Draft

FINDING OF NO PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE

1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the Proposed Action, Flightline Stormwater System Upgrade at Beale Air Force Base (AFB), California is to repair the inlet, outlet, and a buried conduit system that flows east to west beneath the northern end of the flightline. This project is needed because scouring along the sides of the inlet channel releases sediment and gravel which are then deposited into the buried conduit system and outlet channel. The increased sediment causes several problems: degraded stormwater quality; buildup of sediment in the buried conduit system causing the potential for destructive storm water surcharges and airfield flooding; and deposition of sediment in the outlet channel that can lead to ponding at the outlet, creating a Bird Air Strike Hazard (BASH) near the flightline. Without implementation of the proposed project, future heavy rain events could scour the unlined inlet drainage channel resulting in perpetuation of the previously described problems.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Proposed Action. Install box culverts within inlet channel, bury and seed area with native grasses; sawcut and remove oil water separator at outfall to outlet channel; remove accumulated sediment and vegetation from outlet channel.

No Action Alternative. If the project is not implemented, the flightline stormwater system would not be repaired. Future heavy rain events could scour the unlined inlet drainage channel. This would result in degraded stormwater quality; buildup of sediment in the buried conduit system causing the potential for destructive storm water surcharges and airfield flooding; and deposition of sediment in the outlet channel that can lead to ponding at the outlet, potentially increasing BASH incidents near the flightline.

3.0 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Biological Resources.
There are 44 vernal pools and 28 swales ranging from 22 to 247 feet from the project area. All of the vernal pools within 250 feet are higher in elevation than and/or upstream of the proposed project area, and no construction equipment will enter any of these pools. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred (23 June 2014) implementation of the Proposed Action is “not likely to adversely affect” sensitive biological resources (vernal pool fairy shrimp and vernal pool tadpole shrimp) within the project area.

Water Resources.
Surface Water. Implementation of the Proposed Action will have an overall positive impact to water quality by restoring optimal water flow through the flightline stormwater system, and eliminating erosion of the inlet channel and resulting downstream sedimentation. Construction will be conducted in the inlet channel when the channel is dry; therefore there will be no effect

on water quality due to construction activities in the inlet channel. During the repair work in the outlet channel, the project is expected to have temporary and minor effects on water quality. Repair activities utilizing construction equipment are expected to cause a minor, temporary increase in turbidity within the outlet channel. Implementation of Best Management Practices will minimize the impacts to the immediate channel and downstream.

Culvert installation and channel repairs will be conducted within Waters of the United States (U.S.) and are subject to Clean Water Act Section 404 and 401 requirements. Section 404 permit and Section 401 water quality certification will be obtained before work begins, and adherence to the requirements established in the Section 404 permit and 401 water quality certification will ensure the construction and repairs do not adversely affect wetlands or waters of the U.S. Therefore, no significant effects to surface water are expected from implementation of the Proposed Action.

Floodplain. Implementation of the Proposed Action will have a minor positive impact to the 100-year floodplain. The outlet channel is within the 100-year floodplain, and repairs to this channel will improve surface water flow, which will improve the function of the floodplain. Therefore, no significant effects to the floodplain are expected from implementation of the Proposed Action.

Cultural Resources.
There are no cultural resources within the project area. The State Historic Preservation Officer issued a letter of concurrence (24 July 2014) on the USAF finding of no historic properties affected pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800.4(d)(1). If unanticipated cultural resources are encountered during construction, project-related ground-disturbing activities will cease in the area until the resource can be assessed by a qualified archaeologist.

Geological Resources/Soil.
Implementation of the Proposed Action will eliminate erosion within the inlet channel that results in downstream deposition of sediments and debris in the buried conduit system and outlet channel. Repairs to the inlet channel will stabilize soils in the channel. Disturbance of soil during construction may have minor, temporary effects within the inlet channel at the project site. The project will implement Best Management Practices to stabilize the soil within the channel during construction. Therefore, no significant effects are expected from implementation of the Proposed Action.

Safety.
Implementation of the Proposed Action will correct the potential increase in BASH incidents near the flightline; therefore, implementation will have a positive impact on safety. Workers at the project site will follow safety plan precautions. Therefore, no significant effects are expected from implementation of the Proposed Action.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed action requires work within surface water drainages and the 100-year floodplain to conduct the culvert installation and repair activities. There are no practicable alternatives to conducting work in the drainages or the floodplain that allow for culvert installation and repairs. The attached AF Form 813 and a draft of this FONPA were made available to the public on X for a 30-day review period. X comments were received.

5.0 STATEMENT OF NO PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE

The Proposed Action will have no significant independent or cumulative effects on the human or natural environment, and based on 32 CFR 989 appendix B, this project qualifies for a categorical exclusion and requires no further analysis (see attached AF Form 813). An alternative was considered, but also includes work within Waters of the U.S. and 100-year floodplain. Pursuant to Executive Orders 11988 Floodplain Management and 11990 Wetlands Management and the authority delegated by the Secretary of the Air Force 791.1, and taking the above information into account, I find there is no practicable alternative to the action and that the Proposed Action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to the water and floodplain environments.

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ROY-ALAN C. AGUSTIN, Colonel, USAF Date
Director, Installations and Mission Support

3 Attachments:

1. AF Form 813 for Flightline Stormwater System Upgrade Project
2. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Concurrence Letter
3. State Historic Preservation Officer Concurrence Letter