

# **Draft Final Finding of No Significant Impact**

## **Proposed New Corrosion Facility/Wash Rack**

### **U.S. Air Force Reserve Command**

#### **Homestead Air Reserve Base, Homestead, Florida**

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ's) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), Title 40 *Code of Federal Regulations* Parts 1500-1508, and 42 *United States Code* Sections 4321 *et seq.*, the U.S. Air Force Reserve Command performed an environmental assessment (EA) to evaluate the impacts of constructing a new corrosion facility/wash rack at the Homestead Air Reserve Base (ARB) in Homestead, Florida. The EA is incorporated by reference into this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

### **Purpose and Need**

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide a corrosion facility/wash rack that accommodates mission readiness and the health and welfare of personnel. The proposed corrosion facility/wash rack is needed to meet the demands of Homestead ARB units for corrosion mitigation/maintenance and aircraft washing. The coastal location of Homestead ARB is a high salt environment that requires aggressive preventative maintenance to ensure the aircraft remain mission-capable.

The current corrosion facility is not compliant with Unified Facilities Criteria (UFC) 4- 211-02, *Aircraft Corrosion Control and Paint Facilities* (1 December 2012) standards for personnel access and decontamination, creating health and safety risks for workers. Additional protective measures to counter these risks reduce worker efficiency. The facility cannot be upgraded to meet UFC 40-211-02 standards. This facility has a direct negative effect on human health and the environment from the use and generation of hazardous materials and solid waste that occur due to corrosion personnel working in an inadequate facility. Therefore, the proposed facility is needed to properly protect workers, improve worker efficiency, and to provide a facility that is compliant with UFC 4- 211-02. Aircraft washing in the current wash rack, which is an open-sided structure, is spatially separate from the inadequate corrosion control function reducing operational efficiency.

### **Description of the Proposed Action**

The Proposed Action includes the construction and operation of a corrosion facility/wash rack two-bay hangar facility for aircraft corrosion mitigation/maintenance and wash rack functions. The proposed facility would consist of individual work surfaces, restrooms, lockers, transfer and changing areas, showers, break area, offices, computer training area, and two corrosion (maintenance)/wash bays. The proposed facility would include support areas such as a bead blast room and a paint shop room, with a paint booth for painting smaller pieces. These spaces are considered the "dirty" shops, and these functions, along with the corrosion control hangar bay, must be segregated from the rest of the building. This separation would be achieved by providing a personal protective equipment (PPE) cleaning room that would lead to the "dirty" toilet/shower areas for men and women and then transition to the "clean" toilet areas, and then to the other "clean" areas of the building.

The project will also include an access road, utilities, wash water retention, worker fall protection, bridge cranes, and all necessary supporting facilities and controls for a complete and usable facility. Sidewalks, parking lots, and a new access gate are not included under this Proposed Action.

Following construction, the existing open-sided wash rack would be retained to provide a back-up wash rack in case additional planes are added to the mission or for transient planes temporarily assigned to the installation.

The current corrosion function is in Hangar Building 194 and is a paint booth placed within the center bay. Once the proposed corrosion facility/wash rack is operational, Hangar Building 194 would be reverted to its prior use.

## Alternatives

CEQ regulations require that all reasonable alternatives be evaluated under NEPA. Alternatives may be eliminated from detailed analysis in a NEPA document based on their infeasibility and operational constraints, technical constraints, or substantially greater environmental impacts relative to other alternatives under consideration. For this EA, only the Preferred Alternative and the No Action Alternative were analyzed. Because of the constraints of internal development at Homestead ARB and the adjacent flightline, no other alternatives were identified as feasible for construction of a new corrosion facility/wash rack.

### Alternatives Considered in Detail

#### Alternative 1: Preferred Alternative

Alternative 1, the U.S. Air Force's (USAF's) Preferred Alternative, would involve construction of the new corrosion facility/wash rack on an up to 1.5-acre parcel adjacent to the maintenance apron on the vacant land immediately north of, and adjacent to, Building 4709 (Wash Rack) and south of the existing perimeter security gate. The site design was developed to avoid existing monitoring wells, an oil/water separator, and a drainage canal. In addition, the site design avoids or minimizes encroachment into a known population of the federally endangered Small's milkpea (*Galactia smallii*). Small's milkpea populations will be visibly marked and fenced to prevent inadvertent entry by equipment. The federally endangered Florida bonneted bat (*Eumops floridanus*) is known to occur in the area. Because the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) determined there are no potential roost areas in the Proposed Action area during a 2018 site visit (Friers, pers. comm., 2020), there would be no effects on the species.

Up to 1.5 acres, including land already covered by asphalt, would be disturbed for construction of the proposed corrosion facility/wash rack. Of that 1.5 acres, 0.6-acre of urban land (currently mowed grass and scattered palm trees and shrubs) would be converted to impervious surfaces.

#### No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative represents baseline conditions, which are used for comparison to future conditions that would exist under the Proposed Action. Under the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action would not be implemented. A modernized corrosion facility/wash rack would not be established, and corrosion mitigation/maintenance and aircraft washing would continue to operate out of substandard facilities that are not compliant with UFC 4-211-02 standards for personnel access and decontamination. Corrosion mitigation would continue to be operated out of a facility with inadequate areas, resulting in minor direct impacts to human health and/or the environment from the use or generation of hazardous materials, and solid waste would occur. Aircraft maintenance would continue to be executed in inadequate facilities resulting in minor direct impacts to human health and/or the environment from the use or generation of hazardous materials, and solid waste would occur. Aircraft washing would be conducted in the current wash rack, which is an open-sided structure, would continue to be separate from the corrosion control function reducing operational efficiency. There would be no impacts from constructing and operating a corrosion facility/wash rack. Under the No Action Alternative, the continuation of current conditions would reduce operational efficiency and would be noncompliant with UFC 4-211-02.

#### Alternatives Considered but Eliminated

An additional location approximately 0.25-mile southeast of the Preferred Alternative location was considered for the Proposed Action. It was eliminated from consideration because that land is needed for other mission-critical activities.

## Potential Environmental Impacts

The EA prepared for Homestead ARB contains a comprehensive evaluation of the existing conditions and environmental consequences of implementing the Proposed Action's Preferred Alternative and the No Action Alternative, as required by NEPA. Based on the findings of the EA, there would be no significant impact to any environmental resources resulting from the Proposed Action or the No Action Alternative. The following best management practices (BMPs) and mitigation/conservation measures would be implemented under the Preferred Alternative:

- Stormwater impacts to runoff would be reduced by reseeded disturbed areas, incorporating low-maintenance plant species, installing sediment fencing, applying water to disturbed soil, and limiting soil disturbance only to areas where construction is proposed. Temporary detention basins would be incorporated, as necessary, into the design to manage large quantities of stormwater. A stormwater permit from South Florida Water Management District would be obtained prior to construction activities.
- Air quality impacts would be reduced by applying water to, or using other stabilization measures on, areas of bare soil or soil piles, creating wind breaks and covering dump trucks that transport materials that could become airborne.
- Contractors would maintain construction equipment in accordance with manufacturers' specifications to keep unnecessary noise impacts and air emissions to a minimum.
- BMPs to reduce soil and water resource impacts would be selected based on site-specific conditions and could include, but would not be limited to, sediment barriers (silt fence or straw wattles), temporary detention basins, mulching of exposed soils, and prompt revegetation of disturbed areas.
- Safety and occupation health impacts would be reduced by segregating the "dirty shops," such as the bead blast areas and corrosion control hangar bay, from the rest of the buildings by providing a PPE cleaning room that would lead to the "dirty" toilet/shower areas for men and women, and then transition to the "clean" toilet areas, and then to the other "clean" areas of the building.
- Small's milkpea is present on the parcel, but it is expected the site design would avoid any populations of the federally endangered plant. Small's milkpea populations will be visibly marked and fenced to prevent inadvertent entry by equipment. If encroachment into the Small's milkpea populations is unavoidable due to site layout, then additional consultation with USFWS will determine appropriate management activities to reduce the potential impacts to this federally protected species.
- Construction would primarily occur on weekdays during daylight hours. Construction may also occur occasionally during daylight hours on weekends.
- Temporary fencing would be installed around the construction site to prevent unauthorized access to the active construction zone.
- If any unanticipated discoveries of archaeological resources or cultural items were to occur, work would be temporarily halted at the discovery site until appropriate notifications and consultations were complete, and procedures were in place to minimize adverse effects and/or render disposition of cultural items.
- During construction, signs would be placed on Westover Boulevard to alert drivers to changes in traffic patterns and trucks entering and exiting the road.

## Public Review and Comment

The draft final EA and draft final FONSI were available to the public for review and comment for a period of 30 days. The public notice was published in the *Miami Herald* and *South Dade News Leader*. Copies of the draft final EA and the draft final FONSI were made available online at <https://www.homestead.afrc.af.mil/About-Us/SusOps/>. At the same time, the draft final EA and draft final FONSI were provided to the Florida Clearinghouse for Coastal Zone Management Consistency Review for a 60-day review.

In consideration of the potential impact of the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the usual methods of access to information and ability to communicate, such as the mass closure of local public

libraries and challenges with the sufficiency of an increasingly overburdened internet, USAF encourages members of the public and all interested stakeholders to contact us directly by email or telephone to discuss and resolve issues involving access to the draft final EA and FONSI or the ability to comment.

## **NEPA Determination**

Based on the findings of the EA, there would be no significant impact resulting from the Proposed Action's Preferred Alternative or the No Action Alternative. This FONSI was prepared to accompany the EA, which concludes that preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required for this Proposed Action.

**Signature:**

**Approved by:**

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DAVID A. PIFFARERIO, Brigadier General, USAF  
Commander, 482nd Air Mobility Wing

Date