

DRAFT
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR PROPOSED TEMPORARY RELOCATION
OF THE 173^d FIGHTER WING

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Oregon Air National Guard (ORANG) – in conjunction with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) - has recently approved a comprehensive airfield improvement program at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Oregon. In order to continue training and operational activities during this planned runway construction project, the ORANG has proposed to temporarily relocate the 173^d Fighter Wing (173 FW) currently operating at Kingsley Field to the Idaho Air National Guard's (IDANG's) Gowen Field Air National Guard Base (ANGB), located on the south side of the Boise Municipal Airport (BOI) in the City of Boise, Idaho. While deployed to Gowen Field ANGB, the 173 FW would utilize a currently unoccupied hangar and associated facilities recently vacated by the 189th Airlift Squadron (189 AS), a component of the 124th Wing (124 WG) of the IDANG. Operationally, implementation of the Proposed Action would include a total of 1,800 sorties flown by the 173 FW over a 6-month period; these training sorties would depart BOI and operate in existing general and special use airspace areas around Gowen Field ANGB.

2.0 PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action would include the relocation of approximately 240 personnel, 23 F-15 aircraft, and associated equipment for 6 months—from approximately 2 May to 2 November 2009. While deployed to Gowen Field ANGB, the 173 FW would be granted access to and use of existing facilities previously utilized by the 124 WG. This hangar space and associated maintenance and administrative facilities previously supported the 189 AS's C-130 aircraft mission, which is scheduled to stand down on 1 April 2009 in accordance with 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission Recommendations. These facilities would include:

- Building 1530 – to be utilized for hangar and aircraft maintenance space;
- Buildings 1500 and 1523 – to be shared with the 124 WG for use as administrative space, also includes trailer maintenance space;
- Building 1525 – to be shared with the 124 WG for munitions maintenance and inspection operations;

- Buildings 1105, 1108, 1112, 1114 through 1125, 1524, and 1527 – to be used for munitions storage;
- Apron space – to provide parking for up to 24 aircraft arranged in two rows in front of Building 1530 occupying parking spots 33 through 39;
- Hush-house – to be shared with the 124 WG for all high-power engine checks; and
- Covered aerospace ground equipment (AGE) storage – to be shared with the 124 WG.

In addition to use of existing facilities at Gowen Field ANGB, the 173 FW would transport two (2) mobile aircraft arresting systems, one (1) airfield sweeper, approximately 100 pieces of AGE, two (2) Deployed Debrief Facilities (DDF's), and various general support equipment and vehicles. It is anticipated that this equipment would require approximately 50 truck loads for transportation. The ORANG does not propose construction of any new facilities or demolition to support this action.

Operationally, implementation of the Proposed Action would include a total of 1,800 sorties flown by the 173 FW during this 6-month period; these training sorties would depart BOI and a majority of flight operations would be conducted in special use airspaces in the region including Restricted Area- (R-) 3203 and R-3202. The 173 FW would fly approximately 14 sorties per day with an average sortie duration (ASD) of 1.3 hours. During the temporary deployment period, it is anticipated that the 190th Fighter Squadron (190 FS) of the 124 WG would maintain existing A-10 operations of approximately 12 sorties per day. In addition, it is anticipated that the 189 AS would stand down on 1 April 2009 and would cease to conduct C-130 flying operations which would further offset the operational effect of the 173 FW's short-term increase in aircraft operations at and in the vicinity of Gowen Field ANGB and local airspace areas.

3.0 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

A review of regional ANG installations and airfields capable of providing an appropriate alternative site location for the Proposed Action was conducted; however, no alternative sites in the region, including Mountain Home Air Force Base, were identified that could provide adequate and vacant airfield facilities for the 173 FW in addition offering access to appropriate nearby special use and restricted airspace areas during the timeframe required for the Proposed Action. Therefore, only the No-Action Alternative was carried forward for analysis in this Environmental Assessment (EA).

If the No-Action Alternative were selected, the 173 FW would not temporarily relocate the F-15 Formal Training Unit (FTU) to Gowen Field ANGB. As a result, the F-15 FTU would be unable to conduct any flight training activities due to the comprehensive airfield improvement project scheduled for implementation at Kingsley Field and the unit would be unable to meet its mission requirements. However, because Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations stipulate that the No-Action Alternative be analyzed to assess any environmental consequences that may occur if the Proposed Action is not implemented, the No-Action Alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EA.

4.0 ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

For this particular action, due primarily to the temporary and short-term nature of the deployment (i.e., 6 months) and because most environmental resources at and in the vicinity of BOI were recently addressed in an EA completed in December 2007, resource descriptions and analyses focus on air quality, noise, and land use. Other resources often analyzed in a comprehensive EA – geological resources, water resources, biological resources, transportation and circulation, visual resources, cultural resources, socioeconomics, environmental justice, hazardous materials and wastes, safety, and airspace management – would not be affected by the Proposed Action and were excluded from further discussion to keep the analysis relevant and concise. For a description of these resource areas, please see the *Final Environmental Assessment for Implementation of Base Realignment and Closure Final Recommendation for the 124th Wing* (IDANG 2007).

Air Quality. Implementation of the Proposed Action would result in short-term changes in aircraft operations and personnel levels at Gowen Field ANGB. There would be no construction-related or long-term operational emissions associated with the Proposed Action, as the duration of the Proposed Action would be limited to 6 months and would not include any construction or demolition activities. The majority of operational emissions associated with the Proposed Action would be associated with mobile sources due to additional aircraft operations as well as increased vehicular traffic. Ada County is a *maintenance* area for CO and PM₁₀. However, the projected total net increases in CO and PM₁₀ would not exceed *de minimis* thresholds for a General Conformity determination, nor would they exceed 10 percent of emissions in Ada County. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Action does not require a conformity analysis and would not result in significant air quality impacts.

Noise. Implementation of the Proposed Action would result in approximately 389 residences being newly introduced to the 65-69 DNL contour and approximately 42 residences currently within the 65-69 DNL contour to be

introduced to the 70-74 DNL contour. No other types of sensitive receptors (e.g., schools, hospitals, places of worship, etc.) would be newly introduced to the 65-69 DNL or 70-74 DNL contours. In addition, no long-term activities are associated with the Proposed Action. After 6 months, all aircraft and personnel associated with the 173 FW would return to the ORANG installation at Klamath Falls, Oregon and sound levels in the vicinity of BOI would return to baseline conditions. Therefore, although short-term impacts to noise would be adverse, no long-term direct impacts to noise would occur under the Proposed Action.

Land Use. Residential areas north of BOI would experience an increase in noise levels upon implementation of the Proposed Action. The remaining surrounding areas expected to be exposed to an increase in noise levels support primarily open space, agricultural activities, and industrial and commercial use. Implementation of the Proposed Action would result in the introduction of noise-sensitive receptors (i.e., residences) to sound levels above 65 DNL and 70 DNL; however, any realized increase would be temporary and noise exposure would return to baseline conditions following the 173 FW's return to Oregon in November 2009. In addition, implementation of the Proposed Action would not require any changes to existing land use or zoning. Therefore, short-term impacts to land use associated with the Proposed Action would be adverse but not significant.

No long-term activities are associated with the Proposed Action. After 6 months, all aircraft and personnel associated with the 173 FW would return to the ORANG installation at Klamath Falls, Oregon. Therefore, no long-term impacts to land use would occur under the Proposed Action.

Geological Resources. Implementation of the Proposed Action would not include any construction or demolition activities; the 173 FW would utilize existing buildings and facilities at Gowen Field ANGB. Therefore, the Proposed Action would have no impacts on geology and soils.

Water Resources. Implementation of the Proposed Action would not require any construction or demolition activities. In addition, the 173 FW would utilize existing buildings and facilities at Gowen Field ANGB and would not create any new impermeable surfaces. Runoff from existing facilities would be incorporated into the installation's existing storm drainage system, which is capable of accommodating such flows. Therefore, the Proposed Action would not have significant impacts with regard to surface water, groundwater, floodplains, or wetlands.

Biological Resources. Implementation of the Proposed Action would not include any construction or demolition activities because the 173 FW would

utilize existing buildings and facilities at Gowen Field ANGB. In addition, previous analyses of biological resources at Gowen Field ANGB, including consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a review of data provided by the Idaho Conservation Data Center, have indicated that no sensitive species exist in the vicinity of the Proposed Action and concluded that Gowen Field ANGB's disturbed habitats and previous development make it unlikely that sensitive species would become established there in the future. Therefore, the Proposed Action would not have the potential to impact biological resources.

Transportation and Circulation. Implementation of the Proposed Action would not include any construction or demolition activities at Gowen Field ANGB. It is anticipated that approximately 50 truck loads would be required to transport required equipment associated with the 173 FW's temporary relocation to and from Gowen Field ANGB. However, this truck traffic would only make up a small portion of the total existing traffic volume in the region. Further, increases in traffic volumes associated with truck delivery activity and the other vehicular activity (i.e., associated with the 240 relocated ORANG personnel) would be temporary. In addition, the 173 FW would utilize existing buildings and facilities at Gowen Field ANGB, including adequate parking facilities and roadways. Therefore, impacts to transportation and circulation would be temporary less than significant.

Visual Resources. Implementation of the Proposed Action would not include any construction or demolition activities and no long-term changes to the visual character of Gowen Field ANGB would result. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Action would result in no impacts to regional visual resources.

Cultural Resources. Implementation of the Proposed Action would not include any construction, demolition, or renovation activities. As previously indicated, the 173 FW would utilize existing buildings and facilities at Gowen Field ANGB. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Action would have no impact to architectural or cultural resources.

Socioeconomics. The Proposed Action would include the temporary relocation of approximately 240 personnel for an 6 months—from 2 May to 2 November 2009. Between direct and indirect spending, it is anticipated that this temporary deployment would generate approximately \$8.8 million in economic activity for Boise's regional economy. Economic activity associated with this temporary relocation would provide short-term economic benefits to the local economy; therefore, impacts to regional and local socioeconomic characteristics would be beneficial.

Environmental Justice. Implementation of the Proposed Action would not include any construction, demolition, or renovation activities. Further, since no significant, adverse environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action would occur, no populations (minority, low-income, or otherwise) would be disproportionately impacted and no significant impact with regard to environmental justice would result. No on-site housing or facilities for children currently exist in areas associated with Gowen Field ANGB. Because children would not have access to the temporary relocation site, implementation of the Proposed Action would not result in increased environmental health risks or safety risks to children. Therefore, no significant impacts to children would occur.

Hazardous Materials and Wastes. Implementation of the Proposed Action would not include any construction, demolition, or renovation activities. Although the temporary relocation of the 173 FW would result in an overall increase in the quantity of hazardous materials and waste at Gowen Field ANGB, the 173 FW would utilize existing buildings and facilities at Gowen Field ANGB, including hazardous materials and wastes storage and accumulation sites. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Action would not result in any significant impacts to hazardous materials and wastes.

Safety. While located at Gowen Field ANGB, the 173 FW would utilize existing buildings and facilities, including established facilities for munitions maintenance, inspection, and storage. The 173 FW would conduct day-to-day operations and maintenance activities in accordance with applicable safety regulations, published Air Force Technical Orders, and standards prescribed by Air Force Occupational Safety and Health requirements. In addition, the 173 FW would have access to adequate fire suppression and security features and would operate under the IDANG's existing Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard program. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Action would not result in any significant impacts to safety.

Airspace Management. Implementation of the Proposed Action would include a total of 1,800 sorties conducted by the 173 FW during a 6-month period; these training sorties would be flown out of BOI and a majority of flight operations would be conducted in special use airspaces in the region including R-3203 and R-3202. The 173 FW would fly approximately 14 sorties per day with an ASD of 1.3 hours. All operations conducted at BOI would be handled by the airport's existing Air Traffic Control Tower. During the temporary deployment period, it is anticipated that the 190 FS of the 124 WG would maintain existing A-10 operations of approximately 12 sorties per day. In addition, it is anticipated that the 189 AS would stand down on 1 April 2009 and would cease to conduct C-130 flying operations which would offset the operational effect of the 173 FW's short-

term increase in aircraft operations at and in the vicinity of BOI and local airspace areas. No changes to airspace configuration of management procedures would be required. Therefore, increased operations associated with the Proposed Action would not have a significant impact to airspace management.

5.0 PUBLIC NOTICE

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1500-1508, and 32 CFR 989 require public review of the EA before approval of the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and implementation of the Proposed Action. For this particular action, due primarily to the temporary and short-term nature of the deployment (i.e., 6 months) and because most environmental resources at and in the vicinity of BOI were recently addressed in an EA completed in December 2007, a focused Final EA and Draft FONSI have been submitted for public review. A Notice of Availability for public review of the focused Final EA and Draft FONSI was published in the Idaho Statesman on Sunday, 29 March 2009 and Sunday, 5 April 2009. The focused Final EA and Draft FONSI will be available for review at the Ada Community Library, 10664 West Victory Road, Boise, Idaho; and the Boise Public Library, 715 S. Capitol Boulevard, Boise, Idaho. The public review period will last for 30 days and comments will be incorporated as part of the amended Final EA.

6.0 FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

After careful review of the potential impacts of this Proposed Action, I have concluded that the action's implementation would not have a significant impact on the quality of the human or natural environment or generate significant controversy. Accordingly, the requirements of the NEPA, CEQ regulations, and 32 CFR 989, et seq. have been fulfilled, and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not necessary and will not be prepared.

COLONEL MARK S. SUSA
Executive Secretary
Environmental, Safety, and Occupational Health Committee

