

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

FOR

**FOCUS Study Implementation (Four Construction Projects)
and Expanded Herbicide Application at
Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station**

Draft



PREPARED BY:
U.S. Air Force

September 2024

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10 COVER SHEET

11 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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14 FOCUS STUDY IMPLEMENTATION (FOUR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS) AND EXPANDED
15 HERBICIDE APPLICATION

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18 a. Lead Agency: U.S. Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC)
19 Cooperating Agency: Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA)
- 20 b. Proposed Action: FOCUS Study Implementation (Four Construction Projects) and Expanded
21 Herbicide Application at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station
- 22 c. Written comments and inquiries regarding this document should be directed to:
23 Kim Powell, kimberly.powell@us.af.mil
- 24 d. Designation: Draft Environmental Assessment

25 **Abstract:** The United State (U.S.) Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) proposes to implement four
26 construction projects outlined in the Facilities Operations Capability and Utilization Survey (FOCUS) study
27 and expand herbicide application activity at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS) in order to meet
28 training requirements and conduct airfield operations to support the 914 Air Refueling Wing (ARW). This
29 Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with two
30 alternatives for this Proposed Action: the Preferred Alternative and the No Action Alternative.

31 Under the Preferred Alternative, the AFRC would implement four construction projects originally identified
32 in the FOCUS study: 1) renovate and construct an addition to Building (B)-850; 2) renovate and construct
33 an addition to B-317; 3) construct Aerospace Ground Equipment (AGE) covered storage; and 4) replace
34 ten aircraft ramp lights and install one additional light (i.e., total of 11 lights). The Preferred Alternative also
35 includes expanding the application of herbicides to additional areas on the installation. The Preferred
36 Alternative does not include changes to personnel stationed or trained at NFARS. Under the No Action
37 Alternative, no new construction, renovation, or demolition would occur on the installation, and herbicide
38 application would continue to occur under existing procedures.

39 The following environmental resources were analyzed in the EA: visual resources, air quality, climate, noise,
40 water resources, earth resources, biological resources, cultural resources, utilities, socioeconomics and
41 environmental justice, and hazardous and toxic materials and waste. Resources that would not be
42 meaningfully or measurably affected by the Proposed Action, including airspace, coastal zone resources,
43 land use, transportation, and energy independence, were dismissed from detailed analysis. Based on the
44 analysis presented in this EA, the AFRC has determined that with incorporation of best management
45 practices, the Proposed Action would have no significant impacts on the human or natural environment.

46 This Draft EA, Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), and Draft Finding of No Practicable
47 Alternative (FONPA) are available on the NFARS 914 Air Refueling Wing website at
48 <https://www.niagara.afrc.af.mil/About/Environmental/>.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

°F	Degrees Fahrenheit	DAFI	Department of the Air Force Instruction
ACAM	Air Conformity Applicability Model	DAFMAN	Department of the Air Force Manual
AFFF	Aqueous Film Forming Foam	dB	Decibel
AMCSUP	Air Mobility Command Supplement	dBA	A-weighted Decibel
AFI	Air Force Instruction	DNL	Day-Night Sound Level
AFMAN	Air Force Manual	DoD	Department of Defense
AFR	Air Force Reserve	DoDI	Department of Defense Instruction
AFRC	Air Force Reserve Command	DOPAA	Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives
AGE	Aerospace Ground Equipment	DOT	Department of Transportation
ANG	Air National Guard	EA	Environmental Assessment
APE	Area of Potential Effect	EIAP	Environmental Impact Analysis Process
ARW	Air Refueling Wing	EISA	Energy Independence and Security Act
ATKW	Attack Wing	EO	Executive Order
BASH	Bird/Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard	ESA	Endangered Species Act
BCC	Birds of Conservation Concern	FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
BMP	Best Management Practice	FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
CAA	Clean Air Act	FOCUS	Facilities Operations Capability and Utilization Survey
CEJST	Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool	FONPA	Finding of No Practicable Alternative
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality	FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act	GHG	Greenhouse Gas
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	GWP	Global Warming Potential
CGP	Construction General Permit	HTMW	Hazardous and Toxic Materials and Waste
CH ₄	Methane	HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
CO	Carbon Monoxide	HVAC	Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide	HWMP	Hazardous Waste Management Plan
CO _{2e}	Carbon Dioxide Equivalent		
CS	Communications Squadron		
CWA	Clean Water Act		
CY	Calendar Year		

IAC	White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council	PFAS	Per- and Polyfluorinated Alkyl Substances
IPaC	Information for Planning and Consultation	PFBS	Perfluorobutane Sulfonate
IPMP	Integrated Pest Management Plan	PFOA	Perfluorooctanoic Acid
IRP	Installation Restoration Program	PFOS	Perfluorooctane Sulfonate
ITRP	Installation Tribal Relations Plan	PM	Particulate Matter
LID	Low Impact Development	PM _{2.5}	Particulate Matter Less Than or Equal to 2.5 Micrometers in Diameter
LOD	Limits of Disturbance	PM ₁₀	Particulate Matter Less Than or Equal to 10 Micrometers in Diameter
MS4	Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System	ppb	Parts per Billion
MSGP	Multi-Sector General Permit	ppm	Parts per Million
MXG	Maintenance Group	PVC	Polyvinyl Chloride
N ₂ O	Nitrous Oxide	RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards	ROI	Region of Influence
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act	SAF/IE	Secretary of the Air Force – Energy, Installations, and Environment
NFARS	Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station	SC-GHG	Social Cost of Greenhouse Gas
NFIA	Niagara Falls International Airport	SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
NFTA	Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority	SMP	Site Management Plan
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act	SO ₂	Sulfur Dioxide
NLEB	Northern Long-Eared Bat	SPCC	Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure
NO ₂	Nitrogen Dioxide	SPDES	State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NOA	Notice of Availability	SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
NO _x	Oxides of Nitrogen	T&E	Threatened and Endangered
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System	TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service	µg/m ³	Micrograms per Cubic Meter
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places	U.S.	United States
NYSDEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation	USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
O ₃	Ozone	USAF	U.S. Air Force
PA	Programmatic Agreement	USC	U.S. Code
Pb	Lead	USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture

USEPA

U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Service

USGS
VOC
WOUS

U.S. Geological Survey
Volatile Organic Compound
Waters of the U.S.

1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Assessment (EA) assesses the United States (U.S.) Air Force (USAF) Reserve Command's (AFRC; lead agency) proposal to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with implementing four construction projects outlined in the Facilities Operations Capability and Utilization Survey (FOCUS) study and expanding herbicide application activity at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS) in order to meet training requirements and conduct airfield operations to support the 914th Air Refueling Wing (914 ARW) (Proposed Action).

NFARS is collocated with the Niagara Falls International Airport (NFIA or the Airport) in the Towns of Niagara and Wheatfield, Niagara County, New York, approximately four miles east of the City of Niagara Falls and five miles from the Canadian border (see **Figure 1**). NFIA is operated by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA). Part of one of the four projects proposed for implementation from the FOCUS study, replacing airfield ramp lights (see **Section 2.1.4**), may occur on NFTA property. Therefore, the NFTA is a cooperating agency for this EA.

The AFRC prepared this EA in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S. Code [USC] 4321, et seq.); the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508);¹ and the Air Force Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP; 32 CFR Part 989).

This Draft EA, the Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), and the Draft Finding of No Practicable Alternative (FONPA) are available on the NFARS website at <https://www.niagara.afrc.af.mil/About/Environmental/>.

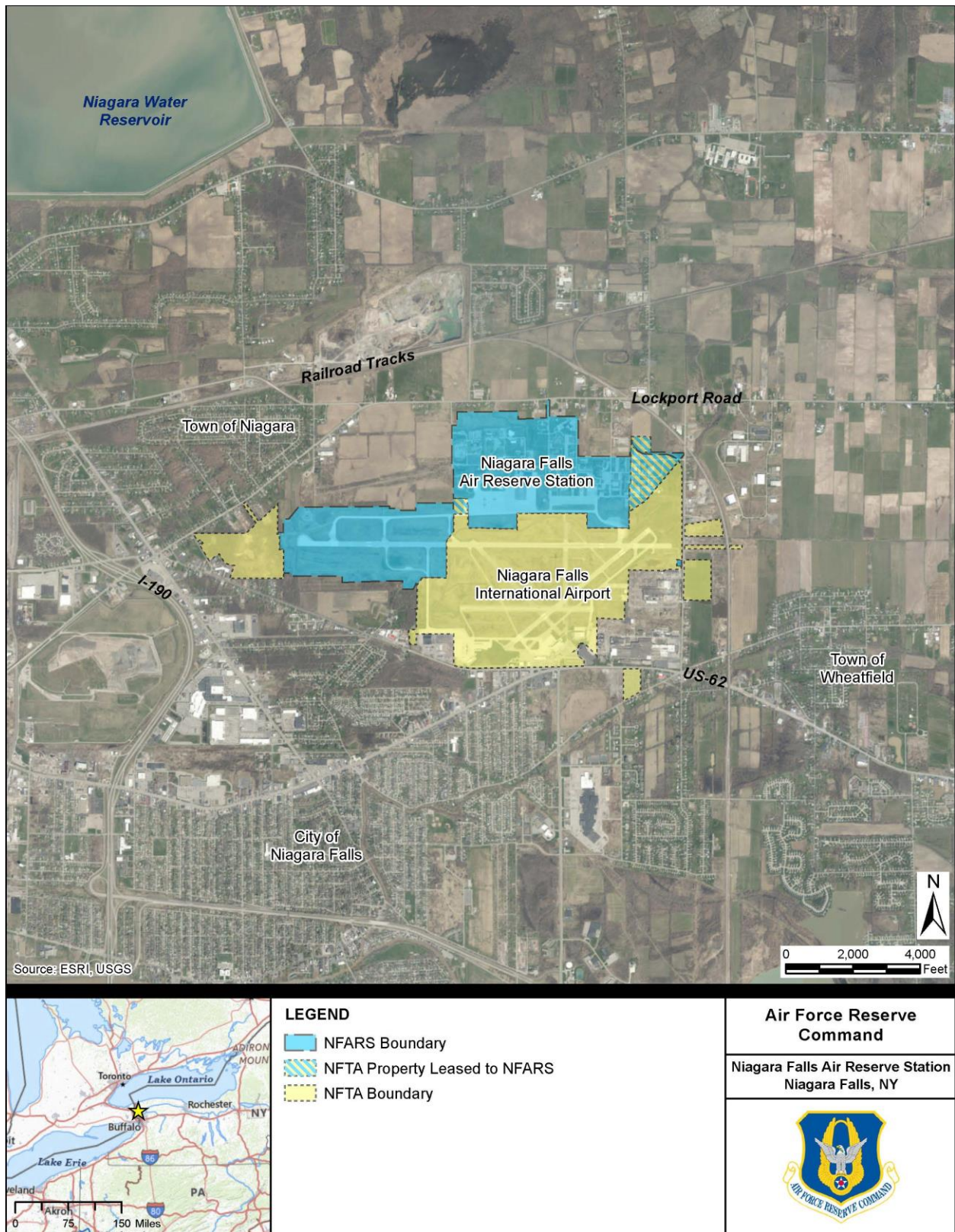
1.2 BACKGROUND

The 914 ARW is the host wing at NFARS which operates eight KC-135 Stratotankers, provides support to tenant units, and maintains partnerships with the NFTA, which operates the collocated commercial airport, NFIA. The 914 ARW's mission is to organize, recruit, and train Air Force Reserve (AFR) personnel to provide aerial refueling, cargo and passenger airlift, aeromedical evacuations, and support and maintenance functions on a global scale. The New York Air National Guard (ANG), Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Air Force Exchange Service, Air Force Office of Special Investigations, and Military Entrance Processing Station are additional tenant units. There are more than 3,000 total military personnel stationed at NFARS.

The FOCUS study was completed for the 914 ARW in 2022 to document space utilization and evaluate the condition of AFRC facilities (AFRC, 2022). This effort consisted of a Facility Utilization Survey and a Facility Condition Assessment, which were used to develop a recommended project list to ensure that NFARS facilities are properly configured and available to personnel to perform the mission efficiently and effectively. The plan outlines suggestions for organizational changes, new facility construction, additions, renovations, maintenance and repairs, and facility divestiture necessary to achieve the installation's goals.

¹ On May 1, 2024, the CEQ published in the Federal Register (89 FR 35442) a Final Rule to revise its NEPA implementing regulations (Phase 2). This rule becomes effective on July 1, 2024. Given that preparation of this EA began prior to issuance of the Final Rule, the analysis contained in this document complies with the CEQ regulations issued in April 2022.

Figure 1: NFARS Site Vicinity



234 The recommended project list was developed to address workspace deficiencies and degraded facility
235 systems and components, and included over 100 projects recommended for implementation over the next
236 several years depending on need, planning requirements, and funding. This EA includes the proposed
237 implementation of four of the facility projects described in the FOCUS study.

238 Herbicide application at NFARS was previously assessed in the 2011 Final EA, *Addressing Expanded*
239 *Herbicide Applications and the Relocation of Dry Chemical Testing at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station,*
240 *New York* (NFARS, 2011b). That EA allowed for the application of chemical herbicides on a total of 118.6
241 acres for the purpose of controlling weeds to address safety, security, maintenance, and aesthetic
242 concerns. Since publication of the 2011 EA, herbicide application has continued in the previously evaluated
243 areas and the area of application has not increased. Elements of the 2011 EA related to the description of
244 herbicides used, application methods, impact minimization measures, and safety protocols, are
245 incorporated by reference into this EA. A copy of the 2011 EA is available online at:
246 <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA636057.pdf>.

247 **1.3 PURPOSE AND NEED**

248 NFARS currently lacks the infrastructure necessary to fully meet training requirements and conduct airfield
249 operations. The Proposed Action would support the operational plans for the AFRC and the 914 ARW. The
250 *purpose* of the Proposed Action is to provide the 914 ARW with the facilities and infrastructure needed at
251 NFARS to meet current and future mission requirements, and fulfill the strategic vision of the installation as
252 presented in the FOCUS study. Facilities at NFARS should be optimally configured to ensure they are
253 suitable for the respective missions of the various units located at NFARS, and that activities are not
254 constrained by outdated, deficient, or small facilities. The Proposed Action is *needed* because aging
255 facilities and infrastructure are no longer able to support mission needs, and existing buildings do not
256 support sizes and layouts needed for mission operations, training activities, and aircraft maintenance.

257 **1.4 INTERAGENCY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION/CONSULTATION**

258 Interagency and intergovernmental cooperation is a federally mandated process for informing and
259 coordinating with other governmental agencies regarding federal proposed actions. The Intergovernmental
260 Cooperation Act of 1968 and Executive Order (EO) 12372, *Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs*,
261 require federal agencies to cooperate with and consider state and local views in implementing a federal
262 proposal. Air Force Instruction (AFI) 32-1015, *Integrated Installation Planning*, requires the USAF to
263 facilitate agency coordination and implement scoping requirements under NEPA.

264 During the public scoping process, the AFRC coordinated with the following federal, state, and local
265 agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise over the Proposed Action to inform the range of issues
266 to be addressed in the EA. The AFRC sent a copy of the Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives
267 (DOPAA) to the following agencies to give them an opportunity to provide comments or other information
268 on the Proposed Action prior to developing the EA.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 269 • Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) | 277 • U.S. Environmental Protection Agency |
| 270 • Federal Emergency Management Agency | 278 (USEPA) |
| 271 (FEMA) | 279 • U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) |
| 272 • U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Buffalo | 280 • New York State Department of |
| 273 District | 281 Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) |
| 274 • U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), | 282 • New York State Department of |
| 275 Natural Resources Conservation Service | 283 Transportation (DOT) |
| 276 (NRCS) | |

- 284 • New York State Historic Preservation Office
- 285 • Niagara County Department of Public Works
- 286 • City of Niagara Falls
- 287 • City of Niagara Falls Department of Planning
- 288 and Environmental
- 289 • Town of Niagara
- 290 • Town of Wheatfield
- 291 • NFTA
- 292 • HQ AFRC/JA
- 293 • AFRC/A4CA
- 294 • 107 CES/CEV
- 295 • 99th Division, U.S. Army Reserve

296 Responses received from agencies on the DOPAA are consolidated in **Appendix A** and discussed in
 297 **Section 3.0**, as appropriate.

298 Consistent with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800),
 299 EO 13175, *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*, Department of Defense (DoD)
 300 Instruction (DoDI) 4710.02, *DoD Interactions with Federally Recognized Tribes*, Department of the Air Force
 301 Instruction (DAFI) 90-2002, *Interactions with Federally Recognized Tribes*, and Department of the Air Force
 302 Manual (DAFMAN) 32-7003, *Environmental Conservation*, the AFRC is also consulting with five federally
 303 recognized tribes that are historically affiliated with the geographic region of NFARS regarding the potential
 304 for the Proposed Action to affect properties of cultural, historical, or religious significance to the tribes. The
 305 AFRC sent the DOPAA to the following federally recognized tribes to invite comments: Cayuga Nation of
 306 New York, Seneca-Cayuga Nation, Seneca Nation of Indians, Tonawanda Band of Seneca, and Tuscarora
 307 Nation. A record of this consultation is included in **Appendix B**.

308 **1.5 PUBLIC AND AGENCY REVIEW OF THE EA**

309 In accordance with CEQ and Air Force NEPA regulations, the Draft EA, Draft FONSI, and Draft FONPA
 310 have been made available for a 30-day public review and comment period between September 27, 2024,
 311 and October 27, 2024. A Notice of Availability (NOA), that includes an Early Public Notice that the Proposed
 312 Action would take place within a floodplain, for the Draft EA, Draft FONSI, and Draft FONPA was published
 313 in the *Niagara Gazette* on September 27, 2024.

314 The Draft EA, Draft FONSI, and Draft FONPA were published digitally on the NFARS 914 ARW website at
 315 <https://www.niagara.afrc.af.mil/About/Environmental/>. Printed copies of the Draft EA, Draft FONSI, and
 316 Draft FONPA are available for public review at the Niagara Falls Public Library, Earl W. Brydges Building,
 317 1425 Main Street, Niagara Falls, New York, 14305. During the Draft EA public review period, written
 318 comments may be emailed to Kim Powell at kimberly.powell@us.af.mil.

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2.0 PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

2.1 PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action involves five total projects. Four of these projects are from the FOCUS study: B-850 renovation and addition, B-317 renovation and addition, construction of aerospace ground equipment (AGE) covered storage, and replacement of airfield ramp lights. The fifth project is expanding herbicide application. Each project is described in detail below and identified on **Figure 2**.

2.1.1 B-850 Renovation and Addition

The Proposed Action would renovate and construct additions for the two-story B-850 in order to update building features and consolidate 914 Maintenance Group (MXG) functions. B-850 currently houses 914 MXG shops and offices, many of which have not had significant renovations for years. Aircraft maintenance functions are currently spread between several buildings (B-850, B-902, and B-907), making transporting parts and equipment difficult and performing repairs inefficient, particularly during severe weather. Further, B-850 is not adequately sized for KC-135 tail clearances, preventing aircraft from pulling into the hangar bay completely during maintenance operations. Finally, fire suppression in B-850 was previously provided by an aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) system, which must be upgraded in accordance with the *Secretary of the Air Force – Energy, Installations, and Environment (SAF/IE) Sundown Policy for Foam Fire Suppression Systems* guidance.

Under the Proposed Action, NFARS would renovate existing offices, maintenance shops, and support and administrative spaces along the perimeter of B-850 to improve functionality, ensure all systems comply with current codes, and abate hazardous materials. NFARS would also construct an approximately 2,000 square foot addition for shops; a 660 square foot, two-story addition with an elevator; an approximately 20,000 square foot interior renovation that would include a new second-story mezzanine; and two paved parking lots with about 130 parking spaces that would total about 40,500 square feet of new parking area. Renovation and construction of the additions would consolidate various maintenance shops and functions such as avionics, engine shops, metals tech, corrosion control, and others, as well as various MXG offices.

In addition, the hangar door would be replaced to provide adequate vertical and horizontal tail clearance to fully pull KC-135 aircraft into the hangar for maintenance, and the hangar bay would require minor structural modifications, such as adding a small cupola to the roof, to provide tail clearance within B-850. The existing AFFF fire suppression system would be replaced with a water-based system.

2.1.2 B-317 Renovation and Addition

The Proposed Action would renovate B-317, which includes repairing the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) and electrical infrastructure and repaving the parking lot. The 914 Communications Squadron (CS) communications and data center functions are currently located in multiple facilities (B-317, B-206, and B-806) across the installation, which has resulted in mission downtime when travel between the facilities is needed. B-206 and B-806 have reached the end of their useful life. B-317 was constructed in the 1990s, but some existing utilities required to service the facility are deficient and in need of replacement. Utilities are critical for proper operation, and not performing upgrades would pose a risk to the mission. Reconfiguration of the facility layout is also needed to support the utility upgrades and consolidation of the mission. This project would also enable consolidation of the 914 CS personnel, storage, and servers at one location.

Under the Proposed Action, NFARS would upgrade the existing electric distribution system, replace the interior light fixtures, upgrade the existing mechanical and HVAC systems, upgrade the existing telecommunications systems, and upgrade the existing fire protection/life safety systems in B-317. An approximately 2,100 square foot addition to B-317 would be constructed on the north side of the building. Following renovation and construction, the 914 CS would relocate from B-206 and B-806 to B-317. B-206 would be demolished, while B-806 would remain in-place to support other functions.

2.1.3 Construct AGE Covered Storage

The Proposed Action would include the construction of an approximately 4,700 square foot covered metal storage shed adjacent to B-848. A covered storage facility is needed to house AGE to protect it from snow and daily weather, thereby reducing necessary maintenance and repairs. AGE is currently stored outside at NFARS. The outdoor, uncovered storage of AGE requires the equipment to be cleared of snow and ice prior to maintenance activities during the winter months, while daily, year-round weather exposure oxidizes and corrodes equipment. This exposure to the elements results in increased maintenance needs for the AGE itself, longer maintenance timeframes, and less time in operation. As an alternative to outdoor storage, under existing conditions, the west bay of B-850 is used for AGE storage; however, this negatively impacts aircraft maintenance by occupying hangar space and increases energy usage due to frequent opening of hangar doors, and thus is not a viable long-term solution.

The proposed covered storage shed would have a concrete slab, metal structure and roofing, wind/snow control sidewalls, lighting, and convenience outlets. Utilities would be installed, and adjacent pavement would be repaired to facilitate a smooth transition into the covered shed. Following construction, the west bay of B-850 would no longer be used for AGE storage, leaving the area fully available for aircraft maintenance activities.

2.1.4 Replace Airfield Ramp Lights

The Proposed Action would include the construction of a new energy-efficient airfield ramp lighting system of poles with winching systems. NFARS currently maintains ten existing aircraft ramp lights, which do not comply with USAF security requirements for ground light coverage. Maintenance of these lights requires NFARS to rent lift assist equipment to change the light bulbs. The surrounding unimproved surfaces do not provide stable support for the equipment, and high winds create unsafe working conditions on the equipment. The existing light fixtures are not energy efficient and do not prevent light spillage. The airfield ramp lights need to be replaced to improve safe aircraft movement during low-light or nighttime conditions by ensuring that the area is well lit for aircraft visibility and navigation. Additionally, replacement would improve human safety by eliminating the need for equipment during maintenance operations, and ensure compliance with USAF security requirements.

Under the Proposed Action, the ten existing ramp lights, including their foundations, would be removed and replaced, and a new light installed (i.e., an eleventh light), with ground maintainable hoist system lights; the new lights may not be in the same locations as the existing lights, and one of the lights may be installed on NFTA property (to be determined during final design). Conduit excavations (either horizontal directional drilling or utility trenching) would occur to connect controls to B-310 and B-821, both located north of the airfield ramp. Most of the approximately 1,230-foot conduit would occur in existing roadway right-of-way, although approximately 285 feet of the conduit may occur through existing grassy open space. Short access roads would also be constructed from the airfield ramp to each new light that is not already adjacent to an existing paved surface. Once operational, the new lights would require routine maintenance, which would be more operationally efficient than the current lighting system. One new light pole proposed to be installed may be within a floodplain. NFARS intends to avoid impacting the floodplain. However, the locations of the light poles are constrained by USAF security and engineering requirements. Consequently, locating this

one light pole in the floodplain may be unavoidable. Additionally, two of the ten existing ramp lights that would be removed are located in the floodplain.

2.1.5 Expanded Herbicide Application

The Proposed Action would include the new application of herbicide around fence lines and buildings in the western portion of the installation. The 2011 Final EA analyzed the application of herbicides around the main NFARS airfield ramp and around various buildings in the eastern portion of the installation. However, areas around fences, around B-2502 and B-2503, and on the airfield ramp that were not previously analyzed now require weed control. Therefore, NFARS proposes to expand the allowable area for herbicide applications beyond what is currently approved to address safety, security, maintenance, and aesthetic concerns. Although the total area of herbicide application would expand, the criteria for application, type of herbicides used, and application rates would remain the same as those described in the 2011 Final EA; this information is therefore incorporated by reference into this EA.

NFARS maintains a list of approved pesticides and herbicides in its Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPMP), all of which are registered with the USEPA and NYSDEC. NFARS would only use herbicides that have been approved by AFRC and the Installation Pest Management Coordinator. All herbicides would be applied manually (i.e., hand-sprayed) during the growing season in accordance with manufacturer recommendations, and application frequency would be between two to four times per year, dependent on the type of vegetation receiving treatment. Cleanup after herbicide application would involve rinsing tools, equipment, and empty herbicide containers. Rinse water and decontamination solution would be collected and transferred to labeled, leakproof containers for disposal. Empty herbicide containers would be disposed of according to label directions. Any vehicles used to transport or apply herbicides would be required to carry spill kits. Personal protective equipment would be supplied to personnel performing herbicide application, as needed. The herbicide expansion project would include herbicide application along a cumulative 15,940 linear feet of fence and within 39.5 acres of field and airfield ramp (see **Figure 2**). **Figure 3** shows the total combined area of herbicide application across NFARS, including areas evaluated in the 2011 Final EA.

2.2 SCREENING OF ALTERNATIVES

The AFRC developed selection standards to evaluate specific reasonable alternatives by which to implement the Proposed Action. "Reasonable alternatives" are those that could be utilized to meet the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action. The AFRC's selection standards used to evaluate reasonable alternatives include the following:

1. **Standard 1 – Achieves Mission Requirements:** This standard measures how well each alternative would meet current and future mission requirements or the strategic vision of the installation. The AFRC evaluated each alternative based on whether it would provide the necessary infrastructure to support the current and future mission requirements of the 914 ARW and tenant units.
2. **Standard 2 – Operational Efficiency:** This standard measures how well each alternative improves operational efficiency, including factors such as proximity to mission-critical facilities, ease of access for personnel and equipment, and optimization of workflow processes.
3. **Standard 3 – Operational Authority:** This standard measures AFRC's preference in conducting installation operations on AFRC property or property where AFRC maintains operational authority. The AFRC evaluated each alternative based on whether AFRC would have the ability to conduct long-term operational activities without involving other land management agencies.

Figure 2: Proposed Projects at NFARS

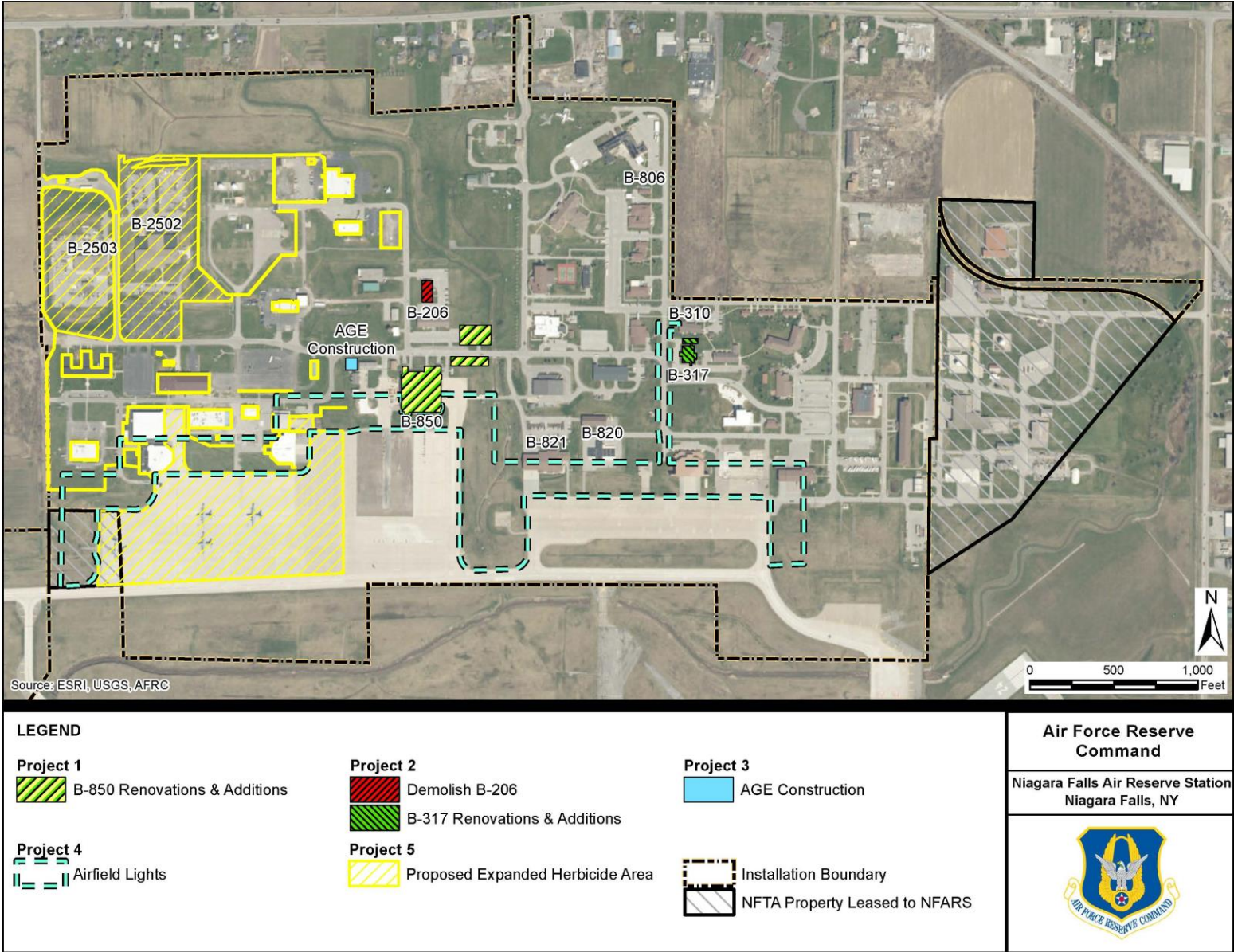
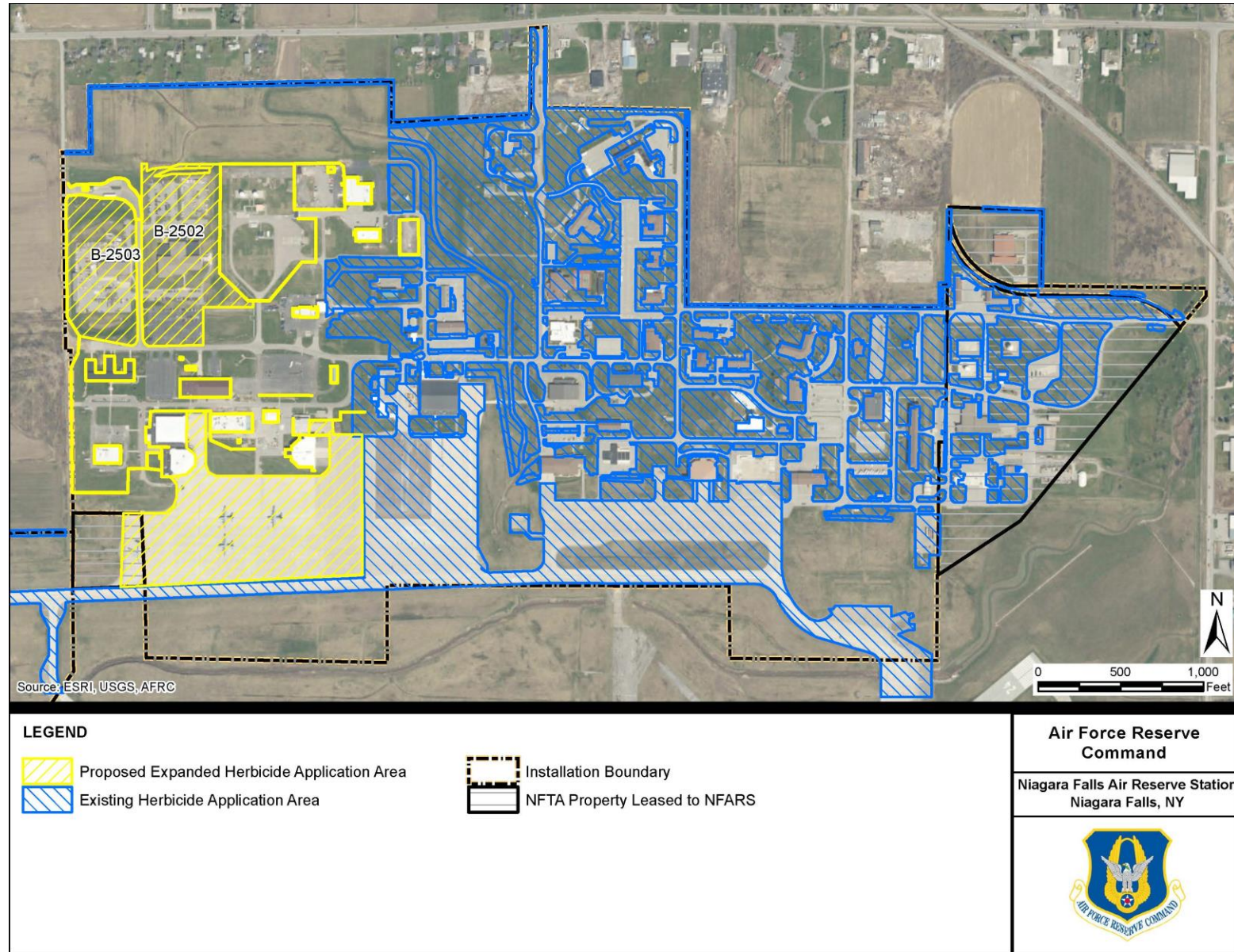


Figure 3: Proposed Complete Herbicide Application Areas



2.3 EVALUATED ALTERNATIVES

2.3.1 Preferred Alternative

Under the Preferred Alternative, the five projects would be implemented as described in **Section 2.1** and shown in **Figure 2**. These projects are not dependent on each other and AFRC may choose to implement one or more without the others. These projects are AFRC directive actions that are analyzed together in this EA for efficiency and due to the similarities in their potential environmental impacts. Therefore, all five projects are fully analyzed as part of the Preferred Alternative in this EA.

The renovation and construction of an addition to B-850 would consolidate maintenance shops and functions and provide fully covered KC-135 aircraft maintenance capabilities. Maintaining a dedicated covered space for KC-135 aircraft maintenance would help support mission requirements, while consolidating 914 MXG functions in B-850 would help improve operational efficiency. This consolidation would make performing aircraft repairs and maintenance easier to perform, as all services would be co-located in one facility and would no longer be dispersed throughout the installation. Any delays in conducting maintenance would be minimized with all functions available in the same building. The renovation of and construction of an addition to B-317 would provide mission-critical upgrades to electrical and HVAC systems and enhance mission efficiency by eliminating travel between the various communication and data buildings. The construction of covered storage for AGE would prevent weathering of equipment, subsequently supporting mission needs and reducing additional maintenance to address weathering. Further, operational inefficiencies from transporting AGE to and storing AGE in the B-850 hangar, subsequently limiting space for KC-135 aircraft, would be eliminated. Replacing the airfield ramp lights would reduce operational inefficiencies associated with renting lift assist equipment to access the existing lights. This would also increase safety for personnel responsible for maintaining the lights. Further, replacement of these lights would eliminate existing noncompliance issues. Therefore, these four proposed projects meet Selection Standards #1 and #2.

Expanding herbicide application on the installation would also support the mission requirements of the 914 ARW. Performing weed control throughout the installation would address safety, security, maintenance, and aesthetic concerns, and would ensure that NFARS is operating in compliance with its existing IPMP. This project ensures that weed control would continue to be operationally efficient, by prioritizing the use of chemical herbicides rather than manual processes. Therefore, this project meets Selection Standards #1 and #2.

NFTA is a cooperating agency since one of the new airfield ramp lights may be located on NFTA property. Although this light would not be located on AFRC property, NFARS is coordinating with the NFTA during preparation of this EA to ensure that land uses would not conflict. Additionally, NFARS would continue to coordinate with NFTA following this EA to maintain the ability to conduct long-term operational activities associated with that light. All other projects included as part of the Preferred Alternative are located on NFARS property and are compatible with existing land uses. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative also meets Selection Standard #3 and would achieve the purpose and need for the Proposed Action.

2.3.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no new construction or renovations would occur on the installation, the airfield ramp lights would not be replaced, and herbicide application would continue to be limited to those areas previously analyzed in the 2011 EA. The 914 MXG functions would not be consolidated, B-850 infrastructure would continue to age, the B-850 hangar door would remain inadequately sized for KC-135 aircraft, and the B-850 fire suppression system would remain deficient. Communications functions would continue to be located in multiple facilities spread throughout the installation, and the electrical and HVAC

services in B-317 would remain deficient. AGE would continue to be stored outside at NFARS, exposing it to weathering, or would be moved inside B-850 where it would occupy limited space also needed for aircraft maintenance. The airfield ramp lighting would remain inadequate and inefficient, and continue to be non-compliant with mission lighting requirements. While the No Action Alternative would not meet Selection Standards #1 or #2 or the Proposed Action's purpose and need, it is analyzed in this EA in accordance with CEQ regulations to provide a comparative baseline for the Preferred Alternative.

2.4 ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER CONSIDERATION

The AFRC initially considered additional alternatives to achieve the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action. The AFRC eliminated these alternatives from further consideration because they did not meet one or more of the selection standards (see **Section 2.2**), as described below.

2.4.1 B-850 Renovation and Addition

2.4.1.1 Consolidate 914 MXG in B-850, No B-850 Hangar Upgrades

Under this alternative, NFARS would consolidate 914 MXG aircraft maintenance functions in B-850 by relocating 914 MXG maintenance functions currently located in B-902, B-907, B-847, and B-854. The existing B-850 hangar door would not be renovated to allow for a fully covered maintenance area for the KC-135 aircraft. One bay would be left open for potential hangar door renovation in the future. Other buildings would be used as aircraft bays, including B-917 and B-707. However, a covered area for KC-135 maintenance is critical to the mission of the 914 ARW and the lack of a dedicated and adequately sized area leaves the installation open to weather-related vulnerabilities and operational inefficiencies. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standards #1 or #2 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.1.2 Construct New Consolidated 914 MXG Building

Under this alternative, NFARS would consolidate 914 MXG aircraft maintenance functions in a newly constructed building next to B-907, which is currently used as a hangar for unscheduled maintenance. B-902, an old hangar currently used for administrative and storage space, would be demolished, except for the mechanical room. NFARS would relocate 914 MXG aircraft maintenance functions from B-902 and B-850 to the new 914 MXG building, and B-907, B-917, and B-707 would be used as aircraft bays. However, the new building under this alternative would be constructed on ANG (i.e., state)-owned land, as NFARS does not have suitable, developable property along the flightline that could support construction of a new 914 MXG building. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standard #3 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.1.3 No 914 MXG Consolidation

Under this alternative, NFARS would repair B-854 and B-847 to fix the safety issues in these facilities, and the 914 MXG maintenance functions and personnel would not be consolidated in B-850. The 914 MXG maintenance functions would continue to be located in several locations (B-902, B-907, B-847, B-854, and B-850) across the installation. Aircraft maintenance functions dispersed throughout the installation promotes inefficiencies, makes transporting equipment problematic during severe weather, and delays work. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standard #2 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.1.4 Renovate B-902 for Consolidated 914 MXG

Under this alternative, 914 MXG aircraft maintenance functions currently located in several locations (B-902, B-907, B-847, B-854, and B-850) across the installation would be consolidated in B-902, which would be renovated to accommodate the consolidation. B-902, however, is located on ANG-owned land. NFARS would have to make substantial investments into a building on land it does not own, and then would not have unrestricted authority over this building and its functions in the long-term. B-907 would continue to be used as a maintenance hangar, while B-917 and B-707 would serve as additional aircraft bays. Moreover, functions would continue to be dispersed across multiple locations and existing operational inefficiencies would remain. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standards #2 or #3 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.2 B-317 Renovation and Addition

2.4.2.1 Renovate B-317 Without Constructing an Addition

NFARS considered renovating B-317 without constructing an addition. Under this alternative, the 914 CS personnel, servers, and storage would remain in their current locations (B-317, B-206, and B-806). However, the physical space in B-317 is undersized, not capable of supporting infrastructure upgrades, and has insufficient and failing utilities. Additionally, the age and failing infrastructure of B-206 necessitates demolition of the facility and relocation of its personnel and equipment. A renovation to the offices in B-317, without construction of an addition, would not be adequate to accommodate consolidation of the 914 CS as it would not address the need for additional space. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standard #1 and thus was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.2.2 Construction of New Data Center Facility

Under this alternative, NFARS would construct a new facility for the 914 CS data center that is currently located in B-317. However, construction of a new facility would take five to ten years, and the B-317 data center HVAC units are currently well past their useful life. If the current HVAC units in the B-317 data center were to fail while construction of the new facility were ongoing, there would be a significant interruption to mission and critical services. NFARS determined that a more immediate solution was needed to prevent service interruption and promote operational efficiencies. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standards #1 or #2 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.3 Construct AGE Covered Storage

2.4.3.1 Use B-850 for AGE Storage

Under this alternative, NFARS would continue to use the west bay of B-850 for AGE storage to protect equipment from weathering. However, use of B-850 for AGE storage occupies limited hangar space and interferes with aircraft maintenance activities also occurring within B-850. Frequent opening of hangar doors in order to access and use AGE equipment also increases overall energy usage at NFARS and is generally inefficient. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standard #2 and was eliminated from further consideration.

569 **2.4.4 Replace Airfield Ramp Lights**

570 **2.4.4.1 Retrofit Existing Airfield Light Fixtures**

571 Under this alternative, NFARS would retrofit the existing airfield light poles by replacing the existing light
572 fixtures with new, higher powered light fixtures. However, the airfield lighting would still be considered
573 deficient as the existing light pole locations and heights do not comply with USAF security requirements.
574 Replacing the lighting fixtures on the existing light poles would not meet the requirements for the entirety
575 of the airfield ramp and the continued use of lift equipment that is weather-dependent would not meet the
576 goals for operational efficiency. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standards #1 or #2 and
577 was eliminated from further consideration.

578 **2.4.4.2 Portable Light Units**

579 Under this alternative, NFARS would use portable light units from sunset to sunrise. These portable light
580 units would require constant refueling and maintenance and are operationally inefficient. Additionally, this
581 alternative is only a temporary solution for addressing the existing airfield light deficiencies and safety
582 concerns. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standards #1 or #2 and was eliminated from
583 further consideration.

584 **2.4.4.3 Substitute with Manpower**

585 Under this alternative, NFARS would increase manned security from sunset to sunrise around the airfield
586 in lieu of replacing the airfield ramp lights, to address safety concerns posed by the deficient system.
587 However, no guidance or directives have been issued by USAF that would allow this type of substitution,
588 and the existing ramp lighting would remain noncompliant with USAF security requirements. Therefore, this
589 alternative did not meet Selection Standard #1 and was eliminated from further consideration.

590 **2.4.5 Expanded Herbicide Application**

591 No other alternatives were considered for the expanded herbicide application.

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3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the affected environment and potential environmental consequences for resource areas that could be affected by the Proposed Action. The “Proposed Action Area” is used to refer to the complete area where the Proposed Action would be implemented, including the four FOCUS study projects and expanded herbicide application.

Potential impacts to the resource areas evaluated in this EA are described using specific criteria. The significance of an impact is measured in terms of its context and intensity, and is further described in terms of its duration and whether it is considered adverse or beneficial. The following definitions have been used throughout this EA to categorize potential impacts from implementing either alternative.

1. **Short-term or Long-term:** Short-term impacts are those that would occur only for a limited, finite time with respect to a particular activity (e.g., just the construction period). Long-term impacts are those that are more likely to be persistent and chronic throughout the life of the Proposed Action or that would last years after an impact-producing activity occurred.
2. **Adverse or Beneficial:** An adverse impact would cause unfavorable or undesirable outcomes. A beneficial impact would cause positive outcomes.
3. The magnitude of an impact is described using the following terms:
 - a. **Negligible:** Changes to the resource that would typically be non-detectable, or, if detected, would be very slight and localized.
 - b. **Less-than-significant:** Changes to the resource that would be noticeable but not likely to cause controversy, and which would remain below established significance thresholds. BMPs could be used to reduce or minimize potential adverse effects.
 - c. **Significant:** Changes to the resource that would be readily apparent and, due to their context and intensity, would be considered significant based on the considerations identified in 40 CFR 1501.3(d). Specific thresholds for determining whether an impact is significant are provided for each resource area in this EA.

Resources dismissed from detailed analysis in the EA, and the justification for their dismissal, are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Resources Dismissed from Detailed Analysis in the EA

Environmental Resource	Justification
Airspace	Construction, operation, and maintenance activities associated with the Proposed Action would have no potential to interfere with airspace. Implementation of the Proposed Action would not result in additional flights arriving to or departing from NFARS and would not change the use of the surrounding airspace. NFARS would continue to coordinate with NFIA as needed for use of the airport runways. Therefore, there would be no impact on airspace.

Environmental Resource	Justification
Coastal Zone Resources	NFARS is not located within the New York State coastal zone or a federal coastal barrier resources system unit. Therefore, the Proposed Action would have no effect on coastal resources.
Land Use	The Proposed Action would occur entirely on-base and has no potential to affect off-base land. Additionally, the Proposed Action would implement projects from the NFARS FOCUS study, which was intended to optimize land use and facility efficiency across the installation (AFRC, 2022). Therefore, the Proposed Action would be compatible with existing and future land uses on NFARS, and would have no impact on land use.
Transportation	Minor upgrades to transportation infrastructure would occur to support the proposed projects, including the addition of short access roads connecting the airfield ramp to new lights not already adjacent to an existing paved surface, and the paving of two parking lots adjacent to B-850. The short access roads would not change the existing transportation system on-base and would only be used to access the ramp lights for repairs and maintenance. The two new parking lots would provide additional space for personnel parking but would not result in an increase in the number of personal vehicles on-base. The Proposed Action would result in a temporary increase in vehicle traffic associated with contractor vehicles and the transportation of construction equipment and materials to the Proposed Action Area; however, it would not substantially increase vehicle traffic or affect the existing level of service on any roadways. Therefore, there would be no impact on the transportation network on or near the Proposed Action Area.
Energy Independence	NFARS currently obtains electric and natural gas utilities from off-site providers in the surrounding region and does not have infrastructure on-base that supports renewable energy generation. Implementation of the Proposed Action would not change NFARS' reliance on utilities providers. Therefore, there would be no change in the level of energy independence.

3.2 VISUAL RESOURCES

Visual resources refer to the visible features on a landscape, both manmade and natural, moving and stationary. Although visual quality is partly subjective, visual characteristics that often render an area less attractive include clashing or incoherent architectural elements; unorganized mixing of open and built spaces; presence of litter; and dead or dying vegetation. Actions that remedy or mitigate such characteristics generally improve visual quality.

The Region of Influence (ROI) for visual resources includes the viewshed from which the Preferred Alternative would be potentially visible. The ROI is generally bounded by Tuscarora Road to the west, Lockport Road to the north, Franklin Drive to the east, and the NFIA runway to the south.

3.2.1 Affected Environment

The overall visual landscape of the ROI is moderately developed with USAF facilities and open space within NFARS, and agricultural land and NFIA infrastructure off-base. Visibility to the Proposed Action Area within the ROI is relatively high, with different portions of the area located adjacent to open fields, airfield ramps, and other USAF facilities. The visibility is mainly limited to military stakeholders on-base; however, activities occurring on and around the airfield and in less built-up portions of NFARS could potentially be visible to the public along the off-base roads and from the NFIA. Approximately sixteen private residences, mostly along Lockport Road, may have limited or obstructed views of the Proposed Action Area.

3.2.2 Environmental Consequences

A visual resources impact would be significant if it would introduce discordant elements or remove important (i.e., visually appealing) elements in a cohesive and valued viewscape.

3.2.2.1 Preferred Alternative

FOCUS Study Projects

Construction of the Preferred Alternative would permanently alter viewsheds in the ROI from a variety of construction and demolition activities. The viewshed around B-850 would be altered by constructing a small addition and installing a cupola to the roof of the hangar, as well as developing parking space along Wagner Drive. Construction of the AGE covered storage facility would establish a new storage facility in the viewshed adjacent to B-848. Additionally, the viewshed would be altered by demolishing B-206 on Johnson Street and by constructing an addition to B-317 off Kirkbridge Drive. These activities, however, would not introduce substantial changes to the current visual landscape. Views of the construction and demolition activities would primarily be limited to personnel on-base. Personnel working at NFARS would have clear views of construction and demolition activities for the duration of the Proposed Action as there are no trees or other natural or built features to obstruct the Proposed Action Area.

Open space and a generally flat topography surrounding the Proposed Action Area may allow for visibility of construction work off-base; however, NFARS is surrounded by fencing that would impede motorist and resident views from surrounding roads. Any construction that may be visible would be generally consistent with other views of facility construction that motorists and residents typically experience. Proposed construction and demolition activities would be consistent with other proposed development activities at NFARS and would not be incongruous on the landscape nor would introduce significant changes to the current visual landscape. Lastly, views of construction work would be temporary, with each project expected to be completed within approximately a year following the project start. Overall, construction activities occurring under the Preferred Alternative would have *short-term, negligible adverse impacts* on visual resources.

Views of construction to replace the ten existing airfield ramp lights and install an eleventh light would be visible from the airfield ramp, but any such views would be consistent with ongoing airfield activities and would not be noticeable off-base. Sixteen residences located along Lockport Road would continue to have partial views of the ramp lights following installation, and personnel and travelers at NFIA would also have clear views of the airfield ramp lights when utilizing runway and taxiway spaces. However, light emissions and visual effects would be consistent with existing visual conditions found at NFARS and NFIA and would not result in a significant change from existing ramp light, streetlight, and building lighting conditions. Replacing the existing lighting structures would reduce or prevent light spillage, potentially improving the visual character of the area by ensuring adequate light for safe aircraft operations while reducing light emissions to surrounding areas. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative would have *long-term, beneficial impacts* on visual resources and light emissions.

Expanded Herbicide Application

The application of herbicides around fence lines, B-2502 and B-2503, and the airfield ramp would not introduce new structural elements, and would not result in permanent changes to the viewscape. Views of herbicide spraying activities would be limited to personnel on-base and residents and motorists travelling along Lockport Road and Tuscarora Road may observe application, but it would not appear different from other common landscaping activities, including existing herbicide application activities. Expanded herbicide application would have *no impact* on visual resources under the Preferred Alternative.

3.2.2.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed four construction projects from the FOCUS study and expanded herbicide application at NFARS would not occur. No demolition, renovation, or construction

activities would be performed. The viewshed surrounding the Proposed Action Area would remain under current conditions and there would be *no impacts* to visual resources.

3.3 AIR QUALITY

Air quality conditions at a given location are a function of several factors including the quantity and type of pollutants emitted locally and regionally, as well as the dispersion rates of pollutants in the region. Primary factors affecting pollutant dispersal include wind speed and direction, atmospheric stability, climate and temperature, and topography.

The ROI for air quality is the Niagara Frontier Intrastate air quality control region (AQCR). Air quality conditions within the ROI are described in terms of the Air Force's Installation Attainment Status spreadsheet maintained by the Air Force Civil Engineer Center (AFCEC) dated May 2024 and the relationship to air quality standards described in **Section 3.3.1** (AFCEC, 2024).

3.3.1 Affected Environment

3.3.1.1 National Ambient Air Quality Standards

Under the Clean Air Act (CAA) and its amendments, the USEPA identifies air pollutants that cause or contribute to the endangerment of human health and/or environmental welfare and establishes air quality "criteria" that guide the establishment of air quality standards to regulate these pollutants (42 U.S.C. Sections 7408 – 7409). These standards, known as the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), have been established for six air pollutants: carbon monoxide (CO), lead (Pb), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), ozone (O₃), particulate matter (PM) less than or equal to 2.5 micrometers in diameter (PM_{2.5}), particulate matter less than or equal to 10 micrometers in diameter (PM₁₀), and sulfur dioxide (SO₂). The NAAQS are meant to safeguard public health (i.e., primary NAAQS) and environmental welfare (i.e., secondary NAAQS). Current NAAQS are presented in **Table 2**.

USEPA and state/local air quality control agencies monitor and evaluate outdoor air quality for compliance with the NAAQS. Areas where monitored outdoor air concentrations are below the NAAQS are considered in attainment. If sufficient ambient air monitoring data are not available, the area is instead deemed attainment/unclassifiable. Areas where monitored outdoor air concentrations exceed the NAAQS are designated by the USEPA as nonattainment areas. Nonattainment designations for some pollutants (e.g., O₃) can be further classified based on the severity of the NAAQS exceedances. Lastly, areas that have historically exceeded the NAAQS, but have since instituted controls and programs that have successfully remedied these exceedances are known as maintenance areas.

Table 2: National Ambient Air Quality Standards

Pollutant	Averaging Time	Level	Form
CO	8-hour	9 ppm	Not to be exceeded more than once per year
	1-hour	35 ppm	
Pb	Rolling 3-month average	0.15 µg/m ³	Not to be exceeded
NO ₂	1-hour	100 ppb	98th percentile of 1-hour daily maximum concentrations, 3-year average
	Annual	53 ppb	Annual mean

Pollutant	Averaging Time	Level	Form
O ₃	8-hour	0.070 ppm	Annual fourth-highest daily maximum 8-hour concentration, 3-year average
PM	PM _{2.5} Annual (primary)	9.0 µg/m ³	Annual mean, 3-year average
	PM _{2.5} Annual (secondary)	15.0 µg/m ³	Annual mean, 3-year average
	PM _{2.5} 24-hour	35 µg/m ³	98th percentile, 3-year average
	PM ₁₀ 24-hour	150 µg/m ³	Not to be exceeded more than once per year, 3-year average
SO ₂	1-hour	75 ppb	99th percentile of 1-hour daily maximum concentrations, 3-year average
	3-hour	0.5 ppm	Not to be exceeded more than once per year

Notes: ppb = parts per billion; ppm = parts per million; µg/m³ = micrograms per cubic meter of air.
Source: (USEPA, 2024a)

3.3.1.2 Clean Air Act Conformity

The General Conformity Rule of the CAA mandates that the federal government does not engage, support, provide financial assistance for licensing or permitting, or approve any activity not conforming to the most recent USEPA-approved State Implementation Plan. This rule applies to all federal actions, except highway and transit actions, which are instead regulated by the Transportation Conformity Rule. The General Conformity Rule ensures that such emissions do not cause or contribute to air quality degradation, thus preventing the achievement of state and federal air quality goals. The USAF's EIAP for air quality, promulgated at 32 CFR 989.30, *Air Quality*, requires that NEPA documents such as this EA address General Conformity applicability.

For federal actions located in nonattainment or maintenance areas, annual net emissions for a Proposed Action are compared against General Conformity *de minimis* thresholds, representing numerical thresholds under which a project is not considered to cause or contribute to continued violation of the NAAQS, and therefore General Conformity is not further applicable. Unlike nonattainment or maintenance areas, General Conformity *de minimis* levels have not been established for attainment areas. According to AFCEC's USAF's Installation Attainment Status spreadsheet, NFARS is considered in attainment of all current NAAQS; however, the installation was previously considered in nonattainment for the now-revoked 1979 1-hour O₃ NAAQS and 1997 8-hour O₃ NAAQS (AFCEC, 2024). Although the region is currently in attainment of all NAAQS, New York State was required to demonstrate attainment of the revoked 8-hour O₃ NAAQS by 15 June 2010, to prevent "backsliding" into nonattainment of current O₃ NAAQS (USEPA, 2021). The USAF continues to evaluate projects against the 1997 8-hour O₃ NAAQS standard, so *de minimis* thresholds for O₃ are relevant to the Proposed Action. Because New York State is located within the Ozone Transport Region (40 CFR 81.457), the General Conformity *de minimis* thresholds for the O₃ precursors oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOC) are 100 tons per year and 50 tons per year, respectively (40 CFR 93.153).

3.3.2 Environmental Consequences

Air quality is affected by stationary sources (e.g., boilers, emergency generators, and industrial processes), mobile sources (e.g., motor vehicles, construction equipment, and aircraft), and area sources (e.g., vehicle and aircraft fuel transfer, storage, and dispensing). Current USAF guidance provides methodology for

performing an Air Quality EIAP Level II, Quantitative Assessment, which is an insignificance assessment that can determine if an action poses an insignificant impact on air quality (Solutio Environmental, 2023). An air quality impact is considered insignificant if the action does not cause or contribute to exceedance of one or more of the NAAQS. The USAF defines “insignificance indicators” for each criteria pollutant according to current air quality conditions to determine whether potential impacts would be significant. In accordance with the EIAP, the greatest annual (calendar year) emissions for each pollutant of concern form the basis of the analysis. In areas the USAF considers as clearly attainment (i.e., where all criteria pollutant concentrations are currently less than 95 percent of applicable NAAQS), the insignificance indicators are 250 tons per year (i.e., the USEPA’s Prevention of Significant Deterioration threshold), except for Pb, which is 25 tons per year.

3.3.2.1 Preferred Alternative

FOCUS Study Projects

The Proposed Action would primarily involve mobile sources of emissions related to construction activities, including fuel combustion in construction vehicles and equipment (e.g., backhoes, bulldozers), material delivery and debris hauling vehicles, and construction employee commute vehicles, as well as fugitive emissions of VOC from asphalt paving and PM from windblown dust on construction sites. Fuel-burning space heating equipment would be removed during demolition, and it is expected that the reduction in criteria pollutant emissions from the removed sources would be slightly greater than increased criteria pollutant emissions that would result from space heating equipment and new emergency generator use at newly constructed or expanded facilities. This would result in an overall minor decrease in long-term, ongoing operational criteria pollutant emissions. The nature and magnitude of this Proposed Action are expected to create only localized air quality impacts to the area surrounding the construction sites within the ROI. Construction and operational emissions were estimated using the USAF’s Air Conformity Applicability Model (ACAM) (Version 5.0.23a). The Record of Conformity Analysis for the Preferred Alternative is included in **Appendix C**. These emissions are “netted” on an annual basis. For air quality analysis purposes and to be conservative, construction activities for the four proposed FOCUS study projects were modeled as occurring in calendar year (CY) 2025 to estimate a maximum emissions (“worst-case”) scenario in a single year. Annual operations of additional space heating equipment and space heating equipment removed from existing building demolition were modeled in ACAM beginning in 2026. **Table 3** shows estimated net emissions from construction in CY 2025 and annual operation of the Preferred Alternative in CY 2026.

Table 3: Annual Construction and Operational Criteria Pollutant Emissions Summary (tons/year)

Pollutant	Action Emissions	Insignificance Indicator	Exceedance?	General Conformity Threshold	Exceedance?
<i>Construction (CY 2025)</i>					
VOC	0.265	250	No	50	No
NO_x	1.205	250	No	100	No
CO	1.573	250	No	N/A	N/A
SO_x	0.003	250	No	N/A	N/A
PM₁₀	0.469	250	No	N/A	N/A
PM_{2.5}	0.043	250	No	N/A	N/A
Pb	0.000	25	No	N/A	N/A

Pollutant	Action Emissions	Insignificance Indicator	Exceedance?	General Conformity Threshold	Exceedance?
NH ₃	0.005	250	No	N/A	N/A
<i>Annual Operations (CY 2026)</i>					
VOC	0.000	250	No	50	No
NO _x	-0.003	250	No	100	No
CO	-0.003	250	No	N/A	N/A
SO _x	0.000	250	No	N/A	N/A
PM ₁₀	0.000	250	No	N/A	N/A
PM _{2.5}	0.000	250	No	N/A	N/A
Pb	0.000	25	No	N/A	N/A
NH ₃	0.000	250	No	N/A	N/A

Source: ACAM Version 5.0.23a

Notes: N/A = Not Applicable

As shown in **Table 3**, construction of the Preferred Alternative would cause short-term, direct, adverse impacts on overall air quality. Emissions of construction-related pollutants would be well below applicable insignificance indicators for all pollutants and well below General Conformity *de minimis* thresholds for VOCs and NO_x. Therefore, these impacts would be insignificant, and no further analysis is required. Construction emissions would result in a *short-term, less-than-significant impact* on air quality in the ROI. Operational emissions reductions from heating equipment removed during demolition are expected to be slightly greater than the emissions increases from heating equipment and generator use at expanded and constructed facilities, resulting in a slight overall decrease in operational emissions when compared to the current conditions and the No Action Alternative. Therefore, the Proposed Action would result in an overall *long-term, beneficial impact* on air quality in the ROI.

Best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented during construction to reduce potential impacts on air quality, including having no visible emissions such as dust or wind-blown soil. These control measures could include applying water or using other stabilization measures on areas of bare soil or soil piles and covering dump trucks that transport materials that could become airborne. Additionally, contractors would be required to maintain construction equipment in accordance with manufacturers' specifications to reduce exhaust emissions. Installation and operation of space heating equipment and emergency generators would be required to comply with all applicable permitting requirements.

Expanded Herbicide Application

A minimal incremental increase of criteria pollutant emissions from the operation of vehicles and equipment used to transport and apply herbicides on-site would result from expanded herbicide application. Some of the herbicides may contain VOCs that could be released. Landscaping activities, such as weed control, are considered trivial activities, and expanded herbicide application is therefore anticipated to have *no impact* on air quality.

3.3.2.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed four construction projects from the FOCUS study and expanded herbicide application at NFARS would not occur. Therefore, there would be no temporary or

long-term increase in criteria pollutant emissions from construction and no long-term decrease in criteria pollutant emissions from operations. The No Action Alternative would have *no impact* on air quality.

3.4 CLIMATE

Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are compounds that contribute to the greenhouse effect. The greenhouse effect is a natural phenomenon where gases trap heat within the lowest portion of the earth's atmosphere, causing heating at the surface of the earth. Climate change refers to a general transformation in the average climate conditions of the earth. The heating effect of GHG emissions in the atmosphere is considered the probable cause of the global warming observed over the last 50 years (74 FR 66496). GHGs occur in the atmosphere both naturally and because of human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels. The primary long-lived GHGs directly emitted by human activities are carbon dioxide (CO₂), nitrous oxide (N₂O), methane (CH₄), hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride. GHG concentrations in the atmosphere have increased substantially since 1750 as a result of human activities. Scientists have identified human activity that generates GHG emissions as a significant contributor to climate change (IPCC, 2021).

Global warming and climate change can affect many aspects of the environment, and are the result of aggregate GHG emissions globally. The USEPA has signed an endangerment finding regarding GHGs under Section 202(a) of the CAA, which finds that the current and projected concentrations of the six key well-mixed GHGs – CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride – in the atmosphere threaten the public health and welfare of current and future generations (Federal Register, 2010).

GHGs are regulated under Section 202 of the CAA. CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O account for more than 97 percent of U.S. total GHG emissions (AFCEC, 2023). CO₂ is the primary GHG emitted during fossil fuel combustion, while smaller amounts of CH₄ and N₂O are also emitted. Each GHG is assigned a global warming potential (GWP). The GWP is the ability of a gas or aerosol to trap heat in the atmosphere. The GWP rating system is standardized to CO₂, which has a value of one. The CO₂-equivalent (CO₂e) rate is calculated by multiplying the emissions of each GHG by its GWP and adding the results together to produce a single, combined emissions rate representing all GHGs. This EA considers CO₂e as the representative GHG emission.

EO 13990, *Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis*, requires an accounting of the full costs of GHG emissions from federal projects, as identified in terms of the “social cost of GHGs” (SC-GHG) for CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O. EO 14008, *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*, further strengthens EO 13990 by implementing objectives, including requiring federal agencies to develop and implement Climate Action Plans, to reduce GHG emissions and bolster resilience to the impacts of climate change. EO 14057, *Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs Through Federal Sustainability*, transforms how the federal government builds, buys, and manages its assets and operations, by supporting the growth of America's clean energy and clean technology industries and accelerating progress toward achieving a net-zero, carbon pollution-free electricity sector by 2035. Specifically, it sets government-wide sustainability goals, which include 100 percent carbon pollution-free electricity by 2030.

In January 2023, the CEQ published, “National Environmental Policy Act Guidance on Consideration of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change.” This guidance instructs federal agencies to consider in their NEPA reviews: 1) the potential effects of a proposed action on climate change, including by assessing both GHG emissions and reductions from the proposed action; and 2) the effects of climate change on a proposed action and its environmental impacts. It also recommends contextualizing GHG emissions using baseline emissions, and determining the SC-GHG from a proposed action where feasible as a means of comparing the GHG impacts of the alternatives (CEQ, 2023b). The SC-GHG is an estimate of the monetized damages associated with incremental increases in GHG emissions, such as reduced agricultural

productivity, human health effects, property damage from increased flood risk, and the value of ecosystem services (Interagency Working Group on Social Cost Greenhouse Gases, 2021).

With respect to GHGs, the ROI for climate is global due to the global mixing and accumulation of GHGs in the atmosphere. With respect to the effects of climate change, the ROI includes the Proposed Action Area and the immediate vicinity within 0.5 mile, which is the area in which the Proposed Action could have environmental impacts.

3.4.1 Affected Environment

Niagara Falls, New York, which is the closest city to NFARS with recent data, has a cold and temperate climate. The average high temperature is 79.2 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) in July, which is the hottest month, and the average low temperature is 19.8°F in February, which is the coldest month. Niagara Falls has average annual precipitation of 42.8 inches per year. The wettest month of the year is July, with an average rainfall of approximately 4 inches U.S. Climate Data, 2024).

Most of the state of New York has warmed 1 to 3°F in the last century. Heavy rainstorms are more frequent, and the sea is rising about one inch every decade. Higher water levels are eroding beaches, submerging lowlands, and exacerbating coastal flooding. In the coming decades, the changing climate is likely to increase coastal and inland flooding, disrupt farming and winter recreation, and increase some risks to human health. Long-term climate areas of concern that could affect NFARS include increasing temperatures and changing precipitation patterns, which are likely to increase the intensity of both floods and droughts; and impacts to human health associated with increased temperatures, such as ground level O₃ formation, an increase in the length and severity of the pollen season for plants such as ragweed, and the risk of transmission of certain diseases from insects such as ticks and mosquitoes (USEPA, 2016).

Since climate change is the result of aggregate global GHG emissions, ACAM provides projected national and state GHG emissions as baselines by which to compare the Preferred Alternative's projected total emissions. **Table 4** shows projected baseline GHG emissions in New York and the U.S., for the Preferred Alternative's construction year (CY 2025), and annual operations beginning in CY 2026.

Table 4: State and National Baseline Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Metric Tons/Year)

New York GHG Emissions				
Year	CO ₂	CH ₄	N ₂ O	CO ₂ e
2025 (Construction)	162,341,710	526,869	23,871	162,892,450
2026 (Operations)	162,341,710	526,869	23,871	162,892,450
U.S. GHG Emissions				
Year	CO ₂	CH ₄	N ₂ O	CO ₂ e
2025 (Construction)	5,136,454,179	25,626,912	1,500,708	5,163,581,798
2026 (Operations)	5,136,454,179	25,626,912	1,500,708	5,163,581,798

Source: ACAM Version 5.0.23a (note: totals reflect rounding in ACAM)

3.4.2 Environmental Consequences

The USAF has adopted the Prevention of Significant Deterioration threshold of 75,000 tons per year of CO₂e (or 68,039 metric tons per year) as an indicator or "threshold of insignificance" for GHG emissions. This indicator does not define a significant impact (e.g., GHG emissions above this rate are not inherently

significant); however, it provides a threshold to identify actions that are insignificant (*de minimis*, too trivial or minor to merit consideration) (AFCEC, 2023).

A significant adverse climate change impact would occur if the Proposed Action substantially increases the vulnerability of the ROI, or nearby properties, to the effects of climate change.

3.4.2.1 Preferred Alternative

FOCUS Study Projects

The Preferred Alternative would result in a temporary increase in GHG emissions related to construction activities, including fuel combustion in construction vehicles and equipment (e.g., backhoes, bulldozers), material delivery and debris hauling vehicles, and construction employee commute vehicles. Fuel-burning space heating equipment would be removed during demolition, and it is expected that the reduction in GHG emissions from the removed sources would be slightly greater than GHG emissions increases that would result from operating newly installed space heating equipment and emergency generators serving expanded and constructed facilities included in the Preferred Alternative. This would result in an overall decrease in long-term annual operational GHG emissions.

Construction and operational GHG emissions were estimated for the construction year (CY 2025) and a representative operational year (CY 2026), using ACAM (Version 5.0.23a). The GHG Emissions Report for the Preferred Alternative is included in **Appendix C. Table 5** shows estimated net annual and net total GHG emissions from construction and operation of the Preferred Alternative. ACAM also provides a long-term analysis for GHG emissions that captures both construction and operational emissions, spanning from 2025 through 2037. A comparison of these emissions relative to state and national GHG emission baselines between 2025 and 2037 is provided in **Table 6**.

To provide context for the impact of these emissions, the SC-GHG of the Preferred Alternative is disclosed and compared to state and national SC-GHG in the construction year (CY 2025) and two representative operational years (CY 2026 and CY 2037) in

Table 7. Long-term analysis for SC-GHG, that captures both construction and operational emissions, spanning from 2025 through 2037, is included in **Appendix C**. ACAM uses SC-GHG derived from the Interagency Working Group on Social Cost of Greenhouse Gases *Technical Support Document: Social Cost of Carbon, Methane, and Nitrous Oxide Interim Estimates Under Executive Order 13990*. Using a 2.5 percent discount factor, the SC-GHG per metric ton in 2020 U.S. dollars is \$83 for CO₂ in 2025, \$84 for CO₂ in 2026, and \$99 for CO₂ in 2037; \$2,200 for CH₄ in 2025, \$2,300 for CH₄ in 2026, and \$3,000 for CH₄ in 2037; and \$30,000 for N₂O in both 2025 and 2026, and \$37,000 for N₂O in 2037 (Interagency Working Group on Social Cost Greenhouse Gases, 2021).

Table 5: Annual GHG Emissions Summary (Metric Tons/Year)

Year	CO ₂	CH ₄	N ₂ O	CO ₂ e	Threshold (CO ₂ e)	Exceedance
2025 (Construction)	275	0.01072018	0.00645692	277	68,039	No
2026 (Operations)	-4	-0.00007033	-0.00007033	-4	68,039	No

Source: ACAM Version 5.0.23a

Table 6: Total GHG Emissions (Metric Tons) Compared to State and National Baselines: 2025-2037

	CO ₂	CH ₄	N ₂ O	CO ₂ e
State Total	2,110,442,230	6,849,300	310,320	2,117,601,849
U.S. Total	66,773,904,327	333,149,852	19,509,199	67,126,563,378
Preferred Alternative	230	0.009876	0.005613	232
Percent of New York Totals	0.00001090%	0.00000014%	0.00000181%	0.00001096%
Percent of U.S. Totals	0.00000034%	0.00000000%	0.00000003%	0.00000035%

Source: ACAM Version 5.0.23a

Note: Table reflects total GHG emissions for the construction year (CY 2025) and operations years (CY 2026 through CY 2037).

Table 7: Social Cost of Greenhouse Gases¹

		Preferred Alternative Annual SC-GHG (\$1,000/Year)		
Year	CO ₂	CH ₄	N ₂ O	Total
2025	\$22.81	\$0.02	\$0.19	\$23.03
2026	-\$0.31	\$0.00	\$0.00	-\$0.32-
2037	-\$0.37	\$0.00	\$0.00	-\$0.37
New York Annual SC-GHG (\$1,000/Year)				
Year	CO ₂	CH ₄	N ₂ O	Total
2025	\$13,474,361.93	\$1,159,112.26	\$716,122.77	\$15,349,596.96
2026	\$13,636,703.64	\$1,211,799.18	\$716,122.77	\$15,564,625.59
2037	\$16,071,829.29	\$1,580,607.62	\$883,218.08	\$18,535,655.00
U.S. Annual SC-GHG (\$1,000/Year)				
Year	CO ₂	CH ₄	N ₂ O	Total
2025	\$426,325,696.86	\$56,379,205.70	\$45,021,229.08	\$527,726,131.63
2026	\$431,462,151.04	\$58,941,896.86	\$45,021,229.08	\$535,425,276.98
2037	\$508,508,963.72	\$76,880,735.04	\$55,526,182.53	\$640,915,881.29
Total SC-GHG CY 2025 through CY 2037 (\$1,000/Year)				
Location	CO ₂	CH ₄	N ₂ O	Total
Preferred Alternative	\$18.71	\$0.02	\$0.17	\$18.89
New York	\$191,887,901.20	\$17,702,805.38	\$10,359,909.43	\$219,950,616.00
U.S.	\$6,071,288,839.58	\$861,064,232.45	\$651,307,114.02	\$7,583,660,186.05

Preferred Alternative SC-GHG Percent of Totals				
Location	CO ₂	CH ₄	N ₂ O	Total
New York	0.00000975%	0.00000012%	0.00000160%	0.00000859%
U.S.	0.00000031%	0.00000000%	0.00000003%	0.00000025%

1. The SC-GHG is measured in 2020 U.S. Dollars, using a 2.5 percent discount factor.

Source: ACAM Version 5.0.23a (note: totals reflect rounding in ACAM)

As shown in **Table 5**, construction of the Preferred Alternative would cause *minor, short-term, direct GHG emissions increases* during the construction period and *minor, long-term, direct GHG emissions decreases* during facility operations. Emissions of construction-related GHGs would be well below applicable insignificance indicators. Operational GHG emissions reductions from heating equipment removed during demolition are expected to be slightly greater than the GHG emissions increases from heating equipment and emergency generator use at expanded or constructed facilities, resulting in a slight overall decrease in operational GHG emissions when compared to the current conditions and the No Action Alternative. This would result in a *long-term, minor reduction* of operational GHG emissions. GHG emissions increases during the construction period (CY 2025) would be greater than the cumulative decrease in operations emissions from CY 2026 through CY 2037. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative's impacts on climate change would be *less-than-significant and adverse*. The total SC-GHG of the Preferred Alternative from CY 2025 through CY 2037 would be approximately \$18,890.

A portion of the Proposed Action Area for the B-850 project and repair of airfield lights is located within the 100- and 500-year floodplains (see **Figure 5**). NFARS would design each of these projects such that project components (e.g., parking lots, light poles) do not encroach upon the floodplain to the extent practicable; however, some minor floodplain impacts may still occur (see **Section 3.6.2.1**). Should there be no practicable alternative to locating in the floodplain, NFARS would design these features to be resilient against flood events, which may become more frequent and/or intense in the future due to climate change. By exploring other design and location options and implementing impact minimization measures, precipitation and flooding are not anticipated to be a concern for the Preferred Alternative. The other potential climate change effects on NFARS identified in **Section 3.4.1** would have no effect on the Preferred Alternative.

Expanded Herbicide Application

A minimal incremental increase of GHG emissions from the operation of vehicles and equipment used to transport and apply herbicides on-site would result from expanded herbicide application. None of the herbicides that would be used contain GHGs. Expanded herbicide application activities are therefore anticipated to have *no impact* on climate change, and would not be affected by climate change.

3.4.2.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed four construction projects from the FOCUS study and expanded herbicide application at NFARS would not occur. No demolition, renovation, or construction activities would be performed and herbicide application would not be expanded; therefore, there would be no temporary or long-term increase in GHG emissions from construction and no long-term decrease in GHG emissions from operations. The No Action Alternative would have *no impact* on climate change.

3.5 NOISE

Sound is vibrations in the air, which are known as compression waves. Just like a pebble dropped into a pond creates ripples, the compression waves, formed of air molecules pressed together, radiate from a source and decrease with distance. If these vibrations reach a human eardrum at a sufficient rate and intensity, they are perceived as sound. Noise is considered unwanted sound. Generally, sound becomes noise to a listener when it interferes with normal activities. Sound within the range of human hearing is measured on a logarithmic scale, known as the decibel (dB), which doubles the noise energy every 3 dB. The human ear does not hear all frequencies equally; instead, the A-weighted decibel scale (dBA) is used to reflect the selective sensitivity of human hearing.

The loudest sounds that can be comfortably heard by the human ear have intensities a trillion times higher than those of sounds barely heard. A sound level of 0 dBA is approximately the threshold of human hearing and is barely audible under extremely quiet listening conditions. Normal speech has a sound level of approximately 60 dBA. Sound levels above 120 dBA begin to be perceived as uncomfortable, while sound levels between 130 and 140 dBA are considered painful. The common sound levels encountered in daily life are shown in **Table 8**.

Table 8: A-Weighted Sound Levels for Common Indoor and Outdoor Sounds

Sound Source	Sound Pressure Level (dBA)
Air Raid Siren at 50 feet	120
Maximum Levels at Rock Concerts (Rear Seats)	110
On Sidewalk by Passing Heavy Truck or Bus	90
On Sidewalk by Typical Highway	80
On Sidewalk by Passing Automobiles with Mufflers	70
Typical Urban Area	60-70
Typical Suburban Area	50-60
Quiet Suburban Area at Night	40-50
Typical Rural Area at Night	30-40
Isolated Broadcast Studio	20
Audiometric (Hearing Testing) Booth	10
Threshold of Hearing	0

Source: (Cowan, 1994)

The sound environment around an air installation such as NFARS is typically described using a measure of cumulative exposure that results from all aircraft operational events. The metric used to account for this is A-weighted Day-Night Sound Level (DNL), which refers to a 24-hour average noise level with a 10 dB penalty applied to the noise levels during the hours between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. due to increased sensitivity to noise levels during these hours (USEPA, 1974). The DNL is the standard noise metric used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), FAA, USEPA, and DoD. Since the length and number of events (i.e., the total noise energy) and the time of day play key roles in the perception of noise, to reflect these concerns, USAF uses the DNL metric to describe the cumulative noise exposure that results from all aircraft operations.

To address the potential impacts of aircraft operations on land use, the USAF has defined certain noise zones and provided associated recommendations regarding compatible land uses in DAFI 32-1015,

987 *Integrated Installation Planning.* In general, residential land uses are not compatible with an outdoor DNL
988 above 65 dBA.

989 The ROI for noise includes areas within 0.2 miles of the Proposed Action Area, beyond which noise
990 generally attenuates to ambient levels.

991 **3.5.1 Affected Environment**

992 The existing noise sources around NFARS include aircraft operations at NFARS and NFIA, traffic on- and
993 off-base, and military training activities at NFARS. NFIA has published noise contours for its runways, which
994 NFARS also uses. Noise contours for a DNL of 65 dBA extend beyond the approach end of one of the
995 NFTA runways (Runway 6). However, the noise contours do not extend into the Proposed Action Area and
996 are located outside of the ROI; therefore, noise levels typically exist at ambient levels in the ROI (NFIA,
997 2016). NFARS is located in a suburban environment, approximately 2 miles east of Interstate 190 and U.S.
998 Route 82. Noise from traffic can periodically be heard on-base, although it is minimal and does not generate
999 excessive or continuous noise. Military operations, training activities, and surrounding facilities on-base
1000 also generate noise; however, this noise would be typical of a developed, industrial environment.

1001 NFARS is located within the Town of Niagara to the west and the Town of Wheatfield to the east. No
1002 sensitive receptors, which include those land uses that are more susceptible to noise pollution, are located
1003 within the ROI. The nearest sensitive receptors, including 16 private residences located on Lockport Road,
1004 the Niagara County SPCA, and the EMPOWER social services facility, are all located just beyond the ROI.
1005 The residences located along Lockport Road would be the closest off-base receptors to construction
1006 activities at B-850 (approximately 0.30 mile), the demolition of B-206 (approximately 0.27 mile), construction
1007 work at B-317 (approximately 0.28 mile), and construction of the AGE covered storage facility
1008 (approximately 0.38 mile). Noise in the area surrounding NFARS, including noise heard by the nearby
1009 sensitive receptors, is anticipated to be in a range between 50 and 60 dBA during daytime hours, given the
1010 developed, mixed-use land uses within the ROI (Cowan, 1994).

1011 The Town of Niagara maintains a noise ordinance that specifies maximum permissible noise levels for
1012 residential land uses. Noise generated from construction equipment, drilling, power tools, or radio
1013 broadcasts is prohibited on weekend and weekday hours from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m., unless the stated
1014 construction activities are designated as emergency work, pursuant to a license or permit issued by the
1015 local authority, or conducted by or for a municipal entity. Additionally, during these hours, there should be
1016 no outdoor noise that is audible on a nearby residential property more than 100 feet from the real property
1017 boundary line (Town of Niagara, 2023).

1018 The Town of Wheatfield maintains a noise ordinance that specifies maximum permissible noise levels for
1019 transient and steady noise. The maximum permissible noise levels for transient noises are 85 dBA for
1020 daytime hours between 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (applies to noises lasting between 12 seconds and one
1021 minute) and nighttime hours between 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. (applies to noises lasting between six
1022 seconds and one minute). The maximum permissible noise levels generated from steady noises exceeding
1023 one minute are 65 dBA for daytime hours between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. and 50 dBA for nighttime hours
1024 between 11:00 p.m. to 9:00 a.m. Noise generated from construction equipment for building projects is
1025 prohibited from 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. on Mondays through Saturdays and all day on Sunday, unless the
1026 stated construction activities are designated as emergency work, pursuant to a license or permit issued by
1027 the town's Building Department, or conducted by or for a municipal entity. Construction work between the
1028 hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. that generates noise in excess of the defined transient and steady noise
1029 levels is allowed, provided that equipment is operated at the manufacturer's approved sound level and used
1030 with noise suppression equipment (Town of Wheatfield, 2023).

3.5.2 Environmental Consequences

A noise impact would be significant if it would 1) cause unsafe noise conditions for nearby receptors during construction, or 2) substantially affect normal operations of noise-sensitive receptors during operation of the Proposed Action.

3.5.2.1 Preferred Alternative

FOCUS Study Projects

Construction and demolition activities associated with the Proposed Action, including site excavation, backfill, material transportation, and building of physical structures would result in a temporary increase in noise levels within the vicinity of the Proposed Action Area. Equipment such as backhoes, excavators, graders, loaders, and trucks would be used, and would be the primary source of noise during implementation of the Proposed Action. Noise impacts would be the greatest at each Project Site and would decrease with distance, generally attenuating to ambient levels about 1,000 feet (0.19 mile; see **Table 9**) from each Project Site. **Table 9** provides sound levels typical of demolition and construction equipment up to a distance of 2,500 feet (approximately 0.5 mile). These noise levels would continue to attenuate at further distances from the Proposed Action Area.

Table 9: Construction Equipment Noise Levels (dBA) at Various Distances from Source (Feet)

	0	50	100	200	400	1,000	1,700	2,500
Heavy Truck	95	84-89	78-93	72-77	66-71	58-63	54-59	50-55
Dump Truck	108	88	82	76	70	62	58	54
Concrete Mixer	108	85	79	73	67	59	55	51
Jackhammer	108	88	82	76	70	62	58	54
Scraper	93	80-89	74-82	68-77	60-71	54-63	50-59	46-55
Bulldozer	107	87-102	81-96	75-90	69-84	61-76	57-72	53-68
Generator	96	76	70	64	58	50	46	42
Crane	104	75-88	69-82	63-76	55-70	49-62	45-48	41-54
Loader	104	73-86	67-80	61-74	55-68	47-60	43-56	39-52
Grader	108	88-91	82-85	76-79	70-73	62-65	58-61	54-57
Pile driver	105	95	89	83	77	69	65	61
Forklift	100	95	89	83	77	69	65	61

Source: (Tipler, 1976)

Proposed construction and demolition activities are expected to take one year to complete, and would generate the most noise during the initial stages of the Proposed Action (i.e., site preparation, renovation additions, and construction of physical buildings). Demolition of B-206, which would occur once the renovations to B-317 are complete, would likely generate similar noise, but would be of shorter duration. Although short-term adverse noise impacts are anticipated for on-base receptors during construction and demolition, sensitive receptors and private residences off-base are located sufficiently far away from construction and demolition activities (at least 1,425 feet away) and are not expected to experience notable noise levels or be adversely affected. Noise reduction BMPs, such as the use of mufflers on construction equipment and vehicles, would minimize noise impacts during implementation of the Proposed Action. Therefore, the demolition and construction activities under the Preferred Alternative would result in *short-*

term, less-than-significant adverse noise impacts to the overall noise environment. No long-term impacts would be anticipated.

Expanded Herbicide Application

Hand-spraying of herbicides would be generally inaudible and would have no potential to be heard by nearby sensitive receptors. Therefore, expanded herbicide application under the Proposed Action would have *no impact* on the overall noise environment.

3.5.2.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed four construction projects from the FOCUS Study and expanded herbicide application at NFARS would not occur. No demolition, renovation, or construction activities would be performed. The noise levels surrounding the Proposed Action Area would remain under current conditions and there would be *no impact* to the noise environment.

3.6 WATER RESOURCES

Water resources analyzed in this EA include surface water (including stormwater), wetlands, floodplains, and groundwater. Surface water resources comprise lakes, rivers, and streams and are important for a variety of ecological, economic, recreational, aesthetic, and human health reasons. Wetlands are areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and under normal conditions do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions (USACE, 1987). Wetlands serve a variety of functions including flood control, groundwater recharge, maintenance of biodiversity, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and maintenance of water quality. Floodplains are belts of low-lying, level ground on one or both sides of a stream channel and are subject to either periodic or infrequent inundation by flood water. A 100-year floodplain has a one percent chance of inundation in any given year. Groundwater can be defined as subsurface water resources that are interlaid in layers of rock and soil and recharged by surface water seepage. Groundwater is important for its use as a potable water source, agricultural irrigation, and industrial applications.

The ROI for surface waters, wetlands, and floodplains includes the boundaries of the site, as well as the down-gradient waterbodies receiving stormwater runoff within 0.5 mile of the Proposed Action Area. The ROI for groundwater includes the portion of the groundwater basin that underlies the Proposed Action Area.

3.6.1 Affected Environment

Surface Water: All surface water from NFARS drains south into Cayuga Creek. The creek flows from east to west along the southern boundary of NFARS before flowing south beneath the NFIA runway, prior to reaching the NFIA Taxiway A2. Stormwater from the impervious areas on NFARS discharges to Cayuga Creek through eight outfalls, which are monitored quarterly for water quality parameters. An unnamed intermittent tributary of Cayuga Creek originates in the northwest part of NFARS and flows south through the center of the base immediately east of B-850, draining more than 50 percent of NFARS acreage (NFARS, 2024b). A small tributary is also located in the southwestern corner of NFARS property and flows to the west, above the runway area (see **Figure 4**).

The Town of Niagara is located within the Niagara Falls Urban Area and is covered under a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit as part of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Phase II permit program that regulates discharges into surface waters. The NYSDEC has been delegated to enforce the federal MS4 Phase II regulations in the state of New York under its State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) General Permit program

(NFARS, 2023a). NFARS maintains and operates under a Multi-Sector General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Industrial Activity (MSGP). Since all discharges from NFARS are considered industrial discharges, and are covered under the MSGP, NFARS is not required to comply with MS4 permit requirements. This exemption also applies to activities undertaken on land leased by NFARS from the NFTA. NFARS' MSGP requires the installation to develop a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and report monitoring results to the NYSDEC on an annual basis. NFARS must also apply for a SPDES General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activity (CGP) for any construction activities disturbing one or more acres of soil. Under these permits, NFARS is required to develop project-specific SWPPPs to minimize the effects of construction-related stormwater pollution into surface waters (NYSDEC, n.d.).

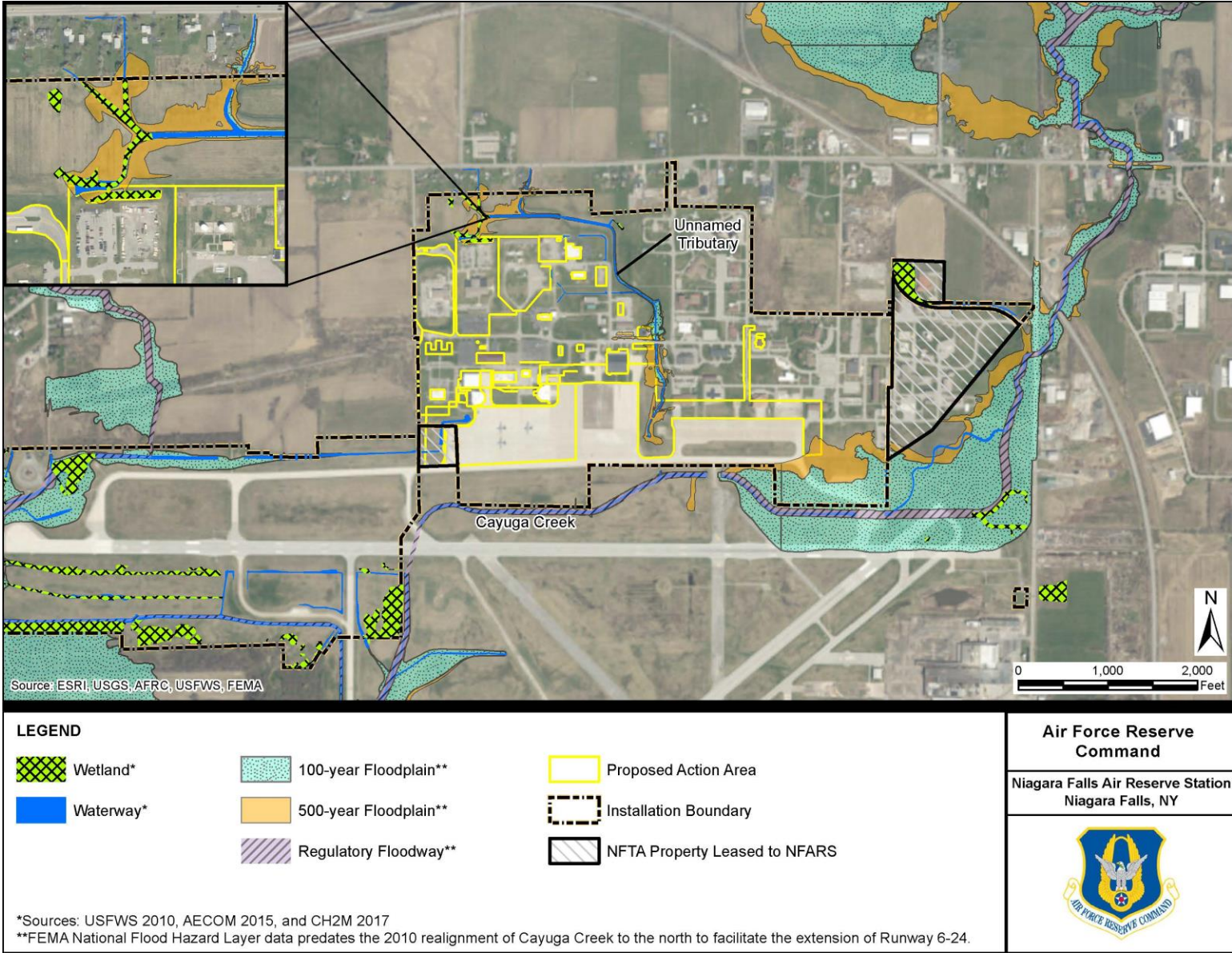
Cayuga Creek and some of its minor tributaries were identified as impaired by contaminated sediments (dioxins) on the Final 2018 New York State Section 303(d) list of impaired waters (NYSDEC, 2020). However, the Draft 2020-2022 Section 303(d) list recommends the removal of Cayuga Creek and its tributaries due to flaws in the original analysis (NYSDEC, 2021). There is no total maximum daily load (TMDL) for Cayuga Creek (NFARS, 2023a).

Wetlands: An installation-wide wetland delineation was conducted in 2017. Wetlands are present at the northwest corner of the installation, north of the area proposed for herbicide application around B-2502 (CH2M, 2017). Additionally, multiple freshwater emergent wetlands and drainageways are located southwest of the airfield and scattered within the runway area (see **Figure 4**). A preliminary jurisdictional determination issued by USACE in 2023 indicates that two areas of the delineated wetlands and waterways around the runways are considered waters of the U.S. (WOUS) in accordance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and are subject to USACE jurisdiction (NFARS, 2023a).

Floodplains: A 100-year and/or 500-year floodplain intersects the Proposed Action Area in three locations: the area north of B-2502, the area surrounding the unnamed tributary of Cayuga Creek that runs north-south just east of B-850, and the southeast corner of the area in which new airfield lights would be installed (see **Figure 5**) (FEMA, 2021).

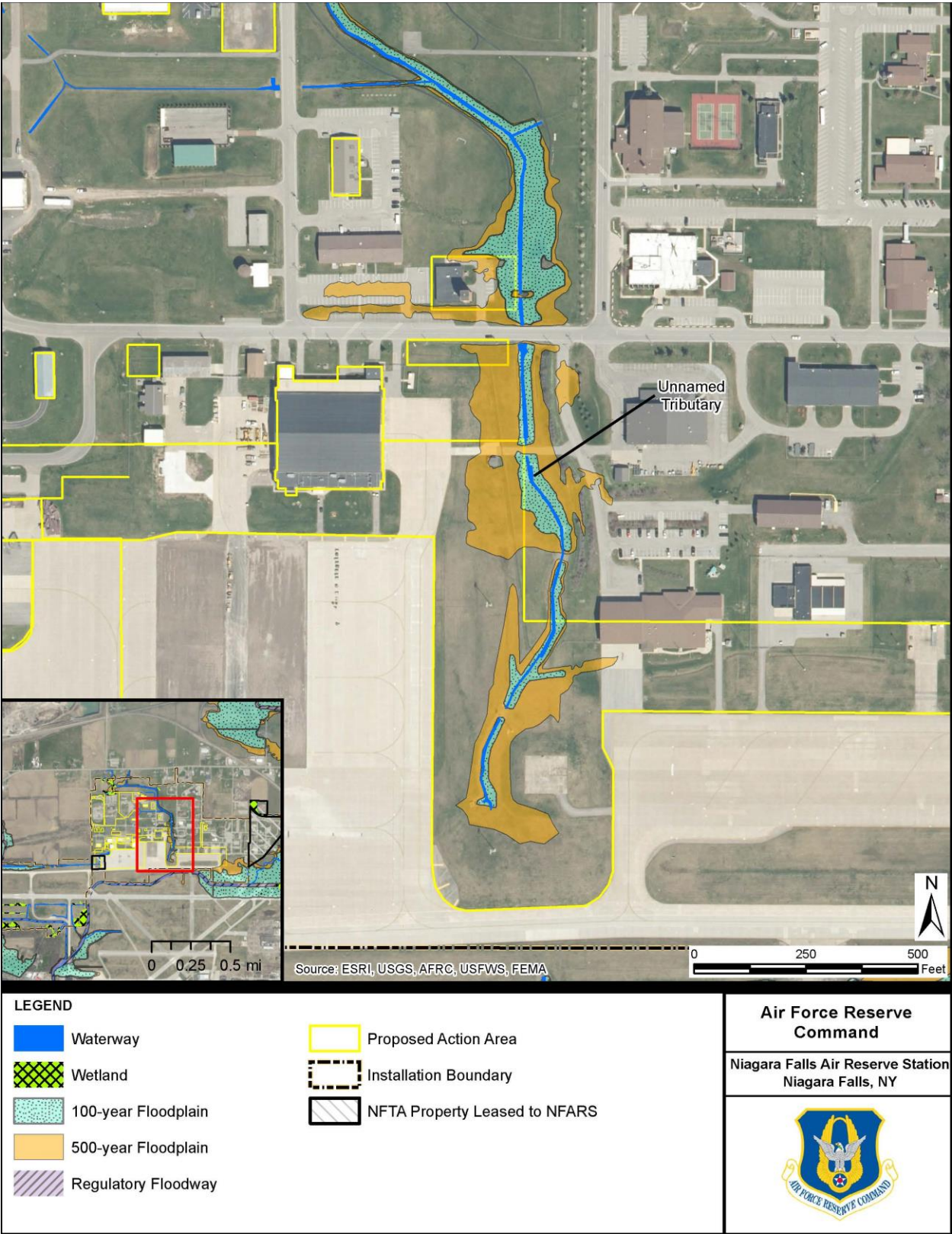
Groundwater: Under the Safe Drinking Water Act, the USEPA defines a sole-source aquifer as an aquifer that provides at least 50 percent of the drinking water for its service area, with no reasonably available alternative sources if the aquifer becomes contaminated. According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), NFARS is located within the Lake Erie-Niagara River Basin and over the Lockport Aquifer, which is not designated as a sole-source aquifer by the USEPA (NFARS, 2023a; USGS, n.d.; USEPA, 2024b). The Lockport Aquifer is also not considered a primary or principal aquifer by NYSDEC under Section 2.1.3 of the Division of Water Technical and Operational Guidance Series (NYSDEC, 1990). The aquifer is primarily recharged by precipitation and surface water infiltration. The gently sloping topography of the area aids in the natural drainage and recharge processes. Depth to groundwater varies based on the season from three to ten feet below ground surface (NFARS, 2023a).

Figure 4: Water Resources at NFARS



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Figure 5: Floodplains Surrounding the Unnamed Tributary



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3.6.2 Environmental Consequences

A water resources impact would be significant if it would 1) substantially reduce water availability or interfere with the water supply to existing users; 2) create or contribute to the overdraft of groundwater basins or exceed decreed annual yields of water supply sources; 3) substantially adversely affect surface or groundwater quality; 4) degrade unique hydrologic characteristics; or 5) violate established water resources laws or regulations.

3.6.2.1 Preferred Alternative

FOCUS Study Projects

Surface Water: Several unnamed tributaries of Cayuga Creek are located within the potential limits of disturbance (LOD) for the airfield ramp lighting project. NFARS would only disturb the area in the immediate vicinity of the chosen locations for the 11 new ramp lights and would intentionally avoid placing new light fixtures within the tributary channels. No other construction projects would occur within, fill, or impede the flow of Cayuga Creek or its tributaries. Additionally, no new stormwater discharges would occur under the Proposed Action. NFARS would comply with all local, state, and federal stormwater management regulations, continue to follow their MSGP, obtain a CGP for each construction project that disturbs one or more acres of soil (this would likely only be required for construction of parking lots under the B-850 project), develop and adhere to site-specific SWPPPs, and implement BMPs during and after construction to prevent construction-related stormwater from entering surface waters. NFARS has developed guidance on *Stormwater Pollution Prevention/Erosion & Sediment Plan for Disturbance Less Than One Acre* for small construction projects, which requires contractors to complete a SWPPP and implement BMPs prior to and during any land disturbing activity (NFARS, 2024b). Erosion and sediment controls would be designed to contain and manage all sediment on-site and would be checked routinely to ensure stormwater is not impacted. The projects would also comply with applicable requirements of Section 438 of the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA), which requires federal development projects disturbing more than 5,000 square feet to incorporate, to the maximum extent technically feasible, low impact development (LID) measures to maintain the pre-development hydrology of the site. Such concepts could include permeable pavement, rain gardens, and creation of stormwater management areas. Overall, the FOCUS study projects would have *no impact* on surface waters in the ROI.

While Cayuga Creek and some of its minor tributaries were considered impaired by contaminated sediments in 2018, they are being removed from NYSDEC's Section 303(d) list of impaired waters. Additionally, there is no TMDL for Cayuga Creek, and standard erosion and sedimentation BMPs would be implemented during construction to protect and maintain water quality. Therefore, the FOCUS study projects would have *no impact* on impaired streams under Section 303(d) of the CWA.

Wetlands: No wetlands are located within the Proposed Action Area. Adherence to standard erosion and sediment controls and the SWPPP would contain any construction-related sediment on-site, and no wetlands downstream of the Proposed Action Area would experience sedimentation from stormwater runoff. No direct fill or dredging of wetlands would occur as part of the FOCUS study projects, and NFARS would not be required to obtain a Section 401 or 404 permit under the CWA. Therefore, the FOCUS study projects would have *no impact* on wetlands in the ROI.

Floodplains: The proposed parking lots under the B-850 project as currently planned would be partially located within the 100- and 500-year floodplains. Paving of the parking lots, including an estimated 40,500-square-foot increase in impervious surfaces, would have the potential to impact the floodplain and associated flood control capacity. NFARS intends to avoid impacting the floodplain and, during the design phase, would explore alternate locations or configurations for the parking lots depending on available space

and the desired size of the parking lots for B-850. Given NFARS' commitment to avoid impacting the floodplain, the B-850 project would have *no impact* on floodplains in the ROI. Should NFARS be unable to design the parking lots to avoid impacts to the floodplain, a supplemental analysis would be prepared prior to project implementation to evaluate potential impacts and provide justification that there are no practicable alternatives to working in the floodplain.

One new light pole that would be installed along the airfield ramp would be near the unnamed tributary east of B-850 and may be required to be placed within the floodplain, depending on technical requirements of the lighting configuration. The LOD for installing the light pole and its foundation is expected to be an approximately 5-foot by 5-foot area surrounding the light pole location, and the LOD for paving an access road to the light pole would be approximately 90 feet long by 16 feet wide. NFARS intends to avoid impacting the floodplain when determining light pole locations; however, the location of light poles is constrained by security and engineering requirements related to ensuring sufficient light coverage and maintaining a setback distance from airfield pavement. NFARS would carefully consider light placement to avoid floodplain impacts to the extent feasible. If placement in a floodplain is determined necessary, any disturbance would be minimal. Therefore, proposed airfield ramp light replacement would have *long-term, negligible adverse impacts* on floodplains in the ROI, due to the potential for impacts to the floodplain from one new light pole installation. In addition, two existing light poles proposed for removal are located within the floodplain. Removing these light poles, including their foundations, would benefit the floodplain by removing built, impervious surfaces and allowing for floodplain restoration in those areas.

The AFRC published an Early Public Notice in conjunction with the NOA for the Draft EA in the *Niagara Gazette* on September 27, 2024 to disclose that replacing airfield ramp lights under the Proposed Action would occur within a floodplain (see **Appendix D**). While the AFRC intends to explore design options to avoid placing a new light pole in the floodplain, there may be no practicable alternative due to USAF security and engineering requirements. Additionally, there is no practicable alternative to working in floodplains for removal of the two existing light pole foundations located in the floodplain. The AFRC has prepared a Draft FONPA in accordance with EO 11988, *Floodplain Management*, for this Proposed Action.

Groundwater: Since the groundwater table is less than 4 feet below ground surface in some areas of NFARS, construction of the FOCUS study projects (i.e., B-850 addition, B-317 addition, ramp lighting installation) would have the potential to intersect groundwater. If groundwater is encountered during construction, it would be managed according to the project-specific SWPPP and with BMPs. The Preferred Alternative would not involve groundwater withdrawals, or intentionally release or inject materials into groundwater resources and aquifers. Potential impacts to groundwater may still occur from the accidental spill or release of petroleum products or other liquids used during construction activities. With implementation of BMPs, such as performing routine inspections of equipment, maintaining spill-containment materials on-site, and adhering to installation-specific plans on managing hazardous materials, the potential for impacts to groundwater would be minimized. Therefore, the FOCUS study projects could have *short-term, negligible adverse impacts* on groundwater.

Expanded Herbicide Application

Surface Water: The 2011 EA on herbicide application concluded that the application of herbicides at NFARS would have a long-term, negligible adverse effect on water quality, given the use of proper application practices. The proposed expansion of herbicide application would adhere to the same stringent protocols outlined in the 2011 EA to ensure a minimal impact on surface water quality, including the use of BMPs to minimize runoff into surface water bodies (NFARS, 2011b). These protocols, included in Section 4.4.2.1.1 and the individual herbicide Materials Safety Data Sheets included in Appendix C of the 2011 EA, are incorporated by reference into this EA. Therefore, the expansion of herbicide application would have *long-term, negligible adverse impacts* on surface waters in the ROI.

Wetlands: NFARS would not apply herbicides in the delineated wetlands within the installation. Herbicides would be used in accordance with the full product label and instructions as registered by the USEPA. BMPs would be strictly followed, including the use of application timing and methods to reduce drift and runoff. Therefore, the proposed herbicide application expansion would have *no impact* on wetlands.

Floodplains: The expansion of herbicide application at NFARS would not include areas located within the 100- and 500-year floodplains. The project would not modify or support development in the floodplain and would not contribute to any measurable loss with regard to flood control capacity. Overall, the Preferred Alternative would have *no impact* on floodplains.

Groundwater: Use of herbicides has the potential to impact groundwater if chemicals leach into the soil during application or if large quantities of herbicide are accidentally spilled. No herbicides would be applied near drinking water sources and no impact on drinking water at the installation would be anticipated. Glyphosate, a common ingredient in herbicides, is strongly absorbed into soil particles, with a low potential to move through the soil and contaminate groundwater. Glyphosate is also readily and completely degraded by microbes in the soil, even when released into water. Other herbicides that do not contain glyphosate have a greater potential to contaminate groundwater; however, the primary concerns regarding groundwater contamination from such herbicides are associated with mixing/loading and disposal, which would not occur on the installation. All herbicides would be handled with caution to prevent contamination of groundwater (NFARS, 2011b). Therefore, this project would result in *long-term, negligible adverse impacts* on groundwater.

3.6.2.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed four construction projects from the FOCUS Study and expanded herbicide application at NFARS would not occur. Related impacts to surface water, wetlands, floodplains, and groundwater associated with the Preferred Alternative would not occur. Therefore, construction of the four FOCUS study projects would have *no impact* to water resources. There would be *no impacts* to water resources in the area proposed for herbicide expansion, as no herbicides are currently applied to those locations on-base.

3.7 EARTH RESOURCES

Earth resources include geology, topography, and soils. Geological resources consist of surface and subsurface materials and their properties. Principal geologic factors influencing the ability to support structural development are seismic properties (i.e., potential for subsurface shifting, faulting, or crustal disturbance), soil stability, and topography. Radon is not discussed in this EA as the Proposed Action does not include any below-grade inhabitable structures.

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (7 USC 4201 et seq.) of 1981 states that federal agencies must “minimize the extent to which federal programs contribute to the unnecessary conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses.” The resources protected by the FPPA include prime and unique farmland, which are categorized by the NRCS based on underlying soil characteristics.

Hydric soils are defined as soils that formed under conditions of saturation, flooding, or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part. Under natural conditions, these soils are able to support growth and reproduction of hydrophytic vegetation. Presence of hydric soils is one of the criteria used to identify and delineate wetlands.

The ROI for earth resources is the Proposed Action Area.

3.7.1 Affected Environment

Geology: Bedrock in the area is comprised of Lockport dolostone from the Middle Silurian age and is approximately 140 feet thick (NFARS, 2023a). Bedrock has been observed as shallow as 5 to 10 feet below ground surface at some locations at NFARS. The USGS 2018 Seismic Hazard Map shows the site is at moderate risk of seismic hazard (i.e., hazard level 3 out of 7) (USGS, 2024).

Topography: The terrain within and in the vicinity of NFARS is predominantly flat, with a slight downward slope to the south (NFARS, 2024b). Elevation within the Proposed Action Area ranges from 584 to 603 feet above sea level.

Soils: The USDA Web Soil Survey identified nine soil map units present within the installation boundary; however, only one soil type was identified within the Proposed Action Area: Odessa silty clay loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes. This soil is designated as prime farmland if drained but is not considered a hydric soil. It falls under the category of “somewhat poorly drained” soils, indicating moderate water-holding capacity and drainage. The landscape associated with Odessa silty clay loam often features lake terrace landforms, reflecting its geological history and deposition patterns (NRCS, 2024). These attributes make soils within the Proposed Action Area suitable for agricultural uses such as crop cultivation or grazing activities; however, this land is not currently used for, nor available for use in, agriculture due to its presence on an active ARS. Some contaminated soils exist on the installation and are discussed in detail in **Section 3.12**.

3.7.2 Environmental Consequences

An earth resources impact would be significant if it would 1) expose people or structures to major geological hazards; 2) substantially increase potential occurrences of erosion or sedimentation; or 3) violate the FPPA.

3.7.2.1 Preferred Alternative

FOCUS Study Projects

Geology: During construction, excavation and soil disturbance/removal would be required. Since bedrock has been observed as shallow as 5 to 10 feet below ground surface at some locations on NFARS, there is potential for bedrock to be encountered during construction. However, no geologic hazards or unique features are apparent within the Proposed Action Area. Further, seismic events are not expected to interfere with construction, and all structures would be constructed according to applicable building codes. Therefore, *negligible impacts* to geology could occur under the FOCUS study projects if bedrock were to be encountered.

Topography: The FOCUS study projects would occur on generally flat land. Only minimal grading would be required. Therefore, the FOCUS study projects would have *no effect* on topography in the ROI.

Soils: Construction activities related to B-850, AGE covered storage, and B-317 under the Preferred Alternative would disturb up to 2.76 acres. Replacement of the airfield ramp lights may disturb approximately 0.3 acres, from installing light pole foundations and paving short access roads, as well as an additional 0.02 acres from trenching a utility conduit to B-310. As discussed in **Section 3.6.2.1**, NFARS would be required to obtain a SPDES CGP for all construction projects disturbing one or more acres of soil, in compliance with NYSDEC regulations, and would adhere to installation guidance for small construction projects that disturb less than one acre. NFARS would develop and implement site-specific SWPPPs that would identify potential sources of pollutants, describe all pollution prevention activities that would be implemented on the site, and establish erosion and sediment controls to contain all sediment on-site. Construction crews would adhere to BMPs outlined in the SWPPP, and the erosion and sediment controls

would be implemented prior to land-disturbing activities and maintained in good working order for the duration of construction to prevent erosion and sedimentation. As part of the site design, the AFRC would also ensure the pre-development hydrology of the Proposed Action Area would be maintained to the maximum extent technically feasible for projects with a footprint exceeding 5,000 square feet. This would be accomplished through site grading, the use of LID features, as discussed in **Section 3.6.2.1**, and through site revegetation to prevent erosion. Implementation of these measures would contain and manage sediment on-site and prevent off-site sedimentation. Therefore, the FOCUS study projects would have *no impact* on soil runoff and erosion.

Approximately 3 acres of soils designated as “prime farmland if drained” would be disturbed by construction of the FOCUS study projects; however, these soils are neither currently used as farmland nor available for farming due to their location on an active ARS and prior disturbance from development and installation activities. No farmland would be taken out of current or future production to facilitate the FOCUS study projects. Therefore, the FOCUS study projects would have *no impact* on prime farmland soils.

Expanded Herbicide Application

Geology and Topography: The application of herbicides would not involve any ground disturbance. Therefore, *no impacts* to geology or topography would occur from the expansion of herbicide application.

Soils: Herbicides would be applied in targeted amounts in accordance with existing application methods and would not involve any soil disturbance, including of soils designated by the NRCS as prime or unique farmland. As discussed in **Section 3.6.2.1**, there is potential for minor soil contamination during herbicide application or if large quantities are accidentally spilled. However, herbicides containing glyphosate have a low potential to move through the soil, and the glyphosate is readily and completely degraded by microbes in the soil. Ground contamination associated with non-glyphosate herbicides is typically associated with mixing/loading and disposal, which would not occur on the installation. Therefore, the expansion of herbicide application would have *long-term, negligible impacts* on soil contamination or prime farmland soils.

3.7.2.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed four construction projects from the FOCUS Study and expanded herbicide application at NFARS would not occur. Therefore, there would be *no impact* to earth resources associated with the No Action Alternative.

3.8 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Biological resources addressed in this EA consist of vegetation, wildlife, and special status species. Special status species relevant to this EA are those protected under the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940, Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, or under applicable state laws or regulations.

The ROI for biological resources includes vegetation present within the boundary of the site and terrestrial wildlife habitats present on-site or within 0.2 mile of the site boundary (i.e., within the noise ROI).

3.8.1 Affected Environment

Vegetation: NFARS is located within the Beech-Maple Forest Section of the Eastern Deciduous Forest Province, which is characterized by temperate deciduous forests. Historically, the area was a mixed hardwood forest, but logging in the 1800s and subsequent agricultural use significantly reduced forest

acreage around the installation. Most of the installation is now urbanized, with original vegetation removed or heavily altered by development, construction, landscaping, and other disturbances. As a result, there is little chance for historic native plant communities to exist at NFARS. The diversity of vegetative species at NFARS is relatively low, and no unique native vegetative species have been observed on the installation (NFARS, 2011b).

Vegetation on the installation currently includes some hardwoods, conifers, turf grasses, and various broad-leaf weeds. The grass varieties include common introduced species, like Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), tall fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*), orchardgrass (*Dactylis glomerata*), and Italian ryegrass (*Lolium multiflorum*). A variety of shrubs and trees, predominantly introduced species, are also present on the installation. Common shrubs include blue pfitzer juniper (*Chinesis glauca hetzel*), pyramidal yew (*Taxus cuspidata capitata*), and spreading yew (*Taxus cuspidata*). Common trees include white pine (*Pinus strobus*), Scotch pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), green ash (*Fraxinus lanceolata*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), and Lombardy poplar (*Populus nigra italica*) (NFARS, 2011b). Vegetation within the Proposed Action Area is limited to turf grasses and other landscaped vegetation. No trees are present.

Wildlife: NFARS provides habitat for the red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), and white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). However, the installation is managed to deter wildlife usage and to reduce the potential for wildlife/bird strikes. The uplands surrounding the NFARS and NFIA runways are mowed regularly to reduce bird/wildlife aircraft strike hazards (BASH) and other wildlife hazards (NFARS, 2023a). Limited wildlife habitat exists elsewhere in the ROI, as it contains maintained agricultural fields and various residential and commercial developments that would not be likely to provide adequate habitat.

Special Status Species: The AFRC initially queried the USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) database to identify federally listed threatened and endangered (T&E) species with the potential to occur within the Proposed Action Area. IPaC identified three listed species: the northern long-eared bat, (NLEB, *Myotis septentrionalis*) which is listed as an endangered species, and the tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*) and salamander mussel (*Simpsonaias ambigua*), both of which are proposed endangered species. In addition, IPaC identified one candidate species, the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). Proposed critical habitat for the salamander mussel, published in the Federal Register on August 22, 2023, is not located within the vicinity of NFARS.

In accordance with USFWS requirements, the NLEB only needs to be considered if the Proposed Action includes wind turbine operations (USFWS, 2024). Since the Proposed Action does not involve wind turbines, this species can be dismissed from further analysis.

The tricolored bat hibernates in caves and mines, primarily roosts in leaf clusters of deciduous hardwood trees during non-hibernating seasons, and forages over water or along forest edges (USFWS, 2021). The Proposed Action Area does not contain any suitable habitat and would not involve the removal of any trees. The salamander mussel is an aquatic species with specific habitat requirements, including perennial flow; river habitats with periodic drying or intermittent flow generally cannot support the species (USFWS, 2023). Cayuga Creek, which flows to the east and south of NFARS property is a perennial stream that may provide habitat for the salamander mussel. The unnamed tributary of Cayuga Creek that flows through NFARS is an intermittent stream with limited aquatic habitat (NFARS, 2011b), and is not expected to contain suitable habitat. While candidate species have no legal protections under the ESA, neither the mowed nor paved areas of NFARS provide suitable habitat for the monarch butterfly, as the species requires fields or open areas with milkweed and flowering plants. Therefore, the Proposed Action Area has no suitable habitat for the tricolored bat or monarch butterfly, and these species have no potential to occur within the Proposed Action Area. Suitable habitat may be present for the salamander mussel in Cayuga Creek.

IPaC identified 11 Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC) as having potential to occur on NFARS (see **Appendix A**). Four of these BCCs have been observed on NFARS: the belted kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon*), bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*), eastern meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*), and wood thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) (NFARS, 2011b). These species have been observed in the past in grassy field areas surrounding and within the runway areas. NFARS implements a BASH program to help minimize the potential for large or flocking birds to congregate on the installation. The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) may also occur; although not a BCC in this area, it warrants attention due to the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Bald eagles prefer forested habitat or tall trees near large bodies of water. While suitable waterbodies are present in the vicinity of the installation, NFARS does not contain any forests or tall trees that would attract bald eagles. Further, the installation actively manages vegetation to discourage birds of prey from occurring in the vicinity as part of the base's BASH program.

New York State's authority over state-listed T&E species is established under Regulation 6 of New York Codes, Rules and Regulations Part 182, which prohibits any activities likely to result in the taking of state-listed T&E species. The NYSDEC maintains a list of endangered, threatened, and special concern fish and wildlife species of New York State. The list currently contains 253 species (see **Appendix A**).

The state-listed short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*) and northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) have known presence in and around the ROI, as identified by the NYSDEC (NYSDEC, 2024). The short-eared owl is listed as endangered and the northern harrier is listed as threatened, and both are protected under state Environmental Conservation Law. A state permit is usually required for any Proposed Action that may result in the taking of a short-eared owl or northern harrier; additionally, a permit would be required for actions that could otherwise harm individual short-eared owls or adversely modify, degrade, or destroy their habitat. While the USAF is not obligated to follow state-level T&E species regulations, this EA considers the potential impacts on these species and will incorporate them into the Proposed Action's final design stage. Additionally, northern harriers are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. No site-specific surveys for short-eared owls and northern harriers were conducted within the Proposed Action Area, but their presence on-base is possible at certain times of the year. The Proposed Action Area contains no designated "critical habitat" for any state or federally listed species, or species of special concern.

The devil crayfish (*Lacunicambarus diogenes*), listed as a 'Species of Greatest Conservation Need' by the NYSDEC, is known to inhabit portions of Cayuga Creek, along with its associated floodplain and wetland areas. In November 2021, a standard observational and habitat search was conducted to survey for the devil crayfish on NFARS. The survey determined this species is present, with a notably higher species presence in the western portion of the installation compared to the eastern portion (NFARS, 2023a). The devil crayfish is not expected to be present within the Proposed Action Area.

3.8.2 Environmental Consequences

A biological resources impact would be significant if it would 1) substantially reduce regionally or locally important habitat; or 2) substantially diminish a regionally or locally important plant or animal species.

AFRC sent scoping letters to USFWS and NYSDEC in order to identify any potential concerns regarding special status species within the ROI. USFWS responded on June 27, 2024, noting that AFRC should obtain a species list from IPaC; AFRC has obtained an official species list and analyzed the potential for the proposed action to affect those species. Copies of this correspondence are included in **Appendix A**.

3.8.2.1 Preferred Alternative

FOCUS Study Projects

Vegetation: The FOCUS study projects would clear minimal vegetation, primarily landscaping, during construction activities, and the existing vegetation within the Proposed Action Area would not substantially change. The installation would remain a mostly developed area, with heavily altered vegetation from development, construction, landscaping, and other disturbances. Therefore, the FOCUS study projects would have *long-term, negligible impacts* to vegetation within the ROI.

Wildlife: Most of the proposed work would occur in areas of actively maintained grasslands/turf, which are mowed on a regular basis. Wildlife habitat is of low value and is already highly fragmented in these areas, and it is not likely that the Proposed Action would negatively affect populations of existing wildlife species that may be using or traveling through the limited available habitat. NFARS would continue with existing management protocols to reduce BASH and other wildlife hazards. Any indirect impacts to wildlife from construction of the FOCUS study projects (e.g., noise) would be temporary in nature, and mobile wildlife would be expected to avoid areas with noise pollution. Therefore, the FOCUS study projects would have *short-term, negligible impacts* on wildlife within the ROI.

Special Status Species: As no suitable habitat exists on NFARS, the FOCUS study projects would have *no impact* on the federally proposed endangered tricolored bat and candidate monarch butterfly. Suitable habitat may be present within Cayuga Creek for the salamander mussel; however, there are no potential impacts to surface waters within the ROI. Erosion and sediment controls would be designed to contain and manage all sediment on-site; therefore, there would be no potential for runoff to affect any salamander mussels that may be present. Therefore, the FOCUS study projects are expected to have *no impact* on the federally proposed salamander mussel. Due to the determination of *no effect*, AFRC does not need to consult with USFWS under Section 7 of the ESA regarding this Proposed Action; however, documentation of this determination is provided in **Appendix A**. Additionally, since the short-eared owl and northern harrier could be present on-site, the FOCUS study projects would have *short-term, negligible impacts* on state-listed protected species, similar to impacts on common terrestrial wildlife.

While some BCCs have been observed on the installation, it is unlikely that these species would be affected. No trees would be removed under the Proposed Action and minimal other vegetation would be cleared, which would not substantially alter potential habitat for BCCs. Additionally, construction would be temporary, and BCCs would be expected to avoid the area during construction activities. Therefore, the FOCUS study projects would likely have *short-term, negligible adverse impacts* on migratory birds.

Expanded Herbicide Application

Vegetation: The 2011 EA concluded that herbicide application at NFARS would directly impact target vegetation (i.e., undesired weeds and grasses) by killing or inhibiting growth. This would result in indirect benefits to non-target vegetation by reducing competition from invasive species. The herbicides, when applied according to NFARS' Integrated Pest Management Plan, would bind tightly to soil particles and decompose through microbial activity, minimizing risks to non-target plants. To minimize potential adverse impacts on vegetation, herbicides would be applied selectively and in minimal quantities, focusing on areas with substantial invasive species problems. BMPs would be strictly followed, including the use of application timing and methods to reduce drift and runoff, and careful application around sensitive vegetation and habitats to protect non-target species. The expansion would incorporate continuous monitoring of vegetation health to assess the effectiveness and impact of herbicide application. Adaptive management strategies would be utilized to adjust application practices as needed, ensuring long-term success and

minimal adverse effects. Therefore, the expansion of herbicide application would have *long-term, beneficial impacts* on vegetation in the ROI.

Wildlife: As previously described, limited wildlife habitat is available on-site, suggesting that wildlife populations are similarly limited. Regardless, expanded herbicide application may affect wildlife that is present. The herbicides proposed for use, and which are currently used, do not bioaccumulate in animals, reducing the risk of indirect effects. The chemicals in these herbicides are rapidly eliminated from the bodies of birds, mammals, and aquatic species, ensuring that any exposure is temporary. Further, the application process would continue to follow the stringent BMPs outlined in the 2011 EA to prevent herbicide drift and runoff into water bodies. Herbicides would not be directly applied to wetlands or water bodies, protecting sensitive habitats and minimizing the risk to terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates. Continuous monitoring and adaptive management strategies would be implemented to assess and mitigate any unforeseen impacts. Therefore, the expansion of herbicide application would have *long-term, negligible adverse impacts* on wildlife in the ROI.

Special Status Species: As no suitable habitat exists on NFARS, the expansion of herbicide application would have *no impact* on federally listed T&E species. Due to the *no effect* determination, no consultation with USFWS is required.

The proposed herbicide expansion would continue to avoid herbicide application in areas where sensitive bird species, including BCCs, have been observed at NFARS (i.e., runway areas), in accordance with the 2011 EA. Although the herbicides proposed for use can be toxic to aquatic invertebrates, including the devil crayfish, herbicide application would not occur near Cayuga Creek nor alongside its unnamed tributary. To minimize potential impacts on state-listed and sensitive bird species, NFARS would avoid herbicide application to the maximum extent practicable in areas identified as ideal for foraging and nesting. The proposed areas for herbicide expansion are largely developed sites, including fence lines, around building foundations, roadways, and the airfield. Therefore, expanded herbicide application would likely have *short-term, less-than-significant adverse impacts* on migratory birds and state-listed species.

3.8.2.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed four construction projects from the FOCUS Study and expanded herbicide application at NFARS would not occur. There would be *no impacts* on wildlife and special status species in the area proposed for herbicide expansion, as no herbicides are currently applied to those locations on-base. Additionally, there would be *long-term, less-than-significant adverse impacts* on vegetation, including invasive species and weeds, as these plants would continue to grow uncontrolled in the area proposed for herbicide expansion.

3.9 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources are historic properties as defined by the NHPA; cultural items as defined by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act; archaeological resources as defined by the Archaeological Resources Protection Act; sacred sites as defined by EO 13007, *Indian Sacred Sites*, to which access is afforded under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act; and collections and associated records as defined by 36 CFR Part 79.

Historic properties covered by the NHPA include any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object with known or potential significance with regard to pre- or post-American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal agencies to consider the effect an undertaking may have on historic properties.

The AFRC is consulting with five federally recognized tribes that are historically affiliated with NFARS and the surrounding area regarding the potential for the Preferred Alternative to affect properties of cultural, historical, or religious significance to the tribes. The AFRC initiated consultation with each tribe via letter on July 3, 2024; a record of this consultation is provided in **Appendix B**.

The ROI for cultural resources is the area of potential effects (APE) as defined by the NHPA. The APE for the undertaking (36 CFR 800.16(d)) consists of the property owned or managed by NFARS. The Proposed Action Area covers approximately 80.1 acres in which a variety of ground-disturbing activities could occur, including construction work and staging and grading areas, although total disturbance would be substantially less than this total area.

3.9.1 Affected Environment

NFARS has completed installation-wide archaeological surveys and historic architectural surveys. Based on these surveys, NFARS has determined, and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (i.e., New York State Historic Preservation Office [SHPO]) has concurred, that no historic properties are present on the installation. In 2023, NFARS and the SHPO developed a Programmatic Agreement (PA) to streamline the Section 106 process. This agreement established a simplified framework for managing cultural resources, focusing on efficient procedures for compliance while ensuring that potential impacts on historic properties are appropriately identified and addressed. By recognizing the absence of significant resources, the PA promotes a streamlined approach to Section 106 consultation, allowing for a more efficient and effective process for both NFARS and the SHPO (NFARS, 2023c).

NFARS also maintains an Installation Tribal Relations Plan (ITRP), dated 2024, that outlines the approach NFARS uses to establish long-term relationships between the installation and Tribal governments. The ITRP recorded prior contact and established a process for future contact with the Tuscarora Nation, Tonawanda Band of Seneca, Seneca Nation of Indians, Oneida Indian Nation, Seneca-Cayuga Nation, and Cayuga Nation of New York. As a result of developing the ITRP, the Oneida Indian Nation indicated that NFARS falls outside of the Nation's aboriginal territory and does not contain any historic properties of significance to the Tribe. As such, the Oneida Indian Nation noted that past or future work on NFARS is unlikely to have an effect on historic properties significant to the Tribe and would not necessitate consultation. Thus, NFARS has solely engaged with the other five Tribal Nations regarding the Proposed Action (NFARS, 2024a).

3.9.2 Environmental Consequences

A cultural resources impact would be significant if it would constitute an unresolved adverse effect as defined in Section 106 of the NHPA (36 CFR 800.5): alteration, directly or indirectly, of any of the characteristics of a historic property that qualify it for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in a manner that would diminish the integrity of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association.

3.9.2.1 Preferred Alternative

FOCUS Study Projects

The four proposed construction projects are all exempt from standard Section 106 review according to the PA between NFARS and the New York SHPO:

1. B-850 Renovation and Addition: This project consists of renovation and addition activities covered under Stipulation III.A.1 of the PA.

2. B-317 Renovation and Addition: This project consists of renovation, addition, and demolition activities covered under Stipulations III.A.1 and III.A.3 of the PA.
3. Construct AGE Covered Storage: This is a small new construction activity that would occur on previously disturbed ground (i.e., the site of a former oil-water separator) and is covered under Stipulation III.A.1 of the PA.
4. Replace Airfield Ramp Lights: This is an infrastructure replacement project covered under Stipulation III.A.2 of the PA.

These undertakings qualify for streamlined Section 106 review, except in the event of an inadvertent discovery of cultural resources that have not previously been evaluated for listing in the NRHP. In accordance with the stipulations of the PA, NFARS has determined that the Preferred Alternative would have *no adverse effect* on historic properties. Since the Preferred Alternative is completely covered under the PA, no consultation with the New York SHPO is required, unless inadvertent discoveries occur. Should any unanticipated cultural resources be encountered during construction, or other activities associated with the FOCUS study projects, NFARS would follow the Unanticipated Discovery Plan included in Attachment III of the PA, including notifying the New York SHPO and federally recognized tribes.

Expanded Herbicide Application

Herbicide application would not result in any ground disturbance which could impact previously undiscovered archaeological sites, nor would it affect the character of any above-ground historic properties. Therefore, the expansion of herbicide application would have *no impact* on historic properties.

3.9.2.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed four construction projects from the FOCUS Study and expanded herbicide application at NFARS would not occur. Therefore, there would be *no impact* on cultural resources associated with the No Action Alternative.

3.10 UTILITIES

Utilities include water storage facilities, treatment plants, and delivery systems; supplemental power generation, transmission, and distribution facilities, including, but not limited to, wind turbines, generators, substations, and power lines; natural gas transmission and distribution facilities; sewage collection systems and treatment plants; and communication systems.

The ROI for utilities includes all areas and end users within NFARS that may be impacted from temporary utility disruptions or an increased demand on utilities. No off-base utility changes are anticipated.

3.10.1 Affected Environment

The infrastructure at NFARS includes utility systems (electrical, potable water, wastewater, storm drainage, solid waste collection, gas, heating and cooling, and liquid fuels) and a communications system. National Grid currently owns and maintains all off-installation equipment serving NFARS, while all electrical equipment and systems on the installation are owned and maintained by NFARS. The Niagara County Water District supplies potable drinking water to NFARS, the Town of Niagara, and the Town of Wheatfield through county supply lines (Town of Niagara, 2024). Potable water service lines and fire water sprinkler lines connect most of the installation buildings to the water main.

Other utilities that serve NFARS include sanitary sewer, stormwater, and natural gas. Wastewater is transported off base to the Niagara County Sewer District's wastewater treatment plant. Stormwater drains

are located adjacent to all primary roadways that are used on-base. The National Fuel company supplies natural gas to NFARS as well as the nearby Towns of Niagara and Wheatfield (State of New York, 2023). Natural gas is the primary heating source for facilities on-base (NFARS, 2011a).

3.10.2 Environmental Consequences

A utilities impact would be significant if it would result in prolonged or permanent service disruptions to other utility end users, substantially increase utility demand so as to burden utility providers, or reduce local utility supply to the surrounding communities.

3.10.2.1 Preferred Alternative

FOCUS Study Projects

Construction of the Preferred Alternative would involve the relocation or abandonment of utility systems in the vicinity of B-317 and B-206. Specifically, several utilities located along the north side of B-317 would be rerouted outside the LOD to accommodate the addition. Following the demolition of B-206, utilities would be capped in place. Existing electric, telecommunication, and fire protection utilities at B-317 would also be upgraded to support the increased demand anticipated from the consolidation of the 914 CS and the necessary HVAC updates. Along the airfield ramp, existing lighting circuits would be rewired in new ducts to support installation of the 11 new ramp lights, and shallow conduits would be dug along approximately 1,230 feet of roadway rights-of-way and 285 feet of open grassy space to connect light controls to B-310 and B-821. New utility connections would also be installed in B-850 following the interior renovations. In particular, water lines to B-850 would be upgraded to support the replacement of the AFFF system with a water-based fire suppression system. Following the construction of the AGE covered storage facility, new utility connections would be installed, and adjacent pavement would be repaired.

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would not meaningfully increase overall utility usage at NFARS. Increased utility demand at B-317 would be offset by the demolition of and disuse of utilities at B-206. The existing water main is anticipated to have adequate capacity to support renovations, including the addition at B-317 and the installation of a water-based fire suppression system at B-850. Temporary, localized service disruptions to electric, natural gas, and sanitary sewer lines would occur during construction of all four FOCUS study projects; however, these disruptions would be minimized by ensuring that existing utilities remain operational until the new utilities are ready to be connected. End users would be given advance notice of anticipated service disruptions. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative would have *short-term, negligible impacts* on utilities during construction and renovations associated with B-850, B-317, and AGE covered storage; the demolition of B-206; and the installation of new airfield ramp lighting. No service disruptions would occur for off-base end users.

Once construction is complete, training activities and the number of personnel stationed at NFARS would remain the same as under current conditions. As a result, there would be a negligible change in overall demand for communications, water, natural gas, or sanitary sewer utilities on-base. Some elements may slightly increase utility usage, such as the proposed upgraded HVAC in B-317, while other elements may slightly reduce utility usage, such as the replacement of the existing ramp lights with more energy efficient lights. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative would have *long-term, negligible impacts* on utility usage or demand once the FOCUS study projects are operational.

Expanded Herbicide Application

The expansion of herbicide application would not change utility demand or usage at NFARS or require the use of new or existing utilities. As a result, no utilities are anticipated to be affected by the Proposed Action. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative would have *no impact* on utilities.

3.10.2.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed four construction projects from the FOCUS Study and expanded herbicide application at NFARS would not occur. No demolition, renovation, or construction activities would be performed. The utilities surrounding the Project Site would remain under current conditions and there would be *no impacts* to utilities.

3.11 SOCIOECONOMICS & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Socioeconomics

Socioeconomics is defined as the basic attributes and resources associated with the human environment, particularly characteristics of population and economic activity. Regional birth and death rates and immigration and emigration affect population levels. Economic activity typically encompasses employment, personal income, and industrial or commercial growth. Changes in these fundamental socioeconomic indicators typically result in changes to additional socioeconomic indicators, such as housing availability and the provision of public services. Socioeconomic data at local, county, regional, and state levels permit characterization of baseline conditions in the context of regional and state trends.

Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental pollution, and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment. This means equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits. Environmental justice considerations are guided by EO 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, which directs federal agencies to identify and address the environmental effects of their actions on minority and low-income populations. Additional guidance published by the CEQ and USEPA Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (now the White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council or IAC) provides practical definitions of environmental justice communities and establishes a framework on how to appropriately identify such communities and assess potential impacts.

Minority populations are those persons who identify themselves as Black, Hispanic, Asian American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander, or Other. According to the CEQ's guidance, minority populations exist if "(a) the minority population of the affected area exceeds 50 percent or (b) the minority population percentage of the affected area is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographic analysis" (CEQ, 1997b). Guidance from the IAC recommends identifying minority populations using the "Fifty Percent and Meaningfully Greater" analysis. The "Fifty Percent" analysis considers whether the percentage of minorities residing in the affected environment (i.e., the ROI) exceeds 50 percent. Following this determination, the "Meaningfully Greater" analysis compares the minority population of the ROI to a reference community to determine if the percent of minorities in the ROI is meaningfully greater than that within the reference community (EJ IWG, 2016).

Poverty status is used to define low-income. The CEQ recommends the identification of low-income populations where there is a substantial discrepancy between a community and the surrounding communities by using annual statistical poverty thresholds, and the IAC suggests assessing “the proportion of individuals below the poverty level, households below the poverty level, and families with children below the poverty level” (USEPA, 2024c; EJ IWG, 2016). Poverty status is determined based on the U.S. Census Bureau’s annual poverty measure, which was \$30,000 for a family of four in 2023 (USEPA, 2023; HHS, 2023).

EO 14096, *Revitalizing Our Nation’s Commitment to Environmental Justice for All*, was issued in April 2023. This EO affirms that environmental justice is central to the implementation of civil rights and environmental laws. The EO provides a federal definition of environmental justice as “the just treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of income, race, color, national origin, Tribal affiliation, or disability, in agency decision-making and other federal activities that affect human health and the environment.” The EO directs agencies to consider measures to address and prevent disproportionate and adverse environmental and health impacts on communities with environmental justice concerns in comparison to the general population, and whether these effects occur in communities also affected by the cumulative impacts of pollution and other burdens like climate change.

EO 13045, *Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks*, states that agencies should ensure that potential health and safety risks to children are identified and addressed, since children may be more susceptible to certain risks and exposures than adults.

3.11.1 Affected Environment

The ROI for socioeconomics includes the two census tracts that contain NFARS, tract 226.02 and tract 227.15, as well as four other census tracts adjacent to NFARS: tracts 227.14, 225, 226.01, and 244.06. The ROI is limited to the geographic areas where work under the Proposed Action would occur and the surrounding areas where socioeconomic impacts may occur. No changes in the number of personnel at NFARS would occur that would have the potential to affect socioeconomic conditions in a larger geographic area (i.e., in areas where personnel live).

The ROI for environmental justice considerations consists of the two block groups that contain NFARS, census tract 226.02, block group 3; and census tract 227.15, block group 2. The environmental justice ROI also includes eight other block groups that are both adjacent to the NFARS block groups and within a 1-mile radius from the specific sites where work would occur. These eight block groups include census tract 227.15, block group 1; census tract 227.14, block group 2; census tract 225, block group 1; census tract 226.02, block groups 1 and 2; census tract 226.01, block group 1; and census tract 244.06, block groups 2 and 3 (see **Figure 6**). These block groups are the area where impacts from the Proposed Action would be most directly felt and where the potential for disproportionate impacts should be evaluated.

Socioeconomics

Demographic data, including population and economic data, are shown in **Table 10**, which provides an overview of the socioeconomic environment in the ROI. In addition to data for the ROI, **Table 10** includes data for the Towns of Niagara and Wheatfield and Niagara County, New York, for comparative purposes and to demonstrate larger trends in the region. Although all census tracts have strong economic characteristics, with generally high median household income and low unemployment, there is a fair amount of variability. Census tract 226.02, which partially contains NFARS, has both the lowest median household income and unemployment rate. Census tract 227.14 has the highest median household income. The population of children under 18 years of age is relatively consistent, with the highest percent in census tract

1724 227.15, which partially contains NFARS. Total population across the region has generally decreased at a
1725 varying rate since 2010, with the largest decline occurring in census tract 225.

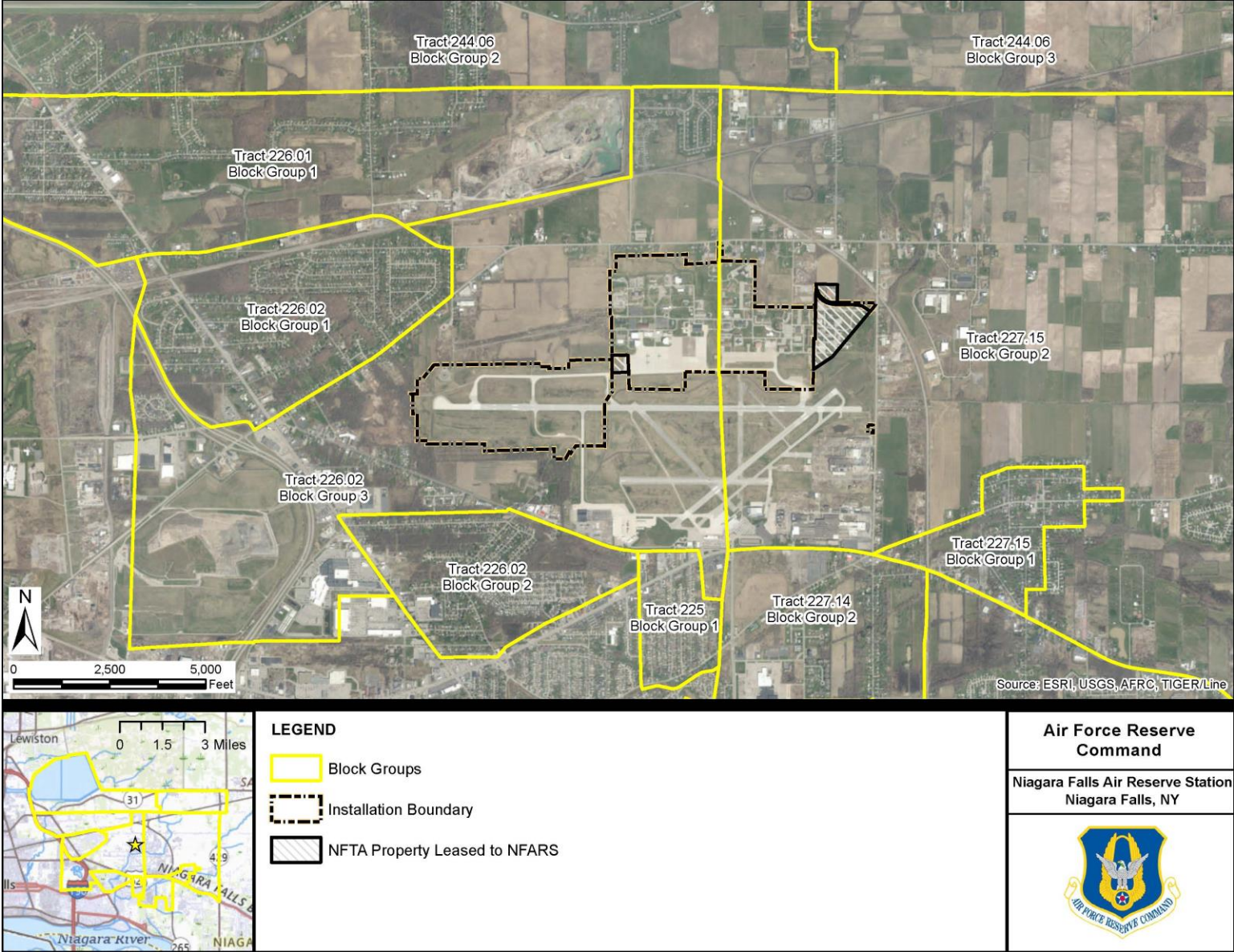
1726 **Table 10: 2022 Socioeconomic Characteristics in the ROI**

Location	Total Population	Population Change, 2010-2022	Median Household Income	Unemployment Rate	Population Under 18 Years
Niagara County, NY	212,230	-1.8%	\$65,882	5.8%	19.8%
Town of Niagara	7,901	-6.4%	\$57,696	3.5%	14.8%
Town of Wheatfield	18,555	7.2%	\$94,290	4.7%	21.8%
Census Tract 225	2,527	-13.1%	\$55,871	7.8%	16.2%
Census Tract 226.01	2,378	-8.5%	\$64,635	5.4%	18.3%
Census Tract 226.02	5,523	-5.5%	\$55,159	2.7%	13.3%
Census Tract 227.14	4,296	N/A ¹	\$82,500	5.7%	18.5%
Census Tract 227.15	2,292	N/A ¹	\$71,978	3.1%	24.5%
Census Tract 244.06	3,535	-5.3%	\$71,761	3.1%	13.6%

1727 1. Census tract mapping has changed between 2010 and 2022 and there is no comparable data from 2010 for the current tracts
1728 227.14 and 227.15.
1729 Sources: (US Census Bureau, 2010; 2022d; 2022e)

1730 Public services include fire protection, emergency medical services, law enforcement, schools, libraries,
1731 and parks. NFARS is located in a suburban area with the Town of Niagara to the west and the Town of
1732 Wheatfield to the east. Therefore, the installation would use and rely on the services offered by these towns
1733 and potentially those of the City of Niagara Falls. No public services are located within 1 mile of NFARS,
1734 although the installation does maintain its own fire department on-site. NFARS is located within 2 miles of
1735 the nearest fire station, police station, and hospital.

Figure 6. Environmental Justice ROI



Environmental Justice

NFARS is collocated at the NFIA, and is located within the Towns of Niagara and Wheatfield. The installation is surrounded by suburban areas to the south and west and by agricultural fields to the east. Some scattered neighborhoods are present to the north. Additionally, the Tuscarora Nation Reservation is located approximately 2 miles north of NFARS. As described in **Section 1.4**, NFARS has engaged in intergovernmental consultation with the Tuscarora Nation and other federally recognized tribes to ensure their ability to participate and provide comment on the EA.

Minority population and income characteristics of the environmental justice ROI are presented in **Table 11**, along with data for the Towns of Niagara and Wheatfield and Niagara County, for comparative purposes.

Table 11: 2022 Minority Population and Income Characteristics of the Environmental Justice ROI

Location	Total Population	Non-Hispanic White Alone (%)	Minority Population (%)	Low-Income Population (%)
Niagara County, NY	212,230	83.6	16.4	13.0
Town of Niagara	7,901	85.0	15.0	0.0
Town of Wheatfield	18,555	95.4	4.6	0.0
Census Tract 225, Block Group 1	1,165	91.1	8.9	8.8
Census Tract 226.01, Block Group 1	1,594	93.2	6.8	0.0
Census Tract 226.02, Block Group 1	1,942	91.4	8.6	0.0
Census Tract 226.02, Block Group 2	1,832	84.4	15.6	0.0
Census Tract 226.02, Block Group 3	1,749	67.6	32.4	0.0
Census Tract 227.14, Block Group 2	853	87.3	12.7	0.0
Census Tract 227.15, Block Group 1	592	95.3	4.7	0.0
Census Tract 227.15, Block Group 2	1,700	96.6	3.4	0.0
Census Tract 244.06, Block Group 2	1,200	93.5	6.5	0.0
Census Tract 244.06, Block Group 3	741	87.6	12.4	0.0

Source: (US Census Bureau, 2022a; 2022b; 2022c)

In accordance with the CEQ and IAC environmental justice guidance, only census tract 226.02, block group 3, is considered to contain a minority population. While this block group does not contain a minority population that exceeds 50 percent, the minority population may be considered meaningfully greater than that of the reference communities (i.e. the Towns of Niagara and Wheatfield and Niagara County). The minority population in this block group is nearly double the minority population of Niagara County, which contains the next largest minority population. Therefore, census tract 226.02, block group 3, is considered to contain a community with environmental justice concerns, with respect to minority populations.

None of the block groups in the ROI contain a low-income population that is substantially higher than surrounding geographies. The only block group that contains any low-income population is census tract 225, block group 1, but this population is lower on a percentage basis than those of the reference communities. Therefore, no communities with environmental justice concerns, with respect to low-income populations, are present surrounding the Proposed Action Area.

The CEQ has also developed a Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) to identify census tracts that are considered overburdened and underserved based on a combination of burden and socioeconomic thresholds. The CEJST uses census tracts from 2010 and so the numbering of some tracts has changed; according to CEJST data, NFARS is located within census tracts 226.02 and 227.11 (now 227.15). Neither of the census tracts containing NFARS are considered disadvantaged, and none of the other four census tracts within the ROI are considered disadvantaged (CEQ, 2023a).

3.11.2 Environmental Consequences

A socioeconomic impact would be significant if it would 1) substantially alter the location and distribution of the local population, or 2) change current economic conditions in the ROI in a way that would be notable and harmful for surrounding communities and residents. An environmental justice impact would be significant if it would result in disproportionate and adverse human health and environmental impacts, or exposures to environmental risks, on minority or low-income populations.

3.11.2.1 Preferred Alternative

FOCUS Study Projects

Socioeconomics

Implementation of the four FOCUS study projects would require construction and paving work, resulting in negligible, temporary economic benefits for local contractors who would be hired to perform this work. In the long-term, employment opportunities are not anticipated to change. Public community and emergency services would not be impacted during construction; during operation, these services would not be diminished nor would there be an effect on housing availability since the number of personnel at NFARS would not change. Therefore, implementation of the FOCUS study projects under the Preferred Alternative would result in *short-term, beneficial impacts* on local socioeconomic conditions during construction, and *no impact* in the long-term, during operation.

Environmental Justice

While much of census tract 226.02, block group 3 is occupied by NFARS facilities and NFIA runways, minority populations in neighborhoods along Lockport Road to the north and Porter Road to the southwest could be affected by implementation of the FOCUS study projects. Construction and operation of the FOCUS study projects would result in pollutant emissions, including fugitive dust, that could carry to nearby residences, particularly those along Lockport Road. Any emissions would be negligible, and well below *de minimis* thresholds. Although construction emissions would be higher than operational emissions, they would be temporary and would not constitute a new source of permanent emissions that could degrade air quality and contribute to long-term respiratory illness in nearby populations. The Preferred Alternative would *not result in disproportionate adverse impacts to air quality* in nearby communities with environmental justice concerns.

Construction noise, utility service interruptions, and the presence of hazardous and toxic materials and waste (HTMW) also have the potential to affect people living nearby. Any construction noise generated

during the Proposed Action would be expected to attenuate to ambient levels at a distance of 1,000 feet. No residences are located within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Action Area; therefore, none are anticipated to be impacted by loud or nuisance noise. Utility work proposed for NFARS would be limited to the installation and would not result in service interruptions to any nearby residences. Lastly, any HTMW used on-site would be managed in accordance with all appropriate regulations and installation plans, and no HTMW from existing contamination sites would have the potential to migrate off-site as a result of the FOCUS study projects. The Proposed Action would *not result in disproportionate adverse impacts to noise, utilities, or HTMW* in nearby communities with environmental justice concerns.

Expanded Herbicide Application

Socioeconomics

Expanded herbicide application throughout NFARS would be performed exclusively by tenant units at the installation, including the 107 ATKW, U.S. Army, and 914 ARW. No outside labor would be used and no additional personnel would be required. This component of the Preferred Alternative would have *no impact* on socioeconomic conditions.

Environmental Justice

Expanded herbicide application is not expected to impact air quality, noise, or utilities, and therefore would *not result in disproportionate adverse impacts* from these resources in nearby communities with environmental justice concerns.

Only herbicides approved by and registered with the USEPA would be used, in accordance with all manufacturer instructions for safe application. NFARS would follow policies and procedures established in installation plans for managing HTMW and cleaning up any spills, to ensure that any herbicides that may be inadvertently released do not migrate or result in environmental contamination. Therefore, the proposed expanded herbicide application would *not result in disproportionate adverse impacts to HTMW* in nearby communities with environmental justice concerns.

3.11.2.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed four construction projects from the FOCUS Study projects expanded herbicide application at NFARS would not occur. There would be *no impact* to existing socioeconomic conditions. The No Action Alternative would *not result in disproportionate adverse impacts* to communities with environmental justice concerns.

3.12 HAZARDOUS AND TOXIC MATERIALS AND WASTE

HTMW are generally defined as materials or substances that pose a risk (through either physical or chemical reactions) to human health or the environment. Hazardous materials are regulated through a number of federal laws and regulations, most commonly the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). The most comprehensive list of hazardous substances is contained in 40 CFR Part 302, which also identifies quantities of hazardous substances that, when released to the environment, require notification to the federal government. Hazardous wastes, defined in 40 CFR 261.3, are discarded materials (solids or liquids) not otherwise excluded by 40 CFR 261.4 that exhibit a hazardous characteristic (i.e., ignitable, corrosive, reactive, or toxic), or are specifically identified within 40 CFR Part 261. Petroleum products are specifically exempted from 40 CFR Part 302, but some are also generally considered hazardous substances due to their physical characteristics (especially fuel products), and their ability to impair natural resources.

In 1970, the USAF adopted AFFF as a firefighting agent for combating petroleum fires. This foam contains perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), perfluorobutane sulfonate (PFBS), and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) which belong to a group of synthetic fluorinated chemicals commonly known as per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS). These substances are utilized in various industrial and consumer products, including defense-related applications. The use of AFFF across USAF installations has resulted in environmental releases during fire training, equipment maintenance, storage, and use. To address environmental concerns, manufacturers have reformulated AFFF to exclude PFAS, and the USAF has initiated a comprehensive program to phase out PFAS-based AFFF from their inventory, opting for formulations that may exhibit reduced persistence and bioaccumulation. The USEPA classified PFOS and PFOA as hazardous substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA; i.e., Superfund) in 2024. As part of this classification, USEPA has developed maximum contaminant levels for PFOS and PFOA, and various regional screening levels for other PFAS compounds. The state of New York has also issued maximum contaminant levels for PFOS and PFOA (NFARS, 2023a).

The USAF established the Installation Restoration Program (IRP) as a comprehensive program to address contamination from past activities and restore USAF lands to useable conditions. Under the IRP, the USAF identifies, investigates, and cleans up hazardous substances, pollutants, and contaminants that pose environmental health and safety risks at active military installations and formerly used defense sites. NFARS implements an installation-specific IRP that tracks and monitors sites on-base that may require restoration and remediation.

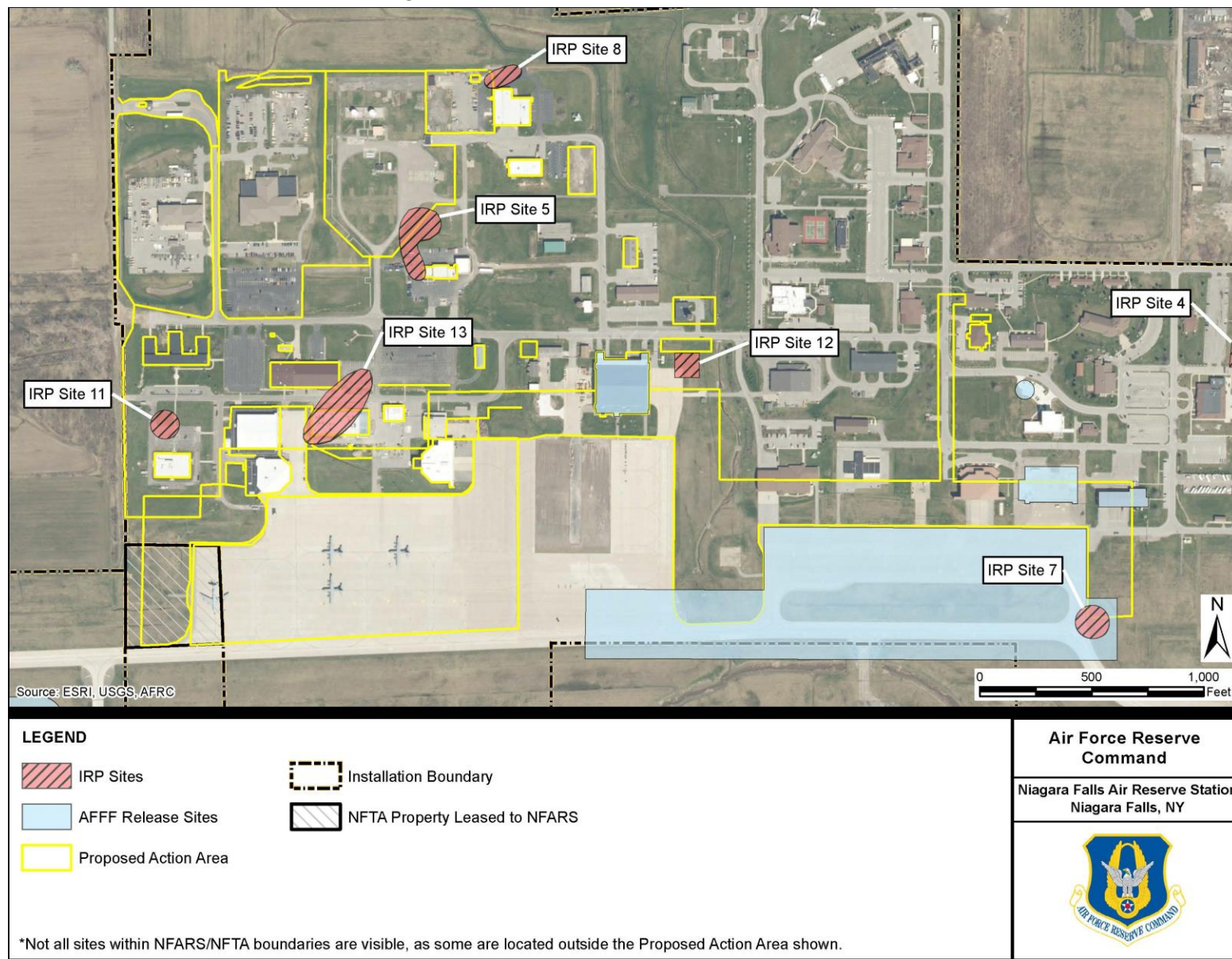
The ROI for HTMW is the Proposed Action Area.

3.12.1 Affected Environment

Hazardous materials are used at NFARS for cleaning, maintenance, and repair of aircraft, vehicles, and facilities. Common hazardous materials include motor oil, gasoline, jet fuels, coolants, hydraulic fluids, paints, paint thinners, strippers, and degreasing agents. Hazardous materials at NFARS are used, handled, stored, and managed in accordance with Air Force Manual (AFMAN) 32-7002, *Environmental Compliance and Pollution Prevention, Hazardous Material Management*, Chapters 3 and 5. NFARS maintains a Hazardous Materials Management Plan, that establishes policy and procedures to be used to reduce and prevent pollution by controlling the acquisition, use, handling, and disposition of installation hazardous materials (NFARS, 2023b). NFARS also maintains a Hazardous Waste Management Plan (HWMP), which contains procedures for managing hazardous wastes in accordance with applicable DoD, federal, and state regulations and requirements. Lastly, NFARS maintains a Spill Prevention and Countermeasure (SPCC), which is implemented in conjunction with the HWMP to address incident response and emergency responsibilities resulting from spills or discharges of HTMW (USAF, 2021).

Since 2016, NFARS has operated under a RCRA consent order with the NYSDEC to manage 13 IRP sites that have been identified at NFARS, most of which involve soil or groundwater contamination. To date, these sites have not achieved unrestricted or unlimited use cleanup levels as determined by NYSDEC, and many are undergoing long-term monitoring or have corrective measures being implemented (USACE, 2018). The consent order requires NFARS to adhere to an NYSDEC-approved, site-specific Site Management Plan (SMP), which includes engineering controls, institutional controls, and a groundwater monitoring plan to ensure that soil and groundwater contamination does not spread (NFARS, 2023a). There are four IRP sites with known contamination (Sites 5, 7, 8, and 13) within the Proposed Action Area (see **Figure 7**).

Figure 7: IRP and AFFF Release Sites at NFARS



NFARS has previously used AFFF in fire protection systems throughout the installation, including in B-850; a site investigation in 2017 identified PFAS releases on NFARS resulting from use of AFFF. AFFF sites at NFARS are managed under CERCLA, and although none of the sites have been designated as a Superfund site, response actions are conducted in accordance with EO 12580, *Superfund Implementation* (NFARS, 2023a). Four locations of PFAS releases (i.e., AFFF releases) overlap with the Proposed Action Area (see Figure 7).

3.12.2 Environmental Consequences

An HTMW impact would be significant if it would 1) interrupt, delay, or impede ongoing cleanup efforts; or 2) create new or substantial human or environmental health risks (e.g., soil or groundwater contamination).

3.12.2.1 Preferred Alternative

FOCUS Study Projects

Small amounts of hazardous materials (e.g., oils, solvents, petroleum products, etc.) may be used, and hazardous wastes may be generated during construction and renovation activities. However, these would be managed and disposed of in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations and requirements. NFARS would adhere to their HWMP and SPCC in the event of an accidental spill. Therefore, the FOCUS study projects would result in *short-term, less-than-significant adverse impacts* from the use of hazardous materials and the generation of hazardous wastes and solid wastes during construction.

IRP Sites 7 and 13 are the only sites located within the vicinity of the FOCUS study projects and which have the potential to be impacted by construction and demolition activities. Both of these sites have very slight overlap with the area in which the new airfield lights would be constructed. During the design phase, NFARS would avoid placing the new lights in the IRP sites to the greatest extent practicable. Further, as needed, the boundaries of each IRP site would be marked prior to construction to ensure they are not inadvertently disturbed. If hazardous materials or contaminated groundwater or soils are encountered, NFARS would handle, store, transport, and dispose of these substances in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations; DAFIs; and NFARS management procedures (USACE, 2018). Therefore, the FOCUS study projects would result in *short-term, less-than-significant adverse impacts* from hazardous wastes if contaminated groundwater or soils near IRP sites are encountered during construction activities.

The boundaries of some AFFF release sites overlap with the potential locations for the airfield ramp lights. Prior to any ground disturbance associated with this project, NFARS would investigate the known AFFF sites to delineate the extent of contamination, and would coordinate with NYSDEC on mitigation recommendations if the full extent cannot be determined. Any disturbed materials and project wastes would be sampled for PFAS and handled and disposed of in accordance with federal and state regulations to limit the spread of these substances. Replacement of the airfield ramp lights would result in *short-term, negligible adverse impacts* from PFAS contamination.

Herbicide Application

The herbicides proposed for use are not classified as hazardous substances under RCRA; however, the herbicides used would be treated as hazardous materials in the event of a spill. NFARS would follow policies and procedures outlined in their Hazardous Materials Management Plan, HWMP, and SPCC when handling herbicides. Clean-up procedures from these plans would be followed in the event of an accidental spill, and all vehicles used in applying or transporting pesticides or herbicides would continue to be required to carry

1925 spill kits (NFARS, 2011b). Therefore, *short-term, negligible adverse impacts* would be expected from the
1926 proposed expansion of herbicide application.

1927 IRP Site 7 is not located in the vicinity of the areas proposed for expanded herbicide application and
1928 therefore has no potential to be impacted by this component of the Proposed Action. IRP Sites 5, 8, and 13
1929 are all located in areas proposed for expanded herbicide application; however, application occurring in and
1930 around these sites is not anticipated to impact the sites or contribute to existing contamination. In the event
1931 of an accidental herbicide release in an IRP site, NFARS would adhere to their existing SPCC and
1932 applicable SMPs, and would comply with all federal, state, and local regulations to address and minimize
1933 impacts to the IRP sites. Therefore, the proposed expanded herbicide application may have *short-term,*
1934 *less-than-significant adverse impacts* on ongoing restoration activities.

1935 NFARS would continue to use only herbicides approved by the USEPA, none of which contain known
1936 PFAS. NFARS would also continue to monitor the USEPA's approved inert ingredient list for pesticide
1937 products to ensure compliance with federal regulations and prevention of PFAS contamination. Therefore,
1938 the proposed expansion of herbicide application at NFARS would have *no impact* on PFAS contamination
1939 within the ROI.

1940 **3.12.2.2 No Action Alternative**

1941 Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed four construction projects from the FOCUS Study and the
1942 expanded herbicide application at NFARS would not occur. No hazardous wastes or toxic materials
1943 associated with the Preferred Alternative would be potentially generated or released. Therefore, there would
1944 be *no impact* on HTMW associated with the No Action Alternative.

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4.0 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The AFRC identified and reviewed past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions that have or are planned to occur within the Preferred Alternative's ROI, including NFARS and the surrounding off-base areas. Past and present projects are generally addressed within the environmental baseline of the ROI for each resource area; thus, this analysis focuses on reasonably foreseeable future actions in the ROI. The AFRC analyzed the potential for the Preferred Alternative to have cumulative effects with these other reasonably foreseeable actions.

Baseline conditions in the ROI generally include development trends, with a focus on optimizing land use and facility efficiency across the installation. Most reasonably foreseeable actions occurring in and near the ROI would be undertaken by either NFARS or NFIA. These projects are listed in **Table 12**.

Table 12: Reasonably Foreseeable Actions near the Proposed Action Area

Project Name	Action Agency	Description
1. FOCUS Study Construction Projects	NFARS	NFARS' FOCUS study identifies many recommended facilities projects, maintenance, and repairs (in addition to what is described in this EA) that NFARS may choose to pursue over the next several years in order to update installation infrastructure. Since many of these projects are proposed upgrades, not all suggested projects may be implemented.
2. Runway Extension	NFARS	NFARS plans to extend the existing Runway 10L/28R and construct a new Taxiway A4 to increase mission capabilities of the KC-135R aircraft based at the installation.
3. Combined Operations Facility	NFARS	NFARS plans to build a 54,000 SF administrative building in the former site of hanger 706.
4. B-321 Flight Simulator Facility	NFARS	NFARS is expected to renovate B-321 and build a 2,500 SF addition to B-321 to optimize this building for flight simulations.
5. Repair Fire Training Facility	NFARS	The Aircraft Fire Training Facility and supporting infrastructure will be repaired to enable a fully functional facility capable of meeting mission fire training requirements.
6. Repair Airfield Spalling	NFARS	This project would repair issues with airfield spalling that has occurred over time.
7. PFAS Cleanup	NFARS	NFARS is expected to address, identify, and mitigate PFAS impacts to comply with applicable regulatory standards. The DoD has been prioritizing the switch to non-PFAS containing firefighting systems.
8. Tower Replacement	NFIA	The Airport Traffic Control Tower has exceeded its useful life and needs to be replaced. The FAA is currently conducting a siting study for the new location, which is expected to be completed in fall 2024.
9. Upgrade/Replace Airfield Lighting and Signage	NFIA	This project includes replacing all signage on the airfield to use light-emitting diode lighting. The updated signage would also reflect updates to NFIA runways and the renaming of taxiways per FAA regulations.

Project Name	Action Agency	Description
10. Off-Airport Land Easements and Obstruction	NFIA	NFIA is planning for various projects to remove airport obstructions identified within the Runway Safety Areas. Implementation of these projects is anticipated to begin in 2025.
11. Runway 6/24 Rehabilitation	NFIA	NFIA is planning to rehabilitate Runway 6/24 but is currently unsure of the extent and scope of rehabilitation. The rehabilitation design grant will likely occur in 2026.
12. Parallel Taxiway Program	NFIA	NFIA has developed plans to construct a parallel taxiway and a partial parallel taxiway for two runways, to enhance access to the General Aviation area, the Air Cargo apron, and all runways.
13. Taxiway D Realignment and Extension	NFIA	NFIA has proposed to realign and extend Taxiway D to make it easier for aircraft to reach the end of Runway 24 by lengthening the taxiway and developing an intersection for aircraft to cross.

1957 4.2 EVALUATION OF CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

1958 4.2.1 Visual Resources

1959 *Short-term, less-than-significant adverse impacts* to aesthetics and visual resources may occur during
1960 construction of the Preferred Alternative and reasonably foreseeable actions. Construction sites would
1961 disrupt visual landscapes throughout the ROI and may be visible from main roadways off-base that run
1962 close to the airfield and runways. The temporary nature of construction, however, would render these
1963 impacts inconsequential. In the long-term, the viewshed would change due to new infrastructure, changes
1964 to runways, and the replacement of the Airport Traffic Control Tower. However, changes to the runways
1965 and infrastructure would be consistent with the operational use of the installation, the Airport Traffic Control
1966 Tower already exists within the visual landscape, and all projects would adhere to applicable base design
1967 standards; therefore, long-term impacts would be *negligible*.

1968 4.2.2 Air Quality

1969 Construction of the Preferred Alternative and reasonably foreseeable actions would generate air emissions
1970 from the use of construction equipment and vehicles. However, construction emissions would be temporary
1971 and would not exceed regulatory thresholds or threaten the attainment status of the region. Additionally,
1972 project-specific compliance with state and federal permitting requirements and implementation of BMPs
1973 would further minimize air emissions. These impacts would be *short-term and less-than-significant* due to
1974 the temporary and localized nature of construction.

1975 4.2.3 Climate

1976 Construction of the Preferred Alternative and reasonably foreseeable actions would collectively contribute
1977 to GHG emissions through the consumption of energy, use of construction materials, and operation of
1978 vehicles and equipment. However, while these projects would cumulatively contribute to GHG emissions of
1979 the installation and the NFIA, they would not increase the vulnerability of the ROI, or nearby properties, to
1980 the effects of climate change. Because GHG emissions from the Preferred Alternative are well below the
1981 insignificance threshold, the cumulative impact to GHG emissions and climate change is expected to be
1982 *less-than-significant*.

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2027 There would be *no impacts* on special status species, as there is no suitable habitat on-base for federally
2028 listed or proposed T&E species, and the AFRC would minimize or address potential adverse impacts that
2029 may occur to any state-listed species known to occur on the installation. In addition, no BASH concerns
2030 would arise as the reasonably foreseeable actions near the airfield would not create standing pools of water,
2031 new habitat, or other areas that birds would find attractive.

2032 **4.2.8 Cultural Resources**

2033 Implementation of the Preferred Alternative and reasonably foreseeable actions would have *no effects* on
2034 historic and cultural resources in the ROI. No significant cultural resources occur within the entirety of the
2035 installation. The Preferred Alternative and other development projects would not introduce any structures
2036 to the visual landscape that would be incongruent with the existing viewshed. There is the potential for
2037 inadvertent archaeological discoveries while conducting ground-disturbing activities during construction;
2038 however, in the event that such resources are inadvertently discovered, the AFRC would cease work
2039 immediately and notify the appropriate authorities, minimizing the potential for adverse impacts on
2040 previously unknown cultural resources.

2041 **4.2.9 Utilities**

2042 *Short- and long-term, less-than-significant adverse impacts* to utilities may occur during construction and
2043 operation of the Proposed Action and reasonably foreseeable actions. Implementation of the Preferred
2044 Alternative would not meaningfully affect overall utility usage at NFARS. Temporary service disruptions to
2045 utilities would occur during the installation of any new utility connections. However, these interruptions
2046 would be temporary and would only occur on the installation; all area users would be notified prior to the
2047 start of construction activities and any potential interruptions. Additional buildings requiring new utilities, in
2048 combination with the Preferred Alternative, would also increase the utility demand on-base, although it
2049 would not substantially burden local utility providers or supply. The reasonably foreseeable actions at the
2050 NFIA would update airfield lighting and other utilities but would not result in an increase in utility demand.

2051 **4.2.10 Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice**

2052 In the long term, the Preferred Alternative, when taken in consideration with reasonably foreseeable actions,
2053 would result in *beneficial impacts* on the local economy. Collective expenditures by temporary and
2054 permanent workforces would benefit local accommodation, food, and retail industries, as well as local fiscal
2055 benefits from associated sales tax revenues. There would be no change in population growth rate or
2056 housing as the Preferred Alternative would not require new personnel.

2057 Although communities with environmental justice concerns are present within the ROI, the Preferred
2058 Alternative and reasonably foreseeable actions are *not expected to disproportionately impact* those
2059 communities. Impacts would largely be contained within NFARS and NFIA property and would not disturb
2060 nearby communities or substantially increase their exposure to emissions or hazardous substances.

2061 **4.2.11 Hazardous and Toxic Materials and Waste**

2062 *Short-term, less-than-significant adverse impacts* on HTMW would occur during construction of the
2063 Preferred Alternative and reasonably foreseeable actions. Construction activities could result in potential
2064 discharge, spills, and contamination, as well as encounters with soil contamination. Any construction
2065 activities requiring ground disturbance could expose previously unknown sources of hazardous materials.
2066 Solid waste generation would also increase temporarily during construction activities. Proper permitting and
2067 compliance with applicable base plans regarding hazardous and solid wastes would be in place to prevent

2068 exposure and the spread of any identified contamination. NFARS would continue to follow the HWMP,
2069 SPCC Plan, and applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

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5.0 LIST OF PREPARERS

5.1 AIR FORCE PREPARERS

Name	Role
Kimberly Powell	Chief, Environmental Flight, 914 MSG/CEV

5.2 AECOM PREPARERS

Name	Role	Degree	Years of Experience
Carrie Kyzar	EA review and oversight	M.S. in Environmental Management B.S. in Environmental Science	23
Michael Busam	Project Manager, EA preparation	B.S. in Environmental Science and Policy	9
Natalie Kisak	Preparation of EA sections	M.A. in Environmental Resource Policy B.A. in Environmental Studies and Public Policy	5
Tara Boyd	Preparation of EA sections	B.A. in Environmental Science and Global Sustainability	3
Kaylyn Miller	Preparation of EA sections	B.S. in Environmental Science and Policy	1
Evan Dodd	Preparation of maps and figures	B.S. in Environmental Science and Marine Biology	1
Sam Hartsfield	Preparation of Air Quality and Climate sections	M.S. in Environmental Science and Management B.S. in Biology	19

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APPENDIX A: CONSULTATION WITH FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AIR FORCE RESERVE COMMAND**

July 3, 2024

Mr. Mike Klug, DAF
Acting Chief, Civil Engineer Division
HQ AFRC/A4C
255 Richard Ray Blvd
Robins AFB GA 31098-1895

Ms. Samantha Brenzel
Senior Aviation Planner
Buffalo Niagara International Airport
Administrative Office
4200 Genesee Street
Buffalo NY 14225

Dear Ms. Brenzel

The Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Facilities Operations Capability and Utilization Survey (FOCUS) Study Implementation (Four Construction Projects) and Expanded Herbicide Application at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS), New York, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. The AFRC requests that the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) formally participate as a Cooperating Agency (CA) in the preparation of the EA. NFTA participation is requested because one of the proposed projects includes the replacement of airfield ramp lights, and it is possible that the NFTA property may be the best location for one or more of the lights. As such, this action would require concurrence from the NFTA.

This CA arrangement is established pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §1501.8, Cooperating Agencies. As the lead the AFRC requests the NFTA CA support by:

- Participating in the scoping process;
- Assuming responsibility, upon request by the AFRC, for developing information and preparing analyses, including portions of the EA, on issues for which the NFTA has special expertise;
- Making staff support available to enhance interdisciplinary review capability and provide specific comments;
- Providing review and comments within the timelines prescribed in the milestone schedule; and
- Responding, in writing, to this request.

The AFRC will act as the Lead Agency for purposes of compliance with 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508 (Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the

Procedural Provisions of NEPA), 32 CFR Part 989 (Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP)), and similar regulatory consultation or coordination requirements.

Should you or your staff have further questions regarding the FOCUS Study Implementation (Four Construction Projects) and Expanded Herbicide Application EA or this request, our point of contact is Ms. Kim Powell, 914 MSG/CEV, at (716) 236-3126 or kimberly.powell@us.af.mil.

Sincerely

KLUG.MICHAEL
.W.1230244142

Digitally signed by
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Date: 2024.07.01 11:56:12
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MIKE KLUG, DAF
Acting Chief, Civil Engineer Division

cc: SAF/IEI



2035 Niagara Falls Boulevard
Niagara Falls, New York 14304
716-297-4494
Fax: 716-297-3518
www.niagarafallsairport.com

July 9, 2024

Mr. Mike Klug, DAF
Acting Chief, Civil Engineer Division
HQ AFRC/A4C
255 Richard Ray Blvd
Robins AFB GA 31098-1895

Re: NFARS Focus Study EA – Cooperating Agency

Dear Mr. Klug,

The NFTA recognizes that the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Facilities Operations Capability and Utilization Survey (FOCUS) Study Implementation (Four Construction Projects) and Expanded Herbicide Application at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS), New York. The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority agrees to formally participate as a Cooperating Agency in the preparation of the EA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. Brenzel", is written over a faint, larger signature.

Samantha Brenzel
NFTA, Sr. Aviation Planner



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
914TH AIR REFUELING WING
NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION

June 21, 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR See attached Agency Distribution List

FROM: 914th Air Refueling Wing
Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station
2405 Franklin Drive
Niagara Falls NY 14304

SUBJECT: Preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) for Facilities Operations Capability and Utilization Survey (FOCUS) Study Implementation (Four Construction Projects) and Expanded Herbicide Application at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station

1. The Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) and Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS) are preparing an EA for the proposed FOCUS Study Implementation (Four Construction Projects) and Expanded Herbicide Application, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. The EA will analyze the potential environmental consequences associated with implementing four proposed construction projects outlined in the FOCUS Study and performing the proposed expanded herbicide application on base to meet training requirements and conduct operations required to support the NFARS. The need for the Proposed Action is described in the attached Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives (DOPAA; see **Attachment 1**).
2. This memorandum and the attached DOPAA are being sent as part of the scoping process for the FOCUS Study Implementation (Four Construction Projects) and Expanded Herbicide Application EA. We are sending this DOPAA for your input, so that we can address and analyze any issues of concern in the EA. Please provide written comments or information regarding the action at your earliest convenience but no later than 30 days from the receipt of this memorandum. Also enclosed is a list of those federal, state, and local agencies that have been included in this scoping process (see **Attachment 2**).
3. The Draft EA will be available electronically for review during the public comment period, which is anticipated to begin in September 2024.
4. Please submit your comments electronically to: Ms. Kim Powell, Chief, Environmental Flight, at kimberly.powell@us.af.mil.

Sincerely

RIZZO.CHRISTOPHER.1590112590
HER.1590112590

Digitally signed by
RIZZO.CHRISTOPHER.1590112590
Date: 2024.06.20 10:13:53 -04'00'

CHRISTOPHER RIZZO, GS-13, DAF
Base Civil Engineer

2 Attachments:

1. DOPAA, June 2024
2. Distribution List

Attachment 1

DOPAA, June 2024

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND
ALTERNATIVES**

FOR

**FOCUS Study Implementation (Four Construction Projects)
and Expanded Herbicide Application at
Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station**

Final



PREPARED BY:
U.S. Air Force

June 2024

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFFF	Aqueous Film Forming Foam	HVAC	Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
AMCSUP	Air Mobility Command Supplement	IICEP	Interagency and Intergovernmental Coordination for Environmental Planning
AFI	Air Force Instruction	MXG	Maintenance Group
AFR	Air Force Reserve	NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
AFRC	Air Force Reserve Command	NFARS	Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station
AGE	Aerospace Ground Equipment	NFIA	Niagara Falls International Airport
ANG	Army National Guard	NFTA	Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority
ARW	Air Refueling Wing	NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
ATKW	Attack Wing	NOA	Notice of Availability
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality	NYSDEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	SAF/IE	Secretary of the Air Force – Energy, Installations, and Environment
CMU	Concrete Masonry Unit	U.S.	United States
CS	Communications Squadron	USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
DOPAA	Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives	USAF	U.S. Air Force
DOT	Department of Transportation	USC	U.S. Code
EA	Environmental Assessment	USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
EO	Executive Order	USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration	USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency		
FOCUS	Facilities Operations Capability and Utilization Survey		
FONPA	Finding of No Practicable Alternative		
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact		

1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 INTRODUCTION

An Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared to assess the United States (U.S.) Air Force (USAF) Reserve Command's (AFRC; lead agency) proposal to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with implementing four projects outlined in the Facilities Operations Capability and Utilization Survey (FOCUS) study and expanding herbicide application activity at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS) in order to meet training requirements and conduct airfield operations to support the 914th Air Refueling Wing (914 ARW) (Proposed Action). This Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives (DOPAA) presents the first two chapters of the EA. The DOPAA describes the action being proposed by AFRC that will be analyzed in full in the EA, with sufficient detail as to understand the potential environmental impacts of implementing the Proposed Action. The DOPAA also identifies AFRC's purpose and need for completing the Proposed Action, and describes the alternatives development and screening process, including those alternatives that have been dismissed from consideration.

NFARS is collocated with the Niagara Falls International Airport (NFIA or the Airport) in the towns of Niagara and Wheatfield, Niagara County, New York, approximately four miles east of the City of Niagara Falls and five miles from the Canadian border (see **Figure 1**). NFIA is operated by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA). Part of one of the four projects proposed for implementation from the FOCUS study, replacing airfield ramp lights (see **Section 2.1.3**), may occur on NFTA property. Therefore, the NFTA is a cooperating agency for the EA.

The EA will be prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S. Code [USC] 4321, et seq.); the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508);¹ and the Air Force Environmental Impact Analysis Process (32 CFR Part 989).

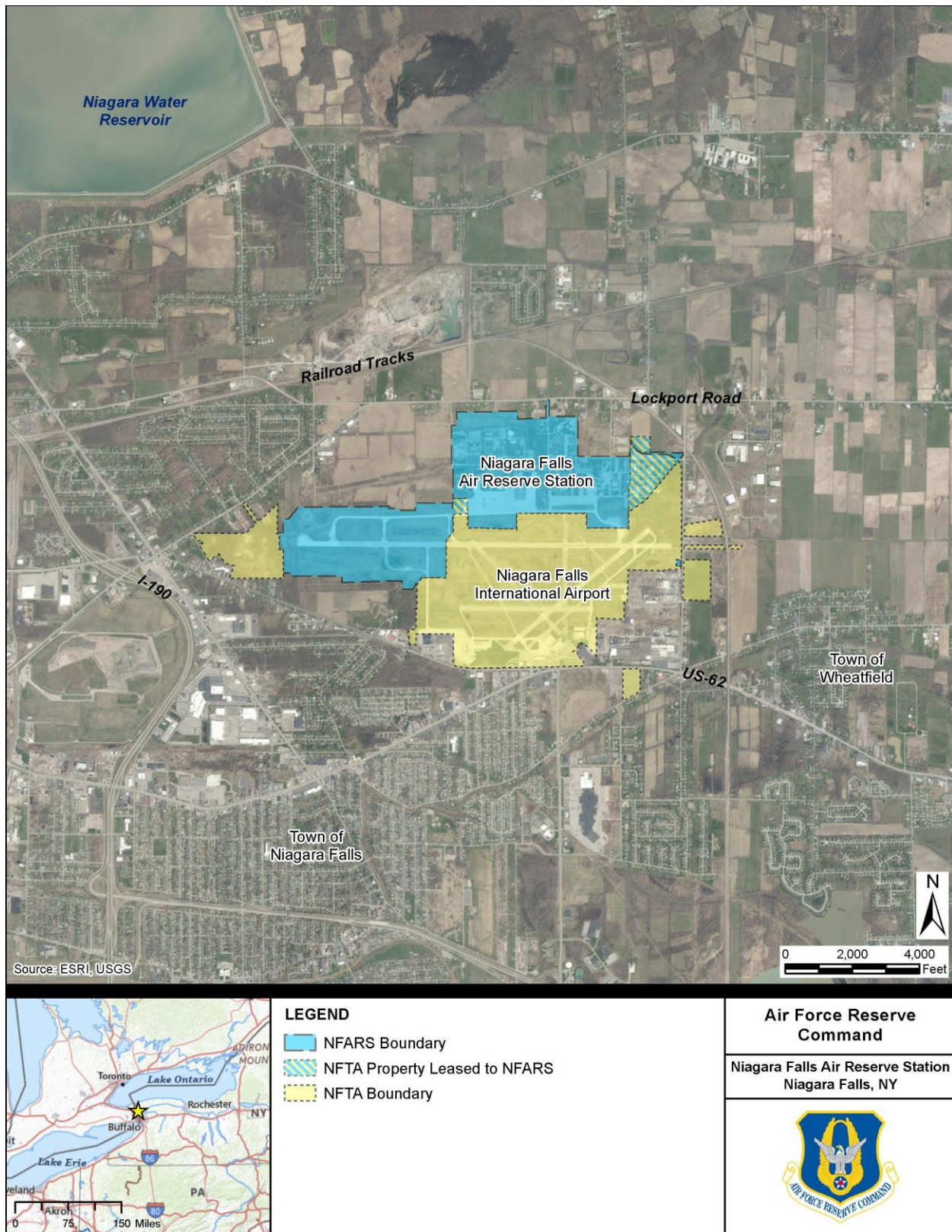
1.2 BACKGROUND

The 914 ARW is the host wing at NFARS which operates eight KC-135 Stratotankers, provides support to tenant units, and maintains partnerships with the NFTA, which operates the collocated commercial airport, NFIA. The 914 ARW's mission is to organize, recruit, and train Air Force Reserve (AFR) personnel to provide aerial refueling, cargo and passenger airlift, aeromedical evacuations, and support and maintenance functions on a global scale. The New York Air National Guard (ANG), Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Air Force Exchange Service, Air Force Office of Special Investigations, and Military Entrance Processing Station are additional tenant units. There are more than 3,000 total military personnel stationed at NFARS.

The FOCUS study was completed for the 914 ARW in 2022 to document space utilization and evaluate the condition of AFRC facilities (AFRC, 2022). This effort consisted of a Facility Utilization Survey and a Facility Condition Assessment, which were used to develop a recommended project list to ensure that NFARS facilities are properly configured and available to personnel to perform the mission efficiently and effectively. The plan outlines suggestions for organizational changes, new facility construction, additions, renovations, maintenance and repairs, and facility divestiture necessary to achieve the installation's goals.

¹ On May 1, 2024, the CEQ published in the Federal Register (89 FR 35442) a Final Rule to revise its NEPA implementing regulations (Phase 2). This rule becomes effective on July 1, 2024. Given that preparation of this EA began prior to issuance of the Final Rule, the analysis contained in this document complies with the CEQ regulations issued in April 2022.

Figure 1: NFARS Site Vicinity



The recommended project list was developed to address workspace deficiencies and degraded facility systems and components, and included over 100 projects recommended for implementation over the next several years depending on need, planning requirements, and funding. The EA will include implementation of four of the facility projects described in the FOCUS study.

Herbicide application at NFARS was previously assessed in the 2011 Final EA, Addressing Expanded Herbicide Applications and the Relocation of Dry Chemical Testing at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, New York (NFARS, 2011). That EA allowed for the application of chemical herbicides on a total of 118.6 acres for the purpose of controlling weeds to address safety, security, maintenance, and aesthetic concerns. Since publication of the 2011 EA, herbicide application has continued in the previously evaluated areas and the area of application has not increased.

1.3 PURPOSE AND NEED

NFARS currently lacks the infrastructure necessary to fully meet training requirements and conduct airfield operations. The Proposed Action would support the operational plans for the AFRC and the 914 ARW. The *purpose* of the Proposed Action is to provide the 914 ARW with the facilities and infrastructure needed at NFARS to meet current and future mission requirements, and fulfill the strategic vision of the installation as presented in the FOCUS study. Facilities at NFARS should be optimally configured to ensure they are suitable for the respective missions of the various units located at NFARS, and that activities are not constrained by outdated, deficient, or small facilities. The Proposed Action is *needed* because aging facilities and infrastructure are no longer able to support their originally planned uses, and existing buildings do not support sizes and layouts needed for mission operations, training activities, and aircraft maintenance.

1.4 INTERAGENCY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION/CONSULTATION

Interagency and intergovernmental cooperation is a federally mandated process for informing and coordinating with other governmental agencies regarding federal proposed actions. The Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1968 and Executive Order (EO) 12372, *Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs*, require federal agencies to cooperate with and consider state and local views in implementing a federal proposal. Air Force Instruction (AFI) 32-7060, *Interagency and Intergovernmental Coordination for Environmental Planning* (IICEP), requires the USAF to facilitate agency coordination and implement scoping requirements under NEPA.

During the public scoping process, the AFRC is coordinating with the following federal, state, and local agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise over the Proposed Action to inform the range of issues to be addressed in the EA. The AFRC sent the DOPAA to the following agencies to give them an opportunity to provide comments or other information on the Proposed Action.

- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Buffalo District
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)
- New York State Department of Transportation (DOT)
- New York State Historic Preservation Office
- Niagara County Department of Public Works
- City of Niagara Falls

- City of Niagara Falls Department of Planning and Environmental
- Town of Niagara
- Town of Wheatfield
- NFTA
- HQ AFRC/JA
- AFRC/A4CA
- 107 CES/CEV
- 99th Division, U.S. Army Reserves

Responses received from agencies on this DOPAA will be included in the EA and discussed as appropriate. At this time, AFRC anticipates analyzing the following resource areas in the EA: visual resources; airspace; air quality and climate; noise; earth resources (i.e., geology, topography, and soil); water resources (i.e., surface water, stormwater, wastewater, wetlands, floodplains, water quality, and groundwater); coastal zone resources; biological resources (i.e., vegetation, wildlife, and special status species); cultural resources; utilities; energy independence; land use; socioeconomics; environmental justice, including protection of children; transportation; and hazardous and toxic materials and waste.

Consistent with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800), EO 13175, *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*, Department of Defense Instruction 4710.02, *Interactions with Federally-Recognized Tribes*, AFI 90-2002, *Air Force Interactions with Federally-Recognized Tribes*, and Air Force Manual, AFMAN 32-7003, *Environmental Conservation*, the AFRC is also consulting with five federally recognized tribes that are historically affiliated with the geographic region of NFARS regarding the potential for the Proposed Action to affect properties of cultural, historical, or religious significance to the tribes. The AFRC sent the DOPAA to the following federally recognized tribes to invite comments: Cayuga Nation of New York, Seneca-Cayuga Nation, Seneca Nation of Indians, Tonawanda Band of Seneca, and Tuscarora Nation.

1.5 PUBLIC AND AGENCY REVIEW OF THE EA

In accordance with CEQ and Air Force NEPA regulations, the Draft EA will be available for a 30-day public review and comment period. A Notice of Availability (NOA), that includes an early notice that the Proposed Action would take place within a floodplain, for the Draft EA is anticipated to be published in the *Niagara Gazette* once the documents are ready for review. The Draft EA will also be published digitally on the NFARS 914 ARW website, and a printed copy of the Draft EA is anticipated to be available for public review at the Niagara Falls Public Library, Earl W. Brydges Building, 1425 Main Street, Niagara Falls, New York, 14305. If the Draft EA preliminarily determines that the Proposed Action would not result in significant impacts to the human environment, then AFRC would prepare a Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Finding of No Practicable Alternative (FONPA) in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.1(l) for concurrent public review.

2.0 PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

2.1 PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action involves five total projects. Four of these projects are from the FOCUS study: B-850 renovation and addition, B-317 renovation and addition, construction of aerospace ground equipment (AGE) covered storage, and replacement of airfield ramp lights. The fifth project is expanding herbicide application. Each project is described in detail below and identified on **Figure 2**.

2.1.1 B-850 Renovation and Addition

The Proposed Action would renovate and construct additions for the two-story B-850 in order to update building features and consolidate 914 Maintenance Group (MXG) functions. B-850 currently houses 914 MXG shops and offices, many of which have not had significant renovations for years. Aircraft maintenance functions are spread between several buildings (B-902 and B-907), making transporting parts and equipment difficult and performing repairs inefficient, particularly during severe weather. Further, B-850 is not adequately sized for KC-135 tail clearances, preventing aircraft from pulling into the hangar bay completely during maintenance operations. Finally, fire suppression in B-850 is currently provided by an aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) system, which must be upgraded in accordance with the *Secretary of the Air Force – Energy, Installations, and Environment (SAF/IE) Sundown Policy for Foam Fire Suppression Systems* guidance.

Under the Proposed Action, NFARS would renovate existing offices, maintenance shops, and support and administrative spaces along the perimeter of B-850 to improve functionality, ensure all systems comply with current codes, and abate hazardous materials. NFARS would also construct an approximately 2,000 square foot addition for shops; a 660 square foot, two-story addition with an elevator; an approximately 20,000 square foot interior renovation that would include a new second-story mezzanine; and two paved parking lots with about 130 parking spaces that would total about 40,500 square feet of new parking area. Renovation and construction of the additions would consolidate various maintenance shops and functions such as avionics, engine shops, metals tech, corrosion control, and others, as well as various MXG offices.

In addition, the hangar door would be replaced to provide adequate vertical and horizontal tail clearance to fully pull KC-135 aircraft into the hangar for maintenance, and the hangar bay would require minor structural modifications, such as adding a small cupola to the roof, to provide tail clearance within B-850. The existing AFFF fire suppression system would be replaced with a water-based system.

2.1.2 B-317 Renovation and Addition

The Proposed Action would renovate B-317, which includes repairing the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) and electrical infrastructure and repaving the parking lot. Communications and data center functions for the 914 ARW are currently located in multiple facilities (B-317, B-206, and B-806). These buildings are spread throughout the installation, which has resulted in mission downtime when travel between the facilities is needed. B-206 and B-806 have reached the end of their useful life. B-317 was constructed in the 1990s, but some existing utilities required to service the facility are deficient and in need of replacement. Utilities are critical for proper operation, and not performing upgrades would pose a risk to the mission. Reconfiguration of the facility layout is also needed to support the utility upgrades and consolidation of the mission. This project would also enable consolidation of the 914 Communications Squadron (CS) personnel, storage, and servers.

Under the Proposed Action, NFARS would upgrade the existing electric distribution system, replace the interior light fixtures, upgrade the existing mechanical and HVAC systems, upgrade the existing telecommunications systems, and upgrade the existing fire protection/life safety systems. An approximately 2,100 square foot addition to B-317 would be constructed on the north side of the building. Following renovation and construction, the 914 CS would be relocated to B-317, and B-206 would be demolished.

2.1.3 Construct AGE Covered Storage

The Proposed Action involves the construction of an approximately 4,700 square foot covered metal storage shed adjacent to B-848. A covered storage facility is needed to house AGE to protect it from snow and daily weather, thereby reducing necessary maintenance and repairs. AGE is currently stored outside at NFARS. The outdoor, uncovered storage of AGE requires the equipment to be cleared of snow and ice prior to maintenance activities during the winter months, while daily, year-round weather exposure oxidizes and corrodes equipment. This exposure to the elements results in increased maintenance needs for the AGE itself, longer maintenance timeframes, and less time in operation. As an alternative to outdoor storage, under existing conditions, the west bay of B-850 is used for AGE storage; however, this negatively impacts aircraft maintenance by occupying hangar space and increases energy usage due to frequent opening of hangar doors, and thus is not a viable long-term solution.

The proposed covered storage shed would have a concrete slab, metal structure and roofing, wind/snow control sidewalls, lighting, and convenience outlets. Utilities would be installed, and adjacent pavement would be repaired to facilitate a smooth transition into the covered shed. Following construction, the west bay of B-850 would no longer be used for AGE storage, leaving the area fully available for aircraft maintenance activities.

2.1.4 Replace Airfield Ramp Lights

The Proposed Action includes construction of a new energy-efficient airfield ramp lighting system of poles with winching systems. NFARS currently maintains eight existing aircraft ramp lights, which do not comply with USAF security requirements for ground light coverage. Maintenance of these lights requires NFARS to rent lift assist equipment to change the light bulbs. The surrounding unimproved surfaces do not provide stable support for the equipment, and high winds create unsafe working conditions on the equipment. The existing light fixtures are not energy efficient and do not prevent light spillage. The airfield ramp lights need to be replaced to improve safe aircraft movement during low-light or nighttime conditions by ensuring that the area is well lit for aircraft visibility and navigation. Additionally, replacement would improve human safety by eliminating the need for equipment during maintenance operations, and ensure compliance with USAF security requirements.

Under the Proposed Action, eight existing ramp lights would be replaced with ground maintainable hoist system lights; the new lights may not be in the same locations as the existing lights, and one of the lights may be installed on NFTA property (to be determined during final design). Conduit excavations (either horizontal directional drilling or utility trenching) would occur to connect controls to B-310 and B-821, both located north of the airfield ramp. Most of the approximately 1,230-foot conduit would occur in existing roadway right-of-way, although approximately 285 feet of the conduit may occur through existing grassy open space. New access roads would also be constructed from the airfield ramp to each new light that is not already adjacent to a paved surface. Once operational, the new lights would require routine maintenance, which would be more operationally efficient than the current lighting system.

2.1.5 Expanded Herbicide Application

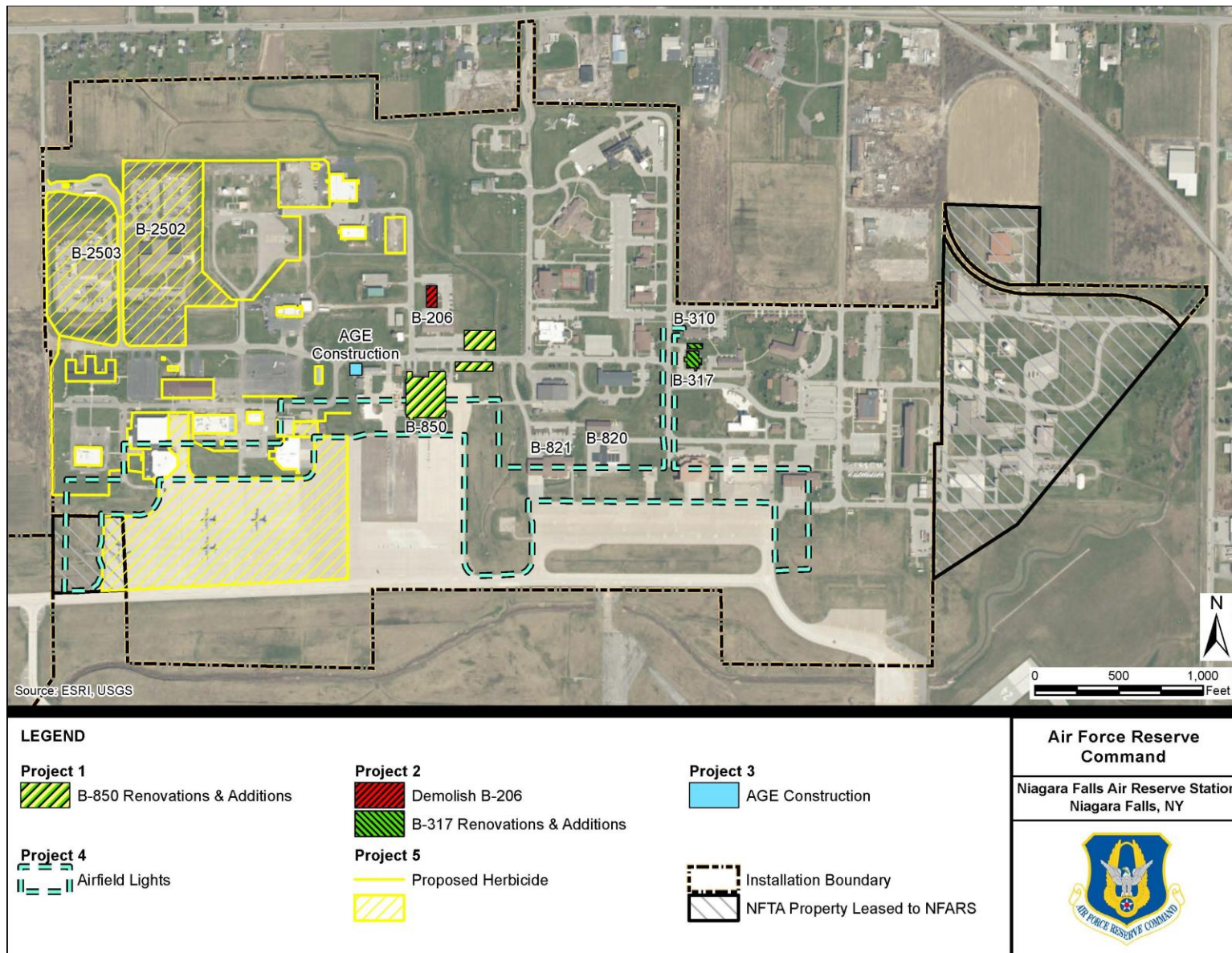
The Proposed Action includes the new application of herbicide around fence lines and buildings in the western portion of the installation. The 2011 Final EA analyzed the application of herbicides around the main NFARS airfield ramp and around various buildings in the eastern portion of the installation. However, areas around fences, around B-2502 and B-2503, and on the airfield ramp that were not previously analyzed now require weed control. Therefore, NFARS proposes to expand the allowable area for herbicide applications beyond what is currently approved to address safety, security, maintenance, and aesthetic concerns. Although the total area of herbicide application would expand, the criteria for application, type of herbicides used, and application rates would remain the same as those described in the 2011 Final EA. The herbicide expansion project would include herbicide application along a cumulative 14,188 linear feet of fence and within 42.2 acres of field and airfield ramp (see **Figure 2**).

2.2 SCREENING OF ALTERNATIVES

The AFRC developed selection standards to evaluate specific reasonable alternatives by which to implement the Proposed Action. “Reasonable alternatives” are those that could be utilized to meet the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action. The AFRC’s selection standards used to evaluate reasonable alternatives include the following:

1. **Standard 1 – Achieves Mission Requirements:** This standard measures how well each alternative would meet current and future mission requirements or the strategic vision of the installation. The AFRC evaluated each alternative based on whether it would provide the necessary infrastructure to support the current and future mission requirements of the 914 ARW and tenant units.
2. **Standard 2 – Operational Efficiency:** This standard measures how well each alternative improves operational efficiency, including factors such as proximity to mission-critical facilities, ease of access for personnel and equipment, and optimization of workflow processes.
3. **Standard 3 – Land Use Compatibility:** This standard measures AFRCs preference in conducting installation operations on AFRC property or property where AFRC maintains land use control. The AFRC evaluated each alternative based on whether AFRC would have the ability to conduct long-term operational activities without interfering with conflicting land uses.

Figure 2: Proposed Projects at NFARS



2.3 EVALUATED ALTERNATIVES

2.3.1 Preferred Alternative

Under the Preferred Alternative, the five projects would be implemented as described in **Section 2.1** and shown in **Figure 2**. These projects are not dependent on each other and AFRC may choose to implement one without the others. These projects are AFRC directive actions that are analyzed together in this EA for efficiency and due to the similarities in their potential environmental impacts. Therefore, all five projects will be fully analyzed as part of the Preferred Alternative in the EA.

The renovation and construction of an addition to B-850 would consolidate maintenance shops and functions and provide fully covered KC-135 aircraft maintenance capabilities. The renovation of and construction of an addition to B-317 would provide critical upgrades to electrical and HVAC systems and enhance mission efficiency. The construction of covered storage for AGE would prevent weathering of equipment, subsequently reducing additional maintenance to address weathering and operational inefficiencies from storing AGE in the B-850 hangar. Replacing the airfield ramp lights and expanding herbicide application on the installation will also support the mission requirements of the 914 ARW. Therefore, all proposed projects meet Selection Standards #1 and #2.

NFTA is a cooperating agency since one of the new airfield ramp lights may be located on NFTA property. Although this light would not be located on AFRC property, NFARS is coordinating with the NFTA during preparation of the EA to ensure that land uses would not conflict and that NFARS would retain the ability to conduct long-term operational activities associated with that light. All other projects included as part of the Preferred Alternative are located on NFARS property and are compatible with existing land uses. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative also meets Selection Standard #3 and would achieve the purpose and need for the Proposed Action.

2.3.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no new construction or renovations would occur on the installation, the airfield ramp lights would not be replaced, and herbicide application would continue to be limited to those areas previously analyzed in the 2011 EA. The 914 MXG functions would not be consolidated, B-850 infrastructure would continue to age, the B-850 hangar door would remain inadequately sized for KC-135 aircraft, and the B-850 fire suppression system would remain deficient. Communications functions would continue to be located in multiple facilities spread throughout the installation, and the electrical and HVAC services in B-317 would remain deficient. AGE would continue to be stored outside at NFARS, exposing it to weathering, or would be moved inside B-850 where it would occupy limited space also needed for aircraft maintenance. The airfield ramp lighting would remain inadequate and inefficient, and continue to be non-compliant with mission lighting requirements. While the No Action Alternative would not meet Selection Standards #1 or #2 or the Proposed Action's purpose and need, it will be analyzed in the EA in accordance with CEQ regulations to provide a comparative baseline for the Preferred Alternative.

2.4 ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER CONSIDERATION

The AFRC initially considered additional alternatives to achieve the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action. The AFRC eliminated these alternatives from further consideration because they did not meet one or more of the selection standards (see **Section** Error! Reference source not found.), as described below.

2.4.1 B-850 Renovation and Addition

2.4.1.2 Consolidate MXG in B-850, No Hangar Upgrades

Under this alternative, NFARS would consolidate 914 MXG maintenance functions in B-850 and divest of other buildings that house MXG functions (e.g., B-902, B-907, B-847, B-854) but would not renovate the hangar door to allow for a fully covered maintenance area for the KC-135 aircraft. One bay would be left open for potential hangar door renovation in the future. Other buildings would be used as aircraft bays, including B-907, B-917 and B-707. However, a covered area for KC-135 maintenance is critical to the mission of the 914 ARW and the lack of a dedicated and adequately sized area leaves the installation open to weather-related vulnerabilities and operational inefficiencies. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standards #1 or #2 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.1.3 Construct New Consolidated MXG Building

Under this alternative, NFARS would consolidate MXG functions in a newly constructed building next to B-907, which is currently used as a hangar for unscheduled maintenance. B-902, an old hangar currently used for administrative and storage space, would be demolished, except for the mechanical room. NFARS would divest of B-902 and B-850, and B-907, B-917, and B-707 would be used as aircraft bays. However, the new building under this alternative would be constructed on state and ANG land; therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standard #3 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.1.4 No MXG Consolidation

Under this alternative, NFARS would repair B-854 and B-847 to fix the safety issues in these facilities, and no consolidation of the MXG functions or personnel would occur. Aircraft maintenance functions dispersed throughout the installation promotes inefficiencies, makes transporting equipment problematic during severe weather, and delays work. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standard #2 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.1.5 Renovate B-902 for Consolidated MXG

Under this alternative, NFARS would renovate B-902 for consolidated MXG functions, and divest of B-850, B-854, B-847, and other facilities currently containing MXG functions. Aircraft bays would be located in B-907, B-917, and B-707. Part of this alternative would occur on state and ANG land, and the dispersed locations would not promote operational efficiency. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standards #2 or #3 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.2 B-317 Renovation and Addition

2.4.2.2 Renovate B-317 Without Constructing an Addition

NFARS considered renovating B-317 without constructing an addition. Under this alternative, the 914 CS servers and storage would remain in their current locations. However, the physical space in B-317 is undersized, not capable of supporting infrastructure upgrades, and has insufficient and failing utilities. Additionally, the age and failing infrastructure of B-206 necessitates demolition of the facility and relocation of its personnel and equipment. A minor renovation to the offices in B-317 would not be adequate to accommodate consolidation of the 914 CS as it would not address the need for additional space. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standard #1 and thus was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.2.3 Construction of New Data Center Facility

NFARS considered constructing a new facility for the 914 CS data center. While a new facility would be ideal, construction would take five to ten years to complete, and the B-317 data center HVAC units are already well past their useful life. If the HVAC units in the data center were to fail while construction of the new facility were ongoing, there would be a significant interruption to mission and critical services. NFARS determined that a more immediate solution was needed to prevent service interruption and promote operational efficiencies. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standards #1 or #2 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.3 Construct AGE Covered Storage

2.4.3.2 Use B-850 for AGE Storage

Under this alternative, NFARS would continue to use the west bay of B-850 for AGE storage to protect equipment from weathering. However, use of B-850 for storage occupies limited hangar space and interferes with aircraft maintenance activities also occurring within B-850. Frequent opening of hangar doors in order to access and use AGE equipment also increases overall energy usage at NFARS and is generally inefficient. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standard #2 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.4 Replace Airfield Ramp Lights

2.4.4.2 Retrofit Existing Light Fixtures

Under this alternative, NFARS considered retrofitting the existing light poles by replacing the existing light fixtures with new, higher powered light fixtures. However, the airfield lighting would still be considered deficient as the existing light pole locations and heights do not comply with USAF security requirements. Replacing the lighting fixtures at the poles would not meet the requirements for the entirety of the airfield ramp and the use of lift equipment that is weather-dependent would not meet the goals for operational efficiency. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standards #1 or #2 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.4.3 Portable Light Units

NFARS considered the use of portable light units after sunset to illuminate the ramp area. Under this alternative, the lights would run all night and would require constant refueling and maintenance, which is operationally inefficient. Additionally, this alternative is only a temporary solution for addressing the existing airfield light deficiencies and safety concerns. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standards #1 or #2 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.4.4 Substitute with Manpower

NFARS discussed the potential for increasing manned security around the airfield in lieu of updating the ramp lighting, to address safety concerns posed by the deficient system. However, no guidance or directives have been issued by USAF that would allow this type of substitution, and the existing ramp lighting would remain noncompliant with USAF security requirements. Increasing manned security patrols would also be an inefficient use of manpower. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standards #1 or #2 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.5 Expanded Herbicide Application

No other alternatives were considered for the expanded herbicide application.

3.0 REFERENCES

AFRC. (2022). *Facilities Operations Capability and Utilization Survey (FOCUS): 914th Air Refueling Wing Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, New York.*

NFARS. (2011). *Final Environmental Assessment Addressing Expanded Herbicide Applications and the Relocation of Dry Chemical Testing at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, New York.*

Attachment 2
Distribution List

AGENCIES AND OTHER ENTITIES CONSULTED

Federal Agencies

Federal Aviation Administration

Eastern Region/ New York Airports District Office
1 Aviation Plaza, Rm 111
Jamaica, NY 11434
POC: Aaron Braswell, Environmental Specialist
Email: aaron.braswell@faa.gov

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Region 2 Office
26 Federal Plaza, Room 1337
New York, NY 10278
Email: FEMA-IGA@fema.dhs.gov

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Buffalo District
478 Main Street
Buffalo, NY 14202
POC: Martin P. Wargo, NEPA Manager
Email: Martin.P.Wargo@usace.army.mil

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Region 2 Office
290 Broadway
New York, NY 10007-1866
POC: Lisa Garcia, Regional Administrator
Email: garcia.lisa@epa.gov

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

New York Ecological Services Field Office
3817 Luker Road
Cortland, NY 13045
Email: FW5ES_NYFO@fws.gov

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service

New York State Office
441 S Salina Street, Suite 354
Syracuse, NY 13202
POC: Blake Glover, State Conservationist
Email: blake.glover@usda.gov

State Agencies

New York State Department of Transportation

Region 5 Office
100 Seneca St.
Buffalo, NY 14203
POC: Frank Cirillo, Regional Director
Email: Francis.cirillo@dot.ny.gov

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Region 9 Office
700 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14209
POC: Julie Barrett O'Neil, Regional Director
Email: region9@dec.ny.gov

New York State Historic Preservation Office

New York Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
1 Delaware Avenue North
Cohoes, NY 12047
POC: Daniel Mackay, Deputy Commissioner
Email: Daniel.Mackay@parks.ny.gov

Local Agencies

Town of Wheatfield

2800 Church Road
Wheatfield, NY 14120
POC: Don MacSwan, Supervisor
Email: supervisor@wheatfield.ny.us

Town of Niagara

7105 Lockport Road
Niagara Falls, NY 14305
POC: Sylvia Virtuoso, Supervisor
Email: svirtuoso@townofniagara.com

City of Niagara Falls

P.O. Box 69
Niagara Falls, NY 14302-0069
POC: Robert Restaino, Mayor
Email: robert.restaino@niagarafallsny.gov

City of Niagara Falls Department of Planning and Environmental

P.O. Box 69
Niagara Falls, NY 14302-0069
POC: Kevin Forma, Director of Planning
Email: NFNYP.Planning@niagarafallsny.gov

Niagara County Department of Public Works

Brooks County Office Building
59 Park Avenue
Lockport, NY 14094
POC: Richard Updegrove
Email: Richard.Updegrove@niagaracounty.com

Other Entities Consulted

NFTA/Niagara Falls International Airport

2035 Niagara Falls Boulevard
Niagara Falls, NY 14304
POC: Jim Celeste, Airport Manager
Email: james.celeste@nfta.com

NFTA/Buffalo Niagara International Airport

4200 Genesee Street
Buffalo, NY 14225
POC: Sam Brenzel, Senior Aviation Planner
Email: samantha.brenzel@nfta.com

HQ AFRC/JA Westover Air Reserve Base

975 Patriot Ave, Box 64
Chicopee MA 01022-1629
POC: Paul Clawson, OL/JA
Email: paul.clawson.2@us.af.mil

AFRC/A4CA

255 Richard Ray Boulevard
HQ AFRC AFB GA 31098
POC: Wil Jones, Chief, Environmental & Asset
Accountability Branch
Email: wilson.jones.2@us.af.mil

AFRC/A4CA

255 Richard Ray Boulevard
HQ AFRC AFB GA 31098
POC: Corey Bentley, Environmental
Management Program Manager
Email: corey.bentley.5@us.af.mil

AFRC/A4CA

155 Richard Ray Boulevard
HQ AFRC AFB GA 31098
POC: Casey Carter, Environmental
Management Program Manager
Email: casey.carter.2@us.af.mil

107 CES/CEV

9910 Blewett Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14301
POC: Jim Nagelhout, Environmental Protection
Specialist
Email: James.nagelhout@us.af.mil

99th DIV (R), US Army Reserves

5231 South Scott Plaza
JBMDL, NJ 08640
POC: Scott White
Email: Scott.m.white63.ctr@mail.mil

From: dot.sm.r05.SEQR <dot.sm.r05.SEQR@dot.ny.gov>

Sent: Monday, July 22, 2024 8:49 AM

To: POWELL, KIMBERLY M CIV USAF AFRC 914 MSG/CEV <kimberly.powell@us.af.mil>

Cc: Ho, Janet (DOT) <Janet.Ho2@dot.ny.gov>; Ismail, Haris (DOT) <Haris.Ismail@dot.ny.gov>; Hill, David J. (DOT) <David.Hill@dot.ny.gov>

Subject: [Non-DoD Source] RE: NFARS FOCUS Study EA - Agency Coordination - NYSDOT Region 5 Comments

You don't often get email from dot.sm.r05.seqr@dot.ny.gov. [Learn why this is important](#)

Good morning,

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) has reviewed the documentation provided for the NFARS Facilities Operations Capability and Utilization Survey and has the following comments:

- NYSDOT concurs with the Air Force Reserve Command for it to act as the Lead Agency
- Based upon the information provided, the proposed project does not appear to have a significant impact to traffic on the State Highway System
- Based upon the information provided, a NYSDOT highway work permit is not needed
- Please update the NYSDOT contact info for future SEQR processes, Site Plan reviews, Zoning updates and changes, Variances, or other similar review requests to the NYSDOT Region 5 SEQR Coordinator Group at the following:

SEQR Coordinator Group
Planning and Program Management
New York State Department of Transportation Region 5
100 Seneca Street, Buffalo, NY 14203
dot.sm.r05.SEQR@dot.ny.gov

Respectfully,

Casey Gordon

Transportation Analyst

Planning and Program Management

New York State Department of Transportation, Region 5

100 Seneca Street, Buffalo, NY 14203

(716) 847-3580

Casey.Gordon@dot.ny.gov

www.dot.ny.gov

From: Boyd, Tara <Tara.Boyd@aecom.com>

Sent: Friday, June 21, 2024 10:25 AM

To: Boyd, Tara <Tara.Boyd@aecom.com>

Cc: kimberly.powell@us.af.mil; christopher.rizzo@us.af.mil; mackenzie.taylor.3@us.af.mil

Subject: NFARS FOCUS Study EA - Agency Coordination

You don't often get email from tara.boyd@aecom.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

Good morning,

The Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) and Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS) are preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Facilities Operations Capability and Utilization Survey (FOCUS) Study Implementation (Four Construction Projects) and Expanded Herbicide Application, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.

On behalf of the AFRC, we are seeking input from your agency regarding any information or potential environmental concerns associated with this project. Please see the attached memorandum and Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives (DOPAA) for additional information. We would appreciate any written comments, concerns, information, or other data you may have regarding this project within thirty (30) days of receipt of this correspondence.

We look forward to and welcome your participation in this analysis. Please submit your comments electronically to Ms. Kim Powell, Chief, Environmental Flight, at kimberly.powell@us.af.mil.

Thank you,

Tara Boyd
Environmental Planner
Environmental Planning & Permitting (EPP)
M +1-203-685-3220
tara.boyd@aecom.com

AECOM
aecom.com

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United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Long Island Field Office

New York Field Office



Project Number: None Provided Date: 6/25/24

To: Tara Boyd

Project Name: NFARS FOCUS Study

Town/County: Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station

We have received your request for information regarding occurrences of federally listed threatened and endangered species within the above-referenced project/property. In order for your project to be reviewed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Long Island Field Office (LIFO) or the New York Field Office (NYFO), please see the checked box below and follow the recommended next steps.

☒ **An official species list was not requested through IPaC.**

Next steps to take: Please log into the Information, Planning, and Consultation (IPaC) website at <https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/> to obtain an official species list for the above-mentioned project. The LIFO and NYFO cannot accept species lists that indicate they are "Not for Consultation." ***Project submittals will not be reviewed until official species list requests are obtained and the project is resubmitted.***

☐ **Insufficient project information was provided to complete our review.**

Next steps to take: Please go to the Project Review website used for both LIFO and NYFO at <https://www.fws.gov/office/new-york-ecological-services-field/new-york-project-reviews> and follow the four 7-Step process before submitting a project for our review. To ensure that all pertinent project information has been submitted for Endangered Species Act (ESA) (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) review, we recommend that you use the Project Review Submittal Checklist found here: <https://www.fws.gov/media/project-submittal-checklist>. ***Project submittals will not be reviewed until all pertinent project information has been submitted.***

It is preferred that all project reviews be submitted via email to fw5es_nyfo@fws.gov. If you are unable to submit documents electronically, please mail them to the appropriate office at one of the addresses in the Contact Information section below.

May 8, 2023

As a reminder, sections 9 (Prohibited Acts) and 4(d) (Regulations deemed necessary and advisable to provide for the conservation of threatened species) of the ESA establish protections for endangered and threatened species, respectively¹. If you have questions regarding section 9 and/or 4(d) rules, contact either office. Additionally, section 7(a)(2) of the ESA, requires **Federal agencies**, in consultation with the Service, to ensure that any action they permit, authorize, fund, or carry out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat.

For **non-federal projects**, those not permitted, authorized, funded, or carried out by a Federal agency, we provide technical assistance to individuals and other non-federal entities to assist with project planning to avoid the potential for “take”² or when appropriate, to assist with an incidental take permit application pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA.

To avoid potentially impacting federally listed species or causing unauthorized “take” to federal listed species (under section 9 or 4(d)), we encourage project sponsors to ensure all requirements of the ESA have been fulfilled prior to finalizing project plans. If you have any questions or require further assistance regarding threatened and endangered species, please contact the LIFO or NYFO Endangered Species Programs at the contact information below. Please refer to the above Project Number (if provided) or the Project Name in any future correspondence.

Contact Information:

Long Island Field Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
340 Smith Rd.
Shirley, NY 11967
631-286-0485

New York Field Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
3817 Luker Rd.
Cortland, NY 13045
607-753-9334

¹ Without a 4(d) rule, threatened species do not receive section 9 protections. For more information see: https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/section-4d-rules_0.pdf

² Take is defined in section 3 of the ESA as harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
New York Ecological Services Field Office
3817 Luker Road
Cortland, NY 13045-9385
Phone: (607) 753-9334 Fax: (607) 753-9699
Email Address: fw5es_nyfo@fws.gov

In Reply Refer To:

07/29/2024 17:19:33 UTC

Project Code: 2024-0093860

Project Name: EA for FOCUS Study Implementation and Expanded Herbicide Application at NFARS

Subject: List of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed species list identifies threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, as well as proposed and final designated critical habitat, that may occur within the boundary of your proposed project and/or may be affected by your proposed project. The species list fulfills the requirements of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

New information based on updated surveys, changes in the abundance and distribution of species, changed habitat conditions, or other factors could change this list. Please feel free to contact us if you need more current information or assistance regarding the potential impacts to federally proposed, listed, and candidate species and federally designated and proposed critical habitat. Please note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the accuracy of this species list should be verified after 90 days. This verification can be completed formally or informally as desired. The Service recommends that verification be completed by visiting the IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists and information. An updated list may be requested through the IPaC system by completing the same process used to receive the enclosed list.

The purpose of the Act is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend may be conserved. Under sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(2) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 *et seq.*), Federal agencies are required to utilize their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and to determine whether projects may affect threatened and endangered species and/or designated critical habitat.

A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)). For projects other than major construction activities, the Service suggests that a biological evaluation similar to a Biological Assessment be prepared to determine whether the project may affect listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat. Recommended contents of a Biological Assessment are described at 50 CFR 402.12.

If a Federal agency determines, based on the Biological Assessment or biological evaluation, that listed species and/or designated critical habitat may be affected by the proposed project, the agency is required to consult with the Service pursuant to 50 CFR 402. In addition, the Service recommends that candidate species, proposed species and proposed critical habitat be addressed within the consultation. More information on the regulations and procedures for section 7 consultation, including the role of permit or license applicants, can be found in the "Endangered Species Consultation Handbook" at:

<https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/endangered-species-consultation-handbook.pdf>

Migratory Birds: In addition to responsibilities to protect threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), there are additional responsibilities under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) to protect native birds from project-related impacts. Any activity, intentional or unintentional, resulting in take of migratory birds, including eagles, is prohibited unless otherwise permitted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (50 C.F.R. Sec. 10.12 and 16 U.S.C. Sec. 668(a)). For more information regarding these Acts see <https://www.fws.gov/program/migratory-bird-permit/what-we-do>.

The MBTA has no provision for allowing take of migratory birds that may be unintentionally killed or injured by otherwise lawful activities. It is the responsibility of the project proponent to comply with these Acts by identifying potential impacts to migratory birds and eagles within applicable NEPA documents (when there is a federal nexus) or a Bird/Eagle Conservation Plan (when there is no federal nexus). Proponents should implement conservation measures to avoid or minimize the production of project-related stressors or minimize the exposure of birds and their resources to the project-related stressors. For more information on avian stressors and recommended conservation measures see <https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/threats-birds>.

In addition to MBTA and BGEPA, Executive Order 13186: *Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds*, obligates all Federal agencies that engage in or authorize activities that might affect migratory birds, to minimize those effects and encourage conservation measures that will improve bird populations. Executive Order 13186 provides for the protection of both migratory birds and migratory bird habitat. For information regarding the implementation of Executive Order 13186, please visit <https://www.fws.gov/partner/council-conservation-migratory-birds>.

We appreciate your concern for threatened and endangered species. The Service encourages Federal agencies to include conservation of threatened and endangered species into their project

planning to further the purposes of the Act. **Please include the Consultation Code in the header of this letter with any request for consultation or correspondence about your project that you submit to our office.**

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List

OFFICIAL SPECIES LIST

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

New York Ecological Services Field Office
3817 Luker Road
Cortland, NY 13045-9385
(607) 753-9334

PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Code: 2024-0093860

Project Name: EA for FOCUS Study Implementation and Expanded Herbicide Application at NFARS

Project Type: Military Development

Project Description: The U.S. Air Force Reserve Command is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the implementation of four projects outlined in the Facilities Operations Capability and Utilization Survey (FOCUS) study and the expansion of herbicide application activity at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS) in order to meet training requirements and conduct airfield operations to support the 914 Air Refueling Wing.

Project Location:

The approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/@43.115261700000005,-78.94786775,14z>



Counties: Niagara County, New York

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT SPECIES

There is a total of 4 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on this species list.

Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species. Note that 1 of these species should be considered only under certain conditions.

IPaC does not display listed species or critical habitats under the sole jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries¹, as USFWS does not have the authority to speak on behalf of NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

-
1. [NOAA Fisheries](#), also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

MAMMALS

NAME	STATUS
Northern Long-eared Bat <i>Myotis septentrionalis</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. This species only needs to be considered under the following conditions: ▪ This species only needs to be considered if the project includes wind turbine operations. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9045	Endangered
Tricolored Bat <i>Perimyotis subflavus</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/10515	Proposed Endangered

CLAMS

NAME	STATUS
Salamander Mussel <i>Simpsonaias ambigua</i> There is proposed critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6208	Proposed Endangered

INSECTS

NAME	STATUS
Monarch Butterfly <i>Danaus plexippus</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9743	Candidate

CRITICAL HABITATS

THERE ARE NO CRITICAL HABITATS WITHIN YOUR PROJECT AREA UNDER THIS OFFICE'S JURISDICTION.

YOU ARE STILL REQUIRED TO DETERMINE IF YOUR PROJECT(S) MAY HAVE EFFECTS ON ALL ABOVE LISTED SPECIES.

IPAC USER CONTACT INFORMATION

Agency: AECOM
Name: Tara Boyd
Address: 4840 Cox Rd
City: Glen Allen
State: VA
Zip: 23060
Email: tara.boyd@aecom.com
Phone: 2036853220

LEAD AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Lead Agency: Air Force

IPaC resource list

This report is an automatically generated list of species and other resources such as critical habitat (collectively referred to as *trust resources*) under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) jurisdiction that are known or expected to be on or near the project area referenced below. The list may also include trust resources that occur outside of the project area, but that could potentially be directly or indirectly affected by activities in the project area. However, determining the likelihood and extent of effects a project may have on trust resources typically requires gathering additional site-specific (e.g., vegetation/species surveys) and project-specific (e.g., magnitude and timing of proposed activities) information.

Below is a summary of the project information you provided and contact information for the USFWS office(s) with jurisdiction in the defined project area. Please read the introduction to each section that follows (Endangered Species, Migratory Birds, USFWS Facilities, and NWI Wetlands) for additional information applicable to the trust resources addressed in that section.

Project information

NAME

EA for FOCUS Study Implementation and Expanded Herbicide Application at NFARS

LOCATION

Niagara County, New York



DESCRIPTION

Some(The U.S. Air Force Reserve Command is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the implementation of four projects outlined in the Facilities Operations Capability and Utilization Survey (FOCUS) study and the expansion of herbicide

application activity at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS) in order to meet training requirements and conduct airfield operations to support the 914 Air Refueling Wing.)

Local office

New York Ecological Services Field Office

☎ (607) 753-9334

📠 (607) 753-9699

✉ fw5es_nyfo@fws.gov

3817 Luker Road

Cortland, NY 13045-9385

NOT FOR CONSULTATION

Endangered species

This resource list is for informational purposes only and does not constitute an analysis of project level impacts.

The primary information used to generate this list is the known or expected range of each species. Additional areas of influence (AOI) for species are also considered. An AOI includes areas outside of the species range if the species could be indirectly affected by activities in that area (e.g., placing a dam upstream of a fish population even if that fish does not occur at the dam site, may indirectly impact the species by reducing or eliminating water flow downstream). Because species can move, and site conditions can change, the species on this list are not guaranteed to be found on or near the project area. To fully determine any potential effects to species, additional site-specific and project-specific information is often required.

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act **requires** Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of such proposed action" for any project that is conducted, permitted, funded, or licensed by any Federal agency. A letter from the local office and a species list which fulfills this requirement can **only** be obtained by requesting an official species list from either the Regulatory Review section in IPaC (see directions below) or from the local field office directly.

For project evaluations that require USFWS concurrence/review, please return to the IPaC website and request an official species list by doing the following:

1. Log in to IPaC.
2. Go to your My Projects list.
3. Click PROJECT HOME for this project.
4. Click REQUEST SPECIES LIST.

Listed species¹ and their critical habitats are managed by the [Ecological Services Program](#) of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the fisheries division of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA Fisheries²).

Species and critical habitats under the sole responsibility of NOAA Fisheries are **not** shown on this list. Please contact [NOAA Fisheries](#) for [species under their jurisdiction](#).

-
1. Species listed under the [Endangered Species Act](#) are threatened or endangered; IPaC also shows species that are candidates, or proposed, for listing. See the [listing status page](#) for more information. IPaC only shows species that are regulated by USFWS (see FAQ).
 2. [NOAA Fisheries](#), also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of

Commerce.

The following species are potentially affected by activities in this location:

Mammals

NAME	STATUS
Northern Long-eared Bat <i>Myotis septentrionalis</i> Wherever found This species only needs to be considered if the following condition applies: This species only needs to be considered if the project includes wind turbine operations. No critical habitat has been designated for this species. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9045	Endangered
Tricolored Bat <i>Perimyotis subflavus</i> Wherever found No critical habitat has been designated for this species. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/10515	Proposed Endangered

Clams

NAME	STATUS
Salamander Mussel <i>Simpsonaias ambigua</i> Wherever found There is proposed critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6208	Proposed Endangered

Insects

NAME	STATUS
Monarch Butterfly <i>Danaus plexippus</i> Wherever found No critical habitat has been designated for this species. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9743	Candidate

Critical habitats

Potential effects to critical habitat(s) in this location must be analyzed along with the endangered species themselves.

There are no critical habitats at this location.

You are still required to determine if your project(s) may have effects on all above listed species.

Bald & Golden Eagles

Bald and golden eagles are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act¹ and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act².

Any person or organization who plans or conducts activities that may result in impacts to bald or golden eagles, or their habitats³, should follow appropriate regulations and consider implementing appropriate conservation measures, as described in the links below.

Specifically, please review the ["Supplemental Information on Migratory Birds and Eagles"](#).

Additional information can be found using the following links:

- Eagle Management <https://www.fws.gov/program/eagle-management>
- Measures for avoiding and minimizing impacts to birds
<https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/avoiding-and-minimizing-incidental-take-migratory-birds>
- Nationwide conservation measures for birds
<https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/nationwide-standard-conservation-measures.pdf>
- Supplemental Information for Migratory Birds and Eagles in IPaC
<https://www.fws.gov/media/supplemental-information-migratory-birds-and-bald-and-golden-eagles-may-occur-project-action>

There are likely bald eagles present in your project area. For additional information on bald eagles, refer to [Bald Eagle Nesting and Sensitivity to Human Activity](#).

For guidance on when to schedule activities or implement avoidance and minimization measures to reduce impacts to migratory birds on your list, see the PROBABILITY OF PRESENCE SUMMARY below to see when these birds are most likely to be present and breeding in your project area.

Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*

Breeds Dec 1 to Aug 31

This is not a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) in this area, but warrants attention because of the Eagle Act or for potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities.

<https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1626>

Probability of Presence Summary

The graphs below provide our best understanding of when birds of concern are most likely to be present in your project area. This information can be used to tailor and schedule your project activities to avoid or minimize impacts to birds. Please make sure you read ["Supplemental Information on Migratory Birds and Eagles"](#), specifically the FAQ section titled "Proper Interpretation and Use of Your Migratory Bird Report" before using or attempting to interpret this report.

Probability of Presence (■)

Each green bar represents the bird's relative probability of presence in the 10km grid cell(s) your project overlaps during a particular week of the year. (A year is represented as 12 4-week months.) A taller bar indicates a higher probability of species presence. The survey effort (see below) can be used to establish a level of confidence in the presence score. One can have higher confidence in the presence score if the corresponding survey effort is also high.

How is the probability of presence score calculated? The calculation is done in three steps:

1. The probability of presence for each week is calculated as the number of survey events in the week where the species was detected divided by the total number of survey events for that week. For example, if in week 12 there were 20 survey events and the Spotted Towhee was found in 5 of them, the probability of presence of the Spotted Towhee in week 12 is 0.25.
2. To properly present the pattern of presence across the year, the relative probability of presence is calculated. This is the probability of presence divided by the maximum probability of presence across all weeks. For example, imagine the probability of presence in week 20 for the Spotted Towhee is 0.05, and that the probability of presence at week 12 (0.25) is the maximum of any week of the year. The relative probability of presence on week 12 is $0.25/0.25 = 1$; at week 20 it is $0.05/0.25 = 0.2$.
3. The relative probability of presence calculated in the previous step undergoes a statistical conversion so that all possible values fall between 0 and 10, inclusive. This is the probability of presence score.

To see a bar's probability of presence score, simply hover your mouse cursor over the bar.

Breeding Season (■)

Yellow bars denote a very liberal estimate of the time-frame inside which the bird breeds across its entire range. If there are no yellow bars shown for a bird, it does not breed in your project area.

Survey Effort (I)

Vertical black lines superimposed on probability of presence bars indicate the number of surveys performed for that species in the 10km grid cell(s) your project area overlaps. The number of surveys is expressed as a range, for example, 33 to 64 surveys.

To see a bar's survey effort range, simply hover your mouse cursor over the bar.

No Data (—)

A week is marked as having no data if there were no survey events for that week.

Survey Timeframe

Surveys from only the last 10 years are used in order to ensure delivery of currently relevant information. The exception to this is areas off the Atlantic coast, where bird returns are based on all years of available data, since data in these areas is currently much more sparse.



What does IPaC use to generate the potential presence of bald and golden eagles in my specified location?

The potential for eagle presence is derived from data provided by the [Avian Knowledge Network \(AKN\)](#). The AKN data is based on a growing collection of [survey, banding, and citizen science datasets](#) and is queried and filtered to return a list of those birds reported as occurring in the 10km grid cell(s) which your project intersects, and that have been identified as warranting special attention because they are a BCC species in that area, an eagle ([Eagle Act](#) requirements may apply). To see a list of all birds potentially present in your project area, please visit the [Rapid Avian Information Locator \(RAIL\) Tool](#).

What does IPaC use to generate the probability of presence graphs of bald and golden eagles in my specified location?

The Migratory Bird Resource List is comprised of USFWS [Birds of Conservation Concern \(BCC\)](#) and other species that may warrant special attention in your project location.

The migratory bird list generated for your project is derived from data provided by the [Avian Knowledge Network \(AKN\)](#). The AKN data is based on a growing collection of [survey, banding, and citizen science datasets](#) and is queried and filtered to return a list of those birds reported as occurring in the 10km grid cell(s) which your project intersects, and that have been identified as warranting special attention because they are a BCC species in that area, an eagle ([Eagle Act](#) requirements may apply), or a species that has a particular vulnerability to offshore activities or development.

Again, the Migratory Bird Resource list includes only a subset of birds that may occur in your project area. It is not representative of all birds that may occur in your project area. To get a list of all birds potentially present in your project area, please visit the [Rapid Avian Information Locator \(RAIL\) Tool](#).

What if I have eagles on my list?

If your project has the potential to disturb or kill eagles, you may need to obtain a permit to avoid violating the [Eagle Act](#) should such impacts occur. Please contact your local Fish and Wildlife Service Field Office if you have questions.

Migratory birds

Certain birds are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act¹ and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act².

Any person or organization who plans or conducts activities that may result in impacts to migratory birds, eagles, and their habitats³ should follow appropriate regulations and consider implementing appropriate conservation measures, as described in the links below. Specifically, please review the ["Supplemental Information on Migratory Birds and Eagles"](#).

1. The [Migratory Birds Treaty Act](#) of 1918.
2. The [Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act](#) of 1940.

Additional information can be found using the following links:

- Eagle Management <https://www.fws.gov/program/eagle-management>
- Measures for avoiding and minimizing impacts to birds
<https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/avoiding-and-minimizing-incidental-take-migratory-birds>
- Nationwide conservation measures for birds <https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/nationwide-standard-conservation-measures.pdf>
- Supplemental Information for Migratory Birds and Eagles in IPaC
<https://www.fws.gov/media/supplemental-information-migratory-birds-and-bald-and-golden-eagles-may-occur-project-action>

The birds listed below are birds of particular concern either because they occur on the [USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern](#) (BCC) list or warrant special attention in your project location. To learn more about the levels of concern for birds on your list and how this list is generated, see the FAQ [below](#). This is not a list of every bird you may find in this location, nor a guarantee that every bird on this list will be found in your project area. To see exact locations of where birders and the general public have sighted birds in and around your project area, visit the [E-bird data mapping tool](#) (Tip: enter your location, desired date range and a species on your list). For projects that occur off the Atlantic Coast, additional maps and models detailing the relative occurrence and abundance of bird species on your

list are available. Links to additional information about Atlantic Coast birds, and other important information about your migratory bird list, including how to properly interpret and use your migratory bird report, can be found [below](#).

For guidance on when to schedule activities or implement avoidance and minimization measures to reduce impacts to migratory birds on your list, see the PROBABILITY OF PRESENCE SUMMARY below to see when these birds are most likely to be present and breeding in your project area.

NAME	BREEDING SEASON
Bald Eagle <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> This is not a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) in this area, but warrants attention because of the Eagle Act or for potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1626	Breeds Dec 1 to Aug 31
Belted Kingfisher <i>Megasceryle alcyon</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA	Breeds Mar 15 to Jul 25
Blue-winged Warbler <i>Vermivora cyanoptera</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA	Breeds May 1 to Jun 30
Bobolink <i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.	Breeds May 20 to Jul 31
Chimney Swift <i>Chaetura pelagica</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.	Breeds Mar 15 to Aug 25
Eastern Meadowlark <i>Sturnella magna</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA	Breeds Apr 25 to Aug 31
Lesser Yellowlegs <i>Tringa flavipes</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9679	Breeds elsewhere

Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus*

Breeds May 15 to Jul 31

This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*

Breeds elsewhere

This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA

Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus*

Breeds elsewhere

This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.

<https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9480>

Wood Thrush *Hylocichla mustelina*

Breeds May 10 to Aug 31

This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.

Probability of Presence Summary

The graphs below provide our best understanding of when birds of concern are most likely to be present in your project area. This information can be used to tailor and schedule your project activities to avoid or minimize impacts to birds. Please make sure you read ["Supplemental Information on Migratory Birds and Eagles"](#), specifically the FAQ section titled "Proper Interpretation and Use of Your Migratory Bird Report" before using or attempting to interpret this report.

Probability of Presence (■)

Each green bar represents the bird's relative probability of presence in the 10km grid cell(s) your project overlaps during a particular week of the year. (A year is represented as 12 4-week months.) A taller bar indicates a higher probability of species presence. The survey effort (see below) can be used to establish a level of confidence in the presence score. One can have higher confidence in the presence score if the corresponding survey effort is also high.

How is the probability of presence score calculated? The calculation is done in three steps:

1. The probability of presence for each week is calculated as the number of survey events in the week where the species was detected divided by the total number of survey events for that week. For example, if in week 12 there were 20 survey events and the Spotted Towhee was found in 5 of them, the probability of presence of the Spotted Towhee in week 12 is 0.25.
2. To properly present the pattern of presence across the year, the relative probability of presence is calculated. This is the probability of presence divided by the maximum probability of presence across all weeks. For example, imagine the probability of presence

in week 20 for the Spotted Towhee is 0.05, and that the probability of presence at week 12 (0.25) is the maximum of any week of the year. The relative probability of presence on week 12 is $0.25/0.25 = 1$; at week 20 it is $0.05/0.25 = 0.2$.

3. The relative probability of presence calculated in the previous step undergoes a statistical conversion so that all possible values fall between 0 and 10, inclusive. This is the probability of presence score.

To see a bar's probability of presence score, simply hover your mouse cursor over the bar.

Breeding Season (■)

Yellow bars denote a very liberal estimate of the time-frame inside which the bird breeds across its entire range. If there are no yellow bars shown for a bird, it does not breed in your project area.

Survey Effort (I)

Vertical black lines superimposed on probability of presence bars indicate the number of surveys performed for that species in the 10km grid cell(s) your project area overlaps. The number of surveys is expressed as a range, for example, 33 to 64 surveys.

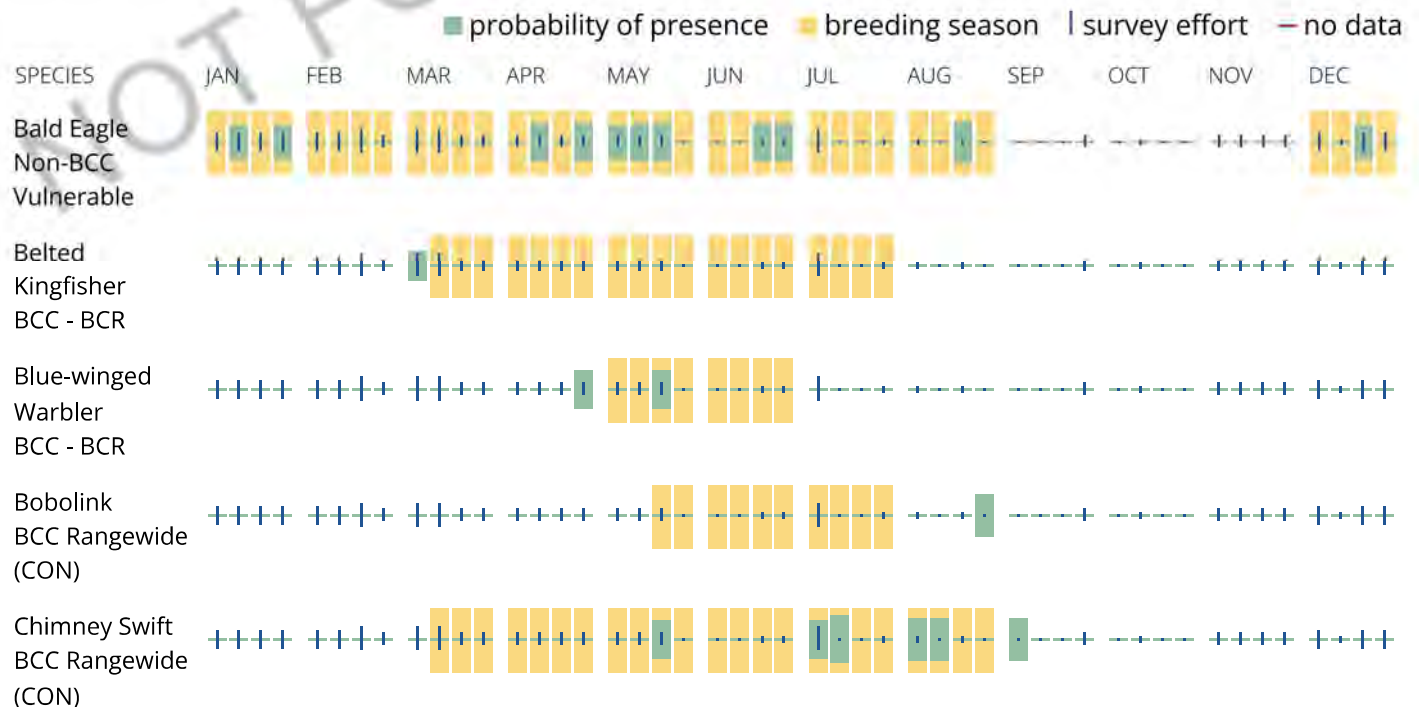
To see a bar's survey effort range, simply hover your mouse cursor over the bar.

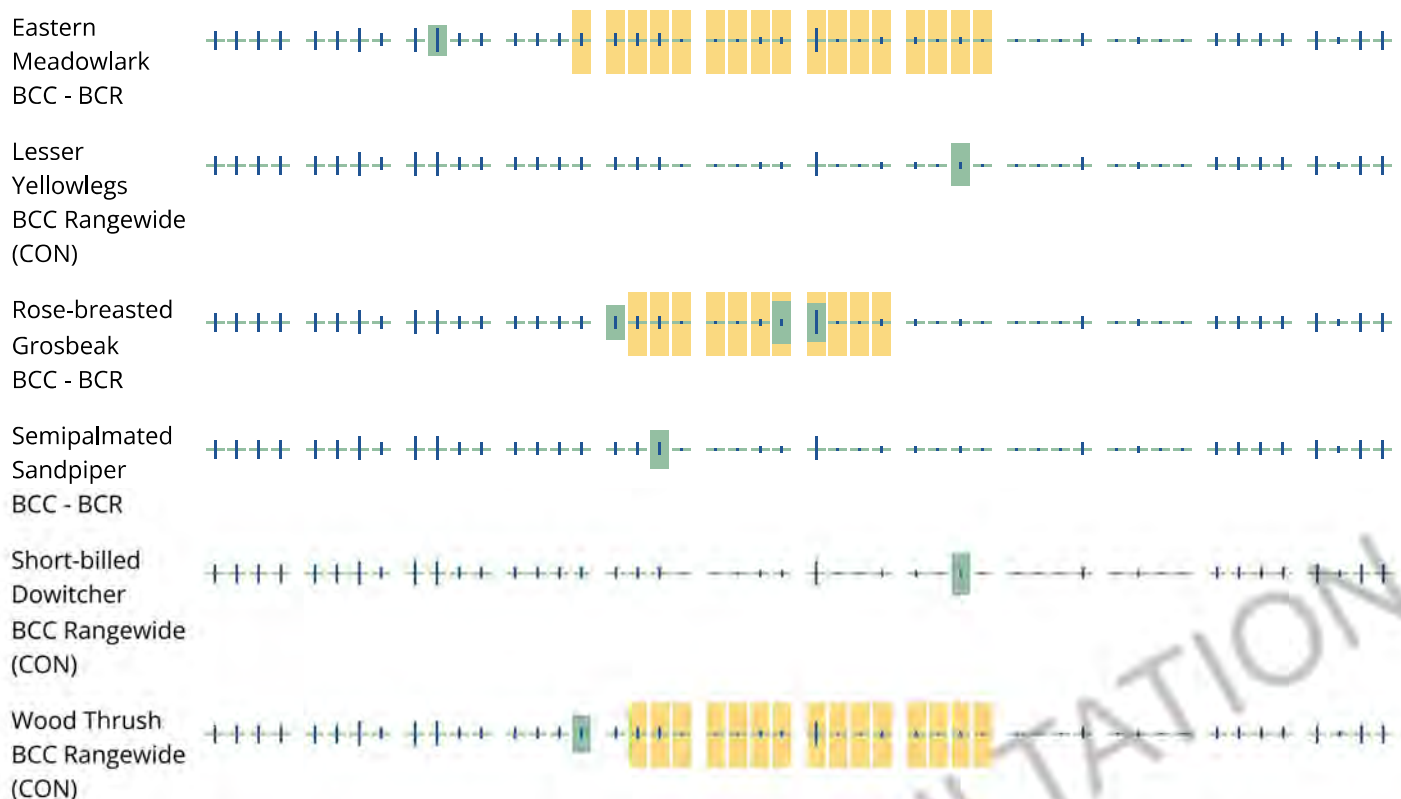
No Data (—)

A week is marked as having no data if there were no survey events for that week.

Survey Timeframe

Surveys from only the last 10 years are used in order to ensure delivery of currently relevant information. The exception to this is areas off the Atlantic coast, where bird returns are based on all years of available data, since data in these areas is currently much more sparse.





Tell me more about conservation measures I can implement to avoid or minimize impacts to migratory birds.

[Nationwide Conservation Measures](#) describes measures that can help avoid and minimize impacts to all birds at any location year round. Implementation of these measures is particularly important when birds are most likely to occur in the project area. When birds may be breeding in the area, identifying the locations of any active nests and avoiding their destruction is a very helpful impact minimization measure. To see when birds are most likely to occur and be breeding in your project area, view the Probability of Presence Summary. [Additional measures](#) or [permits](#) may be advisable depending on the type of activity you are conducting and the type of infrastructure or bird species present on your project site.

What does IPaC use to generate the list of migratory birds that potentially occur in my specified location?

The Migratory Bird Resource List is comprised of USFWS [Birds of Conservation Concern \(BCC\)](#) and other species that may warrant special attention in your project location.

The migratory bird list generated for your project is derived from data provided by the [Avian Knowledge Network \(AKN\)](#). The AKN data is based on a growing collection of [survey, banding, and citizen science datasets](#) and is queried and filtered to return a list of those birds reported as occurring in the 10km grid cell(s) which your project intersects, and that have been identified as warranting special attention because they are a BCC species in that area, an eagle ([Eagle Act](#) requirements may apply), or a species that has a particular vulnerability to offshore activities or development.

Again, the Migratory Bird Resource list includes only a subset of birds that may occur in your project area. It is not representative of all birds that may occur in your project area. To get a list of all birds potentially present in your project area, please visit the [Rapid Avian Information Locator \(RAIL\) Tool](#).

What does IPaC use to generate the probability of presence graphs for the migratory birds potentially occurring in my specified location?

The probability of presence graphs associated with your migratory bird list are based on data provided by the [Avian Knowledge Network \(AKN\)](#). This data is derived from a growing collection of [survey, banding, and citizen science datasets](#).

Probability of presence data is continuously being updated as new and better information becomes available. To learn more about how the probability of presence graphs are produced and how to interpret them, go to the Probability of Presence Summary and then click on the "Tell me about these graphs" link.

How do I know if a bird is breeding, wintering or migrating in my area?

To see what part of a particular bird's range your project area falls within (i.e. breeding, wintering, migrating or year-round), you may query your location using the [RAIL Tool](#) and look at the range maps provided for birds in your area at the bottom of the profiles provided for each bird in your results. If a bird on your migratory bird species list has a breeding season associated with it, if that bird does occur in your project area, there may be nests present at some point within the timeframe specified. If "Breeds elsewhere" is indicated, then the bird likely does not breed in your project area.

What are the levels of concern for migratory birds?

Migratory birds delivered through IPaC fall into the following distinct categories of concern:

1. "BCC Rangewide" birds are [Birds of Conservation Concern](#) (BCC) that are of concern throughout their range anywhere within the USA (including Hawaii, the Pacific Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands);
2. "BCC - BCR" birds are BCCs that are of concern only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA; and
3. "Non-BCC - Vulnerable" birds are not BCC species in your project area, but appear on your list either because of the [Eagle Act](#) requirements (for eagles) or (for non-eagles) potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities (e.g. offshore energy development or longline fishing).

Although it is important to try to avoid and minimize impacts to all birds, efforts should be made, in particular, to avoid and minimize impacts to the birds on this list, especially eagles and BCC species of rangewide concern. For more information on conservation measures you can implement to help avoid and minimize migratory bird impacts and requirements for eagles, please see the FAQs for these topics.

Details about birds that are potentially affected by offshore projects

For additional details about the relative occurrence and abundance of both individual bird species and groups of bird species within your project area off the Atlantic Coast, please visit the [Northeast Ocean Data Portal](#). The Portal also offers data and information about other taxa besides birds that may be helpful to you in your project review. Alternately, you may download the bird model results files underlying the portal maps through the [NOAA NCCOS Integrative Statistical Modeling and Predictive Mapping of Marine Bird Distributions and Abundance on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf](#) project webpage.

Bird tracking data can also provide additional details about occurrence and habitat use throughout the year, including migration. Models relying on survey data may not include this information. For additional information on marine bird tracking data, see the [Diving Bird Study](#) and the [nanotag studies](#) or contact

[Caleb Spiegel](#) or [Pam Loring](#).

What if I have eagles on my list?

If your project has the potential to disturb or kill eagles, you may need to [obtain a permit](#) to avoid violating the Eagle Act should such impacts occur.

Proper Interpretation and Use of Your Migratory Bird Report

The migratory bird list generated is not a list of all birds in your project area, only a subset of birds of priority concern. To learn more about how your list is generated, and see options for identifying what other birds may be in your project area, please see the FAQ "What does IPaC use to generate the migratory birds potentially occurring in my specified location". Please be aware this report provides the "probability of presence" of birds within the 10 km grid cell(s) that overlap your project; not your exact project footprint. On the graphs provided, please also look carefully at the survey effort (indicated by the black vertical bar) and for the existence of the "no data" indicator (a red horizontal bar). A high survey effort is the key component. If the survey effort is high, then the probability of presence score can be viewed as more dependable. In contrast, a low survey effort bar or no data bar means a lack of data and, therefore, a lack of certainty about presence of the species. This list is not perfect; it is simply a starting point for identifying what birds of concern have the potential to be in your project area, when they might be there, and if they might be breeding (which means nests might be present). The list helps you know what to look for to confirm presence, and helps guide you in knowing when to implement conservation measures to avoid or minimize potential impacts from your project activities, should presence be confirmed. To learn more about conservation measures, visit the FAQ "Tell me about conservation measures I can implement to avoid or minimize impacts to migratory birds" at the bottom of your migratory bird trust resources page.

Facilities

National Wildlife Refuge lands

Any activity proposed on lands managed by the [National Wildlife Refuge](#) system must undergo a 'Compatibility Determination' conducted by the Refuge. Please contact the individual Refuges to discuss any questions or concerns.

There are no refuge lands at this location.

Fish hatcheries

There are no fish hatcheries at this location.

Wetlands in the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI)

Impacts to [NWI wetlands](#) and other aquatic habitats may be subject to regulation under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, or other State/Federal statutes.

For more information please contact the Regulatory Program of the local [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers District](#).

Please note that the NWI data being shown may be out of date. We are currently working to update our NWI data set. We recommend you verify these results with a site visit to determine the actual extent of wetlands on site.

This location overlaps the following wetlands:

RIVERINE

[R4SBCx](#)

A full description for each wetland code can be found at the [National Wetlands Inventory website](#)

NOTE: This initial screening does **not** replace an on-site delineation to determine whether wetlands occur. Additional information on the NWI data is provided below.

Data limitations

The Service's objective of mapping wetlands and deepwater habitats is to produce reconnaissance level information on the location, type and size of these resources. The maps are prepared from the analysis of high altitude imagery. Wetlands are identified based on vegetation, visible hydrology and geography. A margin of error is inherent in the use of imagery; thus, detailed on-the-ground inspection of any particular site may result in revision of the wetland boundaries or classification established through image analysis.

The accuracy of image interpretation depends on the quality of the imagery, the experience of the image analysts, the amount and quality of the collateral data and the amount of ground truth verification work conducted. Metadata should be consulted to determine the date of the source imagery used and any mapping problems.

Wetlands or other mapped features may have changed since the date of the imagery or field work. There may be occasional differences in polygon boundaries or classifications between the information depicted on the map and the actual conditions on site.

Data exclusions

Certain wetland habitats are excluded from the National mapping program because of the limitations of aerial imagery as the primary data source used to detect wetlands. These habitats include seagrasses or submerged aquatic vegetation that are found in the intertidal and subtidal zones of estuaries and

nearshore coastal waters. Some deepwater reef communities (coral or tubercid worm reefs) have also been excluded from the inventory. These habitats, because of their depth, go undetected by aerial imagery.

Data precautions

Federal, state, and local regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over wetlands may define and describe wetlands in a different manner than that used in this inventory. There is no attempt, in either the design or products of this inventory, to define the limits of proprietary jurisdiction of any Federal, state, or local government or to establish the geographical scope of the regulatory programs of government agencies. Persons intending to engage in activities involving modifications within or adjacent to wetland areas should seek the advice of appropriate Federal, state, or local agencies concerning specified agency regulatory programs and proprietary jurisdictions that may affect such activities.

NOT FOR CONSULTATION

Species Conclusions Table – This table is intended to help you provide the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with information regarding federally listed species identified on our Information, Planning, and Consultation (IPaC) Program's official species list¹.

Project Name: Environmental Assessment for Implementation of the Facilities Operations Capability and Utilization Survey (FOCUS) Study and Herbicide Application, Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS)

Project Proponent/Agency: U.S. Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC)

IPaC Project Code: 2024-0093860

Date: May 22, 2024

Species Name	Potential Habitat Present? ²	Species Present? ²	Piping Plover Critical Habitat Present? ³	Endangered Species Act Effect Determination(s) (REQUIRED) (e.g., <u>Section 7</u> : no effect, may affect but not likely to adversely affect, may affect, likely to adversely affect, may affect <u>Section 10</u> : no take, take	Bald Eagle presence and effect determination [If applicable] ⁴ (e.g., no take, take)	Notes / Documentation Summary (include full rationale for your determination(s) for each species and provide supporting conservation measures, if applicable (including numbers/acres of tree clearing if bats are identified, time of year dates for cutting trees, etc.)
Northern long-eared bat (<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>)	No	No	N/A	No effect	N/A	No forested areas are present within the action area at NFARS that would provide suitable habitat for the northern long-eared bat. No tree removal would occur under the Proposed Action.
Tricolored bat (<i>Perimyotis subflavus</i>)	No	No	N/A	No effect	N/A	No forested areas or caves and mines are present within the action area at NFARS that would provide suitable habitat for the tricolored bat. No tree removal would occur under the Proposed Action.
Salamander mussel (<i>Simpsonaias ambigua</i>)	No	No	N/A	No effect	N/A	An intermittent, unnamed tributary of Cayuga Creek flows through NFARS. There are no perennially flowing river habitats located within the action area that could provide suitable habitat for the salamander mussel.

¹ More information about IPaC can be found here: <https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/>

² Please see this page: <https://www.fws.gov/office/new-york-ecological-services-field/new-york-project-reviews>, and go to step 4 to obtain protocols on how to assess for federally listed species habitat and/or conduct species presence/probable absence surveys.

³ Currently, the only federally designated critical habitat in New York State is for the Great Lakes breeding population of the piping plover, which occurs along 17 miles of Lake Ontario shoreline in Oswego and Jefferson Counties.

⁴ National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines- link: https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/national-bald-eagle-management-guidelines_0.pdf

Species Name	Potential Habitat Present? ²	Species Present? ²	Piping Plover Critical Habitat Present? ³	Endangered Species Act Effect Determination(s) (REQUIRED) (e.g., <u>Section 7</u> : no effect, may affect but not likely to adversely affect, may affect, likely to adversely affect, may affect <u>Section 10</u> : no take, take)	Bald Eagle presence and effect determination [If applicable] ⁴ (e.g., no take, take)	Notes / Documentation Summary (include full rationale for your determination(s) for each species and provide supporting conservation measures, if applicable (including numbers/acres of tree clearing if bats are identified, time of year dates for cutting trees, etc.)
Monarch butterfly (<i>Danaus plexippus</i>)	No	No	N/A	No effect	N/A	Extensively mowed and paved areas present at NFARS do not provide suitable habitat for the monarch butterfly.
Bald eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>)	No		N/A	N/A	Unlikely to disturb nesting bald eagles	New York Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP) did not identify the presence of any bald eagles in the vicinity of the action area. No suitable habitat is present at NFARS.

APPENDIX B: NATIVE AMERICAN CONSULTATION

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
914TH AIR REFUELING WING
NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION

July 3, 2024

Col Joseph P. Contino
914ARW/CC
Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station
2720 Kirkbridge Drive
Niagara Falls NY 14304

President Rickey Armstrong, Sr.
Seneca Nation of Indians
90 Ohi:Yo' Way
Salamanca NY 14779

Dear President Armstrong

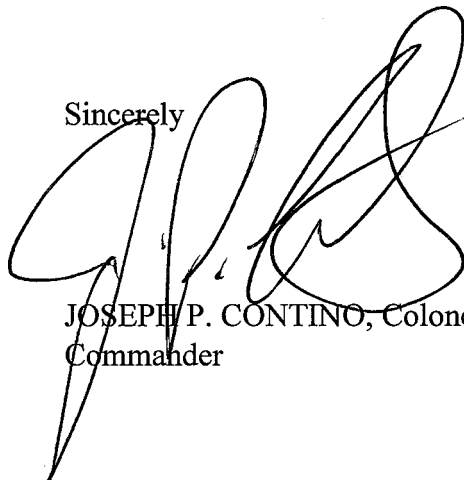
The Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) and Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS) are preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Facilities Operations Capability and Utilization Survey (FOCUS) Study Implementation (Four Construction Projects) and Expanded Herbicide Application, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. The EA will analyze the potential environmental consequences associated with implementing four proposed construction projects outlined in the FOCUS Study and performing the proposed expanded herbicide application on base to meet training requirements and conduct operations required to support the NFARS. The need for the Proposed Action is described in the attached Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives (DOPAA; see **Attachment 1**).

This letter and the attached DOPAA are being sent as part of the scoping process for the FOCUS Study Implementation (Four Construction Projects) and Extended Herbicide Application EA. We are sending this DOPAA for your input, so we can address and analyze any issues of concern in the EA. We respectfully request your review and comments in accordance with Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments. Please provide written comments or information regarding the action at your earliest convenience but no later than 30 days from the receipt of this letter.

We will inform you when the Draft EA is available for review, which is anticipated to be in September 2024.

Please submit your comments electronically to: Ms. Kim Powell, Chief, Environmental Flight, at kimberly.powell@us.af.mil.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by 'P. CONTINO' and a long, sweeping underline.

JOSEPH P. CONTINO, Colonel, USAF
Commander

Attachment:

1. DOPAA, June 2024



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
914TH AIR REFUELING WING
NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION

July 3, 2024

Col Joseph P. Contino
914 ARW/CC
Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station
2720 Kirkbridge Drive
Niagara Falls NY 14304

Chief Charles Diebold
Seneca-Cayuga Nation
23701 South 655 Road
Grove OK 74344

Dear Chief Diebold

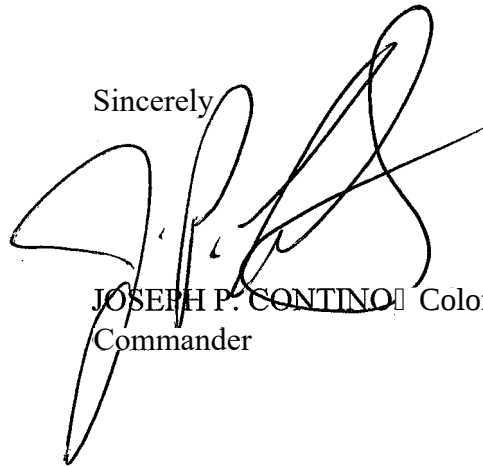
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JOSEPH P. CONTINO, Colonel, USAF
Commander

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1. DOPAA, June 2024



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
914TH AIR REFUELING WING
NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION

July 3, 2024

Col Joseph P. Contino
914 ARW/CC
Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station
2720 Kirkbridge Drive
Niagara Falls NY 14304

Chief Tom Jonathan
Tuscarora Nation
5226 Wahnore Road
Lewistown NY 14092

Dear Chief Jonathan

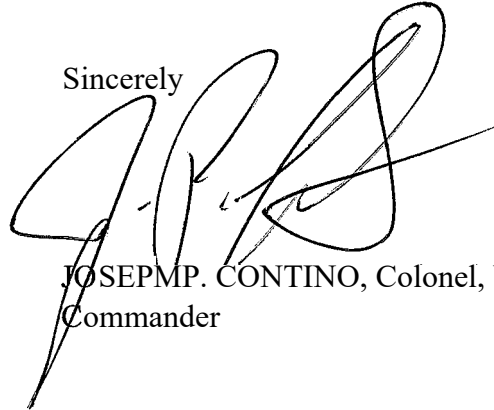
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Sincerely

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JOSEPH M. CONTINO, Colonel, USAF
Commander

Attachment:

1. DOPAA, June 2024



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
914TH AIR REFUELING WING
NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION

July 3, 2024

Col Joseph P. Contino
914 ARW/CC
Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station
2720 Kirkbridge Drive
Niagara Falls NY 14304

Chief Roger Hill
Tonawanda Band of Seneca
Meadville Road
BasomNY 14013

Dear Chief Hill

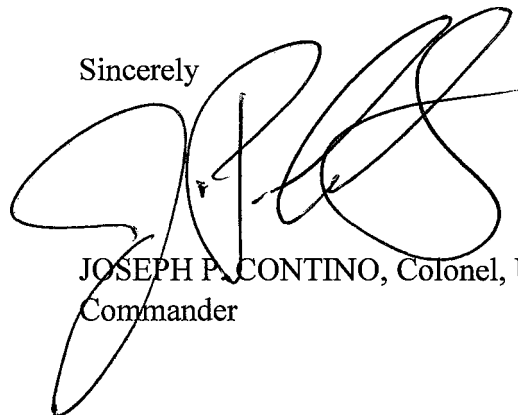
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JOSEPH P. CONTINO, Colonel, USAF
Commander

Attachment:

1. DOPAA, June 2024



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
914TH AIR REFUELING WING
NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION

July 3, 2024

Col Joseph P. Contino
914 ARW/CC
Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station
2720 Kirkbridge Drive
Niagara Falls NY 14304

Clint Halftown
Federal Representative
Cayuga Nation of New York
P.O. Box 803
Seneca Falls NY 13148

Dear Mr. Halftown

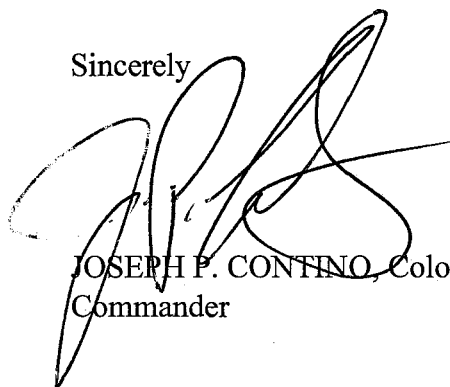
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JOSEPH P. CONTINO, Colonel, USAF
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Attachment:

1. DOPAA, June 2024

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND
ALTERNATIVES**

FOR

**FOCUS Study Implementation (Four Construction Projects)
and Expanded Herbicide Application at
Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station**

Final



PREPARED BY:
U.S. Air Force

June 2024

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFFF	Aqueous Film Forming Foam	HVAC	Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
AMCSUP	Air Mobility Command Supplement	IICEP	Interagency and Intergovernmental Coordination for Environmental Planning
AFI	Air Force Instruction	MXG	Maintenance Group
AFR	Air Force Reserve	NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
AFRC	Air Force Reserve Command	NFARS	Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station
AGE	Aerospace Ground Equipment	NFIA	Niagara Falls International Airport
ANG	Army National Guard	NFTA	Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority
ARW	Air Refueling Wing	NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
ATKW	Attack Wing	NOA	Notice of Availability
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality	NYSDEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	SAF/IE	Secretary of the Air Force – Energy, Installations, and Environment
CMU	Concrete Masonry Unit	U.S.	United States
CS	Communications Squadron	USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
DOPAA	Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives	USAF	U.S. Air Force
DOT	Department of Transportation	USC	U.S. Code
EA	Environmental Assessment	USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
EO	Executive Order	USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration	USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency		
FOCUS	Facilities Operations Capability and Utilization Survey		
FONPA	Finding of No Practicable Alternative		
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact		

1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 INTRODUCTION

An Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared to assess the United States (U.S.) Air Force (USAF) Reserve Command's (AFRC; lead agency) proposal to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with implementing four projects outlined in the Facilities Operations Capability and Utilization Survey (FOCUS) study and expanding herbicide application activity at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS) in order to meet training requirements and conduct airfield operations to support the 914th Air Refueling Wing (914 ARW) (Proposed Action). This Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives (DOPAA) presents the first two chapters of the EA. The DOPAA describes the action being proposed by AFRC that will be analyzed in full in the EA, with sufficient detail as to understand the potential environmental impacts of implementing the Proposed Action. The DOPAA also identifies AFRC's purpose and need for completing the Proposed Action, and describes the alternatives development and screening process, including those alternatives that have been dismissed from consideration.

NFARS is collocated with the Niagara Falls International Airport (NFIA or the Airport) in the towns of Niagara and Wheatfield, Niagara County, New York, approximately four miles east of the City of Niagara Falls and five miles from the Canadian border (see **Figure 1**). NFIA is operated by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA). Part of one of the four projects proposed for implementation from the FOCUS study, replacing airfield ramp lights (see **Section 2.1.3**), may occur on NFTA property. Therefore, the NFTA is a cooperating agency for the EA.

The EA will be prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S. Code [USC] 4321, et seq.); the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508);¹ and the Air Force Environmental Impact Analysis Process (32 CFR Part 989).

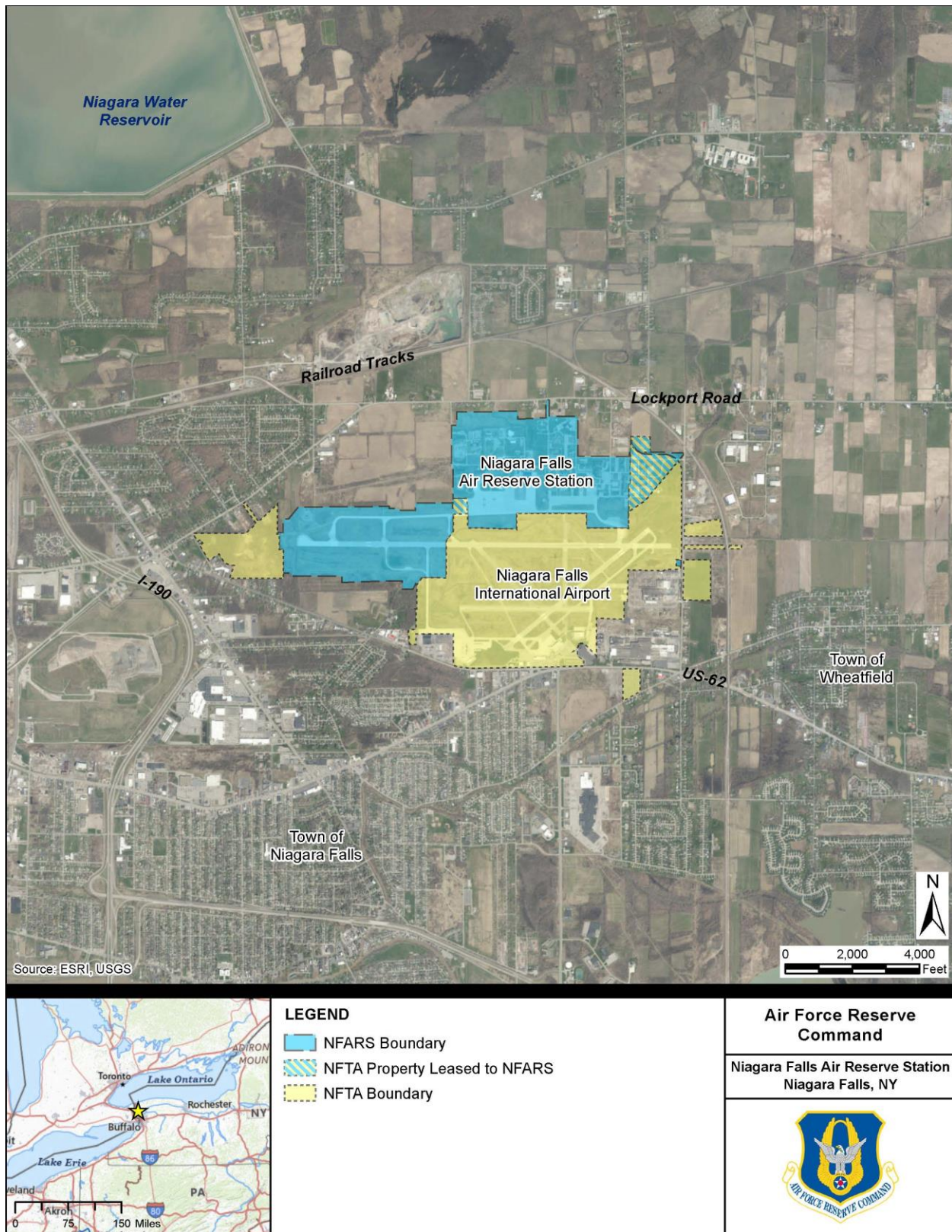
1.2 BACKGROUND

The 914 ARW is the host wing at NFARS which operates eight KC-135 Stratotankers, provides support to tenant units, and maintains partnerships with the NFTA, which operates the collocated commercial airport, NFIA. The 914 ARW's mission is to organize, recruit, and train Air Force Reserve (AFR) personnel to provide aerial refueling, cargo and passenger airlift, aeromedical evacuations, and support and maintenance functions on a global scale. The New York Air National Guard (ANG), Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Air Force Exchange Service, Air Force Office of Special Investigations, and Military Entrance Processing Station are additional tenant units. There are more than 3,000 total military personnel stationed at NFARS.

The FOCUS study was completed for the 914 ARW in 2022 to document space utilization and evaluate the condition of AFRC facilities (AFRC, 2022). This effort consisted of a Facility Utilization Survey and a Facility Condition Assessment, which were used to develop a recommended project list to ensure that NFARS facilities are properly configured and available to personnel to perform the mission efficiently and effectively. The plan outlines suggestions for organizational changes, new facility construction, additions, renovations, maintenance and repairs, and facility divestiture necessary to achieve the installation's goals.

¹ On May 1, 2024, the CEQ published in the Federal Register (89 FR 35442) a Final Rule to revise its NEPA implementing regulations (Phase 2). This rule becomes effective on July 1, 2024. Given that preparation of this EA began prior to issuance of the Final Rule, the analysis contained in this document complies with the CEQ regulations issued in April 2022.

Figure 1: NFARS Site Vicinity



The recommended project list was developed to address workspace deficiencies and degraded facility systems and components, and included over 100 projects recommended for implementation over the next several years depending on need, planning requirements, and funding. The EA will include implementation of four of the facility projects described in the FOCUS study.

Herbicide application at NFARS was previously assessed in the 2011 Final EA, Addressing Expanded Herbicide Applications and the Relocation of Dry Chemical Testing at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, New York (NFARS, 2011). That EA allowed for the application of chemical herbicides on a total of 118.6 acres for the purpose of controlling weeds to address safety, security, maintenance, and aesthetic concerns. Since publication of the 2011 EA, herbicide application has continued in the previously evaluated areas and the area of application has not increased.

1.3 PURPOSE AND NEED

NFARS currently lacks the infrastructure necessary to fully meet training requirements and conduct airfield operations. The Proposed Action would support the operational plans for the AFRC and the 914 ARW. The *purpose* of the Proposed Action is to provide the 914 ARW with the facilities and infrastructure needed at NFARS to meet current and future mission requirements, and fulfill the strategic vision of the installation as presented in the FOCUS study. Facilities at NFARS should be optimally configured to ensure they are suitable for the respective missions of the various units located at NFARS, and that activities are not constrained by outdated, deficient, or small facilities. The Proposed Action is *needed* because aging facilities and infrastructure are no longer able to support their originally planned uses, and existing buildings do not support sizes and layouts needed for mission operations, training activities, and aircraft maintenance.

1.4 INTERAGENCY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION/CONSULTATION

Interagency and intergovernmental cooperation is a federally mandated process for informing and coordinating with other governmental agencies regarding federal proposed actions. The Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1968 and Executive Order (EO) 12372, *Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs*, require federal agencies to cooperate with and consider state and local views in implementing a federal proposal. Air Force Instruction (AFI) 32-7060, *Interagency and Intergovernmental Coordination for Environmental Planning* (IICEP), requires the USAF to facilitate agency coordination and implement scoping requirements under NEPA.

During the public scoping process, the AFRC is coordinating with the following federal, state, and local agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise over the Proposed Action to inform the range of issues to be addressed in the EA. The AFRC sent the DOPAA to the following agencies to give them an opportunity to provide comments or other information on the Proposed Action.

- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Buffalo District
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)
- New York State Department of Transportation (DOT)
- New York State Historic Preservation Office
- Niagara County Department of Public Works
- City of Niagara Falls

- City of Niagara Falls Department of Planning and Environmental
- Town of Niagara
- Town of Wheatfield
- NFTA
- HQ AFRC/JA
- AFRC/A4CA
- 107 CES/CEV
- 99th Division, U.S. Army Reserves

Responses received from agencies on this DOPAA will be included in the EA and discussed as appropriate. At this time, AFRC anticipates analyzing the following resource areas in the EA: visual resources; airspace; air quality and climate; noise; earth resources (i.e., geology, topography, and soil); water resources (i.e., surface water, stormwater, wastewater, wetlands, floodplains, water quality, and groundwater); coastal zone resources; biological resources (i.e., vegetation, wildlife, and special status species); cultural resources; utilities; energy independence; land use; socioeconomics; environmental justice, including protection of children; transportation; and hazardous and toxic materials and waste.

Consistent with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800), EO 13175, *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*, Department of Defense Instruction 4710.02, *Interactions with Federally-Recognized Tribes*, AFI 90-2002, *Air Force Interactions with Federally-Recognized Tribes*, and Air Force Manual, AFMAN 32-7003, *Environmental Conservation*, the AFRC is also consulting with five federally recognized tribes that are historically affiliated with the geographic region of NFARS regarding the potential for the Proposed Action to affect properties of cultural, historical, or religious significance to the tribes. The AFRC sent the DOPAA to the following federally recognized tribes to invite comments: Cayuga Nation of New York, Seneca-Cayuga Nation, Seneca Nation of Indians, Tonawanda Band of Seneca, and Tuscarora Nation.

1.5 PUBLIC AND AGENCY REVIEW OF THE EA

In accordance with CEQ and Air Force NEPA regulations, the Draft EA will be available for a 30-day public review and comment period. A Notice of Availability (NOA), that includes an early notice that the Proposed Action would take place within a floodplain, for the Draft EA is anticipated to be published in the *Niagara Gazette* once the documents are ready for review. The Draft EA will also be published digitally on the NFARS 914 ARW website, and a printed copy of the Draft EA is anticipated to be available for public review at the Niagara Falls Public Library, Earl W. Brydges Building, 1425 Main Street, Niagara Falls, New York, 14305. If the Draft EA preliminarily determines that the Proposed Action would not result in significant impacts to the human environment, then AFRC would prepare a Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Finding of No Practicable Alternative (FONPA) in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.1(l) for concurrent public review.

2.0 PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

2.1 PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action involves five total projects. Four of these projects are from the FOCUS study: B-850 renovation and addition, B-317 renovation and addition, construction of aerospace ground equipment (AGE) covered storage, and replacement of airfield ramp lights. The fifth project is expanding herbicide application. Each project is described in detail below and identified on **Figure 2**.

2.1.1 B-850 Renovation and Addition

The Proposed Action would renovate and construct additions for the two-story B-850 in order to update building features and consolidate 914 Maintenance Group (MXG) functions. B-850 currently houses 914 MXG shops and offices, many of which have not had significant renovations for years. Aircraft maintenance functions are spread between several buildings (B-902 and B-907), making transporting parts and equipment difficult and performing repairs inefficient, particularly during severe weather. Further, B-850 is not adequately sized for KC-135 tail clearances, preventing aircraft from pulling into the hangar bay completely during maintenance operations. Finally, fire suppression in B-850 is currently provided by an aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) system, which must be upgraded in accordance with the *Secretary of the Air Force – Energy, Installations, and Environment (SAF/IE) Sundown Policy for Foam Fire Suppression Systems* guidance.

Under the Proposed Action, NFARS would renovate existing offices, maintenance shops, and support and administrative spaces along the perimeter of B-850 to improve functionality, ensure all systems comply with current codes, and abate hazardous materials. NFARS would also construct an approximately 2,000 square foot addition for shops; a 660 square foot, two-story addition with an elevator; an approximately 20,000 square foot interior renovation that would include a new second-story mezzanine; and two paved parking lots with about 130 parking spaces that would total about 40,500 square feet of new parking area. Renovation and construction of the additions would consolidate various maintenance shops and functions such as avionics, engine shops, metals tech, corrosion control, and others, as well as various MXG offices.

In addition, the hangar door would be replaced to provide adequate vertical and horizontal tail clearance to fully pull KC-135 aircraft into the hangar for maintenance, and the hangar bay would require minor structural modifications, such as adding a small cupola to the roof, to provide tail clearance within B-850. The existing AFFF fire suppression system would be replaced with a water-based system.

2.1.2 B-317 Renovation and Addition

The Proposed Action would renovate B-317, which includes repairing the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) and electrical infrastructure and repaving the parking lot. Communications and data center functions for the 914 ARW are currently located in multiple facilities (B-317, B-206, and B-806). These buildings are spread throughout the installation, which has resulted in mission downtime when travel between the facilities is needed. B-206 and B-806 have reached the end of their useful life. B-317 was constructed in the 1990s, but some existing utilities required to service the facility are deficient and in need of replacement. Utilities are critical for proper operation, and not performing upgrades would pose a risk to the mission. Reconfiguration of the facility layout is also needed to support the utility upgrades and consolidation of the mission. This project would also enable consolidation of the 914 Communications Squadron (CS) personnel, storage, and servers.

Under the Proposed Action, NFARS would upgrade the existing electric distribution system, replace the interior light fixtures, upgrade the existing mechanical and HVAC systems, upgrade the existing telecommunications systems, and upgrade the existing fire protection/life safety systems. An approximately 2,100 square foot addition to B-317 would be constructed on the north side of the building. Following renovation and construction, the 914 CS would be relocated to B-317, and B-206 would be demolished.

2.1.3 Construct AGE Covered Storage

The Proposed Action involves the construction of an approximately 4,700 square foot covered metal storage shed adjacent to B-848. A covered storage facility is needed to house AGE to protect it from snow and daily weather, thereby reducing necessary maintenance and repairs. AGE is currently stored outside at NFARS. The outdoor, uncovered storage of AGE requires the equipment to be cleared of snow and ice prior to maintenance activities during the winter months, while daily, year-round weather exposure oxidizes and corrodes equipment. This exposure to the elements results in increased maintenance needs for the AGE itself, longer maintenance timeframes, and less time in operation. As an alternative to outdoor storage, under existing conditions, the west bay of B-850 is used for AGE storage; however, this negatively impacts aircraft maintenance by occupying hangar space and increases energy usage due to frequent opening of hangar doors, and thus is not a viable long-term solution.

The proposed covered storage shed would have a concrete slab, metal structure and roofing, wind/snow control sidewalls, lighting, and convenience outlets. Utilities would be installed, and adjacent pavement would be repaired to facilitate a smooth transition into the covered shed. Following construction, the west bay of B-850 would no longer be used for AGE storage, leaving the area fully available for aircraft maintenance activities.

2.1.4 Replace Airfield Ramp Lights

The Proposed Action includes construction of a new energy-efficient airfield ramp lighting system of poles with winching systems. NFARS currently maintains eight existing aircraft ramp lights, which do not comply with USAF security requirements for ground light coverage. Maintenance of these lights requires NFARS to rent lift assist equipment to change the light bulbs. The surrounding unimproved surfaces do not provide stable support for the equipment, and high winds create unsafe working conditions on the equipment. The existing light fixtures are not energy efficient and do not prevent light spillage. The airfield ramp lights need to be replaced to improve safe aircraft movement during low-light or nighttime conditions by ensuring that the area is well lit for aircraft visibility and navigation. Additionally, replacement would improve human safety by eliminating the need for equipment during maintenance operations, and ensure compliance with USAF security requirements.

Under the Proposed Action, eight existing ramp lights would be replaced with ground maintainable hoist system lights; the new lights may not be in the same locations as the existing lights, and one of the lights may be installed on NFTA property (to be determined during final design). Conduit excavations (either horizontal directional drilling or utility trenching) would occur to connect controls to B-310 and B-821, both located north of the airfield ramp. Most of the approximately 1,230-foot conduit would occur in existing roadway right-of-way, although approximately 285 feet of the conduit may occur through existing grassy open space. New access roads would also be constructed from the airfield ramp to each new light that is not already adjacent to a paved surface. Once operational, the new lights would require routine maintenance, which would be more operationally efficient than the current lighting system.

2.1.5 Expanded Herbicide Application

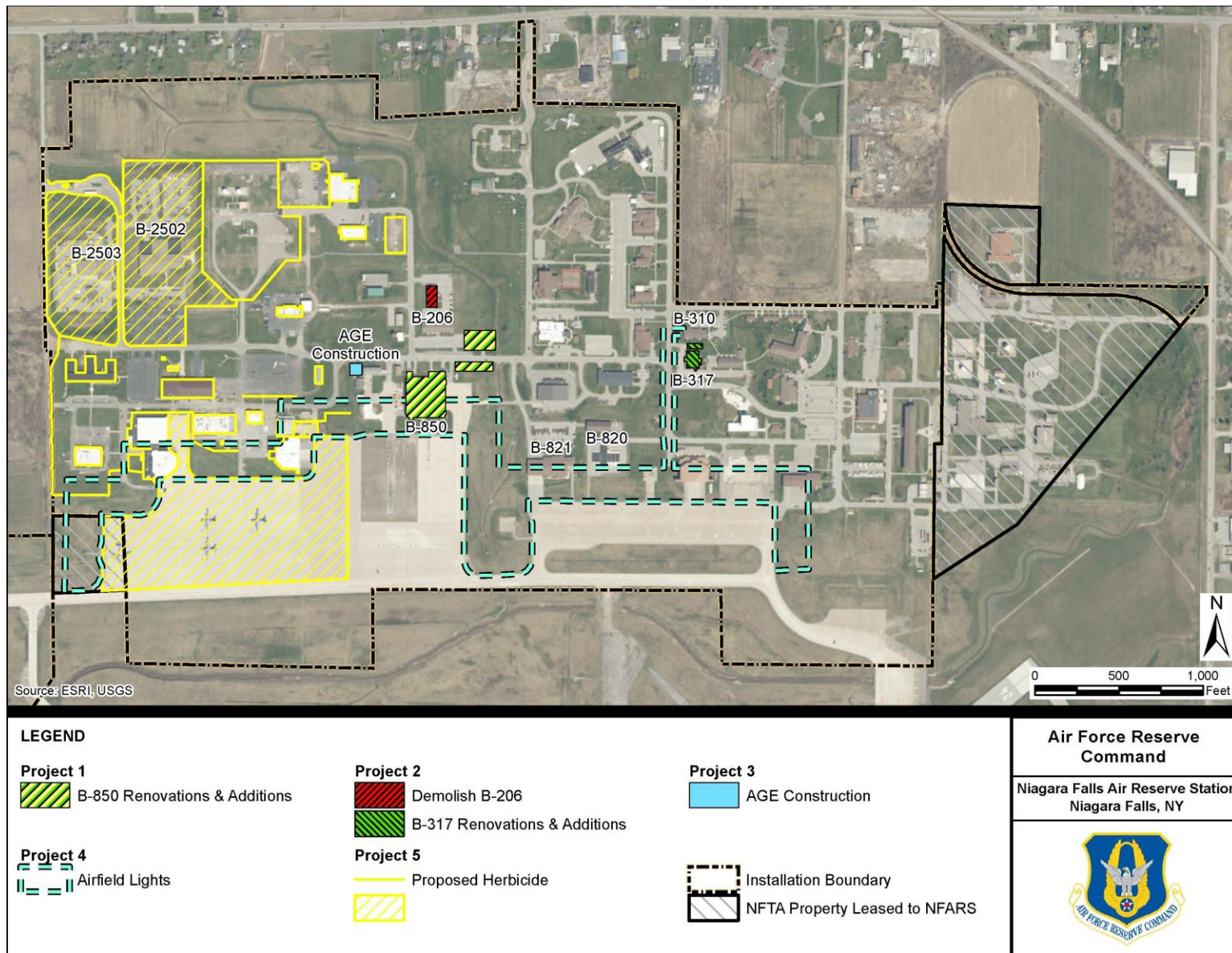
The Proposed Action includes the new application of herbicide around fence lines and buildings in the western portion of the installation. The 2011 Final EA analyzed the application of herbicides around the main NFARS airfield ramp and around various buildings in the eastern portion of the installation. However, areas around fences, around B-2502 and B-2503, and on the airfield ramp that were not previously analyzed now require weed control. Therefore, NFARS proposes to expand the allowable area for herbicide applications beyond what is currently approved to address safety, security, maintenance, and aesthetic concerns. Although the total area of herbicide application would expand, the criteria for application, type of herbicides used, and application rates would remain the same as those described in the 2011 Final EA. The herbicide expansion project would include herbicide application along a cumulative 14,188 linear feet of fence and within 42.2 acres of field and airfield ramp (see **Figure 2**).

2.2 SCREENING OF ALTERNATIVES

The AFRC developed selection standards to evaluate specific reasonable alternatives by which to implement the Proposed Action. “Reasonable alternatives” are those that could be utilized to meet the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action. The AFRC’s selection standards used to evaluate reasonable alternatives include the following:

1. **Standard 1 – Achieves Mission Requirements:** This standard measures how well each alternative would meet current and future mission requirements or the strategic vision of the installation. The AFRC evaluated each alternative based on whether it would provide the necessary infrastructure to support the current and future mission requirements of the 914 ARW and tenant units.
2. **Standard 2 – Operational Efficiency:** This standard measures how well each alternative improves operational efficiency, including factors such as proximity to mission-critical facilities, ease of access for personnel and equipment, and optimization of workflow processes.
3. **Standard 3 – Land Use Compatibility:** This standard measures AFRCs preference in conducting installation operations on AFRC property or property where AFRC maintains land use control. The AFRC evaluated each alternative based on whether AFRC would have the ability to conduct long-term operational activities without interfering with conflicting land uses.

Figure 2: Proposed Projects at NFARS



2.3 EVALUATED ALTERNATIVES

2.3.1 Preferred Alternative

Under the Preferred Alternative, the five projects would be implemented as described in **Section 2.1** and shown in **Figure 2**. These projects are not dependent on each other and AFRC may choose to implement one without the others. These projects are AFRC directive actions that are analyzed together in this EA for efficiency and due to the similarities in their potential environmental impacts. Therefore, all five projects will be fully analyzed as part of the Preferred Alternative in the EA.

The renovation and construction of an addition to B-850 would consolidate maintenance shops and functions and provide fully covered KC-135 aircraft maintenance capabilities. The renovation of and construction of an addition to B-317 would provide critical upgrades to electrical and HVAC systems and enhance mission efficiency. The construction of covered storage for AGE would prevent weathering of equipment, subsequently reducing additional maintenance to address weathering and operational inefficiencies from storing AGE in the B-850 hangar. Replacing the airfield ramp lights and expanding herbicide application on the installation will also support the mission requirements of the 914 ARW. Therefore, all proposed projects meet Selection Standards #1 and #2.

NFTA is a cooperating agency since one of the new airfield ramp lights may be located on NFTA property. Although this light would not be located on AFRC property, NFARS is coordinating with the NFTA during preparation of the EA to ensure that land uses would not conflict and that NFARS would retain the ability to conduct long-term operational activities associated with that light. All other projects included as part of the Preferred Alternative are located on NFARS property and are compatible with existing land uses. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative also meets Selection Standard #3 and would achieve the purpose and need for the Proposed Action.

2.3.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no new construction or renovations would occur on the installation, the airfield ramp lights would not be replaced, and herbicide application would continue to be limited to those areas previously analyzed in the 2011 EA. The 914 MXG functions would not be consolidated, B-850 infrastructure would continue to age, the B-850 hangar door would remain inadequately sized for KC-135 aircraft, and the B-850 fire suppression system would remain deficient. Communications functions would continue to be located in multiple facilities spread throughout the installation, and the electrical and HVAC services in B-317 would remain deficient. AGE would continue to be stored outside at NFARS, exposing it to weathering, or would be moved inside B-850 where it would occupy limited space also needed for aircraft maintenance. The airfield ramp lighting would remain inadequate and inefficient, and continue to be non-compliant with mission lighting requirements. While the No Action Alternative would not meet Selection Standards #1 or #2 or the Proposed Action's purpose and need, it will be analyzed in the EA in accordance with CEQ regulations to provide a comparative baseline for the Preferred Alternative.

2.4 ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER CONSIDERATION

The AFRC initially considered additional alternatives to achieve the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action. The AFRC eliminated these alternatives from further consideration because they did not meet one or more of the selection standards (see **Section** Error! Reference source not found.), as described below.

2.4.1 B-850 Renovation and Addition

2.4.1.2 Consolidate MXG in B-850, No Hangar Upgrades

Under this alternative, NFARS would consolidate 914 MXG maintenance functions in B-850 and divest of other buildings that house MXG functions (e.g., B-902, B-907, B-847, B-854) but would not renovate the hangar door to allow for a fully covered maintenance area for the KC-135 aircraft. One bay would be left open for potential hangar door renovation in the future. Other buildings would be used as aircraft bays, including B-907, B-917 and B-707. However, a covered area for KC-135 maintenance is critical to the mission of the 914 ARW and the lack of a dedicated and adequately sized area leaves the installation open to weather-related vulnerabilities and operational inefficiencies. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standards #1 or #2 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.1.3 Construct New Consolidated MXG Building

Under this alternative, NFARS would consolidate MXG functions in a newly constructed building next to B-907, which is currently used as a hangar for unscheduled maintenance. B-902, an old hangar currently used for administrative and storage space, would be demolished, except for the mechanical room. NFARS would divest of B-902 and B-850, and B-907, B-917, and B-707 would be used as aircraft bays. However, the new building under this alternative would be constructed on state and ANG land; therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standard #3 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.1.4 No MXG Consolidation

Under this alternative, NFARS would repair B-854 and B-847 to fix the safety issues in these facilities, and no consolidation of the MXG functions or personnel would occur. Aircraft maintenance functions dispersed throughout the installation promotes inefficiencies, makes transporting equipment problematic during severe weather, and delays work. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standard #2 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.1.5 Renovate B-902 for Consolidated MXG

Under this alternative, NFARS would renovate B-902 for consolidated MXG functions, and divest of B-850, B-854, B-847, and other facilities currently containing MXG functions. Aircraft bays would be located in B-907, B-917, and B-707. Part of this alternative would occur on state and ANG land, and the dispersed locations would not promote operational efficiency. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standards #2 or #3 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.2 B-317 Renovation and Addition

2.4.2.2 Renovate B-317 Without Constructing an Addition

NFARS considered renovating B-317 without constructing an addition. Under this alternative, the 914 CS servers and storage would remain in their current locations. However, the physical space in B-317 is undersized, not capable of supporting infrastructure upgrades, and has insufficient and failing utilities. Additionally, the age and failing infrastructure of B-206 necessitates demolition of the facility and relocation of its personnel and equipment. A minor renovation to the offices in B-317 would not be adequate to accommodate consolidation of the 914 CS as it would not address the need for additional space. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standard #1 and thus was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.2.3 Construction of New Data Center Facility

NFARS considered constructing a new facility for the 914 CS data center. While a new facility would be ideal, construction would take five to ten years to complete, and the B-317 data center HVAC units are already well past their useful life. If the HVAC units in the data center were to fail while construction of the new facility were ongoing, there would be a significant interruption to mission and critical services. NFARS determined that a more immediate solution was needed to prevent service interruption and promote operational efficiencies. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standards #1 or #2 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.3 Construct AGE Covered Storage

2.4.3.2 Use B-850 for AGE Storage

Under this alternative, NFARS would continue to use the west bay of B-850 for AGE storage to protect equipment from weathering. However, use of B-850 for storage occupies limited hangar space and interferes with aircraft maintenance activities also occurring within B-850. Frequent opening of hangar doors in order to access and use AGE equipment also increases overall energy usage at NFARS and is generally inefficient. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standard #2 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.4 Replace Airfield Ramp Lights

2.4.4.2 Retrofit Existing Light Fixtures

Under this alternative, NFARS considered retrofitting the existing light poles by replacing the existing light fixtures with new, higher powered light fixtures. However, the airfield lighting would still be considered deficient as the existing light pole locations and heights do not comply with USAF security requirements. Replacing the lighting fixtures at the poles would not meet the requirements for the entirety of the airfield ramp and the use of lift equipment that is weather-dependent would not meet the goals for operational efficiency. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standards #1 or #2 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.4.3 Portable Light Units

NFARS considered the use of portable light units after sunset to illuminate the ramp area. Under this alternative, the lights would run all night and would require constant refueling and maintenance, which is operationally inefficient. Additionally, this alternative is only a temporary solution for addressing the existing airfield light deficiencies and safety concerns. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standards #1 or #2 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.4.4 Substitute with Manpower

NFARS discussed the potential for increasing manned security around the airfield in lieu of updating the ramp lighting, to address safety concerns posed by the deficient system. However, no guidance or directives have been issued by USAF that would allow this type of substitution, and the existing ramp lighting would remain noncompliant with USAF security requirements. Increasing manned security patrols would also be an inefficient use of manpower. Therefore, this alternative did not meet Selection Standards #1 or #2 and was eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.5 Expanded Herbicide Application

No other alternatives were considered for the expanded herbicide application.

3.0 REFERENCES

AFRC. (2022). *Facilities Operations Capability and Utilization Survey (FOCUS): 914th Air Refueling Wing Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, New York.*

NFARS. (2011). *Final Environmental Assessment Addressing Expanded Herbicide Applications and the Relocation of Dry Chemical Testing at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, New York.*

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APPENDIX C: AIR CONFORMITY APPLICABILITY MODEL RESULTS

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AIR CONFORMITY APPLICABILITY MODEL REPORT

RECORD OF CONFORMITY ANALYSIS (ROCA)

1. General Information: The Air Force's Air Conformity Applicability Model (ACAM) was used to perform a net change in emissions analysis to assess the potential air quality impact/s associated with the action. The analysis was performed in accordance with the Air Force Manual 32-7002, *Environmental Compliance and Pollution Prevention*; the *Environmental Impact Analysis Process* (EIAP, 32 CFR 989); the *General Conformity Rule* (GCR, 40 CFR 93 Subpart B); and the *USAF Air Quality Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP) Guide*. This report provides a summary of the ACAM analysis.

Report generated with ACAM version: 5.0.23a

a. Action Location:

Base: NIAGARA FALLS JARS
State: New York
County(s): Niagara
Regulatory Area(s): Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY

b. Action Title: FOCUS Study Implementation (Four Construction Projects) and Expanded Herbicide Application at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station

c. Project Number/s (if applicable):

d. Projected Action Start Date: 1 / 2025

e. Action Description:

The Proposed Action involves five total projects. Four of these projects are from the FOCUS study: B-850 renovation and addition, B-317 renovation and addition, construction of aerospace ground equipment (AGE) covered storage, and replacement of airfield ramp lights. The fifth project is expanding herbicide application, which is not included in this ACAM modeling, as it would not add personnel or induce construction or operational air quality impacts. The four projects included in ACAM modeling are:

1. B-850 Renovation and Addition
2. B-317 Renovation and Addition
3. Construct Aerospace Ground Equipment (AGE) Covered Storage
4. Replace Airfield Ramp Lights

f. Point of Contact:

Name: Paul Sanford
Title: Environmental Planner
Organization: AECOM
Email: paul.sanford@aecom.com
Phone Number: 813-286-1711

2. Analysis: Total reasonably foreseeable net change in direct and indirect emissions associated with the action were estimated through ACAM on a calendar-year basis for the "worst-case" (highest annual emissions) and "steady state" (no net gain/loss in emission stabilized and the action is fully implemented) emissions. General Conformity under the Clean Air Act, Section 1.76 has been evaluated for the action described above according to the requirements of 40 CFR 93, Subpart B.

All emissions estimates were derived from various sources using the methods, algorithms, and emission factors from the most current *Air Emissions Guide for Air Force Stationary Sources*, *Air Emissions Guide for Air Force Mobile Sources*, and/or *Air Emissions Guide for Air Force Transitory Sources*. For greater details of this analysis, refer to the Detail ACAM Report.

AIR CONFORMITY APPLICABILITY MODEL REPORT

RECORD OF CONFORMITY ANALYSIS (ROCA)

☐ applicable
☒ not applicable

Conformity Analysis Summary:

2025

Pollutant	Action Emissions (ton/yr)	GENERAL CONFORMITY	
		Threshold (ton/yr)	Exceedance (Yes or No)
Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY			
VOC	0.265	50	No
NOx	1.205	100	No
CO	1.573		
SOx	0.003		
PM 10	0.469		
PM 2.5	0.043		
Pb	0.000		
NH3	0.005		

2026

Pollutant	Action Emissions (ton/yr)	GENERAL CONFORMITY	
		Threshold (ton/yr)	Exceedance (Yes or No)
Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY			
VOC	0.000	50	No
NOx	-0.003	100	No
CO	-0.003		
SOx	0.000		
PM 10	0.000		
PM 2.5	0.000		
Pb	0.000		
NH3	0.000		

2027 - (Steady State)

Pollutant	Action Emissions (ton/yr)	GENERAL CONFORMITY	
		Threshold (ton/yr)	Exceedance (Yes or No)
Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY			
VOC	0.000	50	No
NOx	-0.003	100	No
CO	-0.003		
SOx	0.000		
PM 10	0.000		
PM 2.5	0.000		
Pb	0.000		
NH3	0.000		

The Criteria Pollutants (or their precursors) with a General Conformity threshold listed in the table above are pollutants within one or more designated nonattainment or maintenance area/s for the associated National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS). These pollutants are driving this GCR Applicability Analysis. Pollutants exceeding the GCR thresholds must be further evaluated potentially through a GCR Determination.

The pollutants without a General Conformity threshold are pollutants only within areas designated attainment for the associated NAAQS. These pollutants have an insignificance indicator for VOC, NO_x, CO, SO_x, PM 10, PM 2.5, and NH₃ of 250 ton/yr (Prevention of Significant Deterioration major source threshold) and 25 ton/yr for Pb (GCR

AIR CONFORMITY APPLICABILITY MODEL REPORT

RECORD OF CONFORMITY ANALYSIS (ROCA)

de minimis value). Pollutants below their insignificance indicators are at rates so insignificant that they will not cause or contribute to an exceedance of one or more NAAQSs. These indicators do not define a significant impact; however, they do provide a threshold to identify actions that are insignificant. Refer to the *Level II, Air Quality Quantitative Assessment Insignificance Indicators* for further details.

None of the annual net change in estimated emissions associated with this action are above the GCR threshold values established at 40 CFR 93.153 (b); therefore, the proposed Action has an insignificant impact on Air Quality and a General Conformity Determination is not applicable.

Paul Sanford, Environmental Planner

Aug 12 2024

Name, Title

Date

AIR CONFORMITY APPLICABILITY MODEL REPORT

GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) EMISSIONS

1. General Information: The Air Force's Air Conformity Applicability Model (ACAM) was used to perform an analysis to estimate GHG emissions and assess the theoretical Social Cost of Greenhouse Gases (SC GHG) associated with the action. The analysis was performed in accordance with the Air Force Manual 32-7002, Environmental Compliance and Pollution Prevention; the Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP, 32 CFR 989); and the USAF Air Quality Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP) Guide. This report provides a summary of GHG emissions and SC GHG analysis.

Report generated with ACAM version: 5.0.23a

a. Action Location:

Base: NIAGARA FALLS JARS
State: New York
County(s): Niagara
Regulatory Area(s): Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY

b. Action Title: FOCUS Study Implementation (Four Construction Projects) and Expanded Herbicide Application at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station

c. Project Number/s (if applicable):

d. Projected Action Start Date: 1 / 2025

e. Action Description:

The Proposed Action involves five total projects. Four of these projects are from the FOCUS study: B-850 renovation and addition, B-317 renovation and addition, construction of aerospace ground equipment (AGE) covered storage, and replacement of airfield ramp lights. The fifth project is expanding herbicide application, which is not included in this ACAM modeling, as it would not add personnel or induce construction or operational air quality impacts. The four projects included in ACAM modeling are:

1. B-850 Renovation and Addition
2. B-317 Renovation and Addition
3. Construct Aerospace Ground Equipment (AGE) Covered Storage
4. Replace Airfield Ramp Lights

f. Point of Contact:

Name: Paul Sanford
Title: Environmental Planner
Organization: AECOM
Email: paul.sanford@aecom.com
Phone Number: 813-286-1711

2. Analysis: Total combined direct and indirect GHG emissions associated with the action were estimated through ACAM on a calendar-year basis from the action start through the expected life cycle of the action. The life cycle for Air Force actions with "steady state" emissions (SS, net gain/loss in emission stabilized and the action is fully implemented) is assumed to be 10 years beyond the SS emissions year or 20 years beyond SS emissions year for aircraft operations related actions.

GHG Emissions Analysis Summary:

GHGs produced by fossil-fuel combustion are primarily carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (NO₂). These three GHGs represent more than 97 percent of all U.S. GHG emissions. Emissions of GHGs are

AIR CONFORMITY APPLICABILITY MODEL REPORT

GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) EMISSIONS

typically quantified and regulated in units of CO₂ equivalents (CO₂e). The CO₂e takes into account the global warming potential (GWP) of each GHG. The GWP is the measure of a particular GHG's ability to absorb solar radiation as well as its residence time within the atmosphere. The GWP allows comparison of global warming impacts between different gases; the higher the GWP, the more that gas contributes to climate change in comparison to CO₂. All GHG emissions estimates were derived from various emission sources using the methods, algorithms, emission factors, and GWPs from the most current Air Emissions Guide for Air Force Stationary Sources, Air Emissions Guide for Air Force Mobile Sources, and/or Air Emissions Guide for Air Force Transitory Sources.

The Air Force has adopted the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) threshold for GHG of 75,000 ton per year (ton/yr) of CO₂e (or 68,039 metric ton per year, mton/yr) as an indicator or "threshold of insignificance" for NEPA air quality impacts in all areas. This indicator does not define a significant impact; however, it provides a threshold to identify actions that are insignificant (de minimis, too trivial or minor to merit consideration). Actions with a net change in GHG (CO₂e) emissions below the insignificance indicator (threshold) are considered too insignificant on a global scale to warrant any further analysis. Note that actions with a net change in GHG (CO₂e) emissions above the insignificance indicator (threshold) are only considered potentially significant and require further assessment to determine if the action poses a significant impact. For further detail on insignificance indicators see Level II, Air Quality Quantitative Assessment, Insignificance Indicators (April 2023).

The following table summarizes the action-related GHG emissions on a calendar-year basis through the projected life cycle of the action.

Action-Related Annual GHG Emissions (mton/yr)						
YEAR	CO ₂	CH ₄	N ₂ O	CO ₂ e	Threshold	Exceedance
2025	275	0.01072018	0.00645692	277	68,039	No
2026	-4	-0.00007033	-0.00007033	-4	68,039	No
2027 [SS Year]	-4	-0.00007033	-0.00007033	-4	68,039	No
2028	-4	-0.00007033	-0.00007033	-4	68,039	No
2029	-4	-0.00007033	-0.00007033	-4	68,039	No
2030	-4	-0.00007033	-0.00007033	-4	68,039	No
2031	-4	-0.00007033	-0.00007033	-4	68,039	No
2032	-4	-0.00007033	-0.00007033	-4	68,039	No
2033	-4	-0.00007033	-0.00007033	-4	68,039	No
2034	-4	-0.00007033	-0.00007033	-4	68,039	No
2035	-4	-0.00007033	-0.00007033	-4	68,039	No
2036	-4	-0.00007033	-0.00007033	-4	68,039	No
2037	-4	-0.00007033	-0.00007033	-4	68,039	No

The following U.S. and State's GHG emissions estimates (next two tables) are based on a five-year average (2016 through 2020) of individual state-reported GHG emissions (Reference: State Climate Summaries 2022, NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. <https://statesummaries.ncics.org/downloads/>).

State's Annual GHG Emissions (mton/yr)				
YEAR	CO ₂	CH ₄	N ₂ O	CO ₂ e
2025	162,341,710	526,869	23,871	162,892,450
2026	162,341,710	526,869	23,871	162,892,450
2027 [SS Year]	162,341,710	526,869	23,871	162,892,450
2028	162,341,710	526,869	23,871	162,892,450
2029	162,341,710	526,869	23,871	162,892,450
2030	162,341,710	526,869	23,871	162,892,450
2031	162,341,710	526,869	23,871	162,892,450
2032	162,341,710	526,869	23,871	162,892,450
2033	162,341,710	526,869	23,871	162,892,450
2034	162,341,710	526,869	23,871	162,892,450

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2035	162,341,710	526,869	23,871	162,892,450
2036	162,341,710	526,869	23,871	162,892,450
2037	162,341,710	526,869	23,871	162,892,450

U.S. Annual GHG Emissions (mton/yr)				
YEAR	CO2	CH4	N2O	CO2e
2025	5,136,454,179	25,626,912	1,500,708	5,163,581,798
2026	5,136,454,179	25,626,912	1,500,708	5,163,581,798
2027 [SS Year]	5,136,454,179	25,626,912	1,500,708	5,163,581,798
2028	5,136,454,179	25,626,912	1,500,708	5,163,581,798
2029	5,136,454,179	25,626,912	1,500,708	5,163,581,798
2030	5,136,454,179	25,626,912	1,500,708	5,163,581,798
2031	5,136,454,179	25,626,912	1,500,708	5,163,581,798
2032	5,136,454,179	25,626,912	1,500,708	5,163,581,798
2033	5,136,454,179	25,626,912	1,500,708	5,163,581,798
2034	5,136,454,179	25,626,912	1,500,708	5,163,581,798
2035	5,136,454,179	25,626,912	1,500,708	5,163,581,798
2036	5,136,454,179	25,626,912	1,500,708	5,163,581,798
2037	5,136,454,179	25,626,912	1,500,708	5,163,581,798

GHG Relative Significance Assessment:

A Relative Significance Assessment uses the rule of reason and the concept of proportionality along with the consideration of the affected area (yGba.e., global, national, and regional) and the degree (intensity) of the proposed action's effects. The Relative Significance Assessment provides real-world context and allows for a reasoned choice against alternatives through a relative comparison analysis. The analysis weighs each alternative's annual net change in GHG emissions proportionally against (or relative to) global, national, and regional emissions.

The action's surroundings, circumstances, environment, and background (context associated with an action) provide the setting for evaluating the GHG intensity (impact significance). From an air quality perspective, context of an action is the local area's ambient air quality relative to meeting the NAAQSs, expressed as attainment, nonattainment, or maintenance areas (this designation is considered the attainment status). GHGs are non-hazardous to health at normal ambient concentrations and, at a cumulative global scale, action-related GHG emissions can only potentially cause warming of the climatic system. Therefore, the action-related GHGs generally have an insignificant impact to local air quality.

However, the affected area (context) of GHG/climate change is global. Therefore, the intensity or degree of the proposed action's GHG/climate change effects are gauged through the quantity of GHG associated with the action as compared to a baseline of the state, U.S., and global GHG inventories. Each action (or alternative) has significance, based on their annual net change in GHG emissions, in relation to or proportionally to the global, national, and regional annual GHG emissions.

To provide real-world context to the GHG and climate change effects on a global scale, an action's net change in GHG emissions is compared relative to the state (where action will occur) and U.S. annual emissions. The following table provides a relative comparison of an action's net change in GHG emissions vs. state and U.S. projected GHG emissions for the same time period.

Total GHG Relative Significance (mton)					
		CO2	CH4	N2O	CO2e
2025-2037	State Total	2,110,442,230	6,849,300	310,320	2,117,601,849
2025-2037	U.S. Total	66,773,904,327	333,149,852	19,509,199	67,126,563,378
2025-2037	Action	230	0.009876	0.005613	232

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Percent of State Totals	0.00001090%	0.00000014%	0.00000181%	0.00001096%
Percent of U.S. Totals	0.00000034%	0.00000000%	0.00000003%	0.00000035%

From a global context, the action's total GHG percentage of total global GHG for the same time period is: 0.00000005%.*

* Global value based on the U.S. emits 13.4% of all global GHG annual emissions (2018 Emissions Data, Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, accessed 7-6-2023, <https://www.c2es.org/content/international-emissions>).

Climate Change Assessment (as SC GHG):

On a global scale, the potential climate change effects of an action are indirectly addressed and put into context through providing the theoretical SC GHG associated with an action. The SC GHG is an administrative and theoretical tool intended to provide additional context to a GHG's potential impacts through approximating the long-term monetary damage that may result from GHG emissions affect on climate change. It is important to note that the SC GHG is a monetary quantification, in 2020 U.S. dollars, of the theoretical economic damages that could result from emitting GHGs into the atmosphere.

The SC GHG estimates are derived using the methodology and discount factors in the "Technical Support Document: Social Cost of Carbon, Methane, and Nitrous Oxide Interim Estimates under Executive Order 13990," released by the Interagency Working Group on Social Cost of Greenhouse Gases (IWG SC GHGs) in February 2021.

The speciated IWG Annual SC GHG Emission associated with an action (or a lternative) are first estimated as annual unit cost (cost per metric ton, \$/mton). Results of the annual IWG Annual SC GHG Emission Assessments are tabulated in the IWG Annual SC GHG Cost per Metric Ton Table below:

IWG SC GHG Discount Factor: 2.5%

IWG Annual SC GHG Cost per Metric Ton (\$/mton [In 2020 \$])			
YEAR	CO2	CH4	N2O
2025	\$83.00	\$2,200.00	\$30,000.00
2026	\$84.00	\$2,300.00	\$30,000.00
2027 [SS Year]	\$86.00	\$2,300.00	\$31,000.00
2028	\$87.00	\$2,400.00	\$32,000.00
2029	\$88.00	\$2,500.00	\$32,000.00
2030	\$89.00	\$2,500.00	\$33,000.00
2031	\$91.00	\$2,600.00	\$33,000.00
2032	\$92.00	\$2,600.00	\$34,000.00
2033	\$94.00	\$2,700.00	\$35,000.00
2034	\$95.00	\$2,800.00	\$35,000.00
2035	\$96.00	\$2,800.00	\$36,000.00
2036	\$98.00	\$2,900.00	\$36,000.00
2037	\$99.00	\$3,000.00	\$37,000.00

Action-related SC GHG were estimated by calendar-year for the projected action's lifecycle. Annual estimates were found by multiplying the annual emission for a given year by the corresponding IWG Annual SC GHG Emission value (see table above).

Action-Related Annual SC GHG (\$K/yr [In 2020 \$])				
YEAR	CO2	CH4	N2O	GHG
2025	\$22.81	\$0.02	\$0.19	\$23.03
2026	(\$0.31)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$0.32)

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2027 [SS Year]	(\$0.32)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$0.32)
2028	(\$0.32)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$0.33)
2029	(\$0.33)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$0.33)
2030	(\$0.33)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$0.33)
2031	(\$0.34)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$0.34)
2032	(\$0.34)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$0.35)
2033	(\$0.35)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$0.35)
2034	(\$0.35)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$0.36)
2035	(\$0.36)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$0.36)
2036	(\$0.37)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$0.37)
2037	(\$0.37)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$0.37)

The following two tables summarize the U.S. and State's Annual SC GHG by calendar-year. The U.S. and State's Annual SC GHG are in 2020 dollars and were estimated by each year for the projected action lifecycle. Annual SC GHG estimates were found by multiplying the U.S. and State's annual five-year average GHG emissions for a given year by the corresponding IWG Annual SC GHG Cost per Metric Ton value.

State's Annual SC GHG (\$K/yr [In 2020 \$])				
YEAR	CO2	CH4	N2O	GHG
2025	\$13,474,361.93	\$1,159,112.26	\$716,122.77	\$15,349,596.96
2026	\$13,636,703.64	\$1,211,799.18	\$716,122.77	\$15,564,625.59
2027 [SS Year]	\$13,961,387.06	\$1,211,799.18	\$739,993.53	\$15,913,179.77
2028	\$14,123,728.77	\$1,264,486.10	\$763,864.29	\$16,152,079.16
2029	\$14,286,070.48	\$1,317,173.02	\$763,864.29	\$16,367,107.79
2030	\$14,448,412.19	\$1,317,173.02	\$787,735.05	\$16,553,320.26
2031	\$14,773,095.61	\$1,369,859.94	\$787,735.05	\$16,930,690.60
2032	\$14,935,437.32	\$1,369,859.94	\$811,605.81	\$17,116,903.07
2033	\$15,260,120.74	\$1,422,546.86	\$835,476.57	\$17,518,144.17
2034	\$15,422,462.45	\$1,475,233.78	\$835,476.57	\$17,733,172.80
2035	\$15,584,804.16	\$1,475,233.78	\$859,347.33	\$17,919,385.27
2036	\$15,909,487.58	\$1,527,920.70	\$859,347.33	\$18,296,755.61
2037	\$16,071,829.29	\$1,580,607.62	\$883,218.08	\$18,535,655.00

U.S. Annual SC GHG (\$K/yr [In 2020 \$])				
YEAR	CO2	CH4	N2O	GHG
2025	\$426,325,696.86	\$56,379,205.70	\$45,021,229.08	\$527,726,131.63
2026	\$431,462,151.04	\$58,941,896.86	\$45,021,229.08	\$535,425,276.98
2027 [SS Year]	\$441,735,059.39	\$58,941,896.86	\$46,521,936.72	\$547,198,892.97
2028	\$446,871,513.57	\$61,504,588.03	\$48,022,644.35	\$556,398,745.96
2029	\$452,007,967.75	\$64,067,279.20	\$48,022,644.35	\$564,097,891.30
2030	\$457,144,421.93	\$64,067,279.20	\$49,523,351.99	\$570,735,053.12
2031	\$467,417,330.29	\$66,629,970.37	\$49,523,351.99	\$583,570,652.65
2032	\$472,553,784.47	\$66,629,970.37	\$51,024,059.62	\$590,207,814.46
2033	\$482,826,692.83	\$69,192,661.54	\$52,524,767.26	\$604,544,121.62
2034	\$487,963,147.01	\$71,755,352.70	\$52,524,767.26	\$612,243,266.97
2035	\$493,099,601.18	\$71,755,352.70	\$54,025,474.90	\$618,880,428.78
2036	\$503,372,509.54	\$74,318,043.87	\$54,025,474.90	\$631,716,028.31
2037	\$508,508,963.72	\$76,880,735.04	\$55,526,182.53	\$640,915,881.29

Relative Comparison of SC GHG:

To provide additional real-world context to the potential climate change impact associated with an action, a Relative Comparison of SC GHG Assessment is also performed. While the SC GHG estimates capture an indirect

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approximation of global climate damages, the Relative Comparison of SC GHG Assessment provides a better perspective from a regional and global scale.

The Relative Comparison of SC GHG Assessment uses the rule of reason and the concept of proportionality along with the consideration of the affected area (yGba.e., global, national, and regional) and the SC GHG as the degree (intensity) of the proposed action's effects. The Relative Comparison Assessment provides real-world context and allows for a reasoned choice among alternatives through a relative contrast analysis which weighs each alternative's SC GHG proportionally against (or relative to) existing global, national, and regional SC GHG. The below table provides a relative comparison between an action's SC GHG vs. state and U.S. projected SC GHG for the same time period:

Total SC-GHG (\$K [In 2020 \$])					
		CO2	CH4	N2O	GHG
2025-2037	State Total	\$191,887,901.20	\$17,702,805.38	\$10,359,909.43	\$219,950,616.00
2025-2037	U.S. Total	\$6,071,288,839.58	\$861,064,232.45	\$651,307,114.02	\$7,583,660,186.05
2025-2037	Action	\$18.71	\$0.02	\$0.17	\$18.89
Percent of State Totals		0.00000975%	0.00000012%	0.00000160%	0.00000859%
Percent of U.S. Totals		0.00000031%	0.00000000%	0.00000003%	0.00000025%

From a global context, the action's total SC GHG percentage of total global SC GHG for the same time period is: 0.00000003%.*

* Global value based on the U.S. emits 13.4% of all global GHG annual emissions (2018 Emissions Data, Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, accessed 7-6-2023, <https://www.c2es.org/content/international-emissions>).

Paul Sanford, Environmental Planner
Name, Title

Aug 12 2024
Date

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APPENDIX D: EARLY NOTICE AND FINDING OF NO PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE

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1 **NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY AND EARLY NOTICE FOR IMPACTS TO THE FLOODPLAIN**
2 **DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR**
3 **FOCUS STUDY IMPLEMENTATION (FOUR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS) AND EXPANDED HERBICIDE**
4 **APPLICATION**
5 **NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION**
6 **NIAGARA COUNTY, NY**
7

8 **Description:** Interested parties are hereby notified that a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA), Draft Finding
9 of No Significant Impact (FONSI), and Draft Finding of No Practicable Alternative (FONPA) have been prepared
10 for the Proposed Action described below.

11 **Authority:** This notice is being issued to all interested parties in accordance with the National Environmental
12 Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 United States Code 4321, et seq.), the Council on Environmental
13 Quality (CEQ) NEPA implementing regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508), and
14 the United States (U.S.) Air Force (USAF) Environmental Impact Analysis Process (32 CFR Part 989), and
15 Executive Order (EO) 11988, *Floodplain Management*.

16 **Proposed Action:** The USAF Reserve Command (AFRC) proposes to implement four construction projects
17 outlined in the Facilities Operations Capability and Utilization Survey (FOCUS) study and expand herbicide
18 application at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS). The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority
19 (NFTA) is a cooperating agency for this EA. NFARS currently lacks the infrastructure necessary to fully meet
20 training requirements and conduct airfield operations. The Proposed Action would support the operational plans
21 for the AFRC and the 914 Air Reserve Wing (ARW). The Proposed Action involves five total projects. Four of
22 these projects are from the FOCUS study: B-850 renovation and addition, B-317 renovation and addition,
23 construction of aerospace ground equipment (AGE) covered storage, and replacement of airfield ramp lights.
24 The fifth project is expanding herbicide application. The AFRC is considering two alternatives: the Preferred
25 Alternative, which would implement the Proposed Action; and the No Action Alternative, would not implement the
26 Proposed Action but provides a comparative baseline for potential impacts as required under CEQ regulations.

27 The Draft EA evaluates the potential impacts on the environment from implementing the Proposed Action. The
28 evaluation concludes there would be no significant impact, either individually or cumulatively, as a result of
29 implementing the Proposed Action, which includes compliance with all federal and state laws and regulations,
30 including consultation and permitting, and routine best management practices.

31 The Preferred Alternative may impact a small floodplain area during construction. One airfield ramp light pole
32 that would be replaced may be placed within the floodplain. NFARS intends to avoid impacting the floodplain
33 when determining light pole locations; however, locations are constrained by USAF security and engineering
34 requirements. Consequently, locating this one light pole in the floodplain may be unavoidable. Additionally, two
35 existing light poles proposed for removal are located within the floodplain. While NFARS would design the
36 Preferred Alternative to avoid floodplain impacts to the extent feasible, because the Proposed Action involves
37 the removal of structures (existing light poles) and the potential placement of a structure (new light pole) in a
38 floodplain, there is no practicable alternative to working in a floodplain.

39 **Public Review:** The Draft EA, Draft FONSI, and Draft FONPA will be available between September 27, 2024,
40 and October 27, 2024, for a 30-day public comment period. The Draft EA, Draft FONSI, and Draft FONPA were
41 published digitally on the NFARS website at <https://www.niagara.afrc.af.mil/About/Environmental/>. Printed copies
42 of the Draft EA, Draft FONSI, and Draft FONPA are also available at Niagara Falls Public Library, Earl W. Brydges
43 Building, 1425 Main Street, Niagara Falls, New York, 14305 for public review.

44 **Comments:** The public may obtain information and submit comments on the Draft EA, Draft FONSI, and Draft
45 FONPA during the review period via email to Kimberly Powell at kimberly.powell@us.af.mil. Comments must be
46 received by October 27, 2024.