

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF
NAVAL ACTIVITY PUERTO RICO (FORMER NAVAL STATION ROOSEVELT
ROADS), CEIBA, PUERTO RICO.

Pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA, the Department of the Navy (the Navy) gives notice that an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for the disposal of Naval Activity Puerto Rico (NAPR), Ceiba, Puerto Rico. The United States Department of Interior, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was a cooperating agency in the preparation of the EA.

The proposed action of the EA is to comply with Public Law 108-87, charging the Navy to close Naval Station Roosevelt Roads (NSRR). Accordingly, on March 31, 2004, NSRR ceased operations as a Naval Station and was re-designated as NAPR. The property is currently in caretaker status. The proposed action evaluated in this EA is the disposal of 8,435 acres of excess federal land at NAPR. This EA addressed only the environmental impacts of disposal to non-federal interests. Properties totaling approximately 230 acres would remain in federal ownership; however, operational responsibility for these parcels would be transferred by the Navy to other federal entities. Therefore, these lands were excluded from analysis in this EA.

Although the proposed action is the disposal of the excess 8,435-acre property at NAPR, reuse and redevelopment of the property by third-party entities would follow the disposal of NAPR as required by the Base Realignment and Closure Act of 1990 (BRAC), the Reuse Plan is included as part of the proposed action. Therefore, the Reuse Plan for the property developed by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, which provides the most current information regarding reasonable future-use scenarios, once transfer of ownership of the property is completed, has been incorporated into the EA. Because the Reuse Plan was developed while keeping the use of existing infrastructure and facilities in mind, the proposed reuse of the land is very similar to its historic uses before NSRR ceased operations.

The process of identifying and selecting reasonable alternatives for the disposal of NAPR evolved during the completion of the ECP and Reuse Plan. The primary goal of the Local Redevelopment Authority's (LRA) Reuse Plan is to lessen the immediate negative economic impact of the base closure on the surrounding region. For that to occur, redevelopment must be completed in a timely fashion and avoid extensive delays associated with agency permitting requirements and site remediation activities. To that end, the LRA has worked diligently and closely with the Navy to develop a reuse scenario that maximizes existing infrastructure at NAPR while avoiding or accommodating areas constrained by significant natural resources, historic properties,

and cleanup sites. As a result of the close coordination between the LRA and Navy during the preparation of the Reuse Plan, each of the proposed land uses through Phase II are virtually consistent with existing land uses. Because the Reuse Plan was developed keeping the use of existing infrastructure and facilities in mind, the proposed reuse of land is very similar to historic uses before NSRR ceased operations. Moreover, since historic and proposed land uses are congruent, those restrictions that need to be instituted by the Navy would be nearly identical under any disposal scenario. Consequently, no other reasonable alternatives for disposal of NAPR were identified as susceptible to a meaningful analysis.

A No-Action Alternative was also considered in this EA and entailed placing NAPR in an inactive status but maintaining it for some potential future federal use. Implementation of the No-Action Alternative does not benefit the Navy in that it would retain ownership and liability for the property with no functional, operational, or strategic value; and does not benefit the local community in that any possibility of viable, productive use of the land would be removed.

The LRA, in conjunction with the Puerto Rico Planning Board (PRPB) is developing a Special Zoning Plan for NAPR. Upon its adoption, this plan would serve as the official zoning of the property. Any future development projects proposed on former NAPR property would be reviewed by the PRPB to ensure that such development is consistent with the Special Zoning Plan.

Marine waters adjacent to NAPR support sensitive environmental resources such as essential fish habitat (e.g., coral reefs and sea grass beds) as well as threatened and endangered species, including sea turtles, the West Indian manatee, and the yellow-shouldered blackbird. Because of the speculative nature of the Reuse Plan, its full effects on listed species cannot be addressed. However, there are a number of conservation measures that Commonwealth and/or federal resource agencies could/may impose on non-federal owners/developers before development-specific approvals or permits are issued. Implementing these conservation measures would be the responsibility of the new owner/developer, and the respective issuing agency would be responsible for ensuring that these recommendations are instituted. The Navy would no longer retain any ownership or control of these properties.

In consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Navy has developed parcel-specific conservation guidelines that list species-specific conservation recommendations for future land owners to consider. This EA identifies the conservation guidelines to be provided to new owner(s)/developer(s) to offset potential impacts. Accordingly, during Section 7 consultation pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (ESA), in a letter dated April 7, 2006, USFWS concurred with the Navy's determination that the proposed action is "not likely to adversely affect" federally listed species and would not result in adverse modification of critical habitat within the project area.

The EA was prepared concurrently with the performance of relevant Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) hazardous

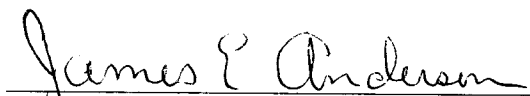
substance studies and investigations. The cleanup of contaminated sites at NAPR is primarily managed under the corrective action portion of the current Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Part B permit issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Navy has submitted an application for renewal of the Part B permit. Since base operations requiring the Part B permit are no longer in operation, only the corrective action portion of the permit remains applicable. The Navy has worked in cooperation with EPA and PREQB to convert the regulation of corrective action requirements from this permit to a RCRA §7003 Administrative Order on Consent (§7003 Order) prior to property transfer.

Prior to implementing the Proposed Action, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Navy and the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has been executed. The MOA details which archaeological sites at NAPR would undergo data recover and to what level. In addition, it specifies the level of documentation needed for respective historic structures or the consultation process needed to establish the level of recordation. Through the execution of a MOA, and by implementing the stipulations of the MOA, the Navy would meet their requirements under Section 106 of the NHPA.

The analysis conducted in the EA focused on the following resources: Land Use and Aesthetics, Soils, Water Quality, Air Quality, Noise, Terrestrial and Marine Environments, Threatened and Endangered Species, Socioeconomic Conditions, Cultural Resources, Environmental Contamination, and Coastal Zone Management.

Based on information gathered during preparation of the EA, the Navy concluded that implementation of the Proposed Action will have no significant adverse impacts on the environment and that an EIS is not warranted.

The EA and FONSI prepared by the Navy addressing this action may be obtained from: Department of the Navy, BRAC Program Management Office SE, 4130 Faber Place Drive, Suite 202, North Charleston, SC 29405, Attn: Darrell Molzan, 843-743-2129, darrell.molzan@navy.mil. A limited number of copies of the EA and FONSI are available to fill single copy requests.



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