

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT/  
FINDING OF NO PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE**

**EROSION PROTECTION SYSTEM MAINTENANCE AT THE SAN ANTONIO ROAD WEST BRIDGE AT  
VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA**

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) / Finding of No Practicable Alternative (FONPA) hereby incorporates by reference and attaches hereto the Final Environmental Assessment (EA), Erosion Protection System Maintenance at the San Antonio Road West Bridge, Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB), California. This EA considered all potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and the No-Action Alternative, in addition to cumulative impacts, and identified measures to avoid and/or minimize environmental impacts.

**PROPOSED ACTION**

The Proposed Action (Alternative A) is a Federal project on VAFB (Federal land), that was developed based on the purpose, need, and selection criteria discussed in Chapter 1 and 2 of the attached EA. The Proposed Action is to implement repair and erosion protection system maintenance of the San Antonio Road West Bridge at VAFB by removing a buildup of sediment, repairing gabions, manually trimming vegetation from the San Antonio Creek channel and its hydrologic floodplain, and implementing riparian mitigation by planting willows and riparian container plantings at a site downstream of the bridge. The mitigation site would be monitored for a minimum of five years to assess effectiveness of the planting efforts and receive follow-up maintenance as needed. The Proposed Action is needed because water pooling upstream of the bridge has been eroding and undermining the gabions (metal nets containing rock) that attach to the bridge piling. The maintenance activities would stop the undermining of the bridges substructure and maintain secure reliable transportation to mission critical access points on North VAFB, along with any associated utilities that are carried across San Antonio Creek at the bridge location. No viable alternatives have been identified at this time that would meet the need for the proposed maintenance project.

**NO ACTION**

The Council on Environmental Quality Regulations requires the assessment of the No Action Alternative (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] § 1502.14). Under the No Action Alternative repairs and maintenance to the erosion protection system at the San Antonio Road West Bridge would not be conducted. Implementing the No Action Alternative has the potential to result in a detrimental impact to the VAFB mission if the bridge were to collapse or become undermined in the future. In addition, bridge collapse, damage, or emergency repairs would have the potential for significant impacts to special status species and Waters of the United States, including Jurisdictional Wetlands. VAFB would continue maintenance and emergency repairs to the structure, as necessary. Future emergency repairs to the bridge may require reinforcing the existing gabions and abutments with additional rip rap. The No-Action Alternative would not meet the Proposed Action's purpose and need.

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The attached EA analyzed the potential environmental consequences of activities associated with the Proposed Action and the No-Action Alternative. Based on the analysis, neither the Proposed

Action nor the No-Action Alternative would result in individual or cumulatively significant impacts to any resources. However, potential adverse impacts were noted for the Proposed Action to the following resources: air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, earth resources, hazardous materials and waste management, human health and safety (noise), Coastal Zone management, solid waste management, transportation, and water resources. Some aspects of the Proposed Action were noted as potentially beneficial to biological resources and water resources. If the existing bridge experiences a catastrophic failure, adverse impacts from the No-Action Alternative could be greater than the Proposed Action. Otherwise, the No-Action Alternative would result in impacts less than the Proposed Action. Environmental protection measures that are incorporated into the Proposed Action (identified as required in the EA) would be implemented to avoid and/or minimize the potential adverse impacts. Discretionary environmental protection measures may further reduce potential impacts of the Proposed Action.

#### **NOTICE OF WETLAND INVOLVEMENT**

Pursuant to Executive Order (EO) 11990, *Protection of Wetlands*, EO 11988, *Floodplain Management*, and Air Force Instruction (AFI) 32-7064, *Integrated Natural Resources Management*, the U.S. Air Force (USAF) hereby provides notice of the potential impacts to wetland or floodplain as a result of the Proposed Action. Jurisdictional wetlands were found in the Project Area. Potential impacts to these wetlands may occur as a result of the proposed activities.

Other alternatives were reviewed during the EA development process under the requirements of NEPA, but were eliminated from further detailed analysis in the EA because they did not meet the stated purpose and need for the action, were not practicable, or would have led to greater overall environmental impact. The only practicable alternative is the Proposed Action. For the reasons stated in the EA, the dismissed alternatives are not practicable alternatives to avoiding the potential wetland impacts.

Similarly, there is no practicable alternative to implementing the Proposed Action outside of the San Antonio Creek floodplain since bridge provides transportation to mission critical access points on North VAFB and supports associated infrastructure and utilities that must cross over the creek and the floodplain. The USAF has a no net loss policy on wetlands and impacts to wetland acreage will comply with the terms of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404(b) permit. The USAF is committed to mitigating the loss of the wetland area through restoration, enhancement, and creation of wetlands at the location of the bridge and within the designated Riparian Mitigation Area, located downstream of the project area.

#### **PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT**

The Final Draft EA and FONSI/FONPA were made available for public review and comment for 30 days following the publication of the Notice of Availability (NOA) in the following newspapers: Lompoc Record and Santa Maria Times. The Final Draft EA and FONSI/FONPA were also distributed per the current VAFB NEPA Distribution List, including the State Clearinghouse. Public comments were received and have been reviewed and considered. Appendix H contains a copy of the NOA, proofs of publication, proof of library deliveries, VAFB's NEPA distribution list, and public comments received, including VAFB responses.

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT / FINDING OF NO PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE**

Based on my review of the facts and analyses contained in the attached EA conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 U.S. Code 4321 et seq., implementing Council on Environmental Quality Regulations, 40 CFR 1500-1508, and 32 CFR Part 989, *Environmental Impact Analysis Process*, I conclude that implementing the Proposed Action (chosen alternative), with incorporation of required environmental protection measures, will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Pursuant to EO 11990, *Protection of Wetlands*, EO 11988, *Floodplain Management*, AFI 32-7064, *Integrated Natural Resources Management*, and the authority delegated by Secretary of the Air Force Order 791.1, and taking the above information into account, I find that there is no practicable alternative to this action and that the Proposed Action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to the wetland and floodplain environments. Therefore, further analysis in the form of an environmental impact statement is not required and a FONSI/FONPA is appropriate.

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Date

Attachment: FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (2018)  
EROSION PROTECTION SYSTEM MAINTENANCE AT THE SAN ANTONIO ROAD WEST  
BRIDGE AT VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA