DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI) FOR THE MODIFICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTEGRATED NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN AT NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY ANNAPOLIS, ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)'s regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] parts 1500-1508) implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 5090.1D, the Department of the Navy (Navy) gives notice that an environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared and an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required for the proposed modification and implementation of the Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) for Naval Support Activity Annapolis (NSAA), Annapolis, Maryland.

Proposed Action: The proposed action is to implement the 2011 INRMP for NSAA to effectively manage natural resources in an ecologically beneficial manner consistent with the mission needs of the Navy, including reducing the Greenbury Point deer population to an ecologically sustainable level and assessing the feral cat population to determine if control measures are required. The INRMP does not propose any management actions for the Dairy Farm at NSAA because Anne Arundel County manages and operates the Dairy Farm under a long-term lease. The Proposed Action includes seventeen (17) projects addressing Fish and Wildlife Management; Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species Management; Wetlands and Watershed Management; and Vegetation/Invasive Species Management. The complete list of projects consists of:

- Repair of the Berm at Greenbury Point
- Riparian Buffer Establishment and Enhancement
- Shoreline Restoration Planning and Implementation
- Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Assessment/Restoration
- Oyster Bed Restoration
- Invasive Species Mapping
- Invasive Species Control
- Common Reed (Phragmites australis) Control
- Northern Bobwhite Habitat Enhancement
- Nuisance Wildlife Management (including deer culling, Canada goose management, and raccoon control)
- Tick Control
- Habitat Management for Cavity Nesters
- Installation-wide Fauna Surveys
- Fishing Restriction Signs
- Feral Cat Population Assessment and Control
- Installation-wide Wetland Delineation
- Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species Survey at NSAA, specifically North Severn and Greenbury Point

The recurring maintenance and survey projects, consisting of oyster bed restoration, invasive species mapping, Northern Bobwhite habitat enhancement, nuisance wildlife management, tick control, baseline faunal surveys, feral cat population assessment and control, base-wide wetland delineation, and the

RT&E species surveys were fully analyzed as part of the proposed action for implementation. The remaining projects, including the berm repair, riparian buffer establishment and enhancement, shoreline restoration, submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) assessment/restoration, invasive species control, common reed control, habitat management for cavity nesters and fishing restriction signs, have insufficient detail preventing full environmental impact analysis. Additional project-specific, focused NEPA analysis of these projects would be tiered from this EA prior to any decision to program funding.

Existing Conditions: An INRMP is a long-term planning document that guides implementation of the natural resources program to ensure support of the installation mission, while protecting and enhancing installation resources for multiple use, sustainable yield, and biological integrity. Previously, the NSAA developed and implemented an INRMP in 2001.

Purpose and Need: The purpose and need to modify and implement the INRMP is to meet the requirements of the Sikes Act as amended (Sikes Act) and provide for effective conservation and rehabilitation of natural resources at the NSAA in keeping with the Navy's environmental stewardship goals. INRMPs are required to be reviewed and updated every five years at a minimum. Previously, the NSAA developed and implemented an INRMP in 2001. In 2011, the INRMP was reviewed and it was determined that an update was needed because the 2001 INRMP no longer accurately reflected the existing natural resources conditions and needed management practices for the resources at the NSAA.

The purpose of the proposed surveys (wetland, floral and faunal) is to provide baseline environmental information to inform future resource management decisions and to meet the Sikes Act requirements for implementation of a compliant INRMP. The survey activities are needed to provide the Navy with current, comprehensive surveys to identify the appropriate management action needs.

The purpose of the invasive species removal and, native habitat improvement and planting activities is to improve wildlife and aquatic habitat at NSAA and increase community awareness about the environmental effects of invasive species. The action is needed because invasive species out-compete native species and reduce ecological diversity at NSAA.

The purpose of the shoreline restoration/buffer establishment activities is to stabilize and restore sections of the installation shoreline severely damaged or made vulnerable by erosion. These actions are needed because eroding shoreline is affecting water quality and will eventually endanger mission-critical real estate, infrastructure, equipment, facilities and other capital assets.

The purpose of the nuisance species management activities is to assess and control the populations of certain species of concern to achieve a more balanced ecosystem at NSAA. Deer, resident Canada geese, raccoons and feral cats are the most prominent species of concern. These activities are needed as high species population density is causing over-browsing of the available food sources, increased risk of disease, and overall decline in the general health of the population and ecosystem. The specific purpose of the proposed deer culling activities is to achieve and maintain an ecologically

sustainable white-tailed deer population. Immediate population reduction is needed because the food resources available at the installation cannot sustainably support the current population.

The purpose of the tick control activity is to improve the overall health of the native deer population and reduce the negative human health impacts from diseases carried by deer ticks. This activity is needed as Lyme disease, a tick-borne disease, is the third most common communicable disease reported in the state of Maryland.

The purpose of the fishing restriction sign activity is to enforce state fishing regulations and to educate anglers on live and nonnative bait restrictions. The fishing restriction signs are needed because the use of nonnative bait in Maryland has introduced aggressive nonnative species into the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, NSAA would not implement the 2011 INRMP update. The No Action alternative is continued implementation of the previous 2001 INRMP at the NSAA. The on-going practices and priorities for management of natural resources would continue, and there would be no change to the objectives outlined under the current plan. However, because the 2001 INRMP does not accurately reflect the existing natural resources conditions and needed management practices at the NSAA, the No Action Alternative does not comply with the requirements of the Sikes Act for management of natural resources at Federal installations and therefore does not meet the purpose of, and need for, the proposed action.

This alternative is required by NEPA and evaluates the impacts at NSAA in the event that the INRMP is not implemented. The No Action Alternative performs the important function of acting as an environmental baseline against which the environmental consequences of the other alternatives are measured.

Environmental Effects of the Proposed Action: Modification and implementation of the 2011 INRMP would have negligible impact on noise or socioeconomics at, or in the vicinity of, the NSAA and these issues were eliminated from further study. Environmental resources analyzed in the EA consist of ecological resources, cultural resources, air quality, land use, hazardous materials, public health and safety, recreation and cumulative impacts as discussed below. Select projects from the 2011 INRMP update that have sufficient detail available are fully analyzed within the context of the EA. The projects fully analyzed include: 1) Oyster Bed Restoration (placement of oyster beds), 2) Invasive Species Mapping, 3) Northern Bobwhite Habitat Enhancement, 4) Nuisance Wildlife Management at North Severn and Greenbury Point, 5) Tick Control, 6) Baseline Faunal Surveys, 7) Feral Cat Population Assessment and Control at North Severn, 8) Base-wide Wetlands Delineation, and 9) Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species Survey Update at North Severn and Greenbury Point.

The remaining projects, including the berm repair, riparian buffer establishment and enhancement, shoreline restoration, submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) assessment/restoration, invasive species control, common reed control, habitat management for cavity nesters, and fishing restriction signs, would not have the potential for significant, long-term adverse impacts; however, the individual project locations and design details could introduce small-scale impacts, permitting requirements, effects to cultural

resources, and other concerns that would need to be addressed in a project-specific NEPA document, which would be tiered off of this document, prior to programming and implementation.

Ecological Resources. Implementation of the Proposed Action and projects fully analyzed within the EA would have long term beneficial impacts on ecological resources including natural, coastal and water resources. Those projects that were not fully analyzed, such as the Greenbury Point berm repair, SAV restoration, shoreline restoration projects, etc., would require additional review under NEPA during the design phase to fully analyze any impacts to wetlands and coastal resources.

Overall, the resource-specific management activities (fully-analyzed or not) identified in the INRMP would result in long-term, positive programmatic benefits to soils, water resources (including wetlands and coastal resources), vegetation, and wildlife (including RT&E species) at the NSAA.

Cultural Resources. The implementation of the projects fully analyzed within the EA will have no effect on cultural resources. The remaining INRMP projects have the potential to adversely effect cultural resources to the extent those projects involve ground disturbing activities in areas with archeological resources. The Navy will conduct further NEPA analysis and appropriate consultation under the National Historic Preservation Act during the design phase and prior to project implementation.

Air Quality. Implementation of the Action Alternative would not result in significant impacts on air quality. Even should all projects occur simultaneously, the Navy has determined that those projects fully analyzed under the Proposed Action present negligible air quality impacts and would not adversely affect the attainment status of Anne Arundel County or the ability to comply with the State Implementation Plan (SIP). Of the remaining projects analyzed programmatically in this EA, the repair of Greenbury Point berm and shoreline restoration projects have the potential for minor, short-term air quality impacts due to associated construction equipment. Therefore, air quality impacts would not be significant and a formal conformity determination would not be required.

Land Use. The Action Alternative would have no impacts on community land use and beneficial impacts on installation land use through the enhancement of natural areas at the NSAA.

Hazardous Materials. The Greenbury Point berm project involves repairs to an existing berm that was created to hold dredge spoils. Although details of the repair design and strategy are unknown at this time and further tiered NEPA analysis would be initiated, as appropriate, when more information is available, impacts are not expected to be significant if all Federal and state regulations for managing, transporting and disposing of hazardous materials are followed.

Public Health and Safety. If the deer management activities are conducted in the manner described in the EA, the human health and safety risks associated with lethal deer removal would be minimized such that there would be no significant impact to human health and safety. Additionally, the tick control program would reduce the negative human health impacts from diseases carried by deer ticks.

Recreation. The management activities being considered for programming would result in greater recreational benefit and usage through native wildlife viewing opportunities, and better fishing quality as a result of aquatic environment improvements during publically accessible periods.

Cummulative Impacts. The programming and implementation of the activities identified in the proposed action, when combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities would not have the potential for significant adverse cumulative impacts at, or in the vicinity of NSAA. The overall environmental impacts of the proposed action would be beneficial to the environment.

Finding: The projects fully analyzed within the EA including Oyster Bed Restoration, Invasive Species Mapping, Northern Bobwhite Habitat Enhancement, Nuisance Wildlife Management at North Severn and Greenbury Point, Tick Control, Baseline Faunal Surveys, Feral Cat Population Assessment and Control at North Severn, Base-wide Wetlands Delineation, and Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species Survey Update will not have a significant impact on the human environment and will be programmed. The remaining INRMP projects were analyzed programmatically and as detailed information becomes available additional project-specific, tiered NEPA analysis will be completed. Based on the analyses contained in the EA and after considering the comments received on the preliminary final EA, the Navy finds that the Preferred Alternative would not have significant impacts on the human environment or generate significant controversy. Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

The EA addressing this action is on file and interested parties may obtain a copy from: Ms. Tara Meadows, NAVFAC WASHINGTON, 1314 Harwood Street SE, Building 212, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, DC 20374, or by email to: tara.meadows@navy.mil.

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Date

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