead agencies) preferred alternatives are identified in a new **Section 2.12**. This section also discusses the preferred alternatives expressed by the cooperating agencies, the Department of the Interior (for NPS and USFWS) and USEPA.
- Some commentors indicated that unemployment rates in Miami-Dade County and the Homestead area had declined substantially in the last couple years. The information in **Section 4.1** has been expanded to incorporate more recent information.

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- **Section 4.4** has been expanded to incorporate the findings of a safety analysis performed by Florida Power and Light Company and reviewed and approved by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for Turkey Point Nuclear Power Plant. NRC correspondence related to this analysis is included in a new **Appendix I**.
- Discussions of South Florida Water Management District lands in the region of influence have been added to **Sections 3.6 and 3.11**, and potential impacts on those lands and their resources are discussed in **Sections 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.11, and 4.14 and Appendix E**.
- The status of the Installation Restoration Program at former Homestead AFB has been updated in **Section 3.7**, particularly with regard to an ongoing Feasibility Study of Military Canal.
- More information has been added to **Section 4.8** on airborne nitrogen oxide emissions and uncombusted aviation fuel emissions.
- **Section 3.10** contains corrected information on water quality standards and added information on recent studies of Military Canal. **Section 4.10** has been revised to clarify net effects and provide additional information on nitrogen inputs to Biscayne Bay, stormwater discharges from secondary development, and changes in groundwater flows and nutrient loads.
- More information has been added to **Section 3.11** and **Appendix G** on sensitive species, marine mammals, and migratory birds. **Section 4.11** has been expanded to address potential impacts on these resources and provide further discussion of noise effects on wildlife, impacts from increased nitrogen inputs, aircraft and spacecraft accidents, essential fish habitat, and habitat fragmentation due to secondary development. An Essential Fish Habitat Assessment is contained in a new **Appendix J**.
- FAA's evaluation concerning the application of DOT Act Section 4(f) has been completed in **Section 4.14**, based on the data and analyses for relevant environmental impact categories in other sections of the SEIS. Information relevant to FAA's Section 4(f) evaluation has not substantially changed between the Draft and Final SEIS.
- Additional possible mitigation measures have been added to several sections of **Chapter 4** in response to comments on the Draft SEIS. These are also summarized in **Section 2.11**.
- Additional information about aviation growth and airport capacity in south Florida has been added to **Appendix A**.
- In **Appendix H**, the draft Wyle Research Report on *The Soundscape in South Florida National Parks* has been replaced with a final report, and FAA's review of the report has been added.
- Comments on the Draft SEIS are provided in a new **Volume III** and responses to the comments are in a new **Volume IV**.

Several commentors pointed out errors and omissions in the Draft SEIS that have been corrected when feasible. Some commentors made vague allusions to errors and inadequacies, but their comments were not specific enough to make corrections to the document.

1.6 OTHER APPLICABLE FEDERAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

Federal permits, licenses, entitlements, and other approvals that may be required of the recipients of surplus property at former Homestead AFB are presented in **Table 1.6-1**.

Table 1.6-1. Federal Environmental Permits, Licenses, and Approvals Potentially Required for Redevelopment of Former Homestead AFB Property

Requirement	Typical Activity, Facility, or Category of Persons Required to Obtain the Permit, License, or Approval	Authority	Regulatory Agency
Title V permit under CAA	Any major source (source that emits more than 100 tons/year) of criteria pollutant in nonattainment area for that pollutant or is otherwise defined in Title I of CAA as a major source; affected sources as defined in Title IV of CAA; sources subject to Section 111 regarding New Source Performance Standards; sources of air toxics regulated under Section 112 of CAA; sources required to have new source or modification permits under parts C or D of Title I of CAA; and any other source designed by USEPA regulations	Title V of CAA, as amended by 1990 CAA Amendments	USEPA, FDEP
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit	Discharge of pollutant from any point source into waters of the United States	Section 402 of CWA, 33 U.S.C. Paragraph 1342	USEPA, FDEP
Section 404 (Dredge and Fill) permit	Any project activities resulting in the discharge of dredged or fill material into bodies of water, including wetlands, within the United States	Section 404 of CWA, 33 U.S.C. Paragraph 1344	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in consultation with USEPA
Hazardous waste treatment, storage, or disposal facility permit	Owners or operators of a new or existing hazardous waste treatment, storage, or disposal facility	RCRA, as amended, 42 U.S.C. Paragraph 6901, 40 CFR 270	USEPA, FDEP
USEPA identification number	Generators or transporters (off-site transport) of hazardous waste	40 CFR 262.10 (generators); 40 CFR 263, Subpart B (transporters)	USEPA
Archaeological Resources Protection Permit	Excavation and/or removal of archaeological resources from public lands or Native American lands and carrying out activities associated with such excavation and/or removal	Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, 16 U.S.C. Paragraph 470 cc	NPS
Endangered Species Act Section 10 permit	Taking endangered or threatened wildlife species; engaging in certain commercial trade of endangered or threatened plants or removing such plants on property subject to federal jurisdiction	Section 10 of Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. Paragraph 1539; 50 CFR 17, Subparts C, D, F, and G	USFWS

Key: CAA Clean Air Act RCRA Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
CFR Code of Federal Regulations U.S.C. United States Code
CWA Clean Water Act USEPA U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FDEP Florida Department of Environmental Protection USFWS U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
NPS National Park Service

1.7 ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT OF THE SEIS

The SEIS conforms to the format recommended in CEQ regulations. Following this first chapter, Chapter 2 describes the alternatives identified for detailed analysis, including the Proposed Action and No Action alternative, and summarizes the environmental impacts of the alternatives in comparative form. Chapter 3 describes the environment that could be affected by reuse of former Homestead AFB and presents conditions as they currently exist and as they would be expected to evolve without the reuse of the remaining surplus property at former Homestead AFB. Chapter 4 describes anticipated environmental consequences from implementation of each of the alternatives described in Chapter 2. Additional chapters provide references used in preparing the SEIS, a list of preparers, a distribution list, an index, and a glossary. Other volumes contain appendices (Volume II), comments received on the Draft SEIS (Volume III), and responses to the issues raised in those comments (Volume IV).

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