APPENDIX B

PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

VOLUME 2 OF 2
PUBLIC COMMENTS, AGENCY COMMENTS, AND AIR FORCE RESPONSE TO COMMENTS ON THE 2014 DRAFT EIS

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Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Symbols

CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
GLI	Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative Landscape Initiative
GRASI	Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act

B.4 PUBLIC AND AGENCY COMMENT SUMMARY

Click on hyperlinks to jump to an element, and hold down the "Alt" key while pressing the "left-arrow" key to GO BACK.

This section contains comments received from federal, state, and local agencies, and the public, during the public comment period for the 2014 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Air Force considered all of the oral and written public and agency comments received. The Air Force encouraged public comments at each of the public hearings, and in newspaper ads and press releases. The following sections present the Air Force comment and response process.

During the Draft EIS public review period from May 9 to June 23, 2014, the Air Force received a total of 219 comment submittals. Table B-1 displays the source of the comment submittals and Table B-2 displays the approximate numbers for the formats in which the comment submittals were received. These numbers are approximate as duplicate comment submittals may have been submitted via multiple methods (i.e., mail, e-mail, website). These duplicate comment submittals may have been consolidated, if the commenter was the same, so only one form of delivery was counted.

Table B-1. Summary of Comment Submittal Sources

Agency/Government Representative	10
Individual (private citizen)	167
Organization	42
Tribe	0
Total Submittals Received	**219**

Table B-2. Summary of Comment Submittal Formats

E-mail	20
Multiple	5
Postal mail	11
Public Hearing Testimony	61
Public Hearing Written Comment	17
Website	105
Total Submittals Received (original submittals)	**219**

The Air Force took public and agency comments into consideration in its decision-making process regarding preferred alternatives and mitigations and will continue to do so throughout the environmental impact analysis process. These decisions will be announced in the Record of Decision following the publication of the Final EIS. To evaluate the comments, the Air Force subdivided the 219 comment submittals into 593 independent comments, categorized by resource area. Table B-3 identifies the resource areas, identifies the "response code" associated with each respective resource area, and breaks out the number of individual comments by resource area.

Table B-3. Response Code Guide for Response to Comments on Draft EIS

Response Code	Resource Area or Comment Topic	Number of Comments per Resource Area
AQ	Air Quality	4
AS	Airspace Management and Use	12
BR	Biological	76
CR	Cultural Resources	2
CU	Cumulative Impacts	7
GN	General (NON-SUBSTANTIVE)	124
GS	General (SUBSTANTIVE)	21
IN	Infrastructure	10
LU	Land Use	49
NO	Noise	29
NP	NEPA Process	29
PA	Proposed Action Clarification/New Alts	111
PN	Purpose and Need	30
SA	Safety	18
SE/EJ	Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice	26
SO	Soils/Erosion	15
SW	Solid & Hazardous Materials/Waste	20
WR	Water Resources	10
	Total	**593**

Copies of comment submittals are contained in Section B.5, Public/Agency Comments.

B.4.1 Public/Agency Comment Identification Guide

This section describes the comment and response process, and the following sections outline the organization of comments, the comment review process, and how commenters can find responses to their comments.

Comment Receipt: Comments on the 2014 Draft EIS included both written correspondence and oral testimony received during the public comment period. The Air Force assigned each comment a Commenter Identification Number. All comments are included under the Section B.5, Public/Agency Comments. The comment letters and public hearing transcript excerpts are printed by Comment Identification Number in numerical order, which are grouped into three categories:

- **Agency comments:** Comment Identification Numbers A_001 through A_022.
- **Organization comments:** Comment Identification Numbers O_002 through O_045.
- **Individual (or private citizen) comments:** Comment Identification Numbers I_001 through I_177.

The Comment Identification Numbers may skip a number due to the removal of a comment because of one or more of the following occurred after the original submittal was received and assigned a number:

- A comment was identified as duplicating another submittal from the same commenter that was transmitted another way (e.g., via e-mail and mail).

- A commenter was running a test of the website.
- The text submitted on the website was not a comment on the Draft EIS.
- The comment was labeled incorrectly and later relabeled into the correct category (e.g., a submittal was categorized as coming from an organization but later was determined to have been from an individual).

Comment Review: In accordance with 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1503.4, the Air Force assessed and considered comments as follows.

Each comment letter and oral statement was carefully considered by the Air Force. Substantive comments were identified and a response code (see Table B-3) was assigned to each comment to associate it with a particular resource area (i.e., "bracketed") within a database. Substantive comments are those comments considered to be meaningful within the scope of the issues currently considered in the EIS. The reviewers applied four guidelines for determining substantive comments:

- The comment questioned the Proposed Action, alternatives, or other components of the proposal, or
- The comment questioned the methodology of the analysis or results, or
- The comment questioned the use, adequacy, or accuracy of data, or
- The comment addressed other specific issues or specific items within the document itself.

See Section B.4.3, Locating Responses to Comments, for addition information on substantive and non-substantive comments.

The bracketed comments were reviewed and responses were prepared by environmental resource specialists. A number associated with each response was automatically assigned to each substantive comment by the database. Response numbers are located in Section B.6, Air Force Responses to Comments, in Table B-5, Air Force Responses to Comments.

B.4.2 Locating Comments

A directory of commenters begins on page B-5 in Table B-4, Directory of Comments, presenting the names of all commenters alphabetically, first by the name of the organization (or "Private Citizen"), and then by the surname of the person who submitted the comment. Each commenter can locate his/her name in this directory. As noted on the public displays, sign-in sheets, and comment sheets, providing names during the public comment process meant that each commenter understood that his/her name and comment would be made a part of the public record for this EIS. The third column of Table B-4, Directory of Comments, lists the Commenter Identification Number(s) associated with each respective comment. This is a number that was assigned to each comment form or oral testimony and is stamped on the letter or next to oral comments. All comments are organized numerically by Commenter Identification Number in the Section B.5, Public/Agency Comments.

It is important to note that for the Public Hearing Transcript testimonial format in Section B.5, Public/Agency Comments, the speakers' statements before and after the

commenter was redacted to show only the commenter's oral testimonial. Therefore, you may see several black lines before and/or after the comment. No part of the commenter's comment submittal was redacted. Also, if a commenter spoke more than one time at a public hearing, the Public Hearing Transcript testimonial pages from all instances on the same date were combined and labeled with one Commenter Identification Number. In most of these instances, the commenter was adding to their first statement.

B.4.3 Locating Responses to Comments

Public and agency involvement is an important part of the NEPA process, and all comments are taken into consideration during the decision-making process. The Air Force would like to express appreciation for all comments. Many of the comments express the views of the commenter and, therefore, do not require a specific response. Nonetheless, these views are taken into consideration in the decision-making process. The fact that a specific response was not developed for a comment does not in any way reduce the value of anyone's participation. Section B.5, Public/Agency Comments, presents copies or transcripts of the comments/testimonials.

Air Force responses to comments are contained in Section B.6, Air Force Responses to Comments. The responses are ordered by the Commenter Identification Number. To locate the response, the commenter should first find the name of the organization/agency or private citizen the Table B-4, Directory of Comments, and identify the "Commenter Identification Number," and then locate the bracketed substantive comments in Table B-5, Air Force Response to Comments.

Substantive versus Non-substantive Comments. In this EIS, the Air Force responded to substantive comments, for example, by revising text to improve clarity of discussion, made factual corrections, and explained why some comments did not warrant further action. The Air Force will take public and agency comments into consideration in its decision-making process.

Generally, substantive comments are regarded as those comments that challenge the analysis, methodologies, or information in a draft EIS as being factually inaccurate or analytically inadequate; that identify impacts not analyzed or develop and evaluate reasonable alternatives or feasible mitigations not considered by the agency; or that offer specific information that may have a bearing on the decision, such as differences in interpretations of significance, scientific, or technical conclusions.

Non-substantive comments, which do not require an agency response, are generally considered those comments that express a conclusion, an opinion, or a vote for or against the proposal itself, or some aspect of it; that state a position for or against a particular alternative; or that otherwise state a personal preference or opinion.

Commenters that submitted only non-substantive comments have been identified with an asterisk (*) before their name in the second column of Table B-4, Directory of Comments; in the third column, non-substantive comments that were part of a submittal that also contained substantive comments have been marked with an asterisk as well. Responses for these comments have been consolidated into one response. See the first row of Table B-5, Air Force Responses to Comments, for the response to all General non-substantive comments.

Table B-4. Directory of Comments

Organization (Private Citizen, etc.)	Commenter Name	Comment Response Number(s)
Apalachicola Bay Chamber of Commerce	Grove, Anita	O_041-R1
Apalachicola Riverkeeper	Tonsmeire, Dan	*O_024-R1, O_024-R3, O_024-R4, O_024-R5, O_024-R6, O_024-R7, O_024-R8, O_024-R9, O_024-R10, O_024-R11, O_024-R13, O_024-R14, O_024-R15, O_024-R16, O_024-R17, O_024-R18, O_024-R19, O_024-R20, O_024-R21, O_024-R22, O_024-R23, O_024-R24, O_024-R25, O_024-R26, O_024-R27, O_024-R28, O_024-R29, O_024-R30, O_024-R31, O_024-R32, O_024-R33, O_024-R34, *O_024-R35
Apalachicola Riverkeeper	Tonsmeire, Dan	O_039-R1, O_039-R2, O_039-R3
Bream Fisherman's Association, Francis M. Weston Audubon Society, and Native Plant Society	Albrecht, Barbara	O_009-R1, O_009-R2, O_009-R3
Bream Fishermen Association, FMW Audubon Society, Native Plant Society, Longleaf Chapter	Albrecht, Barbara	O_018-R1, O_018-R2, O_018-R3, O_018-R4, O_018-R5, O_018-R6, O_018-R7, O_018-R8, O_018-R9, *O_018-R10, *O_018-R11, *O_018-R12
Carrabelle Airport	Nobles, Mark	O_032-R1, O_032-R2
Carrabelle Waterfront Partnership	*Allen, Tamara	O_004-R1, O_004-R2
Clark Partington Hart Larry Bond & Stackhouse	Dunaway, William	O_029-R1, O_029-R2, O_029-R3, O_029-R4, O_029-R5, O_029-R6, O_029-R7
Defense Support Initiative (DSI) of the Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County	*Wintner, Kim	O_028-R1
Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County, Florida	*Sparks, S. Nathan	O_025-R1, O_025-R2, O_025-R3, O_025-R4
FDEP/Blackwater River State Park	Harvey, Anne	A_013-R1, A_013-R2, A_013-R3, A_013-R4
Five Flags Arabian Horse Assoc.	Foreman, Brenda	O_044-R1
Flashy Tack Rope Halters and horse equip.	Decker, Gayle	O_043-R1, O_043-R2
Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida State Clearinghouse	Milligan, Lauren P.	A_016-R1, A_016-R2, A_016-R3, A_016-R4, A_016-R5, A_016-R6, A_016-R7, A_016-R8, A_016-R9, A_016-R11
Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources	Parsons, Timothy A.	A_017-R1
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	Brooks, Michael B.	A_004-R1, A_004-R2, A_004-R3, A_004-R4, A_004-R5, A_004-R6
Florida Geotourism Associates, LLC	Vroegop, Michael P.	*O_008-R1, O_008-R2

Table B-4. Directory of Comments, Cont'd

Organization (Private Citizen, etc.)	Commenter Name	Comment Response Number(s)
Florida Green Guide Association	*Cox, Lesley	O_033-R1
Florida Green Guide Association	Cox, Lesley	*O_003-R1, *O_003-R2, *O_003-R3, *O_003-R4, O_003-R5
Florida Trail Association	Daniel, Tom	O_015-R1
Francis M. Weston Audubon Society	Baker, Peggy	O_011-R1
Francis M. Weston Audubon Society	Baker, Peggy	O_016-R1
Francis M. Weston Audubon Society	Baker, Peggy	O_021-R1
Francis M. Weston Audubon Society	Baker, Peggy	O_022-R1
Francis M. Weston Audubon Society	Baker, Peggy	O_023-R1
Francis M. Weston Audubon Society	Baker, Peggy	O_035-R1
Franklin County Commissioner	Sanders, Cheryl	A_020-R1, A_020-R2
Franklin County Dog Hunters Association	*Brannen, Charles	O_038-R1
Gulf Unmanned Systems Center	McCormack, Bruce	O_030-R1, O_034-R1
Gulf Unmanned Systems Center	Spooner, Lisa	O_002-R1
Gulf Unmanned Systems Center	Spooner, Lisa L.	O_040-R1
La Lutra LLC	Debbi Clifford, Serge Latour and	O_026-R2, O_026-R4, O_026-R5, O_026-R6, O_026-R7, O_026-R8, O_026-R9, O_026-R10, O_026-R11
La Lutra LLC	Latour, Serge	O_031-R1, O_031-R2, O_031-R3, O_037-R2, O_037-R3, O_037-R4
League of Women Voters for the Pensacola Bay Area	Gutierrez, Mary	O_017-R1
Long Leaf Alliance	Compton, Vernon	O_012-R1
National Park Service, Southeast Region, Planning and Compliance Division	Barnett, Anita	A_001-R1
National Park Service, Southeast Region, Planning and Compliance Division	Barnett, Anita	A_022-R1
Panhandle Citizens Coalition	Parmenas, Gathana	O_036-R1, O_036-R2, O_036-R3
Santa Rosa County, Military Affairs Committee	*Salter, Don	A_019-R1
Save Blackwater	Hardy Jr, Daniel	O_020-R1
The Recreation Aviation Foundation	Davis, Eric W.	O_007-R2
The Recreation Aviation Foundation	Tyler, Jack	O_006-R1, O_006-R2
Trailriders of America	Beumel, Sally	O_019-R1, *O_019-R2
US Department of the Interior/Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance	*Stanley, Joyce A.	A_003-R1
US EPA, Region 4, NEPA Program Office, Office of Environmental	*Mueller, Heinz J.	A_018-R1, A_018-R2, A_018-R3

Table B-4. Directory of Comments, Cont'd

Organization (Private Citizen, etc.)	Commenter Name	Comment Response Number(s)
Accountability		
Wakulla and Franklin county	*Seidler, Robert	O_042-R1
West Florida Canoe & Kayak Club	Veasey, John	*O_027-R1, O_027-R2, O_027-R3, O_027-R4, O_027-R5, O_027-R6, O_027-R7, O_027-R8, O_027-R9, O_027-R10, O_027-R12, *O_027-R13, O_027-R14, O_027-R18
West Florida Community Kayak Club, Florida Panhandler's Canoe and Kayak Connection	Veasey, John	O_013-R1, O_013-R2, O_013-R3, O_013-R4, O_013-R5, O_013-R6
Western Gate Chapter of the Florida Trail	Wigersma, Helen	O_010-R1, O_010-R2, O_010-R3, O_010-R4
Private Citizen	*Agnew, Grace	I_005-R1
Private Citizen	*Amy	I_140-R1
Private Citizen	*Anderson, Kristine	I_052-R1
Private Citizen	*Aquila, Christa	I_074-R1
Private Citizen	*Arvay, Ryan	I_129-R1
Private Citizen	*Bowers, Jennifer	I_162-R1, I_162-R2
Private Citizen	*Bryan, James	I_164-R1
Private Citizen	*Burkett, James E.	I_050-R1
Private Citizen	*Butler, Carole	I_108-R1
Private Citizen	*Butler, Carole	I_109-R1
Private Citizen	*Caasi, Christina	I_024-R1
Private Citizen	*Chamberlain, Charles	I_013-R1
Private Citizen	*Cole, Mark	I_105-R1
Private Citizen	*Copeland, Sheresa	I_007-R1
Private Citizen	*Creel, Susan	I_081-R1
Private Citizen	*Edmisten, Patricia	I_107-R1
Private Citizen	*Edwards, Amber	I_010-R1
Private Citizen	*Friedman, Stephanie	I_057-R1
Private Citizen, Save Blackwater River State Forest	*Fuqua, Marsha	I_026-R1
Private Citizen	*Hardy, Nicole	I_035-R1
Private Citizen	*Hatch, Dan	I_061-R1
Private Citizen	*Herzog, Rebecca	I_033-R1
Private Citizen	*Hogan, Guy	I_172-R1
Private Citizen	*Hoggard, Riley	I_153-R1

Table B-4. Directory of Comments, Cont'd

Organization (Private Citizen, etc.)	Commenter Name	Comment Response Number(s)
Private Citizen	*Holley, Chrys	I_092-R1
Private Citizen	*Hulsizer, Chad	I_042-R1
Private Citizen	*Hulsizer, Chad	I_144-R1
Private Citizen	*Hulsizer, Chad W.	I_177-R1
Private Citizen	*Jacobs, Thomas	I_149-R1, I_149-R2
Private Citizen	*Jetter, Walter	I_115-R1
Private Citizen	*Johnson, David	I_043-R1
Private Citizen	*Jones, Fred	I_002-R1
Private Citizen	*Knetzger, George	I_106-R1
Private Citizen	*Lambert, Christi I.	I_045-R1
Private Citizen	*Lambert, Joey	I_044-R1
Private Citizen	*Link, Jim	I_166-R1
Private Citizen	*Lynda	I_141-R1
Private Citizen	*MacWhinnie, Anthony	I_027-R1
Private Citizen	*Neese, Carrie	I_029-R1
Private Citizen	*Pack, Chris	I_051-R1
Private Citizen	*Phillips, Steven	I_102-R1
Private Citizen, Florida Trail Association	*Power, Nicholas P.	I_016-R1
Private Citizen, Economic Development Council	*Ramussen, Kay	I_063-R1
Private Citizen	*Richardson, Anne	I_015-R1, I_015-R2
Private Citizen	*Roston, Ellen	I_072-R1
Private Citizen	*Russell, Judi	I_168-R1
Private Citizen	*Seidler, Robert	I_159-R1
Private Citizen	*Sheffield, Diarrhea Jean	I_036-R1
Private Citizen	*Shields, Sharyn	I_097-R2
Private Citizen	*Snyder, Steven	I_032-R1
Private Citizen	*Stewart, Karen	I_099-R1
Private Citizen	*Updike, Anne	I_139-R1
Private Citizen, Florida Geotourism Associates, LLC	*Vroegop, Michael P.	I_038-R1
Private Citizen	*Vroegop, Robin Rickel	I_154-R1
Private Citizen, Florida Panhandle Canoe & Kayak Connection	*Waggle, Susan	I_126-R1
Private Citizen	*Warner, Nancie and Michael	I_114-R1
Private Citizen	*White, Krissa	I_030-R1

Table B-4. Directory of Comments, Cont'd

Organization (Private Citizen, etc.)	Commenter Name	Comment Response Number(s)
Private Citizen	*Wilks, Joshua	I_137-R1
Private Citizen	*Winterringer, Dennis and Celia	I_053-R1
Private Citizen	Asquith, Austen	I_070-R1
Private Citizen	Austino, Cindy	I_071-R1
Private Citizen	Bailey, Anthony	I_084-R1
Private Citizen	*Ballard, Bob	I_175-R1
Private Citizen	Barbig, Thomas	I_068-R1
Private Citizen, Audubon Society	Barbig, Thomas H.	I_064-R1
Private Citizen	Blais, Carol	I_104-R1
Private Citizen	Bonney, Jack	I_090-R1
Private Citizen, Bream Fisherman Association	Bonney, Jack and Shirley	I_103-R1, I_103-R2, I_103-R3, I_103-R4, I_103-R5
Private Citizen	Brady, James A.	I_128-R1
Private Citizen	Broderick, Brooke	I_112-R1
Private Citizen	Brooks (Ms) & Andrew M Hatch, Gary	I_011-R2, I_011-R3
Private Citizen	Butler, Carole	I_161-R1, I_161-R2
Private Citizen	Cantu, Sandra	I_073-R1, I_073-R2, I_073-R3, I_073-R4
Private Citizen	Carlton, Chares Branson	I_132-R1
Private Citizen	Carver, Linda	I_040-R1
Private Citizen	Castille, Sandra	I_086-R1, I_086-R2
Private Citizen	Cerfus, Gary	*I_163-R1, I_163-R2, I_163-R3
Private Citizen	Chamblin, Larry	I_111-R1
Private Citizen	Creel, Charles R.	I_118-R1, I_118-R2, I_118-R3
Private Citizen	Creel, Susan	I_142-R1, I_142-R2
Private Citizen	Cuchens, Henry	I_014-R1, I_014-R2
Private Citizen	Cummins, Betty	I_039-R1, *I_039-R2
Private Citizen	Cummins, Betty	I_119-R1
Private Citizen	Cummins, Betty	I_120-R1, I_120-R2, I_120-R3
Private Citizen	Cummins, Betty	*I_165-R1, I_165-R2, *I_165-R3, I_165-R4
Private Citizen	Cummins, Betty	*I_169-R1, I_169-R2, I_169-R3, I_169-R4, I_169-R5, I_169-R6, *I_169-R7
Private Citizen	Cummins, Jim	I_156-R1, I_156-R2, I_156-R3, I_156-R4, *I_156-R5, I_156-R6

Table B-4. Directory of Comments, Cont'd

Organization (Private Citizen, etc.)	Commenter Name	Comment Response Number(s)
Private Citizen	Cummins, Jim R.	I_146-R1, I_146-R2, I_146-R3, I_146-R4, I_146-R5, I_146-R6, I_146-R7, I_146-R8, I_146-R9, I_146-R10, I_146-R11
Private Citizen	Cupp, Glynda	I_085-R1, I_085-R2
Private Citizen	Delfo, Tonya	I_079-R2, I_079-R3, I_079-R4
Private Citizen	DeRaimo, Anthony	I_117-R1
Private Citizen	Dunaway, William	I_076-R1, I_076-R2
Private Citizen	Dunham, Frances	I_100-R1
Private Citizen	Early, Sue	I_130-R1, I_130-R2
Private Citizen	Early, Sue	I_158-R1, I_158-R2, I_158-R3, I_158-R4, I_158-R5, *I_158-R6
Private Citizen	Feaver, Ed	I_101-R1, I_101-R2, I_101-R3
Private Citizen	Feaver, Marylyn	*I_009-R1, I_009-R3, I_009-R4, I_009-R5, I_009-R6, *I_009-R7, *I_009-R8, I_009-R9, I_009-R10, I_009-R11, I_009-R12, *I_009-R13, *I_009-R14, *I_009-R15
Private Citizen	Fish, Matt	I_094-R1
Private Citizen	Forbush, Chris	I_041-R1
Private Citizen	Fung, Wuilk	I_138-R1
Private Citizen	Fuqua, Erin	I_122-R1, I_122-R2, I_122-R3
Private Citizen	Goodman, Larry	I_135-R1, I_135-R2, I_135-R3, I_135-R4
Private Citizen	Hall, Pamela	I_059-R1
Private Citizen	Hawthorne, Kyle	I_037-R1, I_037-R2
Private Citizen	Hettenhaus, Dennis	I_083-R1
Private Citizen	Hoggard, Riley	I_152-R1, I_152-R2, I_152-R3, I_152-R4, I_152-R5, I_152-R6, I_152-R7, *I_152-R8, I_152-R9, I_152-R10, I_152-R11, I_152-R12
Private Citizen	Hulsizer, Chad W.	I_003-R1, I_003-R2
Private Citizen	Hutchinson, Lonnie	I_075-R1, I_075-R2
Private Citizen	Hutchinson, Lonnie	I_096-R1
Private Citizen	Jones, Elisa	I_174-R1, I_174-R2
Private Citizen	Koelsch, Jessica	I_127-R1, *I_127-R2
Private Citizen	Lambert, Dustin	I_046-R1
Private Citizen	Leech, Janna	I_080-R1, I_080-R2
Private Citizen	Lishefski, Nancy	I_047-R1
Private Citizen	Mahute, Wallis	I_077-R1
Private Citizen	McArthur, Kyle	I_025-R1, *I_025-R2

Table B-4. Directory of Comments, Cont'd

Organization (Private Citizen, etc.)	Commenter Name	Comment Response Number(s)
Private Citizen	McHale, Tanya Alvarez	I_147-R1, I_147-R2, I_147-R3, I_147-R4, I_147-R5, I_147-R6, I_147-R7, I_147-R8, I_147-R9, I_147-R10, I_147-R11, I_147-R12, I_147-R13, I_147-R14, I_147-R15, I_147-R16, I_147-R17, I_147-R18, I_147-R19, I_147-R20, I_147-R21, I_147-R22, I_147-R23, I_147-R24, I_147-R25, I_147-R26, I_147-R27, I_147-R28, I_147-R29, I_147-R30, I_147-R31, I_147-R32, I_147-R33, I_147-R34, I_147-R35, I_147-R36, I_147-R38, I_147-R39, I_147-R40, I_147-R41, I_147-R42, I_147-R43, I_147-R44, I_147-R45, I_147-R46, I_147-R47, I_147-R48, I_147-R49, I_147-R50, *I_147-R51, I_147-R52, I_147-R53, I_147-R54, I_147-R55, I_147-R56, I_147-R57, I_147-R58, *I_147-R59
Private Citizen	Melaven, Jim and Cheryl	*I_022-R1, I_022-R2, I_022-R3, *I_022-R4, *I_022-R5
Private Citizen, Horse Recreation Organizations	Morres, David	*I_054-R1, I_054-R2, *I_054-R3, I_054-R4, *I_054-R5
Private Citizen, Five Flags Arabian Horse Assoc.	Mullins, Medora	I_123-R1, I_123-R2, I_123-R3, I_123-R4, I_123-R5
Private Citizen	Murphy, Tina	I_133-R1, I_133-R2, I_133-R3, I_133-R4, I_133-R5, I_133-R6, I_133-R7
Private Citizen	O'Laughlin, Charlotte & Thomas	I_121-R1, I_121-R2, I_121-R3, I_121-R4, I_121-R5, I_121-R6, I_121-R7, *I_121-R8
Private Citizen	*Oliver, Leah	I_151-R1, I_151-R2
Private Citizen	Olsen, The Rev. Christiana	I_028-R1, *I_028-R2
Private Citizen	Pack, Chris	I_082-R1
Private Citizen	Patterson, Chad	I_098-R1
Private Citizen	Pearsall, Julia	I_093-R1
Private Citizen	Pelling, Nancy	*I_110-R1, I_110-R2
Private Citizen	Plowman, Laura	I_091-R1
Private Citizen	Pooley, Jeffery	I_131-R1, I_131-R2, I_131-R3
Private Citizen	Pung, Larry	*I_012-R1, *I_012-R2, *I_012-R3, *I_012-R4, *I_012-R5, I_012-R6
Private Citizen	Railey, Stephany	I_062-R1
Private Citizen	Russell, Judi	I_087-R1, I_087-R2, I_087-R3
Private Citizen	Scott, Donna	I_088-R1

Table B-4. Directory of Comments, Cont'd

Organization (Private Citizen, etc.)	Commenter Name	Comment Response Number(s)
Private Citizen	Scott, Mark J.	I_017-R1, I_017-R2
Private Citizen	Scott, Mark J.	I_018-R1
Private Citizen	Scott, Mark J.	I_019-R1
Private Citizen	Scott, Mark J.	I_020-R1
Private Citizen	Sheldon, Cindy	I_021-R1
Private Citizen	Smith, Ashlynn	I_078-R1, I_078-R2, I_078-R3, I_078-R4
Private Citizen	Spencer, William E.	I_113-R1
Private Citizen	Starling, Sherry	*I_048-R1, I_048-R2, I_048-R3
Private Citizen	Starling, Sherry	I_089-R1, I_089-R2, I_089-R3
Private Citizen	Straw, Laura	I_136-R1
Private Citizen	Tebay, Carole	I_067-R1, I_067-R2, I_067-R3, I_067-R4, I_067-R5, I_067-R6, I_067-R7, I_067-R8, I_067-R9, I_067-R10, I_067-R11, I_067-R12, I_067-R13
Private Citizen	Tebay, Carole	I_143-R1, I_143-R2, I_143-R3
Private Citizen	Turner, Darrian	I_171-R1, I_171-R2
Private Citizen	Venable, Frank	I_173-R2, I_173-R3, I_173-R4, *I_173-R5, *I_173-R6
Private Citizen	Verbeck, Eileen	I_095-R1
Private Citizen	Vroegop, Michael	I_155-R1
Private Citizen	Vroegop, Robin Rickel	I_145-R1, I_145-R2, I_145-R3, I_145-R4, I_145-R5, I_145-R6, *I_145-R7
Private Citizen	Waldron, John	O_045-R1, O_045-R2, O_045-R3, O_045-R4
Private Citizen	Walko, I. K.	I_004-R1, I_004-R2
Private Citizen	Wells, Suzanne	I_125-R1, I_125-R2, I_125-R3
Private Citizen	Whaley, Barbara	I_034-R1, I_034-R2, I_034-R3
Private Citizen	Whaley, James	I_031-R1
Private Citizen	White, Danny	I_069-R1
Private Citizen	White, Murray	I_124-R1
Private Citizen	Wigersma, Helen	I_134-R1, I_134-R2, I_134-R3
Private Citizen	Williams, Margherite	I_167-R1, I_167-R2, I_167-R3, I_167-R4, I_167-R5, I_167-R6, I_167-R7, I_167-R8, I_167-R9, I_167-R10, I_167-R11, I_167-R12, I_167-R13, I_167-R14, I_167-R15, I_167-R16, I_167-R17, I_167-R18, I_167-R19, I_167-R20, I_167-R21, *I_167-R22
Private Citizen	Williams, Margherite	I_170-R1, I_170-R2, I_170-R3

Table B-4. Directory of Comments, Cont'd

Organization (Private Citizen, etc.)	Commenter Name	Comment Response Number(s)
Private Citizen	Wilson, Spencer K.	I_049-R1
Private Citizen	Winterringer, Dennis	I_065-R1, I_065-R2, I_065-R3, I_065-R4, I_065-R5

Key: Response Code=Resource Area or Comment Topic:
AQ=Air Quality; AS=Airspace Management and Use; BR=Biological; CR=Cultural Resources; CU=Cumulative Impacts; GN=General (NON-SUBSTANTIVE); GS=General (SUBSTANTIVE); IN=Infrastructure; LU=Land Use; NO=Noise; NP=NEPA Process; PA=Proposed Action Clarification/New Alts; PN=Purpose and Need; SA=Safety; SE/EJ=Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice; SO=Soils/Erosion; SW=Solid & Hazardous Materials/Waste; WR=Water Resources
*See the first row of Table B-5, Air Force Responses to Comments, for the response to this comment.

B.5 PUBLIC/AGENCY COMMENTS

All comments are organized numerically by Commenter Identification Number into three sections:

- **A** is Agency comments in order by Identifier ID Number (Section B.5.1)
- **O** is Organization comments in order by Identifier ID Number (Section B.5.2)
- **I** is Individual/Private Citizen comments in order by Identifier ID Number (Section B.5.3)

As stated in Section B.4.2, note that for the Public Hearing Transcript testimonial format in Section B.5, Public/Agency Comments, the speakers' statements previous and after the commenter was redacted to show only the commenter's oral testimonial. Therefore, you may see several black lines before and/or after the comment. No part of the commenter's comment submittal was redacted. Also, if a commenter spoke more than one time at a public hearing, the Public Hearing Transcript testimonial pages from all instances on the same date were combined and labeled with one Commenter Identification Number. In most of these instances, the commenter was adding to their first statement.

B.5.1 Agency Comments in Order by Identifier ID Number

Received During the Public Comment Period (May 9 to June 23, 2014)

A_001

[redacted]

From: Barnett, Anita <anita_barnett@nps.gov>
Sent: Monday, June 02, 2014 12:56 PM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Subject: GRASI

Hey Mike,

Thanks for returning my call. I understand that there are no new flights planned over Gulf Islands National Seashore and as you stated in your voice mail message there is no proposed action even within 10 miles of the Seashore. However, the folks who are responsible for our Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division are in Colorado and have never been to Gulf Islands National Seashore. They review all Federal EIS's for anything that has the potential to affect a National Park or an affiliated site and are responsible for providing comments to protect those resources.

It would be great if the GRASI and all future EIS's for Eglin acknowledge and address that Gulf Islands National Seashore:
1) is a unit of the National Park Service,
2) is within x miles of Eglin,
3) within x miles of the proposed action ,
4) if the proposed action would affect an increase or decrease in current levels of flights over Gulf Islands National Seashore and
5) If there were a proposed change (increase) in flights over the Seashore, Eglin would consider analyzing the impact to the acoustic environment at the NPS unit, using "time audible" and "time above" metrics that take into account the duration of aircraft noise events, the number of aircraft noise events, and the absolute sound level of events that could be used to compare with NPS baseline data at the Seashore.

The National Park Service policy is to provide the same level of protection that is required for federally listed T & E species, to state listed species with in the boundary of the Seashore.

According to the Organic Act, the National Park Service is charged with " conserving the scenery and the natural and historic object and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. The "scenery," includes the natural soundscape, as well as the landscape

Natural and cultural sounds are integral components of the suite of resources and values that NPS managers are charged with preserving and restoring.

Give me call I'd like to set up a conf. call to clarify some of the concerns raised.

--
Anita Barnett
Environmental Protection Specialist

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A_001

Planning and Compliance Division
National Park Service
Southeast Region
404-507-5706
678-883-4770

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A_003

ID	A_003
Date Submitted	6/19/2014
Commentor	Joyce A Stanley
Commenter email	joyce_stanley@ios.doi.gov
Organization	US Department of the Interior/Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
Affiliation	Agency/Government Representative
Comment	The U.S. Department of the Interior (Department) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative and Landscape Initiative. We have no comments at this time. If you have questions or concerns, I can be reached at (404) 331-4524 or via email at joyce_stanley@ios.doi.gov.

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A_004

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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(800) 955-8770 (V)

MyFWC.com

June 12, 2014

Mr. Mike Spaits
Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238
Eglin Air Force Base FL 32542-5499

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Landscape Initiative

Dear Mr. Spaits,

Thank you for the opportunity for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to review the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Gulf Regional Airspace Initiative (GRASI). As has been resoundingly demonstrated on Eglin Air Force Base, we believe military training and preparedness can be compatible with sound and sustained stewardship of natural resources. Moreover as a formal signatory to multiple memoranda of agreement with the Air Force and a vested partner with all involved parties, the FWC is committed to enabling use of State of Florida lands for military training that is compatible with the conservation and recreation values for which those lands were acquired and are presently managed. It is within this spirit that we offer the following comments.

According to the EIS, the Air Force proposes to conduct training activities on Blackwater, Yellow River, and Tate's Hell Wildlife Management Areas (WMA). These areas are referred to as Blackwater River State Forest (BRSF) and Tate's Hell State Forest (THSF) in the EIS. Examples of proposed activities include airdrops of personnel and equipment, cross-country movements on foot, use of expendables, and establishing temporary roadblocks with concertina wire. The Air Force also proposes to place temporary and mobile radar emitters in two locations on Box-R WMA. These locations are referred to as FWC-1 and FWC-2 in the EIS. The majority of our comments address coordination with local FWC staff, locations of protected species and sensitive habitats, recreational use, and the proposed emitter sites.

Coordination

1 The goal stated in the "Memorandum of Agreement between the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Environment and Logistics and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for the Provision of Military Training on State Lands" is to work together in an effort to enhance both Parties' ability to carry out their respective missions. To this end, we recommend that the Air Force coordinate with the Area Biologist on Box-R WMA regarding training missions conducted at the emitter sites. Also, please be aware that FWC biologists conduct wildlife surveys, including nighttime surveys, and other management activities on all proposed training sites, and FWC law enforcement (LE) officers actively patrol these areas. We provide a list of FWC points of contact for the proposed training areas below:

A_004

Box-R WMA (Emitter Sites)
Jerry Pitts, Area Biologist, Jerry.Pitts@myfwc.com, 850-653-2747
Blackwater River State Forest
Barbara Almario, Area Biologist, Barbara.Almario@myfwc.com, 850-957-6170
Olin Rondeau, LE Captain, Olin.Rondeau@myfwc.com, 850-595-8905

Tate's Hell State Forest
Diane Alix, Area Biologist, Diane.Alix@myfwc.com, 850-697-3734 x104
Rob Beaton, LE Captain, Rob.Beaton@myfwc.com, 850-697-3764

Sensitive Species and Habitats

The Area Biologists listed above can assist in identifying protected species locations and sensitive habitats. For example, Table 2-24 on page 2-27 states that there are no eagle nests on either forest. In actuality, there are documented eagle nests on both forests that are monitored by FWC; the Area Biologists can provide these locations. Page 2-9, line 4 references a team and liaison that the Air Force will establish to coordinate with the Florida Forest Service (FFS) on implementing the proposed actions. We recommend including the Area Biologists in this process so that they may serve as resources on protected species locations and sensitive areas. The following are additional comments related to protected species and sensitive areas, organized by page and line number.

Page 2-32, line 21, k: We recommend adding Florida pine snake to the list of species. Pine snakes are often encountered by FWC staff working on Blackwater and could potentially occur on Tate's Hell.

Page 2-45, line 39: We recommend amending to "Annually provide training units with global positioning system (GPS) coordinates for known sensitive species locations and habitats, including bald eagle nests and wood stork feeding/roosting habitat." We recommend establishing a mechanism for FWC staff to provide updates to known sensitive species locations and habitats.

Page 5-49, line 12; page 5-52, line 34: Although no individuals have been found in many years, the reticulated flatwoods salamander pond complex in TA-9 is designated federal critical habitat and should be protected and listed as sensitive habitat in Blackwater.

Page 5-52, line 34; page 5-56 lines 12-13; page 5-57 lines 3-5: The Florida bog frog, a protected species in Florida, breeds along Garnier Creek and Julian Mill Creek in TA-9. FFS and FWC are working on significant habitat enhancement projects in this area, which should be avoided. We recommend including a buffer around the bog frog habitat in any and all maps where restricted training activities are delineated. Table 5-39 on page 5-52 should include bog frog habitat.

Page 5-52, line 34; page 5-56 lines 12-13; page 5-57 lines 3-5: The Southeastern American kestrel, a protected species in Florida, breeds in nest boxes on Blackwater. As with the Florida bog frog, we recommend including a buffer around known kestrel breeding sites in any and all maps where restricted training activities are delineated.

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Page 5-50, Table 5-38: Some information in the table is not accurate. We provide an account of protected species found on Blackwater on the last page of this letter.

Page 6-43, Table 6-37: Frosted flatwoods salamander larvae were recorded in TA-3 in 1984 and 1985; we recommend changing the status to "potential to occur." Gopher tortoises are present in TA-3, TA-7, and TA-10. There is a bald eagle nest in TA-10.

Recreational Use

The EIS states that conflicts with hunters would not occur because training activities would be restricted in the daytime during hunting season. However, there are considerable nighttime hunting opportunities available on both Blackwater and Tate's Hell WMAs, including special seasons and fishing and frogging, which are allowed 24 hours a day, year round. For this reason, the potential exists for interactions between recreational users and Air Force personnel conducting missions at night. Also, please be aware that there is an extensive hunting season on both WMAs; in the case of Blackwater, nearly the entire year is established as a hunting season in Florida Administrative Code.

Instead of using the general term "hunting season" in the document, we recommend either naming the specific hunting season in which no daytime activities would occur, or listing the dates. FWC can provide assistance regarding hunting season dates and area specific regulations. We also recommend using a system similar to the Public Access Map (P.A.M) at Eglin to notify users of training activities. The following are additional comments related to recreational use, organized by page and line number.

Page 2-32, lines 23-25: We encourage coordination with FWC regarding hunting and fishing regulations as well as licenses and permits required for hunting, trapping, and fishing related activities.

Page 5-64, lines 10-11: BRSF also includes Yellow River WMA; TA-9 is located in this WMA.

Page 6-59, lines 3-5: Hunting is not listed as a recreational opportunity on Tate's Hell in this paragraph nor in Table 6-48. Hunting is one of the most important recreational activities on the WMA. Additionally, Tate's Hell is approximately 202,000 acres, not 2,000 acres as stated.

Page 6-60, line 7: Hunt camps on Tate's Hell extends from a week before Thanksgiving through a week after the end of the general gun season (mid-February). The word "transient" may not be applicable. Some of the campgrounds also have hosts that live there for extended periods.

Emitter Sites

We request more information about the proposed sites, including GPS coordinates and the total impact footprint, due to the following concerns and questions expressed by FWC staff.

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It is difficult to determine from the map (page 2-6, figure 2-5) the exact locations of the proposed emitter sites, but FWC-1 appears to be located in an area that is designated as a priority for habitat restoration according to the Box-R WMA Management Plan. We planted longleaf pine seedlings in this area as part of the restoration process. While the landscape is currently open, the site likely will not meet the "line of site" requirement as the pines mature. FWC-2 appears to be in an agricultural field that is actively managed.

The EIS states that the emitter sites would be fenced to prevent unauthorized personnel entry within 400 feet of the JTE systems. We request clarification on how the sites will be fenced (materials, height, etc.). Will the fences be permanent, or set up only during training activities? Will the perimeter be fenced or just roads that access the site? If only roads or human access points are fenced, what are the potential impacts on wildlife that wander within 400 feet of the JTE system? Page 3-69, line 8 states that exposure to potentially harmful levels of electromagnetic radiation (EMR) is highly unlikely given that wildlife are not likely to continuously remain within the hazard distance. This applies to larger mammals and perhaps some birds but may not be true for animals with small home ranges, such as small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.

It is not clear from the EIS how the use of emitter sites will affect management activities on Box-R such as prescribed burning, discing and planting, and roller chopping. Additionally, it is not clear how the emitter sites will affect recreational users, such as hunters.

If JTE emitters are used, FWC-1 needs to be greater than 400 feet from the hunter check station, Tilton Rd (county road), and US-98. FWC-2 needs to be greater than 400 feet from the residence, office/pole barn complex, and access road (Huckleberry Lane). Although Box-R is not considered a populated area, the residence is occupied year round. We recommend the use of only KTM and MCM emitters on Box-R due to the large buffer requirement of the JTE emitters resulting in potential conflicts with management activities and recreational users, as well as safety concerns.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on this project and look forward to working with you throughout its implementation. If you or your staff has any specific questions regarding our comments, please contact Diana Pepe at 850-717-8742 or Diana.Pepe@myfwc.com. Please be aware that GRASI-related activities that are deemed to have the potential for significant impact to natural resources on Box-R WMA will be subject to additional review and final approval by the Acquisition and Restoration Council. For more information on this process, please contact Gary Cochran at 850-487-9185 or Gary.Cochran@myfwc.com.

Sincerely,

Michael B. Brooks, Section Leader
Wildlife and Habitat Management Section

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A_004

Protected Species Presence by Tactical Area on Blackwater

	Tactical Area								
Species	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
Reticulated flatwoods salamander (Amystoma bishopi)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		●
Pine Barrens treefrog (Hyla andersonii)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Gopher frog (Rana capito)		●							
Florida bog frog (Rana okaloosae)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		●
Eastern indigo snake (Drymarchon couperi)									
Gopher tortoise (Gopherus polyphemus)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Alligator snapping turtle (Macrochelys temminickii)						●			
Florida pine snake (Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Red-cockaded woodpecker (Picoides borealis)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
Bald eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus)		●	●	●		●	●		
Eastern chipmunk (Tamais striatus)	●					●	●		
Spoon-leaved sundew (Drosera intermedia)	●	●	●					●	●

● Confirmed present ○ Not present Potential to occur

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A_013

ID	A_013
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	Anne Harvey
Organization	FDEP/Blackwater River State Park
Affiliation	Agency/Government Representative
Comment	Upon reading the online information set and attending the Milton public meeting , I was concerned that Blackwater River State Park was not designated as a Populated Area (residents and volunteers live on-site) nor a Recreation Area in figure E-4 BRSF Tactical Areas. When I talked to a representative, they pointed out that all such areas would be protected by a perimeter up to 2200 feet. Table ES-22 defines Restricted as 1500 feet around pitcher plant bogs and rare plants, but those located in many areas of Blackwater River State Park (BRSP) are not delineated due to the source of your shape files. Only the southeast quadrant of the park lacks pitcher plants and other associated near the park's boundary and within that zone are gopher tortoises and their commensal species. Also, due to the lack of the request for shape files from our agency, several roads that are within the state park's boundary are identified as being within FFS land, those include the identified Vehicle Stream/Wetland Crossing inside our northern boundary and within 500 feet of our residential area in Figure E-4 BRSF Tactical Areas - TA8. The other is approximately 800 feet of what is known as Johnson Float Road. Both roads may appear on old shape files for FFS as within their boundary but are not identified as such by FDEP after transfer of these lands for management by FDEP. They thus fall within an inhabited recreational area. Deaton Bridge Road is a FFS right-of-way that bisects BRSP and provides campers and day use visitors with egress/ingress to this park. How will access along Deaton Bridge Road, Indian Ford Road, Bob Pitts Road, J20 or Boat Ramp Road (all roads used by our visitors or to access the park) be designated for operations? Will campers still be able to access the park year round from all of the above paved roads? How will OHO or OFVO impact or potentially impact park visitors using FFS roads? Can you identify whether the roads listed will be used for particular operations? Boat Ramp Road, within the park, bisects an RCW cluster (J19). This will need to be delineated on your maps so that operations do not impact this cluster. How will integrated trails within the park that continue onto FFS lands have trails protected when maneuvers are using Natural Resource Procurement? Will it be necessary for park staff to advise visitors intending to hike on integrated trails that trap/snares may be present? Will it be necessary for park staff to advise hikers that they may encounter seemingly armed troops on foot or other military activities may be present or will hiking trails be listed as inhabited recreational sites and thus buffered from troop activities?

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A_013

	In conclusion, noise is the number one complaint from park visitors and the majority of complaintants point to the proximity of BRSP to Harold OLF and the training patterns which place helicopters at near tree height above the Blackwater River or above Deaton Bridge Road. Under 5.2.3 Airspace Impact Summary it states that aircraft enroute typically operate at or above 500 feet AGL. That does not appear to be the current operation criteria for helicopters enroute to or from Harold OLF. When we deliver interpretive programs at our pavilions along the river within the park we must wait for aircraft to leave the immediate area before we can continue a program. Is there a voluntary noise exposure limit for Whiting Field and its OLF, and if so, are aircraft currently flying in line with those restrictions? I and other staff have observed numerous flights overy many years within state park bounds that are less than 200 feet AGL. Pg 3-19 of the EIS states that flights 2200 feet laterally would produce 55 db and that approach/departures flights around known noise sensitive areas would exceed those distances to avoid excessive annoyance. Please note our campground as a noise sensitive area per the EIS.

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A_016

[redacted]

-----Original Message-----
From: Milligan, Lauren [mailto:Lauren.Milligan@dep.state.fl.us]
Sent: Friday, June 27, 2014 11:15 AM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA; PRESTON, JEREMY R GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 CEG/CEIEA; HAGEDORN, BRUCE W GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 CEG/CEVSNW; NUNLEY, JERRY M JR CTR USAF AFMC 96 CEG/CEVSN; KNIGHT, KELLY E CTR USAF AFMC 96 CEG/CEIEA
Cc: jim.karels@freshfromflorida.com; david.core@freshfromflorida.com; Ken Weber (Kenneth.Weber@freshfromflorida.com); brad.ellis@freshfromflorida.com; John.Browne@FreshFromFlorida.com; Forrest Watson (John.Watson@freshfromflorida.com); Gaskin, Carla; Fenton, Katy; Boree, Kelley; Gengenbach, Marianne; Allen, Paula L.; Butler, Tom; Larson, Aric; Robinson, Scott D.; Small, Parks; Walker, Gregory; Claridge, Kevin; Lazar, Ann; Isom, Penny; Livingston, Ashley; Orr, Elizabeth; Casey, Scott; Scott Sanders (scott.sanders@MyFWC.com);

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A_016

mike.brooks@myfwc.com; Jennifer Goff (jennifer.goff@MyFWC.com); Diana.Pepe@MyFWC.com; Conservation Planning Services (fwcconservationplanningservices@myfwc.com); Parsons, Timothy A.; Scott Edwards (Scott.Edwards@DOS.MyFlorida.com); Martin Markovich (Martin.Markovich@dot.state.fl.us); david.roberts@dot.state.fl.us; abdul.hatim@dot.state.fl.us; alice.lammert@dot.state.fl.us; Virgie.Bowen@dot.state.fl.us; Terry Joseph (terry.joseph@wfrpc.org); jwatson@thearpc.com
Subject: USAF - Draft EIS for the GRASI Landscape Initiative - State Clearance Letter

Dear Mr. Spaits and Eglin AFB staff:

RE: Department of the Air Force, Eglin Air Force Base - Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Landscape Initiative - Blackwater River State Forest and Tate's Hell State Forest, Florida.

SAI # FL201405126893C

Please find attached the State of Florida's clearance letter on the Draft EIS for the GRASI Landscape Initiative. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (850) 245-2170 or Lauren.Milligan@dep.state.fl.us <mailto:Lauren.Milligan@dep.state.fl.us> .

Yours sincerely,

Lauren P. Milligan

Lauren P. Milligan, Coordinator
Florida State Clearinghouse
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
3900 Commonwealth Blvd, M.S. 47
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000
ph. (850) 245-2170
fax (850) 245-2190

Lauren.Milligan@dep.state.fl.us <mailto:Lauren.Milligan@dep.state.fl.us>

Dep Customer Survey
<http://survey.dep.state.fl.us/?refemail=Lauren.Milligan@dep.state.fl.us>

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A_016

June 27, 2014

Mr. Michael Spaits
Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
Department of the Air Force
101 West D Avenue, Room 238
Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

RE: Department of the Air Force, Eglin Air Force Base – Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Landscape Initiative – Blackwater River State Forest and Tate's Hell State Forest, Florida.
SAI # FL201405126893C

Dear Mr. Spaits:

The Florida State Clearinghouse has coordinated a review of the subject Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the following authorities: Presidential Executive Order 12372; § 403.061(42), *Florida Statutes*; the Coastal Zone Management Act, 16 U.S.C. §§ 1451-1464, as amended; and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321-4347, as amended.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Division of State Lands acknowledges that the DEP, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services-Florida Forest Service and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission have entered into Memoranda of Agreement with the U.S. Air Force for the provision of military training and deployment of military communications equipment on state lands. The current management plans for the Blackwater River State Forest (BRSF) and Tate's Hell State Forest do not authorize the proposed military training actions outlined in the Draft EIS. A general reference to the GRASI Landscape Initiative is included in the recently approved *Ten-Year Resource Management Plan for the Blackwater River State Forest*, which states, "Any proposed future military use agreement such as GRASI would be proposed as an addendum to the approved BRSF 10 year resource management plan. No military activity under this agreement would be implemented on the state forest before such an addendum is approved by ARC." [The State of Florida's Acquisition and Restoration Council] While the Division of State Lands has delegated authority from the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (BOT) for the approval of ARC-recommended land management plan amendments, it should be noted that if such an amendment was deemed to be of heightened public concern, it would require an agenda item to be presented directly to the BOT for final approval.

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As reviewed by DEP staff, some of the activities contemplated could result in unintended impacts to both natural resources and recreational users, including: soil disturbance, wildlife habitat fragmentation, generation of waste materials and attendant pollution, impacts to rare plant and animal species, and restricted public access. Although there are restrictions associated with each proposed activity, staff requests that further details regarding general proposals to "avoid protected wildlife and plants" and "avoid inhabited recreational sites" be included in the EIS. The DEP requests additional detailed information to address its potential concerns below:

- The anticipated length of time the GRASI Landscape Initiative program will be in operation or program expiration date.
- The restrictions on public use within the state forests when civilian users are displaced and/or concentrated in circumscribed areas or at limited times.
- Collection and removal of waste and unexploded expendables and pyrotechnic devices, which may be capable of causing injury if they later detonate from handling, brushfires or accidental kicking or crushing by recreational users.
- The mitigation of potential bank erosion, stream siltation and alteration of stormwater sheet flow in the Vehicle Stream and Wetland Crossings (VSWC) as detailed in the operation plan for maneuvers in the forests.
- The potential alteration of the natural behavior of wildlife species and their sustainability in active areas due to noise from low-flying aircraft. Page H-6 of the appendices reports aircraft noise impacts as high as 150 dB, above the noise made by a nightclub or an oxyacetylene torch. This would also cause disturbance to recreational users.

It is unclear how the military or the state land managing agency would monitor adverse impacts and report them to the DEP Division of State Lands. Notwithstanding the Memoranda of Agreement signed by the agencies listed above, portions of the proposed activities may not be compatible with the purposes for which the State of Florida has acquired its conservation lands. For additional information and assistance, please contact Ms. Marianne Gengenbach, Environmental Administrator of the DEP Office of Environmental Services, at (850) 245-2773 or Marianne.Gengenbach@dep.state.fl.us.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) reports that staff is working with Eglin Air Force Base (AFB) to better consider ongoing recreational opportunities, potential conflicts and any imperiled species issues. As military training activities are proposed on the Blackwater, Yellow River and Tate's Hell Wildlife Management Areas within the state forests, the enclosed FWC letter to Eglin AFB addresses coordination with local FWC staff to ensure personnel safety and assist in identifying protected species locations and sensitive habitats, minimization of conflicts with recreational users, and submittal of further details on management of the proposed emitter sites. Please refer to the enclosed FWC letters and contact Ms. Diana Pepe at (850) 717-8742 or Diana.Pepe@MyFWC.com for additional information.

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The Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) Aviation and Spaceports Office staff requests that the U.S. Air Force and State of Florida consider the following regulatory requirements, which apply to the aircraft landing activities and construction of any airport facilities proposed in Draft EIS Section 2.3.2.1 Helicopter Landing Zones/Drop Zones and Section 2.3.2.2 Fixed-Wing Aircraft Landing Sites:

- The GRASI Landscape Initiative proposals described in the Draft EIS meet the definition of "airport" in § 330.27(2), *Florida Statutes* (F.S.), "an area of land or water used for, or intended to be used for, landing and takeoff of aircraft, including appurtenant areas, buildings, facilities, or rights-of-way necessary to facilitate such use or intended use." Due to the duration and number of operations, the proposals do not meet the definition of "temporary airport" in § 330.27(7), F.S., "any airport that will be used for a period of less than 30 days with no more than 10 operations per day."
- Airport site approval will be required from the FDOT under § 330.30(1)(a), F.S., "the owner or lessee of any proposed airport shall, prior to site acquisition or construction or establishment of the proposed airport, obtain approval of the airport site from the department." Site approval will be granted if the proposal satisfies the following criteria:
  - Adequate area has been allocated for the airport.
  - The proposed airport will conform to all registration requirements and will also comply with all applicable local regulations or zoning requirements.
  - Airports, local governments and property owners affected by the proposal have all been notified and their submitted comments have been given adequate consideration.
  - Safe aircraft traffic patterns can be established at the proposed airport with all existing airports and also all approved future airport sites in the vicinity of the proposed airport.
- The proposals will require registration under § 330.30(2)(a), F.S., "the owner or lessee of any airport in the state shall have either a public airport license or private airport registration prior to the operation of aircraft to or from the facility."
- Please also note that the facility identified as Munson Airfield and Munson Airstrip in the Draft EIS is actually named Blackwater Airfield. Blackwater Airfield is a private-use facility and not a public-use facility as indicated in the EIS.

For further information, please contact Ms. Alice Lammert, FDOT Private Airport and Finance Manager, at (850) 414-4503 or Alice.Lammert@dot.state.fl.us.

The Florida Department of State (DOS) reports that Eglin AFB intends to enter into a Programmatic Agreement (PA) to address effects to historic properties under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The DOS has commented on the PA proposal and Draft EIS indicating that the GRASI operations have the potential to adversely impact recorded

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and unrecorded cultural resources. DOS staff agrees with the Draft EIS finding that previous archaeological surveys conducted in the state forests may not be sufficient for identification of historic properties under federal law and that further identification and avoidance/minimization efforts are needed to avoid adverse impacts. Please refer to the enclosed DOS letters for further details.

Based on the information contained in the Draft EIS and enclosed state agency comments, the state has determined that, at this stage, the proposed federal activities are consistent with the Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP). To ensure the project's continued consistency with the FCMP, the concerns identified by our reviewing agencies must be addressed prior to project implementation. The state's continued concurrence will be based on the activities' compliance with FCMP authorities, including federal and state monitoring of the activities to ensure their continued conformance, and the adequate resolution of issues identified during this and subsequent reviews.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft document. Should you have any questions regarding our letter, please don't hesitate to contact me at Lauren.Milligan@dep.state.fl.us or (850) 245-2170.

Yours sincerely,

Lauren P. Milligan

Lauren P. Milligan, Coordinator
Florida State Clearinghouse
Office of Intergovernmental Programs

Enclosures

ec: David Core, FDACS-FFS
Marianne Gengenbach, DEP-DSL
Scott Sanders, FWC
Mike Brooks, FWC
David Roberts, FDOT
Martin Markovich, FDOT
Timothy Parsons, DOS

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JUN 17 2014
DEP Office of Intergovt'l Programs

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June 13, 2014

Ms. Lauren Milligan
Office of Intergovernmental Programs
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, Mail Station 47
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000
Lauren.milligan@dep.state.fl.us

Re: Department of Air Force, Eglin Air Force Base – Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Landscape Initiative, Okaloosa County, SAI #FL201405126893C

Dear Ms. Milligan:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) staff has reviewed the draft Environmental Impact Statement and provides the following comments and recommendations for your consideration, in accordance with the Coastal Zone Management Act, Florida's Coastal Management Program.

We are working with Eglin Air Force Base staff to better consider ongoing recreational opportunities, potential conflicts, and any imperiled species issues. Our June 12, 2014, letter to Eglin Air Force Base is enclosed to reflect our coordination.

We concur that the proposed project at this planning stage is consistent with our authorities under Chapter 379, Florida Statutes. If you need any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Jane Chabre either by phone at (850) 410-5367 or at FWCConservationPlanningServices@MyFWC.com. If you have any technical questions regarding the content of this letter, please contact Diana Pepe at (850) 717-8742 or email at Diana.Pepe@myFWC.com.

Sincerely,

Michael B. Brooks, Section Leader
Wildlife and Habitat Management Section

mbb/dp/tgw
ENV 1-3-2
GRASI Landscape Initiative Draft EIS_19211_061314
Enclosure

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June 12, 2014

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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Mr. Mike Spaits
Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238
Eglin Air Force Base FL 32542-5499

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Landscape Initiative

Dear Mr. Spaits,

Thank you for the opportunity for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to review the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Gulf Regional Airspace Initiative (GRASI). As has been resoundingly demonstrated on Eglin Air Force Base, we believe military training and preparedness can be compatible with sound and sustained stewardship of natural resources. Moreover as a formal signatory to multiple memoranda of agreement with the Air Force and a vested partner with all involved parties, the FWC is committed to enabling use of State of Florida lands for military training that is compatible with the conservation and recreation values for which those lands were acquired and are presently managed. It is within this spirit that we offer the following comments.

According to the EIS, the Air Force proposes to conduct training activities on Blackwater, Yellow River, and Tate's Hell Wildlife Management Areas (WMA). These areas are referred to as Blackwater River State Forest (BRSF) and Tate's Hell State Forest (THSF) in the EIS. Examples of proposed activities include airdrops of personnel and equipment, cross-country movements on foot, use of expendables, and establishing temporary roadblocks with concertina wire. The Air Force also proposes to place temporary and mobile radar emitters in two locations on Box-R WMA. These locations are referred to as FWC-1 and FWC-2 in the EIS. The majority of our comments address coordination with local FWC staff, locations of protected species and sensitive habitats, recreational use, and the proposed emitter sites.

Coordination

1 The goal stated in the "Memorandum of Agreement between the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Environment and Logistics and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for the Provision of Military Training on State Lands" is to work together in an effort to enhance both Parties' ability to carry out their respective missions. To this end, we recommend that the Air Force coordinate with the Area Biologist on Box-R WMA regarding training missions conducted at the emitter sites. Also, please be aware that FWC biologists conduct wildlife surveys, including nighttime surveys, and other management activities on all proposed training sites, and FWC law enforcement (LE) officers actively patrol these areas. We provide a list of FWC points of contact for the proposed training areas below:

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Box-R WMA (Emitter Sites)
Jerry Pitts, Area Biologist, Jerry.Pitts@myfwc.com, 850-653-2747
Blackwater River State Forest
Barbara Almario, Area Biologist, Barbara.Almario@myfwc.com, 850-957-6170
Olin Rondeau, LE Captain, Olin.Rondeau@myfwc.com, 850-595-8905

Tate's Hell State Forest
Diane Alix, Area Biologist, Diane.Alix@myfwc.com, 850-697-3734 x104
Rob Beaton, LE Captain, Rob.Beaton@myfwc.com, 850-697-3764

Sensitive Species and Habitats

The Area Biologists listed above can assist in identifying protected species locations and sensitive habitats. For example, Table 2-24 on page 2-27 states that there are no eagle nests on either forest. In actuality, there are documented eagle nests on both forests that are monitored by FWC; the Area Biologists can provide these locations. Page 2-9, line 4 references a team and liaison that the Air Force will establish to coordinate with the Florida Forest Service (FFS) on implementing the proposed actions. We recommend including the Area Biologists in this process so that they may serve as resources on protected species locations and sensitive areas. The following are additional comments related to protected species and sensitive areas, organized by page and line number.

Page 2-32, line 21, k: We recommend adding Florida pine snake to the list of species. Pine snakes are often encountered by FWC staff working on Blackwater and could potentially occur on Tate's Hell.

Page 2-45, line 39: We recommend amending to "Annually provide training units with global positioning system (GPS) coordinates for known sensitive species locations and habitats, including bald eagle nests and wood stork feeding/roosting habitat." We recommend establishing a mechanism for FWC staff to provide updates to known sensitive species locations and habitats.

Page 5-49, line 12; page 5-52, line 34: Although no individuals have been found in many years, the reticulated flatwoods salamander pond complex in TA-9 is designated federal critical habitat and should be protected and listed as sensitive habitat in Blackwater.

Page 5-52, line 34; page 5-56 lines 12-13; page 5-57 lines 3-5: The Florida bog frog, a protected species in Florida, breeds along Garnier Creek and Julian Mill Creek in TA-9. FFS and FWC are working on significant habitat enhancement projects in this area, which should be avoided. We recommend including a buffer around the bog frog habitat in any and all maps where restricted training activities are delineated. Table 5-39 on page 5-52 should include bog frog habitat.

Page 5-52, line 34; page 5-56 lines 12-13; page 5-57 lines 3-5: The Southeastern American kestrel, a protected species in Florida, breeds in nest boxes on Blackwater. As with the Florida bog frog, we recommend including a buffer around known kestrel breeding sites in any and all maps where restricted training activities are delineated.

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Page 5-50, Table 5-38: Some information in the table is not accurate. We provide an account of protected species found on Blackwater on the last page of this letter.

Page 6-43, Table 6-37: Frosted flatwoods salamander larvae were recorded in TA-3 in 1984 and 1985; we recommend changing the status to "potential to occur." Gopher tortoises are present in TA-3, TA-7, and TA-10. There is a bald eagle nest in TA-10.

Recreational Use

The EIS states that conflicts with hunters would not occur because training activities would be restricted in the daytime during hunting season. However, there are considerable nighttime hunting opportunities available on both Blackwater and Tate's Hell WMAs, including special seasons and fishing and frogging, which are allowed 24 hours a day, year round. For this reason, the potential exists for interactions between recreational users and Air Force personnel conducting missions at night. Also, please be aware that there is an extensive hunting season on both WMAs; in the case of Blackwater, nearly the entire year is established as a hunting season in Florida Administrative Code.

Instead of using the general term "hunting season" in the document, we recommend either naming the specific hunting season in which no daytime activities would occur, or listing the dates. FWC can provide assistance regarding hunting season dates and area specific regulations. We also recommend using a system similar to the Public Access Map (P.A.M) at Eglin to notify users of training activities. The following are additional comments related to recreational use, organized by page and line number.

Page 2-32, lines 23-25: We encourage coordination with FWC regarding hunting and fishing regulations as well as licenses and permits required for hunting, trapping, and fishing related activities.

Page 5-64, lines 10-11: BRSF also includes Yellow River WMA; TA-9 is located in this WMA.

Page 6-59, lines 3-5: Hunting is not listed as a recreational opportunity on Tate's Hell in this paragraph nor in Table 6-48. Hunting is one of the most important recreational activities on the WMA. Additionally, Tate's Hell is approximately 202,000 acres, not 2,000 acres as stated.

Page 6-60, line 7: Hunt camps on Tate's Hell extends from a week before Thanksgiving through a week after the end of the general gun season (mid-February). The word "transient" may not be applicable. Some of the campgrounds also have hosts that live there for extended periods.

Emitter Sites

We request more information about the proposed sites, including GPS coordinates and the total impact footprint, due to the following concerns and questions expressed by FWC staff.

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Mike Spaits
Page 4
June 12, 2014

It is difficult to determine from the map (page 2-6, figure 2-5) the exact locations of the proposed emitter sites, but FWC-1 appears to be located in an area that is designated as a priority for habitat restoration according to the Box-R WMA Management Plan. We planted longleaf pine seedlings in this area as part of the restoration process. While the landscape is currently open, the site likely will not meet the "line of site" requirement as the pines mature. FWC-2 appears to be in an agricultural field that is actively managed.

The EIS states that the emitter sites would be fenced to prevent unauthorized personnel entry within 400 feet of the JTE systems. We request clarification on how the sites will be fenced (materials, height, etc.). Will the fences be permanent, or set up only during training activities? Will the perimeter be fenced or just roads that access the site? If only roads or human access points are fenced, what are the potential impacts on wildlife that wander within 400 feet of the JTE system? Page 3-69, line 8 states that exposure to potentially harmful levels of electromagnetic radiation (EMR) is highly unlikely given that wildlife are not likely to continuously remain within the hazard distance. This applies to larger mammals and perhaps some birds but may not be true for animals with small home ranges, such as small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.

It is not clear from the EIS how the use of emitter sites will affect management activities on Box-R such as prescribed burning, discing and planting, and roller chopping. Additionally, it is not clear how the emitter sites will affect recreational users, such as hunters.

If JTE emitters are used, FWC-1 needs to be greater than 400 feet from the hunter check station, Tilton Rd (county road), and US-98. FWC-2 needs to be greater than 400 feet from the residence, office/pole barn complex, and access road (Huckleberry Lane). Although Box-R is not considered a populated area, the residence is occupied year round. We recommend the use of only KTM and MCM emitters on Box-R due to the large buffer requirement of the JTE emitters resulting in potential conflicts with management activities and recreational users, as well as safety concerns.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on this project and look forward to working with you throughout its implementation. If you or your staff has any specific questions regarding our comments, please contact Diana Pepe at 850-717-8742 or Diana.Pepe@myfwc.com. Please be aware that GRASI-related activities that are deemed to have the potential for significant impact to natural resources on Box-R WMA will be subject to additional review and final approval by the Acquisition and Restoration Council. For more information on this process, please contact Gary Cochran at 850-487-9185 or Gary.Cochran@myfwc.com.

Sincerely,

Michael B. Brooks, Section Leader
Wildlife and Habitat Management Section

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Protected Species Presence by Tactical Area on Blackwater

	Tactical Area								
Species	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
Reticulated flatwoods salamander (Amystoma bishopi)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	◦	●
Pine Barrens treefrog (Hyla andersonii)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	◦
Gopher frog (Rana capito)	◦	●	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦
Florida bog frog (Rana okaloosae)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	◦	●
Eastern indigo snake (Drymarchon couperi)	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦
Gopher tortoise (Gopherus polyphemus)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	◦
Alligator snapping turtle (Macrochelys temminickii)	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	●	◦	◦	◦
Florida pine snake (Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Red-cockaded woodpecker (Picoides borealis)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
Bald eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus)	◦	●	●	●	◦	●	●	◦	◦
Eastern chipmunk (Tamais striatus)	●	◦	◦	◦	◦	●	●	◦	◦
Spoon-leaved sundew (Drosera intermedia)	●	●	●	◦	◦	◦	◦	●	●

● Confirmed present ○ Not present ◦ Potential to occur

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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of STATE

RICK SCOTT
Governor

KEN DETZNER
Secretary of State

Ms. Lauren Milligan
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
3900 Commonwealth Blvd., Mail Station 47
Tallahassee, FL 32399

May 29, 2014

Re: SHPO Project #: 2014-1992 (2014-1669, 2013-5800)'
SAI#: FL201405126893C
Department of the Air Force, Eglin Air Force Base. Draft EIS for GRASI Landscape Initiative

Dear Ms. Milligan:

Our office reviewed the submitted materials in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. In January of 2014, our office provided comments on the GRASI Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives to the Environmental Management Branch at Eglin Air Force Base. At that time, we commented that the proposed activities have the potential to adversely impact cultural resources at Backwater River and Tate's Hell State Forests (enclosure). We noted that Eglin, in addition to NEPA, would need to fulfill its responsibilities pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA).

In March 2014, Eglin AFB environmental staff informed the SHPO of its intention to enter in to a Programmatic Agreement (PA) to address effects to historic properties under Section 106. We provided comments on the PA proposal, and on the General Operational Constraints in Section 2.5 of the Draft EIS in May 2014 (enclosure). In regard to the April 2014 Draft EIS, it remains the opinion of the SHPO that GRASI operations have the potential to adversely impact recorded and unrecorded cultural resources. The draft notes that previous archaeological surveys conducted in the state forests may not be sufficient for the purposes of NEPA scoping or the identification of historic properties under Section 106, NHPA, and our office agrees that further identification and avoidance/minimization efforts are needed to avoid adverse effects/impacts to historic/cultural resources. The Air Force has chosen to coordinate Section 106 review into the NEPA process as per 36 CFR 800.8(a), and as such the memorialization of the PA, adherence to its stipulations, and inclusion in the EIS will fulfill the Air Force's Section 106 obligations.

If you have any questions, please contact me by email at *Timothy.Parsons@DOS.MyFlorida.com*, or by telephone at 850.245.6333 or 800.847.7278.

Sincerely,

Timothy A. Parsons, Ph.D., RPA
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
for Compliance and Review

Enclosure

VIVA FLORIDA

Division of Historical Resources
R.A. Gray Building • 500 South Bronough Street• Tallahassee, Florida 32399
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Promoting Florida's History and Culture **VivaFlorida.org**

Historical Resources

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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of STATE

RICK SCOTT
Governor

KEN DETZNER
Secretary of State

Maria D. Rodriguez
Environmental Management Branch
96 CEG/CEIE
501 DeLeon Street, Suite 101
Eglin AFB FL 32542-5105

January 17, 2014

Re: SHPO/DHR Project File No.: 2013-0250
Project: *Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives (DOPAA)*

Dear Ms. Rodriguez:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the preliminary draft EIS for the *GRASI*. Our office reviewed the referenced project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and implementing regulations.

As noted in the draft EIS, several of the proposed activities have the potential to cause adverse impacts to cultural resources. As such, these activities will require further consultation with our office as stipulated by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and its implementing regulations as described in 36 CFR 800. Consultation will need to occur regardless of previous survey in activity areas in the State Forests, since compliance with Section 106 is based on SHPO consultation for specific undertakings, not previous survey coverage. Given the nature of the proposed activities, it may be advantageous to develop a programmatic agreement for *GRASI* undertakings that streamlines Section 106 consultation and establishes a list of activities excluded from consultation. Furthermore, I suggest initiating consultation with Florida's federally recognized Native American tribes as soon as possible, if this has not already been done, in order to determine their level of interest in the adverse impacts that may be caused by the proposed activities.

I look forward to reviewing future drafts of the EIS, as well as potentially collaborating on a programmatic agreement to guide Eglin's Section 106 obligations stemming from this initiative. If you have any questions concerning these comments, please contact me at timothy.parsons@dos.myflorida.com or at 850-245-6333.

Sincerely,

COPY

Timothy A. Parsons, Ph.D., RPA
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Compliance and Review

DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES
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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

RICK SCOTT
Governor

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Secretary of State

Ms. Maria D. Rodriguez
Chief, Environmental Management Branch
96 CEG/CEIE
501 Deleon Street, Suite 101
Eglin AFB, Florida 32542-5105

COPY

May 9, 2014

RE: DHR Project File No.: 2014-1669 (2013-5800)
Re: Programmatic Agreement (PA) Proposal for the Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative

Dear Ms. Rodriguez:

The Florida State Historic Preservation Office reviewed the referenced project for possible effects on historic properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the *National Register of Historic Places*. The review was conducted in accordance with Section 106 of the *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966*, as amended, and its implementing regulations in *36 CFR Part 800: Protection of Historic Properties*.

Thank you for developing this proposal outlining a programmatic alternative to the Section 106 process. For a project the scope of GRASI, it is critical to develop a PA that allows the proposed activity to proceed in a timely manner while still meeting Eglin Air Force Base's responsibilities under Section 106. I look forward to working with you and your staff on developing, refining, and finalizing this programmatic agreement.

I agree that dividing the PA in to two sections, one considering immediate effects requiring survey and additional identification and evaluation of historic properties and one considering the long-term cumulative effects of GRASI, is prudent. I hope that the following comments are useful as the drafting process begins:

- *Emitter Sites:* I agree that the placement of equipment on developed areas has little potential for adverse effect. However, the sites should go through individual review prior to being listed as exempted areas/activities in the PA. This can be accomplished quickly by our office when the locations are finalized and maps of the locations are provided to us.

- *PA Part 1, planned development:* I agree that the standard four-step consultation process is appropriate for planned land development and to improve or construct roads, airstrips, staging areas, and other activity areas.

- *PA Part 1, protection protocols (prohibited and restricted areas):* Prohibiting areas within cultural resource buffer areas is an effective way to prevent direct effects to historic properties. However, it is also possible to evaluate recorded historic properties for significance and, if they are determined ineligible for listing in the National Register, they could be utilized for GRASI activities in a less restricted manner. This may be an important consideration for mission critical areas that contain

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Division of Historical Resources
R.A. Gray Building • 500 South Bronough Street• Tallahassee, Florida 32399
850.245.6300 • 850.245.6436 (Fax) flheritage.com
Promoting Florida's History and Culture **VivaFlorida.org**

Historical Resources

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Ms. Rodriguez
DHR Project File No. 2014-1669
May 9, 2014
Page 2

unevaluated historic properties, unless total avoidance of all cultural resources is an established part of the forests' management plans.

- *PA Part 1, protection protocols (limited use areas):* I agree that SHPO consultation on improvements and land disturbance in limited use areas is a prudent approach.

- *PA Part 1, protection protocols (unlimited areas):*

  - The surveys conducted at Blackwater River and Tate's Hell State Forests were not necessarily designed and conducted with Section 106 compliance in mind, and may not meet Florida's 1A-46 and Section 106 reporting standards or meet minimum guidelines for archaeological survey according to Module 3 of Florida's Standards and Operations Manual. It is likely that some or all of these surveys are not sufficient to fulfill Eglin's Section 106 responsibilities. As such, each survey should be individually reviewed for Section 106 and 1A-46 sufficiency before the areas can be cleared for unlimited use.
  - Surveys that are not sufficient according to 1A-46 or that are not sufficient for the purpose of identifying historic properties for this undertaking are not appropriate justification for establishing unlimited use areas.
  - Even in sufficiently surveyed areas where no historic properties are discovered, inadvertent discoveries remain a possibility. The PA must include a protection plan for inadvertent discoveries, even those that occur within unlimited use areas.

- *PA Part 2:* Developing a comprehensive survey strategy for identifying historic properties in areas not immediately effected by GRASI activities is an excellent idea. However, this should be an ongoing effort for the duration of GRASI rather than a land area percentage (sample fraction) mandate. This survey strategy will be an ongoing effort to fulfill Section 106 obligations.

  - Surveys conducted pursuant to the stipulations of this programmatic agreement shall meet or exceed the guidelines put forth in Module 3, and the resultant reports shall meet 1A-46 sufficiency requirements.

- *Lifting of all prohibitions:* The proposal seems to indicate that, at some point in the future, "all prohibitions on training will be lifted within the State Forests, except those imposed by the [Florida Forest Service]." Significant historic properties should be protected in perpetuity, and reasonable restrictions to prevent adverse effects should remain in effect indefinitely.

I welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your staff at Eglin Air Force Base about the GRASI initiative. I would like to propose Thursday, June 19 for a visit.

If you have any questions, please contact me by email at *Timothy.Parsons@dos.myflorida.com*, or by telephone at 850.245.6333 or 800.847.7278.

Sincerely,

Timothy A. Parsons, Ph.D, RPA
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
for Compliance and Review

COPY

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A_017

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of STATE

RICK SCOTT
Governor

KEN DETZNER
Secretary of State

Mr. Mike Spaits
Eglin Air Force Base Public Affairs Office
96 TW/PA
101 West D Ave., Room 238
Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

May 29, 2014

Re: SHPO Project #: 2014-2060 (2014-1992, 2014-1669, 2013-5800)
Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI)

Dear Mr. Spaits:

Our office reviewed the submitted materials in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. In January of 2014, our office provided comments on the GRASI Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives to the Environmental Management Branch at Eglin Air Force Base. At that time, we commented that the proposed activities have the potential to adversely impact cultural resources at Backwater River and Tate's Hell State Forests (enclosure). We noted that Eglin, in addition to NEPA, would need to fulfill its responsibilities pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA).

In March 2014, Eglin AFB environmental staff informed the SHPO of its intention to enter in to a Programmatic Agreement (PA) to address effects to historic properties under Section 106. We provided comments on the PA proposal, and on the General Operational Constraints in Section 2.5 of the Draft EIS in May 2014 (enclosure). In regard to the April 2014 Draft EIS, it remains the opinion of the SHPO that GRASI operations have the potential to adversely impact recorded and unrecorded cultural resources. The draft notes that previous archaeological surveys conducted in the state forests may not be sufficient for the purposes of NEPA scoping or the identification of historic properties under Section 106, NHPA, and our office agrees that further identification and avoidance/minimization efforts are needed to avoid adverse effects/impacts to historic/cultural resources. The Air Force has chosen to coordinate Section 106 review into the NEPA process as per 36 CFR 800.8(a), and as such the memorialization of the PA, adherence to its stipulations, and inclusion in the EIS will fulfill the Air Force's Section 106 obligations.

If you have any questions, please contact me by email at *Timothy.Parsons@DOS.MyFlorida.com*, or by telephone at 850.245.6333 or 800.847.7278.

Sincerely,

Timothy A. Parsons, Ph.D., RPA
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
for Compliance and Review

Enclosure

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Historical Resources

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A_017

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of STATE

RICK SCOTT
Governor

KEN DETZNER
Secretary of State

Maria D. Rodriguez
Environmental Management Branch
96 CEG/CEIE
501 DeLeon Street, Suite 101
Eglin AFB FL 32542-5105

January 17, 2014

Re: SHPO/DHR Project File No.: 2013-0250
Project: *Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives (DOPAA)*

Dear Ms. Rodriguez:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the preliminary draft EIS for the *GRASI*. Our office reviewed the referenced project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and implementing regulations.

As noted in the draft EIS, several of the proposed activities have the potential to cause adverse impacts to cultural resources. As such, these activities will require further consultation with our office as stipulated by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and its implementing regulations as described in 36 CFR 800. Consultation will need to occur regardless of previous survey in activity areas in the State Forests, since compliance with Section 106 is based on SHPO consultation for specific undertakings, not previous survey coverage. Given the nature of the proposed activities, it may be advantageous to develop a programmatic agreement for *GRASI* undertakings that streamlines Section 106 consultation and establishes a list of activities excluded from consultation. Furthermore, I suggest initiating consultation with Florida's federally recognized Native American tribes as soon as possible, if this has not already been done, in order to determine their level of interest in the adverse impacts that may be caused by the proposed activities.

I look forward to reviewing future drafts of the EIS, as well as potentially collaborating on a programmatic agreement to guide Eglin's Section 106 obligations stemming from this initiative. If you have any questions concerning these comments, please contact me at timothy.parsons@dos.myflorida.com or at 850-245-6333.

Sincerely,

COPY

Timothy A. Parsons, Ph.D., RPA
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Compliance and Review

DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES
R. A. Gray Building • 500 South Bronough Street • Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250
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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of STATE

RICK SCOTT
Governor

KEN DETZNER
Secretary of State

Ms. Maria D. Rodriguez
Chief, Environmental Management Branch
96 CEG/CEIE
501 Deleon Street, Suite 101
Eglin AFB, Florida 32542-5105

COPY

May 9, 2014

RE: DHR Project File No.: 2014-1669 (2013-5800)
Re: Programmatic Agreement (PA) Proposal for the Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative

Dear Ms. Rodriguez:

The Florida State Historic Preservation Office reviewed the referenced project for possible effects on historic properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the *National Register of Historic Places*. The review was conducted in accordance with Section 106 of the *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966*, as amended, and its implementing regulations in *36 CFR Part 800: Protection of Historic Properties*.

Thank you for developing this proposal outlining a programmatic alternative to the Section 106 process. For a project the scope of GRASI, it is critical to develop a PA that allows the proposed activity to proceed in a timely manner while still meeting Eglin Air Force Base's responsibilities under Section 106. I look forward to working with you and your staff on developing, refining, and finalizing this programmatic agreement.

I agree that dividing the PA in to two sections, one considering immediate effects requiring survey and additional identification and evaluation of historic properties and one considering the long-term cumulative effects of GRASI, is prudent. I hope that the following comments are useful as the drafting process begins:

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May 9, 2014
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unevaluated historic properties, unless total avoidance of all cultural resources is an established part of the forests' management plans.

- *PA Part 1, protection protocols (limited use areas):* I agree that SHPO consultation on improvements and land disturbance in limited use areas is a prudent approach.

- *PA Part 1, protection protocols (unlimited areas):*

  - The surveys conducted at Blackwater River and Tate's Hell State Forests were not necessarily designed and conducted with Section 106 compliance in mind, and may not meet Florida's 1A-46 and Section 106 reporting standards or meet minimum guidelines for archaeological survey according to Module 3 of Florida's Standards and Operations Manual. It is likely that some or all of these surveys are not sufficient to fulfill Eglin's Section 106 responsibilities. As such, each survey should be individually reviewed for Section 106 and 1A-46 sufficiency before the areas can be cleared for unlimited use.
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  - Surveys conducted pursuant to the stipulations of this programmatic agreement shall meet or exceed the guidelines put forth in Module 3, and the resultant reports shall meet 1A-46 sufficiency requirements.

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I welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your staff at Eglin Air Force Base about the GRASI initiative. I would like to propose Thursday, June 19 for a visit.

If you have any questions, please contact me by email at *Timothy.Parsons@dos.myflorida.com*, or by telephone at 850.245.6333 or 800.847.7278.

Sincerely,

Timothy A. Parsons, Ph.D, RPA
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
for Compliance and Review

COPY

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A_018

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 4
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

June 23, 2014

Mr. Mike Spaits
Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office
96 TW/ PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238
Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

Subject: EPA's Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Landscape Initiative at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. CEQ No. 20140139

Dear Mr. Spaits:

Pursuant to Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (CAA) and Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 4 reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Landscape Initiative at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida.

This DEIS is the result of the Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) region that consists of the eastern Gulf of Mexico region, which includes northwest Florida, southern Mississippi, lower Alabama, southern Georgia, and the eastern Gulf of Mexico. The GRASI is a collaborative planning effort between military and civilian leaders designed to ensure the future availability and capacity of regional airspace and training lands for military use and the continued economic prosperity of the Gulf coast. The GRASI Landscape Initiative (GLI) is a U.S. Air Force-led partnership with the State of Florida and federal agencies to expand the capacity of the region to safely host military test and training operations. This DEIS addressed locations in the Blackwater River State Forest (BRSF) and Tate's Hell State Forest (THSF) for general training operations, as well as small, noncontiguous land areas throughout the region for permanent and mobile radar emitter sites.

The EPA has reviewed the potential environmental impacts resulting from the implementation of the GRASI Landscape Initiative (GLI) in the region of northwest Florida. Based on the information provided in the DEIS, It appears that you have addressed our primary concerns for significant adverse impacts to public health and safety. The general protection levels for the proposed action ground operations provides adequate environmental resource protection.

In summary, EPA has no immediate environmental concerns regarding this project, as proposed, and rates this draft EIS as LO (Lack of Objections) (i.e. the review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the preferred alternative).

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EPA also supports a comprehensive monitoring program to ensure that the ongoing impacts from military training are assessed and appropriately addressed/mitigated once identified. In additions, the general protection levels identified in the draft EIS should be applied and adequately enforced to attain appropriate results. Please provide us with a copy of the Record of Decision (ROD) when available.

We recommend that you continue to keep the community informed on the status of the GRASI Landscape Initiative. We appreciate your coordination with us. If you have any questions, please contact Larry Gissentanna of my staff at 404-562- 8248 (gissentanna.larry@epa.gov).

Sincerely,

Heinz J. Mueller, Chief
NEPA Program Office
Office of Environmental Accountability

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U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS) RATING SYSTEM CRITERIA

EPA has developed a set of criteria for rating Draft EISs. The rating system provides a basis upon which EPA makes recommendations to the lead agency for improving the draft.

RATING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE ACTION

- LO (Lack of Objections): The review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the preferred alternative. The review may have disclosed opportunities for application of mitigation measures that could be accomplished with no more than minor changes to the proposed action.

- EC (Environmental Concerns): The review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures may require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce the environmental impact.

- EO (Environmental Objections): The review has identified significant environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to adequately protect the environment. Corrective measures may require substantial changes to the preferred alternative or consideration of some other project alternative (including the no action alternative or a new alternative). The basis for environmental objections can include situations:

  1. Where an action might violate or be inconsistent with achievement or maintenance of a national environmental standard;
  2. Where the Federal agency violates its own substantive environmental requirements that relate to EPA's areas of jurisdiction or expertise;
  3. Where there is a violation of an EPA policy declaration;
  4. Where there are no applicable standards or where applicable standards will not be violated but there is potential for significant environmental degradation that could be corrected by project modification or other feasible alternatives; or
  5. Where proceeding with the proposed action would set a precedent for future actions that collectively could result in significant environmental impacts.

- EU (Environmentally Unsatisfactory): The review has identified adverse environmental impacts that are of sufficient magnitude that EPA believes the proposed action must not proceed as proposed. The basis for an environmentally unsatisfactory determination consists of identification of environmentally objectionable impacts as defined above and one or more of the following conditions:

  1. The potential violation of or inconsistency with a national environmental standard is substantive and/or will occur on a long-term basis;
  2. There are no applicable standards but the severity, duration, or geographical scope of the impacts associated with the proposed action warrant special attention; or
  3. The potential environmental impacts resulting from the proposed action are of national importance because of the threat to national environmental resources or to environmental policies.

RATING THE ADEQUACY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)

- 1 (Adequate): The Draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alternative and those of the alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis or data collection is necessary, but the reviewer may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

- 2 (Insufficient Information): The Draft EIS does not contain sufficient information to fully assess environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the reviewer has identified new reasonably available alternatives that are within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the Draft EIS, which could reduce the environmental impacts of the proposal. The identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussion should be included in the Final EIS.

- 3 (Inadequate): The Draft EIS does not adequately assess the potentially significant environmental impacts of the proposal, or the reviewer has identified new, reasonably available, alternatives, that are outside of the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the Draft EIS, which should be analyzed in order to reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts. The identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussions are of such a magnitude that they should have full public review at a draft stage. This rating indicates EPA's belief that the Draft EIS does not meet the purposes of NEPA and/or the Section 309 review, and thus should be formally revised and made available for public comment in a supplemental or revised Draft EIS.

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June 27, 2014

Mr. Michael Spaits

Eglin AFB Public Affairs

96th Test Wing/PA

101 West D Avenue, Room 238

Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

Dear Mr. Spaits,

Please accept this letter of support for the GRASI Landscape Initiative on behalf of the Santa Rosa County Military Affairs Committee (MAC). Our MAC is composed of retired and former members of all branches of the military who support the mission at Eglin AFB and the economic benefits to the local economy as a result of the military presence in Northwest Florida. The annual economic benefit to Santa Rosa County exceeds $1.0 billion.

The proposal to establish military training in the Blackwater River State Forest via partnership agreements with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Services and the Florida Forest Service is deserving of public support. We are aware of the long and successful history that Eglin AFB has achieved in managing and protecting the environment on the Eglin AFB Range and the national recognition the base has received over the years for its efforts to preserve the wildlife, waterways and the forests in and around the Eglin Reservation. The environmental stewardship demonstrated to date has been exemplary.

We strongly support the GRASI Landscape Initiative and the proposed military training in the Blackwater River State Forest as outlined in your presentation. If we can be of further support to your efforts, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Don Salter

Don Salter, Chairman

Santa Rosa County Military Affairs Committee

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1 [redacted]

[redacted]

23 COMMISSIONER SANDERS: I wasn't going to -- oh,

24 excuse me. Connie, it's C-h-e-r-y-l, S-a-n-d-e-r-s.

25 Thank you, Connie. I wasn't going to speak, but as

GULF BAY REPORTING

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a representative of the Franklin County people, I think I need to. A lot of what has been said from the military that these talks started back in 2008, and if Franklin County and its residents had been contacted back in 2008 on how we felt then, we could have told the people then, and y'all would have saved a lot of time, and a lot of money, and a lot of people's time, and a lot of money.

I've been from the ground up, from the late '80's to the '90's on supporting the sale of the state -- sale of the land to the state, knowing that it took it off the tax rolls and everything else, but I cannot support what you all are wanting to do, and I would ask that the Air Force take, after looking at everything going down, all of the alternatives and stuff, and would take "No Action Alternative."

We have got something that we value very much here. God has given us the rights to have the use of it as long as everybody else, but he has given us the job of being stewards of this land, and that's what we are, and to have someone come in here and potentially might significantly impact the land, I'm quite concerned about it.

And so that -- I would ask the Air Force to

GULF BAY REPORTING

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work with the Florida Forest Service, and get Blackwater because that's what y'all really need, and I would just leave Tate's Hell to ourselves because I sure do hate to see anything messed up, because once you mess it up, you can't get it back. And so that -- I wasn't going to really say nothing. I love -- and I don't say too much because I'll get emotional about it, but I've worked mighty hard along with a lot of other people, Dan Tonsmeire is one of them, to keep this a rural area, to make sure that everybody realizes what we have, and I don't want to have ill feelings towards anybody because I can say at the last two meetings I got up and spoke I was targeted as being an anti-military, and I'm not. I just love Franklin County, and like I said, the day that I die, I want dirt put over my grave and the last words said, Cheryl Sanders loved Franklin County. So if I do not get up here and voice my concerns, I would be doing wrong, and so I would ask the military to work with the Florida Forestry Service, like I said before, to get Blackwater, but leave Tate's Hell alone. We don't need you here. It's not that we don't want you here. We want you to come as visitors, but we don't want you to destroy what we got, or the potential of

GULF BAY REPORTING

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1 destroying what we have, but "No Action
2 Alternative."
3 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. [redacted]

GULF BAY REPORTING

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A_022

[redacted]

From: Barnett, Anita <anita_barnett@nps.gov>
Sent: Thursday, June 05, 2014 1:01 PM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Subject: Re: GRASI

Hey Mike,

I just sent my "No Comment" from the NPS to the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance.

Thank you for your patience and being willing to answer a few questions. We have specialist around the country reviewing Federal EIS's for potential impacts to units of the NPS and many times these folks have never been to the park they are trying to protect.

Anita Barnett

On Thu, Jun 5, 2014 at 10:16 AM, Barnett, Anita <anita_barnett@nps.gov> wrote:
Hey Mike,
The EIS did not make it clear if aircraft departure or arrival routes may or may not overfly GUIS. Therefore, the comments I received were directed toward requesting this information and then providing a commensurate analysis.

Are there aircraft departure or arrival routes over Gulf Island National Seashore part of the GRASI?

On Thu, Sep 12, 2013 at 4:40 PM, Spaits, Mike GS12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA <mike.spaits@eglin.af.mil> wrote:
Hi Anita,
Sorry I didn't have a chance to call you back, but I'm between meetings.
To answer your questions:
Q. Does this include ranges over water or only Blackwater River and Tate's Hell State Forest?
A. Only Blackwater River and Tate's Hell State Forest

Q. Does this have the potential to affect Gulf Island National Seashore?
A. There are no activities associated with GINS.

Q. Are the radar, telemetry, or training emitter sites on or near (within 5 miles?) of Gulf Island National Seashore?
A. The one emitter closest to the water is the one at Henderson Beach Park but it is proposed to be on land Eglin already owns there.

Thanks,
Mike Spaits
Eglin Environmental Public Affairs
O - (850) 882-2836
C - (850) 621-3391

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A_022

-----Original Message-----
From: Barnett, Anita [mailto:anita_barnett@nps.gov]
Sent: Thursday, September 12, 2013 12:46 PM
To: Spaits, Mike GS12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Subject: GRASI

Hey Mike,

I'd like to talk with you about the Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Landscape Initiative (GLI). Give me a call at 404-507-5706. I need to clarify the area of potential effect.

T
he Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Landscape Initiative (GLI) , a U.S Air Force-led partnership with the State of Florida and other state and federal agencies to expand the capacity of the region to safely host military test and training operations. I understand that under the GLI EIS, the Air Force's Proposed Action is to utilize Blackwater River State Forest (BRSF) and Tate's Hell State Forest (THSF) for establishing helicopter landing and drop zones, airstrips, and a number of different land and air training activities which currently occur within the interstitial (areas between designated test/training sites) areas of the Eglin Air Force Base (AFB) Range.

Does this include ranges over water or only Blackwater River and Tate's Hell State Forest? Does this have the potential to affect Gulf Island National Seashore?

The Air Force is also proposing to establish up to 12 radar, telemetry, and training emitter sites throughout northwest Florida, proposed to support development of an integrated air defense system to provide unique, viable, and robust air training. Our concern is with the location of the emitter sites as well as flight activities that have the potential to impact resources of Gulf Islands National Seashore.

Are the radar, telemetry, or training emitter sites on or near (within 5 miles?) of Gulf Island National Seashore?

--
Anita Barnett
Environmental Protection Specialist
Planning and Compliance Division
National Park Service
Southeast Region

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A_022

404-507-5706
678-883-4770

--
Anita Barnett
Environmental Protection Specialist
Planning and Compliance Division
National Park Service
Southeast Region
404-507-5706
678-883-4770

--
Anita Barnett
Environmental Protection Specialist
Planning and Compliance Division
National Park Service
Southeast Region
404-507-5706
678-883-4770

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B.5.2 Organization Comments in Order by Identifier ID Number

O_002

[redacted]

From: Lisa L. Spooner [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, June 05, 2014 2:57 PM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Subject: GRASI Comments
Attachments: GRASI Letter Spooner.docx

6/5/2014

Lisa L. Spooner, CPA/PFS, MBA

CFO, Gulf Unmanned Systems Center

Resident - [redacted]

I support the military reviewing the reasonable alternative site as presented by Bruce McCormack, President, Gulf Unmanned Systems Center, at the public hearing in Carrabelle, Florida on 6/3/2014.

The site consists of approximately 90,000 acres of privately held land located primarily in Calhoun and adjacent counties which has been used since 1999 for Special Operations Training. The original EIS was approved in 2002 and reapproved in 2011 for military operations.

While these military exercised would be located outside of Franklin County (primarily in Calhoun County) the property and project would be managed by our office in Carrabelle primarily by employees from Carrabelle and Franklin County.

Mr. McCormack can be contacted at [redacted] or at our office in Carrabelle, Florida at 206 [redacted]

Sincerely,

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O_002

Regards,
Lisa L. Spooner, CPA/PFS, MBA

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O_003

[redacted]

From: Lesley Cox [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, June 04, 2014 2:26 PM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Subject: GRASI EIS comments
Attachments: FGGA Comments GRASI 06022014.pdf

Dear Mr. Spaits:

I have attached the letter from the Florida Green Guide Association that I presented at last night's public meeting in Carrabelle.

Lesley Cox
Certified Green Guide
[redacted]
http://www.floridagreenguide.org/

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June 3, 2014

Eglin AFB Public Affairs
ATTNN: Michael Spaits
101 West D Avenue, Room 238
Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

850-882-2836
Mike.spaits@eglin.af.mil

Re: GRASI – Tate's Hell State Forest

Dear Mr. Spaits,

Please accept this letter from the Florida Green Guide Association (FGGA) in favor of the "No Action Alternative." The FGGA was established in 2007 as a trade association to support and market the local nature-based businesses created by graduates of the 90 hour Green Guide program of the Wakulla Environmental Institute. We participate in a variety of low-impact, "Leave No Trace," sustainable tourism opportunities that include hiking, kayaking, canoeing, wildlife viewing, nature photography, and botanical walks. In addition to tourists, we take nature journalists from all over the world to experience and write about the exceptional diversity of Tate's Hell State Forest (THSF) in the hope that their articles will bring visitors to Franklin County.

An April 2007 University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Fact Sheet stated that over 75 million visitors came to Florida in 2003 and spent over $51.5 billion dollars. Over 70% of these visitors participated in nature-based activities. A goal of the FGGA is to bring some of these people to THSF to contribute to the economy of Franklin County by lodging in our hotels, eating in our restaurants, creating jobs and buying from our local stores. The GRASI plan will not boost tourism and outdoor activities in THSF to contribute to our local economy.

According to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI), Eglin AFB is over 460,000 Acres, the largest forested military reservation in the free world. FNAI describes Eglin as 86% forested, 81% of that is sandhill, and 15% is forested wetlands. By contrast, Tate's Hell State Forest is just over 200,000 acres and contains 19 natural communities of which only about 2% is dry year-round. There are 29 surface

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water drainage basins in THSF and many contain high quality natural areas with endangered plant and animal species.

Tate's Hell is a vast wetland that was purchased as forested watershed protection for Apalachicola Bay and for rare species protection, particularly the Florida black bear. The 2007 THSF Management Plan describes the major ecosystems represented on the property as wet or mesic flatwoods, remnant savannahs and a variety of swamp and marsh habitats.

According to EAFBI 13-212, Ch. 7:

7.2.1.2.1. No off-road driving within 100 feet of any water body, wetland, or on steep slopes.

7.2.1.2.2. Do not dig holes or establish new cleared areas within 100 feet of any water body, wetland, or on steep slopes. EAFBI 13-212 20 DECEMBER 2010 49

7.2.1.2.3. The use of munitions, smokes, simulators, flares, and any other pyrotechnics is restricted within 100 feet of water bodies.

7.2.1.2.4. Direct release of chemicals or metals into water bodies or wetlands is prohibited.

7.2.1.2.5. No toxic aerosols are to be released within 300 feet of a water body.

And further, 7.2.1.4. states, "...so personnel should always avoid driving and digging in or near wetlands and streams." Approximately, 75% of THSF is wet most of the year.

The Florida Green Guide Association strongly suggests that ground and air maneuvering military training exercises would negatively impact our nature-based businesses. We recommend the "No Action Alternative." Thank you for your consideration of our opinion.

Sincerely,

Lesley Cox

Lesley Cox, President
Florida Green Guide Association
[redacted]

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O_004

[redacted]

From: Carrabelle History Museum [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, June 05, 2014 4:18 PM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Cc: Lesley Cox
Subject: GRASI Tate's Hell
Attachments: GRASI ltr 060514.pdf

Attached please find a letter from the Carrabelle Waterfront Partnership

Tamara Allen
Program Manager
Carrabelle Waterfront Partnership
[redacted]

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O_004

CARRABELLE WATERFRONT PARTNERSHIP

Designated in 2007

June 5, 2014

Eglin AFB Public Affairs
ATTNN: Michael Spaits
101 West D Avenue, Room 238
Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

850-882-2836
Mike.spaits@eglin.af.mil
Re: GRASI – Tate's Hell State Forest

Dear Mr. Spaits,

Please accept this letter from the Carrabelle Waterfronts Partnership (CWP) in favor of the "No Action Alternative." The CWP was established in 2007 when the City of Carrabelle received designation as a Waterfronts Community from the State of Florida. Since that time the CWP has been an active participant in implementing an action plan that includes economic development of local businesses and tourism opportunities. Carrabelle's backyard is Tate's Hell State Forest (THSF) and we depend on its natural resources.

The CWP has organized volunteers to pick-up trash along forest roads and waterways. We successfully implemented a "carcass dumpster" receptacle for hunters during hunting season. We have placed CR 67 on the Greenways and Trails Opportunity map to create a biking trail from Carrabelle through THSF to the Apalachicola National Forest. Currently, we are pursuing a designation of "Wildflower Corridor" for CR 67 because of the exceptional flowering threatened species in the right-of-way. We promote the natural resources of Carrabelle and Franklin County to ensure a sustainable economy for our restaurants, stores, and lodging businesses.

An April 2007 University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Fact Sheet stated that over 75 million visitors came to Florida in 2003 and spent over $51.5 billion dollars. Over 70% of these visitors participated in nature-based activities. 80% of the land in Franklin County is owned by the public. These public lands are where people recreate. The GRASI plan will not boost tourism and outdoor activities in THSF to contribute to our local economy.

The CWP recognizes the need to acquire additional military training and supports our military's quest to meet the important training function but request another site be considered that will have less negative economic and environmental impact. The Carrabelle Waterfront Partnership strongly opposes the ground and air maneuvering military training exercises because they would negatively impact our local economy. We recommend the "No Action Alternative." Thank you for your consideration of our opinion.

Sincerely,

Tamara Allen, Program Manager
Carrabelle Waterfronts Partnership

A program of Carrabelle CARES
[redacted]
http://www.carrabellecares.org/

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O_006

ID	O_006
Date Submitted	5/10/2014
Commenter	Jack Tyler
Organization	Recreational Aviation Foundation
Affiliation	Organization
Comment	The EIS p. 10, lines 15-16 states "At BRSF, one existing airfield would be utilized (Munson Airfield, currently designated for public use with no restrictions)..." This is incorrect on several levels and reflects a lack of understanding about how the airfield is currently used. My comment is intended to offer a broader perspective on the Airfield's community, aviation and Forest Service uses, and to recommend an alternative approach. The misnamed "Munson Airfield" is actually Blackwater Airfield, federally registered as 8FD3 and noted on the appropriate NOAA published aviation sectional. Referring to it as "public" is misleading and incomplete. It occupies land managed by the Florida Forest Service but access to the Blackwater Airfield is in fact managed via a specific procedure developed by the BRSF District Manager. This procedure provides for approved public access throughout the year (subject to other BRFS uses of the Airfield) provided an existing, published procedure is used. One source for that procedure can be found here: http://theraf.org/content/blackwater-airfield-safety-briefing There are other uses of the Airfield throughout the year that an EIS really should have identified. A very large annual community event is held on the Airfield each year, attended by thousands of participants & vendors. Various FFS aviation-related uses are made of the Airfield during each year, from land use monitoring to fire-suppression flights. In addition, the field is used for heavy equipment training of employees on occasion, given its easy access from the highway and adjacency to the district office and vehicle compound. Given the above facts, here are the main points I request be considered: -- Recreational aviation use of Blackwater Airfield (8FD3) is now a norm and use of the Airfield by USAF and other agencies will intrude on this use. This recreational aviation use includes camping adjacent to parked aircraft, which certainly makes USAF proposed uses of the Airfield in conflict with its occasional recreational use. -- Other airfields at both BRSF and THSF have been identified in the EIS. These airfields are not further identified in the EIS but, from consulting both the FDOT AD chart and the NOAA aviation sectional, none of these other airstrips appear to offer public access. In addition, the EIS states that two dirt roadways in BRSF will be used as temporary airstrips, in addition to the charted (but not identified) airfields. -- Given the above, use of Blackwater Airfield 8FD3 for military operations should be eliminated or at the least minimized, since the other airfields (and likely, the dirt roadways) offer a lower level of conflict with recreational users. -- Finally, given the incomplete and also inaccurate understanding of Blackwater Airfield's current status, I respectfully request that its use be placed at the 'bottom of any list' when individual exercises are planned. Speaking strictly from an aviation perspective, Blackwater Airfield is a very unusual 'turf runway': It is almost 6,000 ft. in length, very wide, extremely smooth by turf airstrip standards, and not - at all - representative of the 'make do' airstrips, roadways and clearings that operators need to use out in the tactical areas of developing countries. Using Blackwater Airfield 8FD3 is a relatively 'high conflict' choice re: public use while being a 'low relevancy' use re: military ops training. Its use might seem logical after a cursory review but, as shown above, is a poor choice when public and FFS use is considered.

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O_007

ID	O_007
Date Submitted	5/13/2014
Commenter	Eric W. Davis
Organization	The Recreational Aviation Foundation
Affiliation	Organization
Comment	Within section 'ES.4.1.2.2 Fixed-Wing Aircraft Landing Sites', Munson Airfield is identified as one of six sites that may be utilized for up to two hours of takeoff and landing training for as many as 232 days annually, as described in 'Table ES-4. LAPT Details per Event'. Within the 'Restrictions' column of Table ES-4, and throughout the document, there are repeated references to hunting which suggest this is a recognized recreational use of the BRSF that the Air Force is willing to accommodate via limited nighttime operations. Hunting is not the only existing recreational use of the BRSF. The Krul Recreation Area consists of both day and night use activities including picnicking, hiking, swimming, and camping is located within 100 yards of the airfield. These recreational facilities are enjoyed by outdoor enthusiasts who travel to the site by automobile as well as General Aviation aircraft. Munson Airfield is classified as a public use airport with no restrictions. This information is incorrect. Munson Airfield (FAA Identifier 8FD3) is a private use airstrip manged by the Forestry Division of the Florida Department of Agriculture. Provisional use of this airstrip by the General Aviation community has only recently been established through the cooperative work of the Recreational Aviation Foundation and the Florida Forest Service. In summary, the Proposed Action's use of Munson Airfield for Light Aviation Proficiency Training (LAPT) operations is incompatible with this area's current use and user population. We respectfully request that the Air Force remove Munson Airfield from the list of FWALS or limit the use of Munson Airfield to non-LAPT missions only.

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O_008

Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: Apalachicola *Please print legibly* **Date:** 04JUN14

Since there has been an overwhelming Amount of public input on this issue; by uneducated, mildly educated, and highly educated individuals; it would be apparent that the general public is resoundingly opposed to the GRASI initiative. Many have spoken on the environmental impacts that would occur from this use of OUR State Forests, many have spoken on eventual user conflicts, and some have spoken about patriotism. Tate's Hell was purchased by the state for use by it's citizens. All of us.

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE **** (over)

Public comments are requested pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 United States Code 4321, et seq. All written comments received during the comment period will be considered during Final EIS preparation. Your provision of private address information with your comment is voluntary and protected in accordance with the Privacy Act and Air Force Instruction 33-332. Your private address information will not be released in the Final EIS or for any other purpose, unless required by law. However, your private address information will be used to compile the mailing list for any further project notices. Failure to provide such information will result in your name not being included on the distribution list.

Name: Michael P. Vroegop

Organization: Florida Geotourism Associates, LLC

Affiliation: ☐ Individual ☐ Government ☐ Tribe ☒ Organization

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Z [redacted]

☒ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☐ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Please mail this form to:
Mr. Mike Spaits, Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

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O_008

Continuation Page

We are patriotic citizens because we are involved.
I would suggest the Air Force adopt the option of doing NOTHING.
We operate a geotourism business that would be adversely affected by GRASI. The economy of this and adjoining counties would be adversely affected. People come to this area to escape metropolitan area crowding and pollution, if only as a short respite. Area businesses, including lodging venues, restaurants, fueling stations, convenience stores and specialty shops would all suffer, since it would not take long for the word to get around that conditions in this recreational area were not what was expected. The geotourism industry would be devestated.

Again, I implore the Air Force AND the Florida State Forest Service to reconsider their stances and adopt option 3, to DO NOTHING.

Thank you for your input.

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O_009

1 [redacted]

14 BARBARA ALBRECHT: Sure. My name is Barbara
15 Albrecht, and I -- my last name is spelled
16 A-L-B-R-E-C-H-T. Tonight I'm going to represent the
17 Bream Fisherman's Association, the Francis M. Weston
18 Audubon Society, and the Native Plant Society.
19 First of all thank you very much Madam Lt. Col.
20 and gentlemen for having this meeting and allowing
21 us the opportunity to comment on this Draft
22 Environmental EIS.
23 Unlike portrayed in the Pensacola News Journal
24 yesterday and today I am not against the military.
25 I am instead an advocate for these managed lands,

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O_009

and so I'd like to go on record for that.

In February, March, and April of 2014 throughout this process the public, myself included, have requested from the point of contact, Mr. Mike Spaits, that the state agency, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, which has an office embedded within the Florida Forest Service at Blackwater River State Forest be officially included to comment since by -- since they are on the ground and having sufficient knowledge of the forest.

By inviting the Fish and Wildlife Service, which is a federal agency, to address the previous comments in the EIS the Air Force did not consider the public significant issues. Tonight when Mr. Spaits was speaking, he brought out that within the Blackwater River State Forest summary that all biological impacts were from FWS federal and not FWC. Further, on page B 273 of the document the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissions only brought up in the affect to lease their lands for emitter sites.

The threatened endangered species list with the federal have a few species with an umbrella component to protect species beneath them, the Florida skake has a number of species. The issue

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that I have is that we are the federal government. You are the Air Force, and we have a state forest. We would like to have -- be more conservative and have all the organisms and plants considered. I'm disappointed that this comment has not been addressed.

Since this hearing tonight is just an exercise in the bureaucratic process, as many have gleaned, this is already somewhat of a done deal. Let me go on record asking the following: What does the public get from this arrangement? What does the forest receive for the service it is providing to the military? I would like to suggest the following. I suggest that the military set aside funding, perhaps one million a year, for a technical support school that would imply and teach best management practices for mitigation on the use of the forest. This school would allow an education that combines coastal plain soils, which we know are highly erodible, with the geography that we have here, climate, topography and (inaudible).

HEARING OFFICER: Ms. Albrecht, I need you to wrap up your comment, please.

BARBARA ALBRECHT: Okay. The forest, both of them, have a list several pages long of the areas

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O_009

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that need restoration. Would the public have a built-in off ramp if this relationship between the state and the federal government doesn't work? Thank you.

GULF BAY REPORTING

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[redacted]

HEARING OFFICER: Next Ms. Helen Wigersma?

HELEN WIGERSMA: Wigersma.

HEARING OFFICER: Wigersma.

JUDI RUSSELL: You got it.

HELEN WIGERSMA: I'm Helen Wigersma. That last name is W-I-G-E-R-S-M-A, and I'm here representing the Western Gate Chapter of the Florida Trail Association. Our chapter has submitted comments previously, and we've had a chance to review the Draft EIS statement. Assuming that all mitigation statements regarding protection of natural resources, wetlands, erosion issues, access, safety, use of wheeled vehicles on approved roads only, and noise abatement are implemented, our chapter accepts that many of the concerns initially raised have been addressed in an appropriate manner. However, there are some items that we feel have either not yet been adequately addressed or need to have a specific mitigation action included.

First, although most individual trail sections in the forest are recognized by name in this

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O_010

1 document, for example wire grass in section TA3,
2 neither the Blackwater River Trail in the Hutton
3 tract, TA8, nor the Yellow River Ravines Trail in
4 TA9 and its extension, which is currently under
5 development, have been included. This entire system
6 of contiguous trails is collectively known as the
7 Florida National Scenic Trail and Side Trail.
8 Now, Western Gate Chapter proposes that the
9 FNST, which is Florida National Scenic Trail, and
10 side trail system, including the Yellow River
11 Ravine's additional proposed routing in Blackwater
12 River State Forest be officially recognized in its
13 entirety as a contiguous trail known as the FNST
14 side trail.
15 Second, be designated as a protected
16 recreational site, be provided a protected corridor
17 with one quarter mile buffer zones on each side
18 restricting designated by impact activities from
19 occurring within those buffer zones. Such
20 restricted activities would include helicopter
21 landing drop zones, low level helicopter insertions,
22 extractions, cross country vehicle movement,
23 blackout driving and placement of obstacles and
24 bivouacking assembly areas.
25 Second issue, scheduling and access for the

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O_010

public. During military training exercises the document indicates that portions of the forest may be closed to the public. It was not clear whether there will be any advance notice of such closures. Since Western Gate Chapter plans activities four months in advance, we ask that you avoid unnecessary conflicts scheduling between Eglin and Blackwater State Forest be done on at least a quarterly basis, made available to the public to assure that user groups are normally able to avoid scheduling conflicts. We are concerned about the use of concertina wire in the forest at all as a barrier.

Monitoring and assessment, and then I'll wind up, the EIS indicates numerous assessments take place, and we recognize that and applaud it. We request that a preliminary assessment be built into the agreement, perhaps after the first two or three years to evaluate whether the actual adverse impact on the forest and its use is greater, equal to or lesser than was projected in the EIS and ask that our chapters -- I'm sorry, that user groups be given an opportunity to be involved in providing comments for assessment. Thank you.

[redacted]

[redacted]

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O_011

1 [redacted]

2 HEARING OFFICER: I have Peggy Burch. From the
3 FMW Audubon Society?
4 UNIDENTIFIED: Baker.
5 PEGGY BAKER: I'm Peggy Baker of the Francis M.
6 Weston Audubon Society. Peggy, P-E-G-G-Y, Baker,
7 B-A-K-E-R.
8 It was learned several years ago that there had
9 never been a year-round bird survey done in
10 Blackwater River State Forest so our chapter decided
11 to survey the birds to determine what birds were
12 using this newly 30 year planted longleaf forest.
13 Over a three and a half year period from 19 -- 2009
14 to 2012 we took weekly trips into the forest and
15 counted the birds that we saw there. And what did
16 we find? First of all, we found people. We found
17 people every day using this forest. This is a
18 recreational forest. I find it impossible that you
19 could say that you could avoid recreational users of
20 this forest.
21 We found 181 species of birds using this forest
22 during the year, 23 birds of special concern appear
23 on the US Fish and Wildlife Service list. Fifty-two
24 species live there all year, 34 migrate in the
25 forest into the summer. So there are 86 species

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O_011

that use this forest as a nesting ground; 111 species come there and spend the winter. That means that they've found a safe place to go in the wintertime. The Bob White quail, the wild turkey, the Bachman sparrow. These are ground nesters that will be greatly impacted by the troops that work off roads. There is no down season in this forest when there are no bird species there. They're always there. We always will impact them.

We found 31 species of birds that use that unique greenway. It's a migratory path to their breeding grounds in the north. Seven species of the woodpeckers are there in large numbers because they started leaving snacks, and they've come back, and of course they stand still, so they can get shot or whatever. The forest -- the Sherman Fox Birds -- squirrel is seen notably in the forest. It's on the Florida threatened list. And the ESI only looked at federal threatened list, not the state list. There are many species concerned -- concerning the forest.

We're greatly concerned about all these species and the impacts that these noise and the troop activities on the ground and the air will cause them -- and also possibly being consumed by these troops who are having to hunt for their food.

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O_011

This lovely forest is very young. We've just begun to see if -- the creatures coming back into it. For example, early in our study, in our survey we found a pair of nesting subspecies of the American Krestel. They're listed as threatened on the Florida list. This species has lost 80 percent of its population in the last 70 years, and it traditionally nests in the cavities in the older long leaf forest and when those disappeared from the southeastern forests, these birds disappeared also. It was not -- this bird has not been documated -- documented in northwest Florida in over 30 years.

The first year of our study we found a nesting pair. In the -- in the -- the FWC's reporting we put up 11 boxes. Now there are five nesting -- we've got nesting pairs there, so we don't know what would return to this forest if it (inaudible). I think we just need to leave it alone and let it see what it would do.

[redacted]

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O_012

1 [redacted]

20 HEARING OFFICER: Vernon Compton?

21 VERNON COMPTON: Vernon Compton, V-E-R-N-O-N

22 C-O-M-P-T-O-N.

23 I work for the Long Leaf Alliance, an

24 organization that's working to -- working with the

25 public and private landowners to restore and manage

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O_012

the long leaf forests for our area and across the south. I have worked with Eglin Air Force Base and other public and private landowners for over 25 years. That work has included conservation projects that improve the land, air and water of the area and others that have improved and increased recreational access for the public. Eglin Air Force Base has also provided support for projects that protected and opened thousands of additional acres of land to the public for hunting, fishing and other recreational activities. These include the Yellow River ravines and Ester Bottom Point, or T Van's Point. That's -- many of us know it locally.

They gave a lot to our area and have had a positive impact on the economy, the environment and recreation, but at times they have to ask for our help to support the men and women serving our country. Their training is becoming more and more complicated in this world that we live in today. Training is critical to doing their job in protecting our country and surviving on the battlefield. Their training is rigorous and requires that they do so in different types of places and different scenarios. I very much appreciate the concerns expressed for protecting

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O_012

Blackwater River State Forest to the very best ability that we have. We have the responsibility to do so. However, we also have a responsibility to the men and women in uniform. I believe there is a way to accomplish both at Blackwater River State Forest. I urge that the public and user groups continue to work with the military to find agreement. I also request that if the military use is approved at Blackwater River State Forest that a citizen's review panel be established to review and follow such use and make recommendations to the Florida Forest Service and the Department of Defense similar to what the Black -- to the Florida Forest Service currently has with the Blackwater liaison panel. This will help to ensure the concerns of both the public and the military continue to be addressed and communication stays open throughout the process.

I want to particularly address the description of proposed action alternatives general operational constraints 3K. It says establish a submittal response and resolution process for local residents to submit complaints and other compliance issues to Eglin. I would request that, that be added to the -- to include user groups and be formulated in a way

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1 that it's more like a citizen's review panel.

2 HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. [redacted]

[redacted]

21 [redacted]

GULF BAY REPORTING

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O_013

HEARING OFFICER: Veasey?

JOHN VEASEY: Hello, I'm John Veasey, spelled V like in Victor, E A S E Y. Nothing personal.

Well, we have this being recorded but is it being recorded by the Air Force for record? Two, what other memorandums of agreement have the Air Force made with any other Florida state, municipal, or other public agencies regarding use of lands for military training?

Let it be clear, I demand no-action decision. Apparently you have not considered the many properties already owned by the military machine. The airspace, ground training issues are not a Florida problem. They're not a state problem or the public's problem. Congress created this situation, and you should go back to them for help.

The airspace is controlled by Eglin approach control and the FAA Regional Control Centers in Jacksonville and New Orleans. We see no facts to support the initiative, just your say-so. Where is the documentation? Where are the scheduling conflicts you claim? I know there's a scheduling office to control unit functions that occur on the Eglin Air Force Base range. It sounds like the Air Force and Army don't want to follow their own

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O_013

procedures to use the range.

Planning high priority missions makes the ground training difficult, and I understand that, but it is still not the responsibility of the forest service or the State of Florida. Where are the letters that claim your training cannot be accomplished as requested? Where are the letters that show you tried to schedule the ground training? Where are the letters that disapprove each request?

The Air Force is a federal government identity pushing this initiative. However, you say the Army Special Forces will be using the forest under this initiative too or is the Army initiative requesting the same thing? The forests are protected for ecological systems and then for human use for multiple uses, not government use. The presence of ground troops in our forest is simply contrary to good order, a comment that the military likes to use a lot. The forests are protected, pardon me. I demand you stay out.

Pursuit of this initiative over the last five to eight years by the Department of Defense, the Air Force, Eglin, and the Army 7th Special Forces Group seem to be a poor coordination situation at best. You did not involve the public five to eight years

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O_013

ago to help or argue your situation. If you look at all the military properties from Mississippi to Georgia, including the air spaces above these lands, a lot of it is already restricted, warning areas, alerted areas, military operating areas. That's where you go. Stay out of the forest. Stay out from even flying over the forest. I support the Navy and their training, but they don't land on the forest. They don't put troops in the forest.

HEARING OFFICER: Mr. Veasey, your time has expired.

JOHN VEASEY: Pardon me?

HEARING OFFICER: Your time has expired.

JOHN VEASEY: All right. I did have a printed copy of my speech. I'll print it off and send it to them with more information.

[redacted]

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1 [redacted]

4 [redacted]

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21 HEARING OFFICER: George Knetzger?

22 GEORGE KNETZGER: I'm George Knetzger, I'd like

23 to -- hello, I'm George Knetzger.

24 HEARING OFFICER: Sir, can you spell you last

25 name?

GULF BAY REPORTING

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O_013

GEORGE KNETZGER: K-N-E-T-Z-G-E-R.

HEARING OFFICER: Thank you.

GEORGE KNETZGER: I'd like to cede my three-minute allotment to John if I may do so.

HEARING OFFICER: You do sir?

GEORGE KNETZGER: Can I do it now?

HEARING OFFICER: Yes, sir.

JOHN VEASEY: Thank you. I'll try to continue where I left off, and I forgot to say I'm representing the West Florida Community Kayak Club, also Florida Panhandler's Canoe and Kayak Connection. Both clubs are out of Pensacola representing people from Northern Michigan all the way to south Florida, sometimes maybe some people from out of the country.

HEARING OFFICER: Sir, if I could ask you to speak a little bit closer to the microphone.

JOHN VEASEY: Let's see, I forgot where I was. Okay, I think I left off somewhere where by -- by virtue of your own briefings, Power Point presentations and discussions held in these town hall meetings clearly indicate space is already available without invading our forests. So what if the other -- so what if the other choices are not ideal? While in the Air Force we were always told

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O_013

learn how to do more with less and adapt and overcome. That's a good comment from the military. We used it all the time when I was in there. Maybe I should have said I've had 24 years in the Air Force too.

Okay. So much to overcome these issues. Here's an example of how many people feel. When a nation comes under attack, that nation takes actions to protect its people and resources. Now many people of the panhandle of Florida are feeling the same thing is coming their way. Do you expect them just to turn over and play dead? No. So what we are doing here tonight, fighting back the government's overreach and protecting our liberties and our forests. Let's continue with the idea of GRASI being accepted -- I'll try to make this a little bit not saying much because other people have already covered it. I don't need to.

Let me see, we are currently fighting in a desert mountainous environment that is winding down. According to the dictionary, urban, meaning they're fighting against other forces that they have, means of or pertaining to or designating a city or town, living in a city, characteristic of or accustomed to cities. You think this has me worried? Well, I

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O_013

supposed to think so. Most of the people will not associate this meaning that you plan to fight the general public, regardless of the country, maybe even America. This is what it means to me.

You have a draft of the operational plan. According to the Air Force operational plan, Section 4.4 mitigation and monitoring issues, how can you justify being judge, jury about what may or may not be damages to the forest? Waiting for quarterly reports are insufficient. An independent group agency should be the evaluation team to assess possible damages along with photographic evidence to support any claims. Likewise the general public should be able to make claims too, which is mentioned in Section 4.6. Any meetings that require mitigation or monitoring oversight should have public representation. Most civilians do not realize the military has a staff judge officite -- office, or inspector general's office. This is where all complaints both military and civilian are taken. You don't need another office for that purpose.

HEARING OFFICER: Sir, your time has expired.

JOHN VEASEY: Thank you.

[redacted]

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O_013

1 [redacted]

[redacted]

20 HEARING OFFICER: Dayton Mueller? Is Dayton

21 Mueller here? One last call for Dayton Mueller.

22 Jacob White?

23 JACOB WHITE: My name is Jacob White. I want

24 to give my time to John.

25 JOHN VEASEY: I found my marker this time where

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O_013

I left off.

Section 4.5, scheduling use and training. We covered it, I tried to cut it out, but 232 days a year in either forest or split between the two, unacceptable. You also claim that more training's coming down the pikes. Boy, it does not add up. It doesn't give me a warm and fuzzy as we say in the military. If there were more troops, that would be more damage. It does not add up.

Section 4.7 cooperative law enforcement. The Air Force will pursue a memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement authorities regarding the use of Air Force security police to protect Air Force property and control access, yes access, with respect to Florida service lands covered by this operational plan. The public shall not be hindered from using the forests they claim. So why do we have to have the control then? They might use force to remove them if they're there? I will be there. Don't try to move me by force. Section 5.1 reservations of Florida service and third-party rights, no mention of specifics. What does exercise reasonable access restrictions for the minimum period necessary mean? I don't know.

Until the military -- let's see here. Exercise

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O_013

control (inaudible). An example of this is that until the military clears the area or exits from the forest, which it's not clearly spelled out, does that mean troops will trespass private lands to exit, especially if there's an emergency. Claims against the Air Force? Reference made to 5.25, however, there's no 5.25 found. Signage, refers to the restricted areas. Well on Eglin restricted areas means no public access ever. When will the public know of such areas, what advance notices will be made and how is that notification is to be accomplished? Nothing mentioned.

You mentioned earlier in your own briefing about CFR 980, well 989.3 gives the responsibilities to the office of Secretary of the Air Force. I left out some paragraphs and comments from that document but it determines the level of environmental analysis required, especially important, visible and controversial Air Force proposals and approves selected environmental assessments, better known as EAs, and all environmental impact statements. So it's going to be a while before they can even get it approved or denied by them at the higher echelons.

HEARING OFFICER: Mr. Veasey --

JOHN VEASEY: I suggest we write to them as

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O_013

1 well.

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GULF BAY REPORTING

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O_015

ID	O_015
Date Submitted	6/21/2014
Commenter	Tom Daniel
Organization	Florida Trail Association
Affiliation	Organization
Comment	Recognition and Protection of Blackwater River State Forest trails and trail users: • Although individual trail sections are recognized by name in this document (Wiregrass in TA-3, Jackson in TA-4 and TA-6, Juniper Creek in TA-8), there is no recognition of the entirety of the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) sidetrail which extends northward from Holt FL through the Forest to the Florida/Alabama line and southward to the Yellow River where it connects to the FNST, extending east and west. I recommend that the FNST Sidetrail and Yellow River component of the FNST in Blackwater River State Forest be: ? officially recognized in its entirety as a contiguous trail, ? that its length be designated as a protected recreational site, and ? that it be provided a buffer zone extending one-quarter mile on each side of its length, restricting designated high-impact activities to be excluded from activity within that buffer zone. • Such activities to include Helicopter Landing/Drop Zones, Low-Level Helicopter Insertions/Extractions, Cross-Country Vehicle Movement, Blackout Driving, Emplacement of Obstacles and Bivouacking /Assembly Areas.

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O_016

ID	O_016
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	Peggy Baker
Organization	Francis M. Weston Audubon Society
Affiliation	Organization
Comment	One of the most important elements in the restoration of the longleaf/wiregrass ecosystem as currently in progress at Blackwater River State Forest is prescribed burns. "The longleaf ecosystem was a driving force behind the formation of Gulf Coast Plain Ecosystem Partnership," says Vernon Compton, director of GCPEP,"for all of its rare and listed species, its clear need for more burning, its potential restoration, and the necessity for education aimed at reviving historical enthusiasm for the piney woods." To improve habitat management, there iis a constant need for scheduled fire in Blackwater to keep to the 2 to 3 year cycle required to restore this ecosystem. Because burning depends on wind direction and humidity, prescribed burn decisions cannot be made until the morning of the burn. It appears that troops on the ground will greatly interfere with burning the forest on a scheduled and last minute basis. Not being able to have the capacity to burn when needed will greatly interfere with the mission of the FFS to restore and maintain this piney woods.

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O_017

ID	O_017
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	Mary Gutierrez
Organization	League of Women Voters for the Pensacola Bay Area
Affiliation	Organization
Comment	On behalf of the League of Women Voters for the Pensacola, I am submitting comments to express our concerns over the current proposed action of the U.S. Air Force (USAF) to use Blackwater River State Forest (BRSF) and Tate's Hell State Forest (THSF) as tactical areas for additional military training maneuvers. Although we know that the USAF has used the forest for maneuvers in the past and is possibly using the land currently, we are in opposition to any additional use for the following reasons: The League promotes an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest. Both BRSF and THSF are state-owned lands; land that is owned by the people of the State of Florida. According to 18-21.004 (1) (a) Management Policies, Standards, and Criteria (1) (a) ....all activities on sovereignty lands must not be contrary to the public interest.... As defined in 18-21.003 (51), "Public interest" means demonstrable environmental, social, and economic benefits which would accrue to the public at large as a result of a proposed action, and which would clearly exceed all demonstrable environmental, social, and economic costs of the proposed action.... According to 18-21.004 (1) (b) All leases, easements, deeds or other forms of approval for sovereignty land activities shall contain such terms, conditions, or restrictions as deemed necessary to protect and manage sovereignty lands. These projects do not meet the criteria as being in the public interest nor do they promoted the protection and management of sovereign lands according to 18-21, F.A.C. The League supports and promotes policies that manage land as a finite resource and that incorporate principles of stewardship. According to 18-21.004 (2) (a) Resource Management... all sovereignty lands shall be considered single use lands and shall be managed primarily for the maintenance of essentially natural conditions, propagation of fish and wildlife, and traditional recreational uses such as fishing, boating, and swimming. Compatible secondary purposes and uses which will not detract from or interfere with the primary purpose may be allowed. These projects do not meet the criteria for the best use of our natural resources according to 18-21, F.A.C. As proposed, the training will impact our land, water quality, air quality, and species habitat. Both BRSF and THSF were placed in preservation with a minimal use component in an effort to protect our land, water, air, and species habitat for now and future generations.

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O_017

	The League of Women Voters for the Pensacola Bay Area supports the NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE, where the training activities identified under the Proposed Action would continue to occur on Eglin AFB; BRSF and THSF would not be utilized, and no new emitter sites would be established.

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O_018

ID	O_018
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	Barbara Albrecht
Organization	Academia, NGOs
Affiliation	Organization
Comment	Citizen Comments on GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS Thank you for taking the time to read and include my comments. Comment 1) There is a deficiency within the NEPA Process which does not address cumulative impacts from earlier NEPA decisions. To concentrate several missions on Eglin AFB, required conducting a series of steps leading up to a BRAC. When this many missions are co-located on one site – someone – somewhere had to conduct a NEPA EIS. Were Cumulative impacts discussed? What was that outcome? Where can the public go to inform themselves of this decision that got us to this point today? Comment 2) The NEPA EIS allows one of two options: The two alternatives are 1. NO Action and 2. Allowing action. I believe the criteria developed for this EIS was far too narrow. I would also like to see GRASI and GRASI GLI as two separate NEPA EIS'. We are not on DOD Lands where a FONSI is acceptable. We are discussing public lands, purchased for the purposes of conservation for future generations. Many of the lands closed through BRAC still belong to the military – thus allowing an option not presented to the public during this process. All federal agencies are required to weigh their options through the NEPA process. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to integrate environmental values into their decision making processes by considering the environmental impacts of their proposed actions and reasonable alternatives to those actions. Early on in the NEPA Process, if no environmental issues arise, the agency may conduct an Environmental Assessment (EA). If however an impact is likely, the agency must perform an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS must offer options to the Stakeholders and Decision Makers as the process proceeds to the final stage. This has not occurred. I would like to go on record and stress NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE. Comment 3) Pg 5-67 5.11.1 Affected Environment. This very small section attempts to address the socioeconomic and environmental justice concerns of GRASI & GLI. At a time when the Veterans Administration is under scrutiny for not providing medical and mental assistance in a timely manner to our veterans, this forest in its natural setting is considered to be a premier ecological asset. Through conservation efforts we can measure success (diversity is increasing). And now the military wishes to expand exercises on the ground. For many young Men and Women returning from military duty in foreign lands, our forests offer serenity and peace. That serenity and peace will be disturbed by Military Training Exercises.

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O_018

The Military is responsible for creating and developing much collateral damage in the arena of mental issues based on what our active service is taught and trained. Often, natural areas without modern electronics and constant stimulation, advertisement, and modern lifestyles are the last opportunity for tranquility. Mental health specialists are well aware of these issues, I would hope your EIS considered this aspect of an ecosystem service that BWRSF & THSF offer the many veterans who call our area

Comment 4) Pg 5-72 Table 5-54. Natural Resource Consumption (X axis) and Land Use & Socioeconomics /Environmental Justice (Y axis). Not sure if the EIS addressed this, but many of the residents with in-holding's depend on locally collected timber to heat their homes and their stoves. This topic was discussed at the Blackwater River State Forest Liaison Mtg in Feb 2014, after this area experienced a hard winter. Would military use impact or affect these individuals?

Comment 5) Pg 5-71 5.13.1.2 Transportation. Many of the roads discussed are currently being widened or repaired. Will the additional use of these heavy military vehicles add more impact on these systems? How will the military mitigate additional traffic to these communities?

Comment 6) Pg 5-69. Recreation and Tourism. Some transient recreational users, such as hikers, may be annoyed by noise from aircraft operations. What about the year round residents? What is the military approach to addressing this? What about the year round animal residents? Are they considered in this EIS?

Comment 7) Pg 5-68. Environmental Justice. As indicated in Table 5-52 and Figure 5-43, the individual counties and the two county ROI have a lower percentage of minority and low-income populations than the state and the nation. Many of the residents living less than 5 miles from the coast are living in rural communities and live there for the peace and quiet – away from the hustle and bustle. Now this proposed GRASI and GLI will reduce their property values and encumber their life style, and potentially shift from one higher demographic perhaps to this lower demographic of minority and low-income. Did the EIS address or study this aspect?

Comment 8) Pg 5-67. Tourism has already been impacted by the numerous calls I have fielded from canoeists/campers and hikers who have come to the forest for 2-day, 3-day, and 5-day camping. We have known all along that the BWRSF is used by Whiting Field and other Military entities to train young pilots by using landmarks (i.e., rivers, lakes, roads, etc). In March 2014, several brothers met for a 5-day float and camping trip and were so aggravated by the helicopters flying low over the river – at one point they could tell you the eye color of the pilot. This has been reported to Governor Scott, and each elected official. This is not the first incident, but definitely one of the more vocal incidents.

Comment 9) Pg 5-66. Table 5-50. Private Parcels Present at BRSF. I see that the military has a very good grip on the number of privately owned parcels in the forest, and so why is it that private land owner's have not received written notification of GRASI or the GLI? Advertising in the newspaper and on-line is not feasible for many of these folks. There is little cell coverage in the mid to northern counties.

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Private Citizens have been posting signs and leaving information is the small stores scattered throughout the forest. If the military cannot notify the very individuals most impacted by these activities, how can I as a citizen KNOW that you have done due diligence in providing information about this potential use?

Comment 10) Pg 5-58. Sensitive Habitat Section. Line 2. Burrows that cannot be avoided would be relocated in accordance with FWC guidelines. I am personally hyper-sensitive to this statement since after locating , marking, and GPSing gopher tortoises on a parcel (primitive camping area on Red Rock Road) for a mountain biking trail – in FULL Cooperation with the FFS & FWC, a timber company came onto that site and logged the area. The company set up their timber operations and staging area on the highest elevation, which coincided with the Gophers. Are there two sets of rules that the public must use? Clearly the FFS & FWC were not communicating, how can I expect the military to communicate effectively? And will the other 2-300 residents of these burrows be excavated or will they be buried as a casualty? Pg 5-52 Lines 15-17, acknowledges more than 360 other species which may be found sharing the Goher Tortoise Burrow.

Comment 11) Pg 5-57. Table 5-43. Amphibious Operations. What I am interpreting this to say is that it is okay for the military to expand its range for training, but Threatened and Endangered (in this case Mussels) cannot expand their range. This is a forest undergoing restoration and we would hope that species would expand their ranges, most especially the T&E species that we consider rare.

Comment 12) Pg 5-56 5.8.2.3 Protected Species. Lines 2-6, Please name several species which have acclimated to noise and other disturbances.

Comment 13) Pg 5-55. 5.8.2.2 Wildlife. Lines 17-19, Permanent disturbances...Has the military conducted a baseline of species complete with abundance on BWSF? If not, how can this statement be upheld?

Along those lines, many of the endangered Mussels which are found within these waters use fish, species specific fish, as a vector to move their larval forms into the upper watersheds. What level of mitigation can the military develop to address this scientific finding? USGS is embarking on this level of science.

Comment 14) Pg 5-53 5.8.1.5 Invasive Species. Invasive species occur in disturbed areas. Lines 2-3, Invasive species have the potential to compete with and displace native species.

I's like to suggest the Military put $100K into invasive species removal fund to monitor and address, early detection, these nuisance species.

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Comment 15) Pg 5-52, 5.8.1.4 Sensitive Habitats. Lines 1-2, now less than 3 million acres remain...that said, the military has not conducted their due diligence in locating other nearby lands for military training. For example, the St Joe Company sold 400,000 acres to the Mormon Church. This land has been managed for timber, which does not typically use fire for land management (fire residue impacts the quality of paper). This land could be 'rented' from the church for maneuvers. In addition, there is another private land owner who has offered to lease his lands to the military, 90,000 acres, for training exercises. It would appear that the military is trying to take public lands, which have been in restoration, and use them for training – without the blessing of the user groups.

If only 3 Million of the once 90 Million areas of longleaf remain, perhaps the military could use some other land not in longleaf restoration for their military exercises.

Comment 16) Pg 5-50 to 5-51, Table Protected species known or potentially occurring in BRSF. In my comments to the Military in Dec 2013, I included a number of rare aquatic species which were being discovered in the Blackwater River system as a result of increased woody material, a resource often removed from the system. I cannot help but notice that no insects were discussed or mentioned, especially after I called attention to them. Was this oversight? Or was this purposeful omission?

Comment 17) Pg 5-49, Will military recruits really be able to tell the difference between an Indigo Snake and a Black Racer? Please expand on this.

Comment 18) Pg 5-48, 5.8.1.2 Wildlife. It would be remiss to not mention the extensive study that Francis M. Weston Audubon Society conducted in the BWSF to assist their Forest Service Personnel in documenting the use of the forest by many different migratory and resident species.

Comment 19) Pg 5-46 5.7.4 Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations. I am not in favor of any vehicles, military or otherwise, using low water crossing, I do appreciate the wisdom that FWS identified in lines 2-5.

Comment 20) Pgs 5-45-46, Table 5-36, Surface Water, Wetland, and Floodplain Impacts Summary. Item 1- Amphibious Operations with heavy equipment may have huge impacts on the delicate hydrology on the forest, especially in sensitive wetland areas. Item 2 – recommend conforming to FWS comments in #19 if this EIS is adopted.

Comment 21) Pgs 5-44 Dismounted Movements. Recommend no dismounted movement which can cause shoreline erosion, and negative impacts to surface waters and wetland resources. Sedimentation is the number one issue in the rivers and creeks in NW FL waters. Hard to fathom that the Military would recommend allowing disturbed sediments to settle thus allowing water clarity to return. Better for the resource would be to keep these potential and likely impacts out of the system. The forest has worked very hard to keep ATVs, 4 wheelers, jeeps, and even horses out of the rivers and creeks. Now they are considering allowing the Military to have access? Again, I refer you to Comment # 16, aquatic insects are making a comeback because water quality and habitat are beginning to return.

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Comment 22) Pg 5-44 Table 5-35. I do not think it is an option to have an impact in conservation lands. Whether that number is 24% or 2%, neither is acceptable.

Comment 23) Pg 5-43 Table 34 Stream Wetland Road Crossing Condition Summary Table. This table identifies what the current conditions of the low water crossings are: Good = 25% in TA1, Fair = 67%, and Poor = 8%. These areas are in recovery from logging in the 1900s, and current deadhead logging which the state FDEP granted for these OFWs, which serve to destabilize the stream and river banks.

These systems do not need any more impacts. Stay out of the water and steer clear of the banks and the important riparian zones.

Comment 24) Pg 5- 43 5.7.2.1 Water Resource Protection Levels. I am deeply concerned to read that the current protection levels were defined and based on Eglin AFB requirements. The Base operates on a different level and works closely with FWS. For the past 6-8 months we have been requesting that the state FWC personnel who are embedded in the forest have oversight to these environmental resources, and we have been ignored. Call me very disappointed!

Comment 25) Pg 5-40. The Military has NO Business conducting training in any impaired FL state waters, not to mention those listed as OFWs.

Comment 26) Pg 33. Lines 20-25. Perhaps the military should look into this.

Comment 27) 5.6.2 Environmental Consequences. Adverse impacts on conservation lands will not be tolerated.

Comments 28 & 29) Pg 5-32 Lines 1-18. Comment # 26 indicates no data, but lines 12-15 indicate otherwise. Is a comprehensive studies required? It is disturbing to note that there are 187 low water crossings which will soon see detrimental impacts with no monetary mitigation set aside.

Comment 30) Pg 5-31. Unpaved Road & Crossings. These are the number one contributing sources of sedimentation and habitat loss and smothering. Any military activity will serve to enhance and continue to degrade the water quality.

Comment 31) Pg 30. Borrow Pits are another source of sedimentation. See comment 30.

Comment 32) Pg 5-28 Soil Erosion, Erodible Soils. The Military should be able to put $1M in monies dedicated to mitigation of erosion caused by their activity. This annual $1M would be an endowment intended to teach low impact restoration techniques on the coastal plain.

Comment 33) Pg 5-27 Table 5-20. BRSF Hrdric Soils. I would hope the Military could stay out of the 40,068 acres of hydric soils they have identified in each tactical area.

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O_018

	Comment 34) Pg 5-1 Lines 13-18. Since NEPA EIS' have been conducted on similar landscapes, please provide monitoring reports so the public can see the level of monitoring that has been conducted. Thank you for your time, Barbara Albrecht Volunteer Watershed Coordinator for UWF, CEDB President of the Bream Fishermen Association Chair of the FMW Audubon Society Conservation Chair Native Plant Society, Longleaf Chapter Joan Q Public, taxpayer, voter, and steward of the environment.

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O_019

ID	O_019
Date Submitted	6/9/2014
Commenter	Sally Beumel
Organization	Trailriders of America
Affiliation	Organization
Comment	PLEASE PLEASE CEASE AND DESIST!!! Please do not use any part of Blackwater forest or Coldwater for any type of military maneuvers!!! Eglin and surrounding areas are already taking up a LOT OF LAND!!! Can't you utilize what is already in place? The local people as well as people all across this country come to this area to rejuvenate!!! This area is listed with Trailriders magazine and is recommended as a wonderful retreat area which at this time it IS!!!

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O_020

ID	O_020
Date Submitted	6/7/2014
Commenter	Daniel Hardy Jr
Organization	save. Blackwater
Affiliation	Organization
Comment	I live in Blackwater and we love our forest just the way it is there are thousands of acres on eglin for you all to train and play war games we appreciate what you do for our country but we have lived here all our lives as our grandparents have before us. We are very much against this

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O_021

ID	O_021
Date Submitted	6/20/2014
Commenter	Peggy Baker
Organization	Francis M. Weston Audubon Society
Affiliation	Agency/Government Representative
Comment	On page 5-49 Section 5.8.1.3 The only bird that will be protected in the forest is the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker but the Southeastern American Kestrel is listed as threatened on the Florida species list and the Sherman Fox squirrel is a mammel that is also listed as threatened? Why aren't these two species going to be protected under the EIS? As a representative of FMW Audubon, I served on the BRSF Liaison Committee for 3 years. As questions arose about birds in the forest, the FFS would turn to me for answers for there had never been a bird survey of BRSF. When I learned that BRSF had been designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA) with global priority by National Audubon, our chapter volunteered to conduct a seasonal bird survey. A dedicated team of bird watchers visited each of the thirteen areas, four times a year. for three and a half years. We learned a lot about the birds of BRSF and compiled a bank of data on the avian life there. At the same time, we came to appreciate the efforts and resources expended by the Florida Forest Service in restoring this historic longleaf/wiregrass ecosystem. One of our most interesting finds in the forest was a nonmigratory subspecies of the American Kestrel which is listed as threatened in Florida. At one time this small falcon was present throughout the southeast but as the longleaf forest were cut the subspecies lost its home. This subspecies of kestrel has declined in population by over 80% in the last 50 years. It had never been recorded in BRSF and only a few times in the panhandle. Our team found this Kestrel in BRSF in the spring of 2009. A pair was observed feeding young in a cavity in a large dead longleaf in a clear-cut area on Beaver Creek Road. This bird likes to hunt over clear-cut areas in longleaf forests. Loss of habitat was the major reason its numbers have diminished but contributing to its demise was fire suppression, and the removal of old-growth trees and snags. The return of the wiregrass/longleaf ecosystem in BRSF has created a home for this threatened subspecies. We notified FWC when we first saw this pair and they put up a nesting box. The next season (2010) they reported a nesting success and now five pair are nesting in the eleven boxes that have been erected in clear-cut areas in the forest. The Southeastern subspecies of the American Kestrel was not mentioned or considered in the GRACI EIS as a threatened species.

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O_021

	The proposal to land helicopters and troops in clear-cuts will have a great impact on the survival of this struggling Florida bird species. Please consider this species and the other unknown wildlife that may be making a new start in this restored longleaf/wiregrass when you consider FFS's decision to allow military training in Blackwater River State Forest.

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O_022

ID	O_022
Date Submitted	6/21/2014
Commenter	Peggy Baker
Organization	Francis M. Weston Audubon Society
Affiliation	Agency/Government Representative
Comment	As stated in section 3.Proposed Action Affected Resource Assessment During training, some wildlife such as birds, reptiles, and small mammals would be consumed by troops. However, the amount consumed would not be enough to decrease a population or have regional impacts and would not be considered significant given the extent of public use and hunting in the state forests. Consumption levels would be minimal, and be less than wildlife takes from recreational hunters." 3.7.1. lines 23-28 I felt the bird population in the forest would be protected from consumption until I read that in 2007 the congress gave a broad authorization to the Armed Forces to take any birds during military readiness activities 3.8.1.1 Regulatory Drivers Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 USC 703-712; 1997-Supp) and EO 13186, Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds: Protects migratory birds and their habitats and establishes a permitting process for legal taking. The Armed Forces are exempted from the incidental taking of migratory birds during military readiness activities (such as those described in this EIS), except in cases where an activity would likely cause a significant adverse effect to the population of a migratory bird species. 3.8.1.1 The Fish and Wildlife Service finalized regulations on February 28, 2007, broadly authorizing incidental takings of migratory birds during military readiness activities.7 These regulations allow incidental takings if DOD implements conservation measures to minimize or mitigate "significant adverse effects" on migratory bird species. My question is: who is judging the significant adverse effects on this taking of migratory bird species? and How? This forest is under restoration to a longleaf/wiregrass ecosystem. The birds are only beginning to return to this recovering habitat. It is still in a fragile state of recovery. There had never been a population bird survey until 2013 so there is no measuring stick to determine how this population has recovered in the last 20 years or what an adverse effect would be.

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O_022

	For example, the red-headed woodpecker was practically gone from NW Florida in the early 1990's. Then the FFS started leaving standing snags. Now they are plentiful in the forest and are starting to be seen in other neighborhoods. (Francis M. Weston BRSF Bird Survey -2009-2013) But it is not the time to take any of these returning bird species. These troops could easily consume the bird population of BRSF and have a great adverse effect on this recovering ecosystem but we do not have the scientific knowledge to know where that demarcation is.

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O_023

ID	O_023
Date Submitted	6/21/2014
Commenter	Peggy Baker
Organization	Francis M. Weston Audubon Society
Affiliation	Agency/Government Representative
Comment	During my experience in BRSF, I have never passed a day that I did not encounter an individual or a group in a recreational activity. These activities were not always planned or coordinated with FFS. BRSF is a recreational-centered state forest.. I cannot conceive how the proposed military activities can avoid conflict with these forest users. It appears to be a certainty that at sometime the area where troops are on the ground will have to be restricted from the public use. This will probably mean that some roads will be temporarily closed to public use. It is for sure that the roads being used as aircraft land strips will be closed from public use from time to time. My question is (and I have searched the EIS for a reference and found none)Who will enforce these restrictions? Will military police be used to stop the public from entering an area? If so, will they be armed?

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O_024

[redacted]

-----Original Message-----
From: Riverkeeper[redacted]
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2014 12:24 PM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Cc: Dan Tonsmeire, Apalachicola Riverkeeper ; Shannon Lease, Executive Director[redacted]
Subject: Apalachicola Riverkeeper comments on GRASI EIS

Dear Mr. Spaits,

Attached please find comments by Mr. Daniel Tonsmeire on behalf of the members, Board of Directors, and staff of Apalachicola Riverkeeper, pertaining to the GRASI Environmental Impact Statement. These comments have been submitted on paper as well, to be delivered to you by US Mail.

Thank you very much,

Shannon Lease

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O_024

Shannon Lease, Executive Director

Apalachicola Riverkeeper

[redacted]

[redacted]

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O_024

APALACHICOLA RIVERKEEPER®

SAVING AN AMERICAN TREASURE

Eglin AFB Public Affairs (96 TW/PA)
ATTN: Mr. Michael Spaits
101 W. D Ave., Room 238
Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

Dear Mr. Spaits,

Attached please find comments on the GRASI Environmental Impact Statement, submitted on behalf of the members, Board of Directors, and staff of Apalachicola Riverkeeper.

Thank you for this opportunity to participate in the process of improving the use of the Tate's Hell State Forest.

Sincerely,

Dan Tonsmeire
Apalachicola Riverkeeper

WATERKEEPER ALLIANCE MEMBER

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO THE PROTECTION AND STEWARDSHIP OF THE APALACHICOLA RIVER & BAY

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O_024

Comments regarding GRASI Environmental Impact Statement
Dan Tonsmeire
Apalachicola Riverkeeper
June 23, 2014

A. Introduction

I write on behalf of the Board of Directors and over 1400 members of ***Apalachicola Riverkeeper***, a non-profit organization dedicated to stewardship of the Apalachicola River, Bay, floodplain, and estuary, of which Tate's Hell State Forest is a part. I have read the pertinent sections of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the GRASI military training exercises in Tate's Hell State Forest. I offer these comments for inclusion and response in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Apalachicola Riverkeeper fully supports the military of the United States. We understand that for their protection and ours, the men and women who risk their lives on our behalf must undergo training, and that training often requires specific types of terrain in order to be effective. We also understand that citizens who do not serve in the military must share the burden of the defense of our nation and of the freedoms that we all enjoy.

But we also know that there are appropriate places and times for those training activities to occur. Training activities as described in the draft EIS are not appropriate for Tate's Hell State Forest. Contrary to the finding of the EIS, there will be many different forms of environmental impacts as a result of the planned "events," and those impacts are indeed significant to the land, to the water, to plants, to wildlife, and to those who use the forest for fishing, hunting, hiking, paddling, or merely to escape the noise and contention of everyday life.

The impacts will be significant to the animals that reside in the forest, whether that residence is seasonal or permanent. The impacts will be significant to the rare and/or endangered plants that are likely to be destroyed. Should any major accidents occur, the impacts to the Apalachicola River and Bay ecosystem, and to those whose livelihoods depend on that system, may be far beyond significant. As Franklin County becomes known for nearly constant low-altitude military overflight as aircraft go to and from the forest thousands of times each year, the negative impacts on tourism and property values in the county will be significant.

Perhaps it all comes down to what we mean by "significant." Nobody outside the military (or its consultants) would believe that 1160 annual intrusions of a particular type, accompanied by the firing of nearly 780,000 rounds or other explosive devices, accompanied by treetop-height overflights at all hours of day and night could be anything other than significant. Military training activity is inherently inconsistent with the purpose and mission of this particular state forest. The level, intensity, frequency, and duration of the activity described in the EIS will have substantial and significant impacts that are unacceptable.

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As discussed further below, the EIS fails in its task of providing description and analysis of a range of alternatives. Had it done so, it is conceivable that an alternative could have been identified, the environmental impacts of which would have been minimal and insignificant, and therefore acceptable. However, whereas the action-alternative as described will have environmental impacts that are significant for people, wildlife, plants, and the ecosystem as a whole, the only choice that can be made on the basis of this EIS is the non-action alternative.

B. The resource at risk

Before moving on to specific areas of concern, it is essential to understand the nature of this ecosystem, and the role played by Tate's Hell State forest in that ecosystem, and in the lives of the people of Franklin County. The ecosystem that comprises the entire watershed and floodplain of the Apalachicola River, Apalachicola Bay, and nearby coastal waters is extraordinary, unique, and irreplaceable. Because so much of it is largely undeveloped from an urban perspective and retains much of its ecological function the river and estuary as a whole is one of the most productive such systems still in existence. It has the highest herpetological diversity of any area in North America. It has the greatest diversity of fish of any river system in Florida. The system has been designated UNESCO United Nations Man in the Biosphere Reserve. It is the home of a National Estuarine Research Reserve. The area is home to three State of Florida Aquatic Preserves and much of the systems water are classified as Outstanding Florida Water and Class II State Waters managed and protected for Shellfish harvesting. It is an area where the federal and state governments have made substantial investments in lands for the conservation of natural areas, in order to preserve and enhance the functioning of the ecosystem, as well as to preserve and enhance opportunities for citizens to utilize the resources. These include the Apalachicola Natural Forest, St. Mark's and St. Vincent National Wildlife Preserves, Tate's Hell State Forest, and the Apalachicola Wildlife and Environmental Area, and a number of State Parks and Preserves.

The ecosystem is essential habitat for oysters, crabs, shrimp, and other aquatic creatures that support some 3000 jobs in Franklin County. Recreational fishing is also supported, and is a hugely important element of the area's rapidly-growing tourism economy. And the system has impacts far beyond the local area: the plume of essential aquatic nutrition (the so-called Green River) that the Apalachicola River delivers to the eastern Gulf of Mexico is now known to extend for hundreds of miles southward, where it nourishes species such as amberjack, groupers, snappers, and triggerfish, all of which are important both commercially and recreationally. This is no ordinary river, and Tate's Hell is no ordinary forest. Accordingly, because of all of the potential ramifications for the ecosystem, environmental impacts that might be insignificant on an isolated, inland, upland forest that received no visitation, are very significant in this estuarial, wetland forest, which receives extensive visitation.

Tate's Hell State Forest was acquired by the State of Florida not principally for forestry, but to

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preserve, restore, and enhance the ecological function of its wetlands in delivering clean water to sustain the highly-productive fisheries of Apalachicola Bay. Since that acquisition, substantial investment has been made in restoring the natural flow of water through the wetlands the forest comprises, which was disrupted by the historic ditching, dredging, and road-building of prior forestry activities. The people of Franklin County not only assented to this acquisition, which removed much valuable private land from this low-income county's tax rolls, they provided active political support for the acquisition. Preserving and restoring the ecological functions of the forest was and is essential to the people of Franklin County, as is preserving citizen access for largely unimpeded use of the forest for camping, hunting, fishing, paddling, hiking, nature observation, equestrian activity, or simply enjoying the quiet beauty of the forest.

The character of this forest, and its ecological role in the estuary, and its role in the lives of the people who frequent it, add significance to any negative impacts that military activity may have. **Any activity what causes noticeable change in the way the forest functions, or in the way people use the forest, is by our definition significant.** The EIS has many examples, some explicit and others implied, where changes in a human or animal behavior will be altered by the training events. In at least one place, the expected flight of animals is cited as the basis for insignificance -- if they are not there anymore, then they are not impacted, correct? That misguided thought process inevitably leads to findings of insignificance, no matter what the actual impacts are. And in this forest, in this ecosystem, that is simply wrong.

C. Failure to consider alternatives

The Environmental Protection Agency describes what an EIS must be, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act:

> **"An EIS is a full disclosure document that details the process through which a ... project was developed, includes consideration of a range of reasonable alternatives, and analyzes the potential impacts resulting from the alternatives."**

The Council on Environmental Quality uses even stronger language. An EIS must:

> **"Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives, and for alternatives which were eliminated from detailed study, briefly discuss the reasons for their having been eliminated."**

We are not aware of any rules or policies that exempt off-base military activity from the requirement that "all reasonable alternatives" be explored, analyzed, evaluated, and presented. This requirement is explicitly adopted in order to prevent the type of all-or-nothing choice that is being presented in the current EIS. Presentation of a range of alternatives leads to an understanding of the various activities and impacts, so that informed and rational decisions can

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be made regarding which alternative to choose. Certainly it is possible to vary the locations, flight paths, levels, intensities, frequencies, and durations of the training exercises; analysis of alternatives incorporating significant variation of parameters is an essential part of the EIS process.

Having failed to present a range of reasonable alternatives, in our view the EIS as drafted provides no basis for any decision other than to adopt the no-action alternative.

C. Specific concerns

1. Specific concern: noise

The noise created day and night for 232 or more days each year by treetop-height aviation and over three-fourths of a million shells and other explosive devices will have substantial and significant impact upon all sentient beings that use the forest. It is hard to think of any forest activity that will not be substantially altered by the noise of military training at the level, intensity, frequency, and duration described in the EIS. Wildlife behavior will be altered, as will that of people who use the forest. This will be especially true at night, when sound takes the place of sight as the principal medium of human sensation. It is true that those who can move away from the noise will do so. **That fact, however, is proof of the significance of the intrusion,** rather than a reduction of impact as presumed in the EIS. Further, in the case of the most sensitive and most mobile species (including humans) the relocation may be permanent. Military noise will drive some people and wildlife out of the forest forever. This is particularly troublesome in the case of bears, which may find themselves driven into nearby residential areas, thus taking the impacts outside of the forest and into the community. We also concur in the concern raised by an equestrian user regarding the reaction of horses, which may react to unexpected, sudden, loud noises in ways that endanger riders, bystanders, and the animals themselves.

2. Specific concern: contamination

Military training activity described in this EIS creates many pathways for chemical contamination of the soil, water, and air to occur. Although in an isolated, inland, upland forest these impacts might be considered insignificant, in a coastal wetland such as Tate's Hell, adjacent to and draining to highly-productive and sensitive estuarial waters (including extensive shellfish beds), any such contamination must be presumed significant until proven otherwise. Vectors for contamination include residues from expendables, impacts from ordinary spills of fuels, lubricants, coolants, and other fluids associated with aircraft and ground vehicles, more severe spills from the occasional accidental collisions (not certain, but likely) and crashes. And unlike the common practice on military bases, it is not acceptable in the forest to build a fence around a spill site, deny public access, and declare the problem solved. Spills may not be either frequent or

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catastrophic, but they will occur and their impacts must be judged to have ecologic significance.

3. Specific concern: collisions

That vehicles occasionally have collisions or allisions is an unfortunate but undeniable fact of vehicular use, any time and in any location. These events become far more likely during night-driving exercises with minimal lighting in use. We can think of at least four types of such events, which are likely to be infrequent, but are likely to occur at least occasionally, and for which there is potential for significant environmental impact.

(a) Collision of two or more military vehicles -- although this will not have direct impacts on non-participants, such collisions have the potential to release significant amounts of noxious fluids (fuel, lubricants, coolants) into the soil and/or waters of the forest. Especially for those events that occur at night in the wettest locations, mitigation will be very difficult, and significant ecosystem damage may occur.

(b) Collision of military vehicle with civilian vehicle -- less likely than (a), but certainly cannot be ruled out and/or prevented with absolute certainty. In addition to the literal impact on the civilian(s) and vehicle(s), such collisions have the same potential for toxic fluid release as (a). In fact, the potential may be even larger, as civilian vehicles lack the robustness of military vehicles, and may be more likely to leak as a result of impact.

(c) Allision of military vehicle with animals -- it will be difficult if not impossible to prevent allisions with animals in the forest, some of which are quite large (deer, bears, hogs). Obviously, there will be significant, potentially fatal impact for the animal involved.

(d) Vehicles leaving roadways as a result of evasive action to avoid other vehicles or large animals -- depending upon the details such incidents might have little to no significant impact, but potential is there for significant problems, especially if fluids are leaked and/or the vehicle comes to rest in either permanent or ephemeral water.

4. Specific concern: aircraft crashes

Just as vehicles occasionally collide, aircraft occasionally crash, especially during training exercises, and especially CV-22s. A military aircraft went down in a residential area in California just a few weeks ago, and residents of this area remember quite clearly the crash of a military aircraft at St George Island. Any such event has the potential of fluid spillage, fire, and injury of people and property by impact. Since crashes are neither planned nor controlled, there is no practical way either to prevent or to mitigate damage. The only perfectly certain way to prevent all crashes is never to allow the aircraft to leave the ground. As it appears that there will be thousands of flights each year, it seems that it will be a question of when aircraft come down, rather than if.

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Whether it occurs in the forest, in the bay, in the river, or in populated areas, the environmental impacts will be significant if not disastrous. The EIS reader searches in vain for detailed contingency plans for dealing with the consequences of crashes under these various circumstances. This is a fundamental, fatal flaw in the EIS that must be remedied before any decision is made.

5. Specific concern: overflight impacts

In addition to the noise and disturbance in the forest itself, the noise and disturbance caused by aircraft going to and from the forest may be substantial and significant. Franklin County residents are familiar with and have grown accustomed to such flights as a consequence of activity at our local airport(s). Depending upon the flight paths taken, the level and frequency of activity described in the EIS has the potential to increase citizens' exposure to such impacts by several orders of magnitude. Furthermore, as described by the manager of the Carrabelle airport, the potential for dangerous conflict with civilian aviation is both significant and potentially hazardous to all concerned; given his experience and expertise, his views should be given utmost respect and consideration. The more distant (from the forest) location of the airport in Apalachicola suggests that the potential conflict there is substantially less, yet presumably not zero. Unless all of the flights to and from the forest are routed over completely unpopulated areas, the quality life underneath the flight paths will be diminished. And certainly to some, those diminutions of happiness are significant environmental impacts for which no mitigation is possible.

6. Specific concern: lost access to the forest

Unquestionably, citizens will have their access to the forest substantially diminished. Although at any given instance the foreclosed area may be small, the frequency and duration of the activities make the cumulative impact of these closings substantial and significant, as perceived by those who are excluded. Several activities are described as likely to occur up to 232 days per year. If all of those occur on the same days, then 232 days will have some impact on civilian access. If those activities do not all occur on exactly the same 232 days, then the total number of foreclosed days would be much larger. Further, the area effectively foreclosed is much larger than the official activity zones and their respective buffers; any area where the activity can be seen, heard, smelled, or felt experiences some loss of effective access. And, the closing of roads that cross the roads used as airstrips necessitate a re-routing of traffic that may create effective foreclosure for visitors on foot, bicycle, or horse. The loss of access by the visiting public is both substantial and significant.

7. Specific concern: wildfire

There are many ways that military training activities could lead to unintended wildfires; fueling activity, vehicle accidents, pyrotechnic devices, and campfires during the cross-country exercises come quickly to mind. Even though much of the forest is wetland, during a long, hot, dry

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summer and autumn the fire risk can be substantial. A wildfire is more likely to start under those conditions, and is more likely to cause significant negative environmental impacts. The reference in the EIS to the beneficial effects of prescribed burns is simply fatuous. Prescribed burns are planned and managed by professional foresters, and would not be conducted when the risk of uncontrolled wildfire is greatest. Unless the USAF has unshared plans to alter its use of the forest when fire risk is high, we must conclude that the probability of significant environmental impact from wildfire is significant.

8. Specific concern: direct degradation of the resource

The contention that military training can be conducted in all seasons of the year and under all conditions of terrain without doing damage to that terrain is impossible to accept. Much of the forest is wetlands, and when those lands are thoroughly saturated significant damage from vehicular use is likely, especially given the amount of activity described in the EIS. Similarly, the impact on stream crossings, areas used to land watercraft, and areas used as aircraft landing zones will be significant because of the sheer volume of activity, but also due to the fragility of the habitats. When activity must be scheduled for 232 or more days each year there is very little of the flexibility that would be necessary in order to avoid adverse conditions on the ground. The fact that the EIS stipulates that activity sites will be rotated in order to minimize these effects is explicit recognition that direct degradation of the resource will occur. We disagree that such rotation will be sufficient action to avoid significant impacts.

Another issue that should be addressed specifically in the final EIS is the extent to which the military activities will conflict with the work that has been done, and is being done, to restore natural drainage patterns to previously ditched-and-drained areas. Various culverts and ditches have been blocked or filled-in so that water drains in ways that mimic what nature intended. As a result, the forest roads do not drain like city streets. During the wettest seasons, military users are likely to find water where they want it least, e.g. on roads to be used as landing strips. What happens then? Will the activity be relocated and/or postponed, or will the water be removed in some way? Increased use of roads will require additional maintenance and increase cost of management for THSF and/or Franklin County. Specific plans for these contingencies should be included in the final document.

9. Specific concern: size of buffer areas

This concern demonstrates the fundamental conflict between civilian use and military training, in a way that offers no useful way to avoid impacts on would-be users. The problem is especially acute for those who conduct their activities away from the cleared and designated recreation zones to which the buffers apply. In general, the buffers are too small to prevent negative impacts. People and animals will still see, hear, smell, and feel the military activity. The sounds and vibrations will not stop when they get to buffer boundaries. But if the buffers are enlarged, the

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effect is to foreclose still more of the forest to civilian use.

10. Specific concern: impacts on threatened species

Tate's Hell State Forest is the certain or likely home to some 90+ species of plants and animals that are officially listed as *Threatened* or *Endangered*, or unofficially experience significant stress as a species. Despite the military's best intentions, we cannot believe that **none** of those species will suffer **any** harm as a result of the activity. Again, the level, intensity, frequency, and duration of activity make it all but impossible to avoid **some** harm to **some** species. One reason is that many of the plants are hard to recognize and occur in small patches that are all too easy to destroy with a vehicle or with troop movement. Likewise, some animals can be hard to recognize, especially in sub-adult or non-breeding morphs (e.g. juvenile king snakes). Third, there are species that are in trouble but have not made any official lists yet. For instance, the Apalachicola Alligator Snapping Turtle was only identified as a separate species within the past year; it occurs only in the Apalachicola River drainage, it probably merits a listing of *Threatened*, it almost certainly exists in Tate's Hell, but it receives no recognition from the military.

Fourth, there is the issue of the gopher tortoise. Many different creatures depend greatly upon the burrows that these turtles excavate. To say that gopher tortoise animals and there burrows will be "cleared and relocated" betrays an ignorance or misunderstanding of this ecosystem that will make effective stewardship of these creatures problematic at best, and impossible at worst. And since there is no alternative action presented that allows a reduced level of activity, we must conclude that the only way to provide effective protection for the rare, threatened, and endangered species in Tate's Hell State Forest is to choose the no-action alternative, and to keep military training out of the forest.

11. Specific concern: conflicts with civilians

In addition to the ways already discussed that military exercises will interfere with civilian enjoyment of the forest, there is substantial potential for conflict with hunters. In general, hunters will be armed, often camped out all night, sometimes hunting at night (alligators), and not always in the best frame of mind to be interfered with. It is all too easy to imagine an unexpected night meeting between a hunting party and a military cross-country group, and having the incident turn out badly for all concerned. Confining activity to nights only during hunting season does not solve this problem. The final EIS should give thorough and detailed consideration to how this problem may be prevented, and (failing that) how it will be handled if/when it does occur.

12. Specific concern: cumulative impacts

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A properly-executed EIS takes into account the cumulative impacts of all of the proposed actions in each alternative. Cumulative, in this context has two distinct meanings, both of which are pertinent, and both of which are essentially ignored. First, cumulative analysis means that all of the various actions taken in a given setting are considered jointly. Environmental impacts are often nonlinear functions of the level of action, so that failure to consider all actions taken together will understate the impact on the environment, especially on wildlife, civilian users, and nearby residents.

Second, cumulative analysis refers to the passage of time: how will all of these actions taken over many years alter the natural and human communities in which they take place? Wildlife populations may often weather a year or two of disturbance, especially when they are not consecutive, but many consecutive years of disturbance will eventually cause the population to attempt migration. In our highly disturbed landscape, such migrations are likely to fail. And of course, the plants cannot migrate at all.

It appears that no concern for either sense of cumulative impacts has entered into this EIS. Rather, each action and each possibility of impact is examined in isolation, as if no other action is occurring. The final EIS needs to give explicit consideration throughout to the cumulative impacts of the proposed alternatives.

An important aspect of the cumulative analysis should be the impact upon tourism and property values. As the area gains and maintains a reputation as a place where military training exercises routinely interfere with citizens' ability to enjoy the forest, their homes, and their vacations, there will be significant impacts on the tourism economy, and upon the long-term growth of property values. No serious consideration is given to these issues.

13. Specific concern: how will activity be monitored?

Leaving aside issues of significance, it is nonetheless clear that the minimization of impacts requires that trainees and their supervisors adhere to many constraints and restrictions regarding what they do, where they do it, and when they do it. How will all of this be monitored, and what sort of sanctions will be imposed (and by whom) if the restrictions are not met? If activity planned for 232 days annually actually occurs on 242 days, how will the public know that, and what sanctions will be imposed? If, rather than 750,000 rounds of blank ammunition the trainees fire off 850,000 but then only manage to "police" 450,000 of the casings, how will the public know that, and what sanctions will be imposed? If a gopher tortoise is struck and killed by a military vehicle, how will the public know that, and what sanctions will be imposed? Will there be independent and objective outside agencies involved, or will we rely upon self-reporting by the military? Plans and details regarding monitoring, reporting, and imposing sanctions for failure to comply are an essential part of any EIS that imposes conditions. This EIS is very rich with conditions and constraints, but very poor with the details of monitoring, reporting, and imposing of sanctions. The final EIS should include these details, and those details should specify

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monitoring by objective, expert, non-military observers.

14. Specific concern: cultural impact -- the role of the forest in local culture

Little if any attention in the EIS is given to the cultural aspect of the disruption of local citizens' use of the forest. Stewardship of this land is regarded by many in the community as something akin to a sacred trust. Their support for the creation of the State Forest, and resultant significant loss of tax base that is no minor burden in this low-wealth county, was founded on their desire for perpetual preservation and perpetual unfettered access. Having that trust violated by military activity that harms the environment and interferes with their use of the forest, is significant far beyond any mere count of the days of access lost, or the shell casings not policed. This issue is all the more salient because the people of Franklin County will receive no compensation for the additional sacrifice that they are asked to provide.

15. Specific concern: environmental justice

An EIS must give consideration to issues of environmental justice, which arise when any group of people have imposed upon them a disproportionate share of the environmental costs of an action. This is especially true when there are no concomitant benefits received by the community. Since its creation, Franklin County has very proudly done its share and then some for the defense of our nation. (Note that many of the streets in Apalachicola are named in honor of men who gave their lives in wartime service.) And the area is still incurring costs for its contributions, as shells continue to be unearthed at relict firing ranges. To impose the further costs of environmental degradation of the forest, foreclosed access for upwards of 232 days each year, and the domestic tranquility lost to seemingly continual overflights, is unfair and unjust. This would be true even if there were some compensation for the county. In its documentation, the USAF proudly notes the economic benefits of its activity in north Florida: $5 billion in Escambia County, nearly $1 billion in Santa Rosa County, $7 billion in Okaloosa County, and $1.8 billion in Bay County. In contrast, even though military exercises are already occurring in Franklin County airspace, at the Apalachicola airport and on the Apalachicola River, the economic benefits in Franklin County are zero. The military benefits of the proposed action are national or even global, the economic benefits occur elsewhere, and all of the environmental costs occur here. That is a violation of the fundamental concept environmental justice, and must not be allowed to occur.

16. Specific concern: the issue of significance

Decisions regarding military exercises in Tate's Hell State Forest will ultimately hinge upon whose concept of "significant" prevails. We believe that the level, intensity, frequency, and duration of the planned encroachments are unquestionably significant to those whose lives and livelihoods are disrupted. USAF clearly disagrees. Perhaps turning things around will help our

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perspective to become clear. Imagine, if you will, that operational areas of Eglin Air Force Base were open to unfettered civilian access 232 days every year; that groups of civilians could appear at any hour of day or night in these areas; that upon arrival of civilians (whose plans might or might not be announced in advance) all military activity in those areas would have to cease, and all military personnel and equipment relocated out of the affected areas; and that these civilians would be operating various kinds of heavy equipment, and driving around at night without headlights. We submit that the imposition of this situation would be regarded as significant.

D. Conclusions

The only reasonable and rational choice that can be made based upon the draft EIS is the no-action alternative. The EIS is deficient in many ways, not the least of which is that it fails the regulatory requirement that a range of alternatives be presented and analyzed; should this not be corrected, litigation should be expected. Many different environmental impacts, economic impacts, and cultural impacts would occur, and are and will continue to be deemed significant by those impacted. Many different kinds of important (to people, and to nature) negative impacts are ignored or simply declared insignificant, and that is unacceptable. Some of these impacts are certain (noise, lost access, conflicts with users, conflicts with civil aviation, cumulative impacts), some are uncertain but likely (chemical contamination, physical degradation, collisions, spills, direct conflict with hunters), some may be speculative (aircraft loss), but all are significant. The proposed activity, which creates large costs but zero benefits in the affected community, fails the fundamental test of environmental justice. The proposed activity, as described, is inconsistent with the mission of the State Forest, and if road/landing-strip activity interferes with natural sheet-flow restoration, actually obstructs that mission.

Until and unless a realistic comprehensive EIS is published, one that corrects the deficiencies noted above, the only acceptable alternative is the No-Action Alternative.

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-----Original Message-----
From: Kay Rasmussen [redacted]
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2014 9:49 AM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Cc: Nathan Sparks
Subject: EDC GRASI Landscape Initiative Support Input

Dear Mike,

Per the GRASI Landscape Initiative Environmental Impact Statement public input process, please find attached the Economic Development Council's letter of support.

If any additional information is required, please do not hesitate to contact Nathan Sparks or myself.

Regards,

Kay

Kay Rasmussen, CEcD

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Associate Director

Economic Development Council

Okaloosa County, Florida

[redacted]

Economic development is an investment;

and the payback is in the future!

The EDC is a 501(c)(6) non-profit private-public partnership organization.

[redacted]

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Economic Development Council
of Okaloosa County, Florida

June 23, 2014

Mr. Michael Spaits
Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office
96 TW/PA, 101 West D Avenue, Room 238
Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

Dear Mr. Spaits,

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Economic Development Council (EDC) of Okaloosa County, FL as a demonstration of our strong support for the GRASI Landscape Initiative and its Environmental Impact Statement process.

The Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County is the community's primary organization tasked with improving the area's economy through the attraction and retention of new, diversified employment opportunities and capital investments. Constituted in 1989, the EDC is a non-profit public/private partnership. The EDC's investors include Okaloosa County and its municipalities, regional educational partners, utility companies, non-profit organizations and more than 100 private companies committed to economic growth and diversification. The EDC has been a supporter of GRASI from its initial discussion stages and believe it is already paying dividends for the Air Force and the community with its unique and innovative approach to managing the air space throughout northwest Florida. We also believe the Landscape Initiative currently proposed is a logical and sound next step to preserving the integrity of Eglin AFB and enhancing the relationships and partnerships among Eglin AFB and the surrounding communities.

The proposal to establish and use temporary emitter training sites within the Blackwater River State Forest and Tate's Hell State Forest via partnership agreements with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Services and the Florida Forest service is being vetted through a transparent and open process that welcomes public comment and input. Further, we would cite the long and successful history Eglin AFB has in protecting and enhancing the environment on and around the Eglin complex. Eglin has received numerous state and national awards for its efforts to preserve wildlife, waterways and the forests that abound in northwest Florida. We strongly believe that history of good stewardship will carry forward into any partnerships drawn between the USAF and the state of Florida.

In addition, and as pointed out in Table 2-24 and section 2-5 of the draft EIS, the Air Force has developed extensive General Operational Constraints to minimize any potentially adverse impacts. We understand that all training activity in the state forests would be under tight monitoring of both the federal government and numerous Florida state agencies.

We thank you for the opportunity to voice our support for this important initiative and stand ready to assist however appropriate.

Sincerely,

S. Nathan Sparks, CEcD
Executive Director

[redacted]

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[redacted]

From: prvs=1245392c9d=michael.spaits@us.af.mil on behalf of SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA <michael.spaits@us.af.mil>
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2014 2:39 PM
To: La Lutra
Subject: RE: GRASI LI EIS Submittal
Signed By: michael.spaits@us.af.mil

Mr. Latour,
Thank you for your input. Your comments will be added to the Administrative Record and included for consideration in the analysis of this Proposed Action. For more information, or to stay current with this proposed action and alternatives, please refer to this link for the most up-to-date information: http://grasleis.leidoseemg.com/

Thanks,
Mike Spaits
Eglin Environmental Public Affairs
O - (850) 882-2836
C - (850) 621-3391

-----Original Message-----
From: La Lutra [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 22, 2014 3:08 PM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Cc [redacted]
Subject: GRASI LI EIS Submittal

To : Mr. Mike Spaits
Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office,
96 TW/PA
101 W.D Ave.,
Room 238
Eglin AFB, Fl 32542-5499
michael.spaits@ua.af.mil

SUBJECT : Submitted for inclusion, consideration, and response to the final GRASI Landscape Initiative Environmental Impact Statement.

Attached is a word document submitted for inclusion, consideration, and response to the final GRASI Landscape Initiative Environmental Impact Statement.

Thank you for this opportunity.

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Respectfully submitted:

Serge Latour
Mgmr. La Lutra, LLC
V.P. Florida Green Guide Association
[redacted]

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White Paper

SUBJECT

GRASI – Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative.

Landscape Initiative – Draft Environmental Impact Statement

or

A layman's guide to Turning the Tate's Hell State Forest into a Military Training Area.

Prepared by: La Lutra LLC

[redacted]

Serge Latour
Debbi Clifford

Submitted for inclusion, consideration, and response to the final GRASI Landscape Initiative Environmental Impact Statement.

Date Submitted: June 22, 2014

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PURPOSE
The purpose of this white paper is to formally submit new information relevant to this EIS, to note where clarifications should be made, and to submit comments to be considered and responded to in the final EIS.

OBJECTIVE.
The objective is to prepare a clear and concise EIS document that all can understand. In English, translated from "Mil-Speak". We can't blame our state officials or their employees of making a bad decision if they have misleading, and or difficult to sort out, data and information.

AUTHORITY TO COMMENT.

In order to comment on these proceedings and " make your comments count" the April 2014 draft GRASI LSI EIS it says you must be either a concerned citizen, representative of an interest group, or an expert.

Fortunately I am all three. I am a directly impacted resident and MGMR of La Lutra LLC , an aquatic sciences and environmental resources eco-tourism business located adjacent to Tate's Hell State Forest (THSF) "Tactical Airspace" 6 (TA6).

I am also Vice President of the Florida Green Guide Association, a group of Tallahassee Community College – Wakulla Environmental Institute trained and certified "Green Guides" who operate eco-tourism based businesses in this area.

Professionally I have prepared, coauthored and served as Principal Investigator on numerous EIS's for governmental and non-governmental agencies as well as private industry.

La Lutra LLC

La Lutra is a registered LLC started in December of 2011. We are an aquatic sciences and environmental resources eco-tourism business operating adjacent to Tate's Hell State Forest in what you refer to as Tactical Airspace 6 (TA6). Our environmental resources group operates silent electric canoes and kayaks up Pine Log Creek, which you refer to as Tactical Airspace 2 (TA2). We also operate up and down sections of the Crooked River and the New River. See Figure1. La Lutra – Currently Operating Silent Canoe and Kayak Tours

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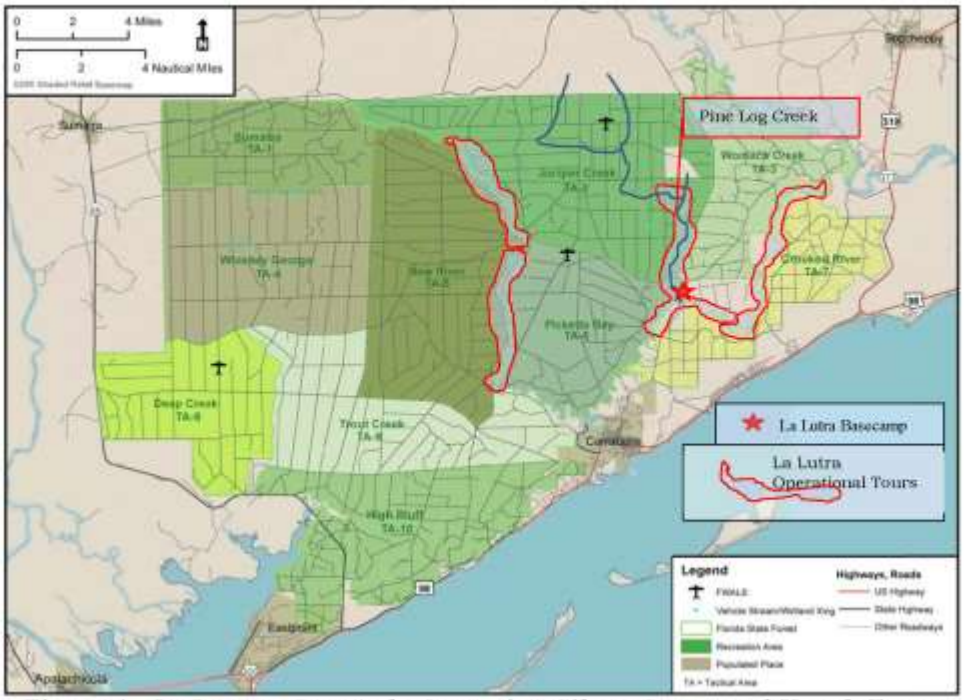

Figure 1 La Lutra – Currently Operating Silent Canoe and Kayak Tours

Fixed-Wing Aircraft Landing Sites FWALS ES.4.1.2.2

The GRASI plan calls for establishing landing strips on Gully Branch Rd , another on County Line Rd. and another on Tower Rd. Those of us who live and play and hunt and timber in this area know these as major roads and they are even hurricane evacuation routes.

I would like to submit new information pertaining to the amount of traffic that goes down Gully Branch Rd. I can't speak for the other areas as I can't hear them from my house ,but I can say that during spring and fall, traffic is "frequent" (1 – 5 vehicles per hour - mostly during the day.) During hunting season traffic is "busy" (> 5 vehicles per hour day and night). The only time I can classify the traffic on Gully Branch as infrequent is for about 2-3 weeks at the start of summer and again in the fall when the yellow flies swarm. Then there is less than 1 vehicle per hour.

There is an electronic counter box at the Gully Branch /Pine Log Creek Bridge but I do not know if or who monitors or maintains it.

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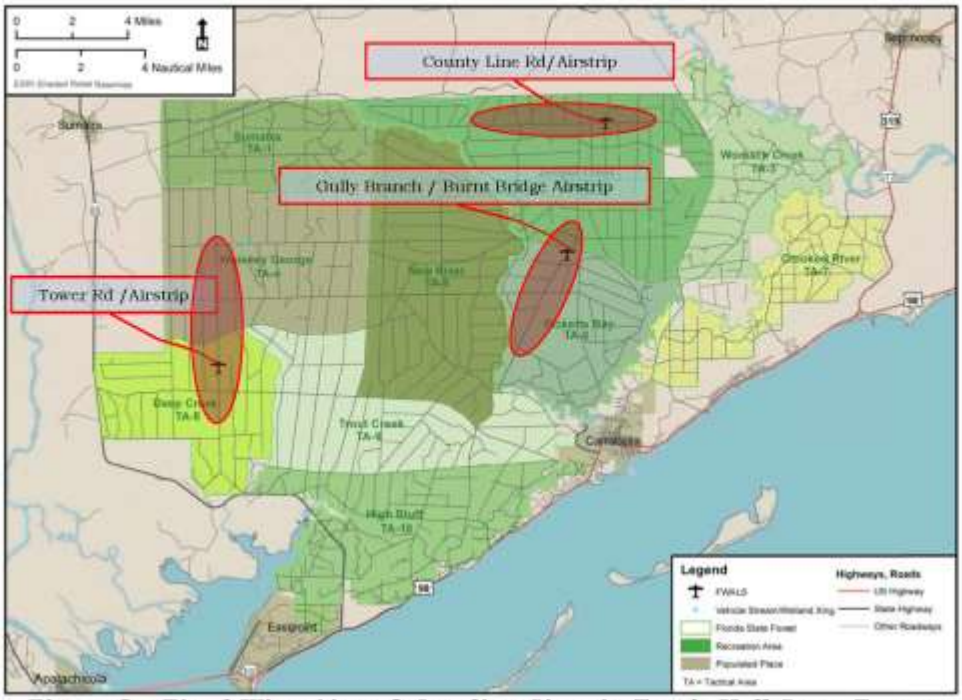

Figure 2 – Fixed-Wing Aircraft Landing Sites in Tate's Hell State Forest

Noise and it's Impact on Life in the Swamp.

At the public hearing, I was hoping to be able to show a short 143 sec video http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddC2dOlqMFk&list=UUpEg5G8Of1mFbNuaWrVo0pg&feature=share&index=4.

The video was not so much about the noise of the Osprey's (not the feathered kind) a pair of CV-22's passing close to the treetops several times, but the silence that occurred after they left. Not a hawk in the sky or a squirrel in a tree, not a frog croaking or a bird singing anywhere. Birds don't sing just because it sounds nice, bull gators bellow for a reason, and bull river frogs snore to communicate. In the swamp you can't see very far. You have to hear and smell to establish a territory, find a mate, find dinner, prevent from being someone else's dinner. In essence, to communicate in the swamp is to survive.

To better understand the exact nature of the amount of air traffic being proposed, I have summarized the activities listed for these airstrips (FAWS) in the following Table 1. .

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Even recognizing that these numbers reflect that maximum number permitted, they are still significant and respectfully request to be clarified. Perhaps per airstrip.

Table 1 - Summary of activities at Fixed-wing Aircraft Landing Sites (FWALS).

MONTHLY SUMMARY

	Aircraft	# of Personnel	Hours	Frequency
Fixed Wing FWAS	?	NA	?	?
Light Aviation LAPT	1	NA	2	5 X Day
Insertion & resupply A/LVL	4	72	2	4 X Day
Airdrops ADS	4	72	2	4 X Day
Treetop Insertions / extractions LLHI/E	4	50	2	2 X Month
Combat Support Areas TCSA	?	50	24*	5 X Month
Totals	**Landings & Take-offs / Month**			**1,808**
	Noise Duration – Hours / Month			**904**
	# of Personnel on the ground/Month			**17,630**

*Generator operation.

These numbers can't be right. 1,808 landings and take offs per month on only 6 airstrips in both state forest sites. 904 hours of noise duration per month (obvious overlap - one month is only 720 hours). 17,000 + pairs of boots on the ground per month? Please clarify so we can understand. This is not intermittent by any standards. This is constant.

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The data in the Summary Table was taken from details presented in the Draft April 2014 Executive Summary of the GRASI LIEIS . It was not contained in the "Welcome" hand out at the public hearings. I want to assure that these tables and figures are available to the people and decision makers of Florida.

For clarification purposes I have included additional information clarifying, in layman's terms, the extent and degree of these proposed activities.

Light Aviation Proficiency Training LAPT ES.4.1.2.4

For the purpose of the EIS, The air force defines Light Aviation as planes such as the CV-22 Osprey and the C-130 (Flying Boxcar that you can drive HMWVs – high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle's –HUMVE's, and jeeps, into) as " "Light Aviation"???

Table 2. (ES-4). LAPT Details per Event

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables/ Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
One aircraft per event, combination of Casa-212, PC-12, C-145	N/A	Paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades	2 hours Day and night	5 times /day, 232 days/year (spread out among landing sites)	During hunting season, night operations only from 2 hours after sunset to 2 hours before sunrise. Avoidance of noise impacts to private landowners and inhabited recreational sites during approach and departure.

LAPT = Light Aviation Proficiency Training

Insertion and resupply via landing aircraft.

Air/Land Vertical Lift A/LVL ES.4.1.2.8

Table 3 (ES-8). A/LVL Details per Event

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
Up to four total aircraft, combination of CV-22, UH-60, CH-47, C-130, C-145. There would be no more than two CV-22s used per event.	Up to 72 depending on associated training activity and aircraft.	Paintballs/plastic pellets,M-18 smoke grenades. THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	24 hours Day or night	4x/day 232 days/year (spread out among HLZs/DZs / FWALS)	During hunting season, night operations only from 2 hours after sunset to 2 hours before sunrise. Avoidance of noise impacts to private landowners and inhabited recreational sites during approach and departure.

A/LVL = Air/Land Vertical Lift; DZ = drop zone; GBS = ground burst simulator; HLZ = helicopter landing zone; mm =millimeter; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest; FWALS = Fixed-Wing Aircraft Landing Sites

Comment for clarification. Why are blanks only allowed in THSF?.

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Temporary Combat Support Areas ES.4.1.2.6

Table 4 (ES-6). TCSA Details per Event

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
May arrive at location via various aircraft or land vehicles	Up to 50	Paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades, tents, generators THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	24 hours Day and night	5 times/ month	During hunting season night operations only from 2 hours after sunset to 2 hours before sunrise. Avoidance of inhabited recreational sites.

GBS = ground burst simulator; mm = millimeter; TCSA = Temporary Combat Support Area; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest.

Insertion and resupply via Airdrops ADs ES.4.1.2.7 Airdrops

Table 5 (ES-7). Airdrop Details per Event

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
Up to four total aircraft, combination of UH-60, CH-47, C-130, C-17, C-145; CV-22 There would be no more than two CV-22s used per event	Up to 72 depending on associated training activity and aircraft.	Land Drops: approximately 15 cubic foot container of water (~300 pounds); containerized delivery system (~500 pounds); paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades Water drops: two Zodiacs	24 hours Day and night	4 times/day, 232 days/year (spread out among HLZs/DZs) C-17 used 2-3 times/year	During hunting season, night operations only from 2 hours after sunset to 2 hours before sunrise. Avoid inhabited recreational sites and public boaters. No power motors in Bear Lake (BRSF). Avoidance of noise impacts to private landowners and inhabited recreational sites during approach and departure.

BRSF = Blackwater River State Forest; DZ = Drop Zone; HLZ = Helicopter Landing Zone

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Low-Level Helicopter 1 Insertions/Extractions ES.4.1.2.5

Table 6 (ES-5). Low-Level Helicopter 1 Insertions/Extractions - LLHI/E

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
Up to four total aircraft, combination of UH-60, CH-47, MH-47 There would be no more than two CV-22s used per event	Up to 50 inserted/extracted	paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	2 hours Day and night	2 times/ month (spread out among (spread out among HLZs/DZs)	During hunting season, night operations only from 2 hours after sunset to 2 hours before sunrise. Avoidance of inhabited recreational sites

DZ = Drop Zone; GBS = ground burst simulator; HLZ = Helicopter Landing Zone; mm = millimeter; LAPT = Light Aviation Proficiency Training; LLHI/E = Low-Level Helicopter Insertions/Extractions; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest

BEARS.

New Information for consideration and comment.

Tate's Hell State Forest is a bear sanctuary and refuge area. The FWC Site for the East Panhandle Bear Management Unit (BMU) , which includes Tate's Hell State forest, reported that in 2002 there were an estimated 653 bears living in the area. The next survey commences this year, 2014. Twenty five percent (25%) of all bear related calls the FWC receives come from this BMU. Nine hundred and forty four (994) were calls from this BMU just last year. From 2010 to 2013, three percent (3%) of the calls were for threatened/attacked/ or killed animals, one percent (1%) threatened humans. But eighty one percent (81 %) were in the garbage, in the yard, or in the bird feeder. These were garbage savvy bears who learned that one piece of pizza has the same calories as 3,000 acorns. They encroached on man's space for food. They are man and pet savvy.

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The bears coming out of the swamp during these maneuvers will be frightened, displaced, and many may never have encountered a man or his pets. They won't go north to the County Line "airstrip" or west to the Tower Road "airstrip". They will head south to the populated areas of Carrabelle, Eastpoint, and Lanark. The number of bear –human encounters will increase significantly with the number of serious encounters increasing drastically.

The GRASI "Welcome' document presented at the recent public hearings, have a nice picture of a bear on the cover. However, no mention of bears exist in that document . However, in a review of the draft EIS documents, it stated that " If bears were encountered, they would be allowed to leave the area..

Please clarify where you expect these bears to go.

See Figure 3. Bear Evacuation Routes from Day and Night Time Events and Activities.

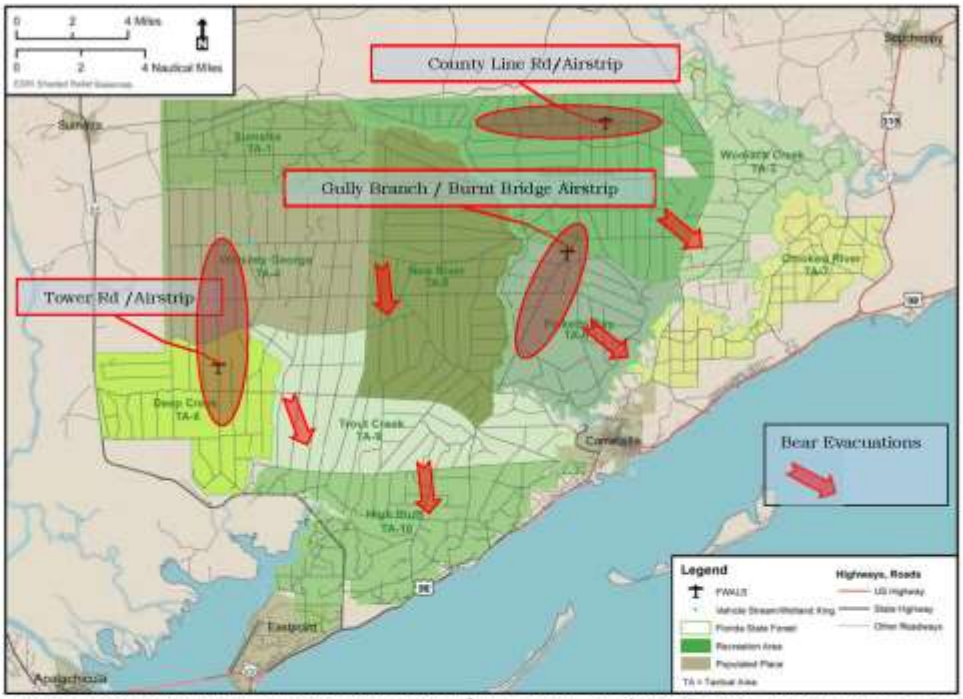

Figure 3 Bear Evacuation Routes from Day and Night Time Events and Activities.

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Basins Draining into Critical Habitat Areas

The Tate's Hell Hydrologic Restoration Plan, prepared by the Northwest Florida Water Management District and the Florida Division of Forestry, defines Pine Log Creek and the Crooked River west, as "Surface Water Drainage Basins Within Tate's Hell State Forest". These two basins drain directly into the New River basin which is the largest watershed in Tate's Hell property. The new River merges with the Crooked River to form the Carrabelle River and discharges in St. George Sound, which are Class III Waters and identified by the GRASI GLI EIS as a "Critical Gulf Sturgeon and Piping Plover habitat. See figures 4 and 5.

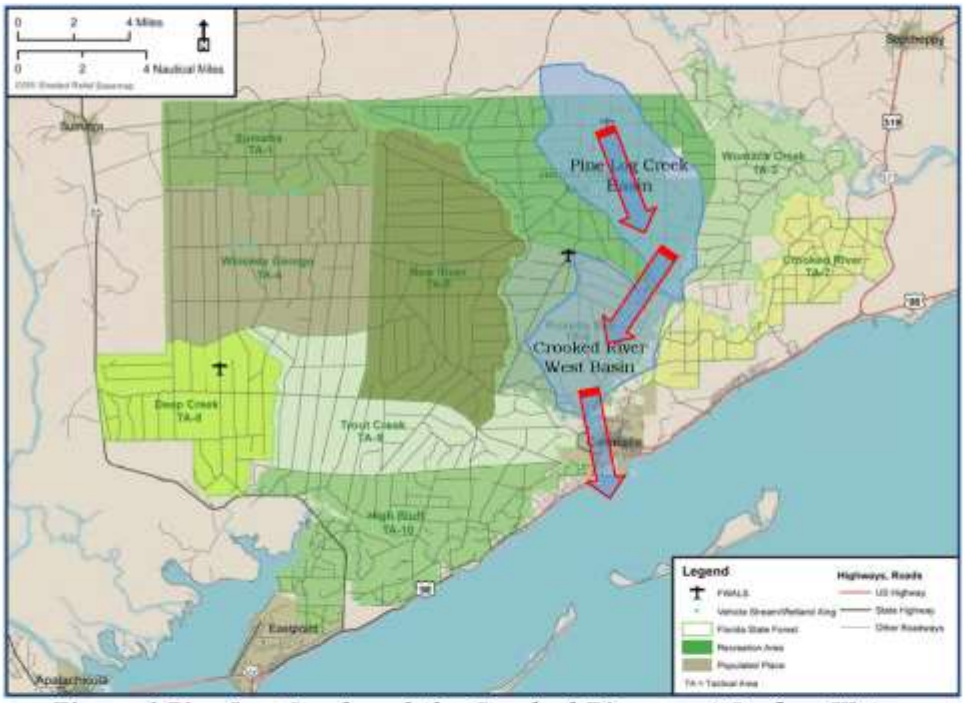

Figure 4 Pine Log Creek and the Crooked River west Surface Water Drainage Basins Within Tate's Hell State Forest

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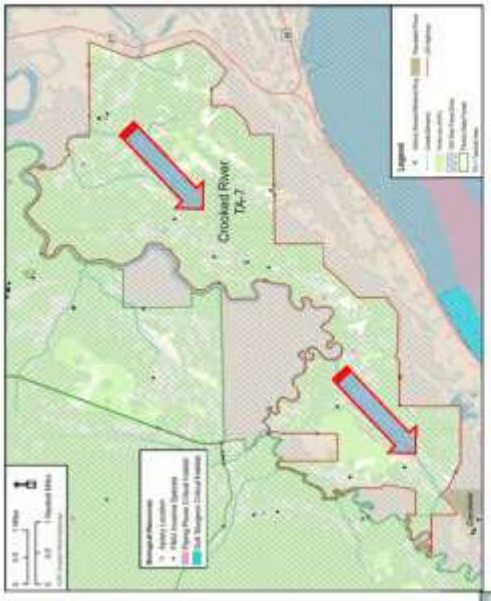
Figure 5 Flow from Basins into Critical Habitats.



Everything that spills in or leaves any residual in these basins will end up in our bay. That is assuming there are no accidents, but this is a proposed training area where accidents will happen.

Basin Flow direction.

The use of expendable munitions and explosives will produce residuals throughout these basins.

This information was taken from Figure 6-37, and Figure 6-40, Water and Biological Resources (TA-7 and TA-10 at THSF), GLI DEIS Appendix A, April 2014.

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Use of Expendable munitions and pyrotechnics in Flood and Swamp Basins UoEX ES.4.1.2.3

In the Tate's Hell State Forest, blanks and grenades and ground burst simulators (GBS's) are to be used rather than paintballs. These munitions and explosives leave behind all kinds of metals and residuals not to mention spent brass. Please clarify how you expect to police brass when you are standing in 2 feet of water or up to your knees in mud. Brass consist of heavy metals. The soil pH in the swamp is about 4.5. Quite acidic and will dissolve the casings in no time to end up in the watershed basins.

The following table lists just how many of these explosives they intend to discharge in just one year and only in Tate's Hell or hardened sites in the Blackwater River State Park.

Table 7 (ES-3.) Munitions and Pyrotechnics, . UoEX Details

Expendable Type Munitions and Pyrotechnics	Estimated Maximum Quantity Per Year	Estimated Average Per Event	Restrictions
5.56-millimeter blank	576,000	~10,000	During hunting season, night operations only from 2 hours after sunset to 2 hours before sunrise. Police brass /expendable waste, avoid public use areas when using blanks. At Blackwater River State Forest, noise-generating expendable use only at hardened camp sites.
7.62-millimeter blank	196,200	~8,000	
Ground burst simulators	5,172	~2 to 5	
M-18 smoke grenades	4,038	~2 to 5	
Paintballs/plastic pellets	50,000	~5,000	
Flares	Emergency use only – not associated with training activities		

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Selective Science, Contextual Truth

When value laden terms like "Better", Healthier, Significant" are used without accurately defining the terms of the evaluation, you end up with inaccurate or misleading conclusions. This process is used every day in marketing to sell an idea or product. It should NOT be used in a fact based scientific EIS.

Selective Science is when the research is designed, intentionally, or not, to support previously establish conclusions or beliefs. For the GRASI ESI to state "There are no GIS data for eagle nests in either forest." is because they did not even look. Eagle nesting sites are posted on the Florida Wildlife and Conservation Commission (FWC) website. This is an example of selective science. "If you don't look, you won't find it."

The "Welcome" document presented at the public hearings is full of this type language without the benefit of defining the terms. The word "significant", "insignificant", and "adverse" are used throughout this document without explaining how the Air Force defined these terms. The April 2014 Draft EIS , Section ES.5. page 23, lines 12 – 43, and page 24, lines 1-10. Define these terms as the Air Force interprets them.

To extract a few excerpts from the Air force definition.

> **"Significant"** ....Significant adverse impacts are typically not recoverable over the short term and require long term recovery processes with extensive mitigation..... *Example* ..."Destruction of large percentages of wetland areas"....
>
> **"Insignificant"** – Adverse but not significant impacts are typically recoverable over the short term and may include restoration of small pockets of wetlands.

Please clarify, in real units, what the Air Force defines as "large percentages" and what it call's " small pockets of wetlands".

This is how the "Welcome" document can, in large print, make the misleading statement.

"For the proposed Action,
the Air Force has not identified any
significant adverse impacts."

Totally out of context. The Air Force may not consider these adverse impacts significant but I believe the wildlife and people who live in this area do consider them significant.

Please clarify and put this all in context so informed decisions can be made.

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[redacted]

From: prvs=1245392c9d=michael.spaits@us.af.mil on behalf of SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA <michael.spaits@us.af.mil>
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2014 2:35 PM
To: John Veasey
Subject: RE: GRASI RESPONSE
Signed By: michael.spaits@us.af.mil

Mr. Veasey,
Thank you for your input. Your comments will be added to the Administrative Record and included for consideration in the analysis of this Proposed Action. For more information, or to stay current with this proposed action and alternatives, please refer to this link for the most up-to-date information: http://grasieis.leidoseemg.com/

Thanks,
Mike Spaits
Eglin Environmental Public Affairs
[redacted]

-----Original Message-----
From: John Veasey[redacted]
Sent: Saturday, June 21, 2014 8:57 PM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Subject: GRASI RESPONSE

TO: EGLIN AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA June 21, 2014/2100
ATTENTION: Mr. Mike Spaits

CC: Secretary of USAF

SUBJECT: GRASI(Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative) & GLI FEEDBACK

My position, retired USAF MSgt of 24 years, civilian pilot with commercial/multi-engine rating, executive board member (3 plus years & member for 8 years) of West Florida Canoe & Kayak Club, our club was created more than 25 years ago. Also a member in the Florida Panhandle Canoe & Kayak Connection. Our clubs have members in the local creeks/rivers every week if the weather permits and many creeks on Eglin AFB range. There are other groups that spend time in our forest too. We provide assistance to other clubs when they come here to paddle. It may be guiding them to places to paddle to places to dine to help with shuttle service.

The majority of the membership opposes the military use of Blackwater River State Forest for military training. Hence we are striving to STOP the GLI (GRASI Landscape Initiative) or troops in the forest. The placement of electronic emitters are no serious threat to the public use of the forest but the troops/vehicles/aircraft/water craft will be.

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We support the military to get their training properly and adequately. No argument there. How and why, they wish to use our forests is not accurately documented. They presented the only things they wanted without concerns of the landowners and public in the area. According to the Air Force's references; they don't follow their own rules to present/conduct/write the Scoping Initiative or the draft Environmental Impact Statements (EIS). Since the military machine had years to work on this, then present the EIS to the public with 30 days to respond. Let me see; over 2000 pages to read, check the references, go back and read some more or re-read. As a working person you will not ever complete the reading let alone form a proper response within the allotted time. Compound the problem, the public town-hall meetings were poorly advertised and held without adequate room once the public truly began to be slightly informed. Not one landowner was contacted. You could have had a more favorable response from the public if you took the time to just write letters to these landowners. No, you took the easiest way to make public notification; that appears to most, you really do not want public knowledge of this travesty. As people learned more, you got a harsh condemnation nearly from everyone. Especially from the town-hall meeting in Bagdad, Florida.

Congress, through BRAC, has placed the Army's 7th Special Forces onto Eglin's Range. The Congressional decision now places extreme burden on scheduling Non Hazardous training on Eglin's range. Initially reports say 2500 special forces moved here; however, another source claims up to 5000 Army troops will be here. My claim: get rid of the priority system of scheduling and schedule the missions. If a weapon's test is delayed, so be it, reschedule and go on, but don't preempt others that are on the schedule. That is why you schedule events. I understand their issues but not willing to have troops & equipment disturbing my solitude while in the forest. There are many factors we have considered for such a negative attitude. One: the DOD/USAF/ARMY have been working on this issue for years. TWO: The public will get a few weeks to review the documents and develop questions/find answers if possible before the town-hall meetings. THREE: by the way, the USAF did not bother to record the comments/concerns made by the public last year. FOUR: this initiative is a slap in our face; showing the lack of concern for the public's well being and opinions. FIVE: if they do not want public feedback at these meetings then it is a waste of time for ALL. Oh yes, there was a court reporter during the last three town-hall meetings. When will the public have access to those records? SIX: just another waste of the tax-payers' money. So that pushes the concerned public to start writing to anyone that may have some influence to STOP the military machine's encroachment into the public's protected lands, especially our designated forests.

All of the reports in the EIS (environmental impact statement) about noise are so underrated. If you do not participate in any activities in the forest then you have NO KNOWLEDGE, NO EXPERIENCE and NO QUALIFICATION to make any evaluation of "noise impact". Even the daily training flights from NAS Whiting Field encroach on the natural enjoyment for all of us. You can not have a conversation (side-by-side) when helicopters come over head. Just because helicopters are 2000 feet or so away, on a lake, EIS claims the campers will suffer "insignificant noise levels"? Think again. I have been there many times over the last eight years. From CV-22s, C-130s, TH-34s, T-34s, T-6Bs, CH-47s, F-15s, F-16s and now the very loud F-35s.

It is bad enough the NAS Whiting Field has helicopters over Blackwater River and other creeks nearly everyday, during the week. Now the military wants and expects the public to accept their request with open arms. It seems even Florida laws have been passed to help expedite this initiative, even by their (USAF) own wording in GRASI. It does not take a lawyer to see the writing-on-the-wall.

Another benefit claim by the EIS: ECONOMY AND SOME JOBS. HOW??? Lets see...the troops train for combat, feed off the land or what they take with them. All supplies come from the military supply system and not from the local stores. What is planned for permit fees are crumbs compared to the tourist trade. So that is not a selling point. From Florida's Fish and Wildlife Commission reports jobs and economic impact over 5 billion dollars and the USAF thinks about $400,000.00 to use two forest should cover annual cost to the forest service, if they would actually get that money.

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* Economics

* Florida #1 in angler (fresh and saltwater) expenditures ($4.95 billion)

  * NY next with ($2.70 billion) – 2011 USFWS Survey information, as compiled by Southwick

* Economic impact:

  * Saltwater recreational Fishing- $7.15 billion,

  * Supports: 65,212 jobs -U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife- Associated Recreation (values updated through Feb. 2013).

  * Alternative data from the Department of Commerce's Fisheries Economics of the United States 2009 <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st5/publication/fisheries_economics_2009.html> West Florida: supports 42,314 job; East Florida: supports 27,445 job; Total: 69,759 jobs

* Eastern Florida: recreational anglers took 10 million fishing trips: the Department of Commerce's Fisheries Economics of the United States 2009 <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st5/publication/fisheries_economics_2009.html>

  * 5.4 million by private/rental boats,

  * 4.5 million from shore, and

  * 180,000 by party/charter boat.

  * West Florida recreational anglers took 15.5 million trips: the Department of Commerce's Fisheries Economics of the United States 2009 <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st5/publication/fisheries_economics_2009.html>

    * 8.4 million private/rental,

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- 6.4 million by shore, and
- 567,000 by party/charter boat.

* Almost 26 percent of all trips taken on the Atlantic coast were made in east Florida.- NOAA Fisheries of the United States 2011 report

* Almost 59% of all trips taken in the Gulf of Mexico were made in west Florida, followed by over 19% in Louisiana, more than 10% in Alabama, nearly 7% in Mississippi, and almost 5% in Texas. - NOAA Fisheries of the United States 2011 report.

Sources:

http://www.sms.si.edu/IRLspec/Seagrass_Habitat.htm

http://www.myfwc.com/conservation/value/saltwater-fishing/

The military, knew well in advance of changes to future expansion/improvements of equipment. This is not the responsibility of Florida residents & Florida's government to allow the military into our forests. It was not created for them nor do we want our solitude disrupted by low flying and hovering aircraft near our camp grounds and water ways. The forests were created for enjoyment NOT MILITARY TRAINING. Solitude allows someone to rejuvenate from the stresses of everyday life. For many people seeking the enjoyment of nature to prevent the boiling pot from spilling out. If more people were visitors to the forest, just maybe, we could have less crime and less drug abuses which would put less stress on the medical services. Hence save some tax-payers money.

Many people will not understand the magnitude of the military's actions and future possibilities to claim "imminent domain" that could lead to another highly restricted or controlled area. All politicians at the state level, did not attend any public hearings or meetings by private groups before or after decisions were made. This speaks poorly, our own representatives do not come forward to represent the public's interest for which they were elected. I guess we are slaves or prisoners of the state and federal government. Sounds like a TYRANNICAL GOVERNMENT.

==========
LETTER FROM GWEN BEATTY:

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I am a retired Environmental Specialist III with 22 years experience conducting environment assessments in the State of Florida. My background/education is in geology. I am concerned about groundwater and surface water contamination resulting from proposed military maneuvers in our state forests.

I have had experience working with Eglin AFB to determine the source of hydrocarbon contamination detected in groundwater in a pit located on Eglin AFB near the Holley Landfill. According to anecdotal information, two field exercises were conducted in that area during the 1980's. Witnesses related that trucks were parked around the pit but Eglin AFB would not confirm that military exercises ever occurred in that area. Our assessment detected toluene, ethylbenzene and BNAs in shallow monitoring wells located down-gradient to the Eglin pit at levels exceeding regulatory limits. These analytes were not detected in shallow wells up-gradient to the pit therefore the Holley Landfill was ruled out as the source. Benzene and total xylenes were also detected at higher levels in wells down-gradient to the pit. FDEP concluded that the Eglin pit was the source of the contaminant plume under the pit and in wells that were located down-gradient to the south. Eglin consistently denied that they were the source of the contamination and maintained an adversarial relationship with FDEP and Santa Rosa County throughout the assessment. The State of Florida spent over $275,000.00 conducting an investigation that was conducted from July 2003 through June 2010.

If Eglin AFB is allowed to conduct military activities on Blackwater River and Tate's Hell State Forests, it is probable that there will be contamination. Spent shell casings will be discarded and will result in metals contamination. Plastic paint ball casings will be left on-site. Incomplete combustion of plastics result in dioxin contamination and will be a source of contamination if prescribed burns are conducted as part of routine maintenance. If refueling occurs, there will be spills and dumps. If accidents occur, there will be glass and metal debris, solvents and hydrocarbon contamination. Military participants will leave miscellaneous cans, plastic wrapping and paper debris. Based on my experience working with Eglin AFB, they will deny any culpability and will refuse to clean up any contamination. Florida will be left with their contamination as well as the cost of cleanup.

I urge you to deny military access to Blackwater River State Forest and Tate's Hell State Forest.
==========

Please review the Florida Department of Environmental Protection Report, dated October 15, 2010; Permit Number 0006176-006-HO . Eglin AFB will continue to have environmental issue; however, the cleanup is not always complete. Just because the areas are CLOSED to the public does not resolve the hazardous conditions to wildlife and groundwater. If all the areas have been cleaned up, maybe, just maybe more land could be used for ground training.

Thank you,

Johnny Veasey

MSgt Retired, USAF, 24 years

Worried citizen.

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[redacted]

-----Original Message-----
From: Jim Breitenfeld[redacted]
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2014 1:53 PM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Subject: Landscape Initiative EIS Letter for the Record

Mike

Please accept the attached Letter for the Record for the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS from the Defense Support Initiative (DSI) of the Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County.

We remain very supportive of the Landscape Initiative as well as the larger GRASI. Please do not hesitate to call upon us whenever you see opportunities for us to be of service.

As always, thank you for all you and your colleagues are doing to sustain and enhance Eglin AFB and its range complex.

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Jim Breitenfeld

Manager

Defense Support Initiative

Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County

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THE DEFENSE SUPPORT INITIATIVE
Okaloosa—Santa Rosa—Walton Counties

June 23, 2014

Mr. Michael Spaits
Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office
96 TW/PA, 101 West D Avenue, Room 238
Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

Dear Mr. Spaits,

Please accept this letter from the Defense Support Initiative (DSI) as a demonstration of our strong support for the GRASI Landscape Initiative currently flowing through the Environmental Impact Statement process.

The DSI is comprised of a range of business, retired military and community leaders from throughout the tri-county area encompassing Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton Counties, and has been actively involved in strengthening military/community relationships for 25 years. We have been supporters of GRASI from its initial discussion stages and believe it is already paying dividends for the Air Force and the community with its unique and innovative approach to managing the airspace throughout northwest Florida. We also believe the proposed Landscape Initiative currently proposed is a logical and sound next step to preserving the integrity of Eglin AFB and enhancing the relationships and partnerships among Eglin AFB and the surrounding communities.

The proposal to establish and use temporary emitter training sites within the Blackwater River State Forest and Tate's Hell State Forest via partnership agreements with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Services and the Florida Forest service is being vetted through a transparent and open process that is solicitous of public comment and input. We have witnessed Eglin and USAF personnel respond to inquiries and concerns from individuals and community organizations to identify compromise solutions to these concerns.

Further, we would cite the long and successful history Eglin AFB has in protecting and enhancing the environment on and around the Eglin complex. Eglin has received numerous state and national awards for its efforts to preserve wildlife, waterways and the forests that abound in northwest Florida. We strongly believe that history of good stewardship will carry forward into any partnerships drawn between the USAF and the state of Florida.

Thank you for accepting our input. We stand ready to be supportive and helpful in any ways that will continue our collective efforts to strengthen the bonds between Eglin AFB and the wider northwest Florida region.

Sincerely,

Kim Wintner
DSI Chairman

Sponsored by The Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County, Florida
[redacted]
www.florida-edc.org

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WILLIAM J. DUNAWAY
[redacted]

June 23, 2014

Via Email and Regular Mail – michael.spaits@us.af.mil
Mike Spaits
Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office
96 TW/PA, 101 West D Avenue, Room 238
Eglin AFB, FL 32572-5499

RE: Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative Environmental Impact Study; comments to Draft EIS

Dear Mr. Spaits,

Please find enclosed six enumerated comments on the subject environmental impact study (EIS). Please ensure that these comments are addressed by the Air Force as part of any final EIS which may be prepared. As these comments are submitted on June 23, 2014, they are timely.

With kind regards, I remain

Sincerely Yours,

William J. Dunaway

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Citizen Comments: US Air Force Proposal for the Gulf Region Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Landscape Initiative (GLI) Page 1 of 3

My name is William J. Dunaway, I am a resident of Northwest Florida and regularly use the Black Water state forest in my area for recreation including camping, hiking, bird watching, kayaking, canoeing, and generally the enjoyment that comes from knowing the state maintains these lands for future generations. While I have never visited the Tate's Hell Forest, I regularly plan excursions and generally benefit from knowing the state is maintaining this property for conservation and for the public's enjoyment.

I am familiar with the National Environmental Policy Act and the military's requirement to comply, including the requirement to prepare an environmental impact study (EIS) when its proposed federal actions significantly impact the quality of the human environment. I attended the public comment session the Air Force hosted in Bagdad, Florida and I provided an oral comment. These written comments are timely submitted and more specifically address the draft EIS, which I have reviewed.

Comment #1: NEPA requires and the CEQ regulations more specifically address the need for the federal agency to address a wide range of alternatives in its analysis of its proposed action. The subject draft EIS inadequately addresses the potential range of alternatives because it purports to limit them based on a narrow set of criteria.

The action proponent states that the reason for the proposed action is based upon scheduling problems at the Eglin Range. From that "problem" evolved a set of criteria which are too narrow to address an adequate evaluation of reasonable alternatives that address the stated "problem." The action proponent should re-evaluate the scope of this EIS and redraft its criteria so as to broaden the range of reasonable alternatives. These reasonable alternatives include (but are not limited to) the use of private property, including the lands owned by the Mormon Church within the area enumerated in the criteria. Lands owned by St. Joe, also within the criteria area, and other areas of training on military facilities owned by the Department of Defense, including Naval Air Station Pensacola, the outlying fields at Saufley, Whiting, Wolfe, NAS Whiting Field, Army maintained facilities in Alabama and Georgia, and/or the established ranges the Navy and Air Force have in the Ocala National Forest and at Avon Park, Florida.

Comment #2: Because the Air Force improperly limited their criteria, the range of alternatives evaluated only includes the proposed action and no action. This is inadequate to meet the requirements of NEPA and specifically the CEQ regulations, which state that the alternative analysis is the heart of NEPA! In addition to the alternatives discussed in comment #1 above, the Air Force should have considered additional alternatives including conducting the training only at certain limited times during the year (i.e., not during hunting season or other periods of prime recreation), evaluating new ways to schedule the 640 square mile resource that Eglin already controls so that the compatibility of this new training (which training should have been evaluated in other environmental reviews), and an alternative which address conducting this training on privately held lands. As indicated in the

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Citizen Comments: US Air Force Proposal for the Gulf Region Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Landscape Initiative (GLI) Page 2 of 3

CEQ regulations, just because the Air Force does not control the alternative does not mean that such an alternative is not reasonable and therefore should be evaluated. Failure of the Air Force to acknowledge and address these reasonable alternatives is fatal to its draft EIS.

Comment #3: The draft EIS does not adequately address the environmental impacts of the project without the use of mitigation. CEQ has provided detailed guidance on addressing mitigation in an environmental impact study. The Air Force should specifically reference that guidance and provide an assessment of the proposed action without the use of mitigation so that the public can better understand the impacts of the proposed action.

While it is acknowledged that Jackson Guard has a good reputation for administration of mitigation measures designed to protect the environment, the public should and the Air Force is required to evaluate all of the environmental impacts of the proposed action not just the mitigated damage.

Comment #4: The draft EIS should address the cumulative impacts of this action in light of the numerous other environmental assessments (EA) which exist at Eglin Air Force Base and which are essentially mitigated "findings of no significant impact" (FONSIs) put in place to accomplish that particular and limited training without the need for a more detailed EIS. This draft EIS should enumerate each and every mitigated EA that exists at Eglin which forms the basis for the environmental impact analysis which allows for the various test and evaluation and training missions which currently are part of Eglin's overall training and testing mission.

CEQ provides specific guidelines for the evaluation of cumulative impacts resulting from the proposed action. Since the proposed action is premised on Eglin's inability to adequately schedule its testing and evaluation missions along with its increased training missions, it is imperative that the underlying EAs justifying the earlier actions taken at Eglin are evaluated in a comprehensive, cumulative effects manner. Without an over-achieving evaluation of the environmental impacts of the training and testing missions at Eglin, the proposed action to move training off Eglin's property cannot be justified. The Air Force should evaluate the cumulative impacts of every EA associated with testing, evaluation, and training within this draft EIS.

Comment #5: NEPA, CEQ regulations implementing NEPA, and relevant case law specifically prohibit an action proponent from expending resources and effort to implement a proposed action prior to the evaluation of that action under NEPA. In this case the Air Force has made a significant commitment of resources in the nature of memorandums of understanding with state agencies and others which have shaped the proposed action and resulted in the limited criteria and range of alternatives evaluated. Such a commitment of resources has predisposed the action proponent to its proposed action and away from its single alternative of the no action alternative. The Air Force needs to address how it will be able to justify

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Citizen Comments: US Air Force Proposal for the Gulf Region Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Landscape Initiative (GLI) Page 3 of 3

taking no action after expensing all of this time and money. Such a commitment of resources and a predisposition towards the proposed action is a violation of federal law. The Air Force should specifically address in this draft EIS each and every prior expenditure of resources in furtherance of the proposed action not already addressed so that the public has a full awareness of the proponents' actions leading up to the scoping of this draft EIS. An action designed to use state lands for federal training based on a premise that it is required because the base is otherwise overly scheduled requires nothing less. Additionally, the Air Force should articulate each and every report, communication, and official request it made to DOD, the Administration, and Congress articulating its inability to adequately schedule its test and evaluation mission to accommodate its training mission. The Air Force should also address where it got the specific authorization to engage with state authorities for the use of state lands.

Comment #6: The Air Force should separate the GLI action from its other GRASI missions.

The draft EIS indicates that certain areas of the state forest are currently not open to the public but would be utilized by Air Force personnel for training. The Air Force should explain in detail why it can use areas in the BRSF not open to the public when the public cannot use these areas. These areas are specifically identified as the STOP camp and the SRYA sites. Explain why these areas that are off limits to the public can be made available to the Air Force. Also explain in detail the amount of money (or payment in kind) that the Air Force will pay to the state of Florida for the use of the land and any damages it causes. This should include the amount of money the Air Force plans to escrow to protect against any damage that does not immediately manifest but which is likely to manifest itself in the future based on the use of the state lands.

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-----Original Message-----
From: Bruce McCormack [redacted]
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2014 1:18 PM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Subject: FW: Alternative Action to using Tates Hell State Park

From: Bruce McCormack [mailto:pcbmccormack@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, June 22, 2014 9:45 AM
To: 'michael.spaits@eglin.af.mil'
Cc: 'Penland, Michael W CIV USAF AF-A3-5 (US)';
'mailto:Steven.Pennington@pentagon.af.mil'
Subject: Alternative Action to using Tates Hell State Park

Mike,

As we have spoke about in the past and I have witnessed at various meetings that have been conducted in Franklin County by the GRASI Commission an alternative solution for using Tates Hell State is still the solution to the many negatives that will come out of the US Air force using the Tates Hell State Park.

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GUSC offsets a generation of Base Relocation and Closures (BRAC) by offering open access to an austere environment that replicates Central and South America, Sub Sahara Africa and South East Asia. GUSC's unique potential to increase unit training quality and quantity because at GUSC, units train beyond garrison distractions and limitations of crowded DOD ranges. GUSC caters to the needs of Special Operations Forces and DOD's training for strategic impact. From small-scale amphibious assault exercises initiated from the Gulf of Mexico to a live fire option on riverine craft to airspace for airborne operations, GUSC provides a wide variety of training options for units up to a reinforced company. GUSC offer this platform by utilizing privately owned land this land is owned by one owner. The operating area stretches between Jackson County and Gulf County on the West side of the Apalachicola River and Gadsden and Liberty County on the East side of the Apalachicola River The training area environment includes 90,000 acres approximately 45,000 acres of upland forest and 45,000 acres of river bottom jungle terrain. Includes maritime and double canopy environments The land includes approximately thirty Eight miles of Apalachicola river front.
GUSC has approved environmental impact statements and ensures compliance with all with federal, state and local authorities.

Northwest Florida Training Center started in the early fall of 1998 when myself, a former Navy SEAL and L-3 Special Operations Division Manager, responded to an unclassified message from the Navy discussing a proposed riverine training facility. The requirements for the facility included; multi-purpose ranges (both land and water), including the capability to use live fire.

I met with local businessmen from Calhoun and Jackson County to understand the impact of moving forward with a training site . I was propelled in the right direction politically by engaging former Governor Jeb Bush who gave his permission to go forward with the project. Local communities were engaged to ensure they understood the project, which then led to their approval. The training area Project received letters of endorsement from the nine counties within the Apalachicola River Basin including Franklin, Wakulla, Liberty, Calhoun, Gulf, Jackson and Gadsden County.

We acquired land through lease agreements, conducted an Environmental Impact Statement in 2000-2001 and signed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, which required L-3 Special Operations to manage the lands and waters to the state's specifications. The State of Florida and the Army Corp of Engineers granted L-3 a permit to use a small portion the Apalachicola River for Live Fire training. this permit was renewed in September 2011. In December 2011 I met with Mr. Mather's (SAIC civilian contractor) and an

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Eglin Delegation and discussed this training area in my office in Blountstown, Florida.

Today, the training area operational capabilities include the ability to provide Surface Danger Zones for prescribed weapons, including .50 caliber ammunition, The vast training grounds and varied landscapes afford excellent opportunities offers a variety of environments where troops can participate in live-fire training, assault courses and conduct operations in Riverine and Coastal environments, have access to airports and a Riverine Facility. One of the main concepts of the training facilities is to provide a full spectrum of Joint Special Operations Training. This area provides an unrestricted and realistic combat scenario area, where Units can train to real world threats in a constantly changing dynamic environment.

90,000 acres of leased training grounds, Tactical Training Ranges in the Apalachicola River Basin fulfills critical requirements for Special Operators needs. The training facilities are just a one and half hour drive from drive from Eglin AFB. They offer Eglin tenants a one-stop shopping environment.

Inside of the yellow margin GUSC can provide 90,000 acres of private property on the East and West side of the Apalachicola River owned by one owner. The area consist jungle, riverine, and up land forest training area. 5,000 acres have been permitted through the Florida DEP and US Army Corp a surface danger zone (SDZ) permitted for live fire from riverine boats, or vehicles. The complex can consist of airport, shipyard, explosive test range, and multiple real world targets and Apalachicola River operations. SOP,s Emergency procedures, Quality Assurance personnel staffing. There are several thousand additional acres available as well. This can all be accomplished with a simple ground use lease.

I am available to speak to you or anyone on the GRASI Commission about this project with you in your office or anywhere else you would like to meet.

Attached is a presentation of the area.

Regards,

Bruce McCormack

President, Gulf Unmanned Systems Center

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Gulf Unmanned Systems Center

[redacted]

Panama City, Florida [redacted]

INTRODUCTION

The mission of **Gulf Unmanned Systems Center (GUSC)** is to support the overall mission of the Special Operations forces Units that conduct unconventional operations. Specially trained and equipped forces engage in a variety of covert operations which may include conducting unconventional warfare, beach and coastal reconnaissance, operational deception, counter-insurgency operations, coastal and riverine interdiction, Village Stability, and certain special tactical intelligence gathering operations in addition to those intelligence functions to aid in the planning and conduct of special operations in hostile settings. Other Special Operations Units may also utilize the area as needed. Regardless of which groups use these areas for training the training activities are not mutually exclusive and would occur in support of other activities or subsequent to other training activities. This training area will help predict the future of Special Operations and United States warfare. All available GUSC land and water range areas can be used for this training. One owner one lease.

Gulf Unmanned Systems Center would like to submit for your review a proposal to provide 90,000 acres of training facilities that can provide a variety of real world training environments for Special Operations Units. This training area will fulfill the established requirements from the GRASI report. The area is within 1.5 hours of Eglin AFB, exercises are conducted with low or no impact to the training area and the owner of the site is a willing partner in the activity. These types of exercises have been held on this land since 1998.

We believe that the training area GUSC proposes is the type of facility that is essential to properly hone the skills of Special Forces. In the past, Special Operations Units have had the benefit of conducting training at various locations, and in a variety of environments. This diversified training has helped to shape the skills, fitness, and degree of readiness now exhibited by these units. However, with a continued reduction in the number and diversity of appropriate training sites for these units as a result of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) and other actions that limit available training locations, (1999 closing of the R.P.) the ability to adequately train and maintain the level of readiness required of these units is jeopardized. Requirement studies have shown that training areas are inadequate to support training requirements for the Special Operations Units for their areas of responsibility. The list below shows some of the results from these requirement studies.

- Special Operations Units trains on ranges owned and operated by the Navy, Army, Air Force, and private / public companies / agencies.
- Many ranges Special Operations use do not adequately support special tactical training range needs required to accomplish the needs of the Special Operator and the mission.
- Increased scheduling conflicts, Special Operations units are bumped from a scheduled range, wasting precious time and resources or the available range does not support the Special Operations tactical mission.
- The environment is so restrictive that it does not provide realistic training scenarios.
- Ranges are being used by others who have a higher local priority than Special Operations Units.
- The range does not support the weapons or munitions used by operators.

There is a need to consider the specific training requirements of Special Operations in relation to: (1) the ongoing elimination of training locations; (2) specific and unique training facility requirements; and (3) Special Operators requirement to fulfill its mandate to supply the Department of the Defense with a well-trained special force capability whose state of readiness is unquestionably reliable. The purpose of the proposed action is to provide a remote, regional training facility close to the Special Operations operational and training commands and the

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existing military support functions in the Northwest Florida region while minimizing operational constraints and scheduling conflicts. With this in mind, eight criteria were developed so that potential locations could be screened. A potential location would need to meet all criteria to satisfy the purpose of and need for the proposed project.

A potential location should:

- Be close to operational bases such as, Eglin AFB, Hurlburt AFB Tyndall AFB, Ft Rucker, and Panama City NSA.
- Provide Open Ocean, coastal and Jungle, riverine environments.
- Have the potential to develop special ranges and other training mock-ups.
- Be able to meet mission specific training scenarios on short notice.
- Be remote enough to support required helicopter landing zones, fixed wing aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles with required safety zones.
- Minimize operational constraints and /or scheduling conflicts.
- Provide a Special Operations unique training environment.
- If warranted provide tactical live fire areas.

GUSC proposes a regional training area for use by the Special Operations Units. The project can include a parachute drop zones, mock villages, Drug Labs, helicopter landing pads and roads.

To be of use to Special Operations Units personnel the center will:

- Provide a training environment suitable for the special training needs of the commands.
- Provide interoperability training to various Special Operations component commands.
- Allow Special Operators to train like they fight.
- Provide a jungle riverine environment similar to 80% of the littoral areas Special Operators train for in real world operating environments.
- Provide variable training scenarios capable of supporting several operational platforms.
- Be located in an area with little civilian encroachment.
- Provide sustainable year round training with few environmental or operational encumbrances.
- Be conveniently located near or within reasonable traveling distance from operational commands.
- Deliver a focused training environment with few logistical or non-operations distractions.

GUSC appreciates your review of the above-proposed Special Operations Training area. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or would like any additional information.
Attached is a map of the training area properties please refer to the legend in the bottom right corner. Also attached is a Power Point Presentation of the area.

Sincerely,
Bruce McCormack
President, Special Operations Training Center

Below is an excerpt from the December 6 meeting between Air Force personnel and Franklin County residents
"Mathers said the Air Force wanted to use Tate's Hell because they were running out of room at Eglin."We have been planning for three years trying to make everything fit in the range we had for use," he said. "We realized we had a set of things in the coming years we would not be able to do as the operational air space needed continues to ramp up."He said current airspace would be insufficient beginning in 2015 or 2016. "We are like a basketball team. At some point, they've got to practice on the whole field because that's where they play the game," he said. He said activities proposed for Tate's Hell were "really not unsafe" and might include low - impact single engine planes landing on roadways; groups of up to 10 vehicles searching for other vehicles at night with no visible headlights; tilt rotor Osprey aircraft landing on existing helipads; and small group survival training and groups of up to 50 soldiers camping around the helipads for a week at a time. Mathers said the Air

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Force is studying the use of blank ammunition and smoke grenades in the swamp. He said participants would avoid inhabited recreation sites and other areas, outparcels and historic sites. He said there would be no activity for two hours before sunrise and after sunset during hunting season."If you can see us, we're doing something wrong," he said. Mathers said the Air Force had three criteria for choosing a training area; that the site be within 150 miles and no more than a two-hour drive from the base, that exercises be conducted with low or no impact to the site; and that the owner of the site be a willing partner in the activity.
(Permission given for this excerpt by Lois Swoboda Apalachicola Times
http://www.apalachtimes.com/news/local-news/state-no-decision-yet-on-grasi-1.251230

Ninety percent of GUSC area is within the Greenway area and under Tyndall AF MOA B / C / D

- Actively pursue new partnership opportunities for landscape-scale training." –GRASI Strategic Plan, March 2011
- There are missions on Hurlburt that could make use of off-range training space.- GRASI Strategic Plan, March 2011
- Moving non hazardous military activities to the greenway would reduce congestion. By making use of the northwest Florida landscape. The geographic scope of military training would more closely resemble that of actual scenarios. Ground Units would be able to deploy over a larger and more diverse area that could include urban operations training .This strategy could entail temporary leases with private landholders, special use permits from state or federal agencies or acquisition of land.

GRASI Report March 2011

GUSC can provide

- EIS
- Past Performance
- Letters of authorization from Florida DEP.
- Surface Danger Zones, land, Vehicles and boats.
- DEP best management practices for the area.
- Unsolicited Proposal.
- Draft lease Agreement.
- Proposal for Range personnel for opening of gates and security on the ranges being used.

<<Information marked "Proprietary" was provided as part of this comment, but has been redacted from the public EIS.>>

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1 [redacted]

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18 MR. LATOUR: If I may put this up here?

19 THE HEARING OFFICER: Absolutely.

20 MR. LATOUR: Thank you very much for this

21 opportunity and I will keep --

22 MR. AKSTULEWICZ: Right here.

23 MR. LATOUR: I will keep my comments in

24 accordance with your recommendation of -- for

25 submitting comments, and the first thing that was

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discussed is the authority to speak. I -- and the statement states that I should be either a concerned citizen --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Use the microphone, please.

MR. LATOUR: -- a concerned citizen or a representative of an organization, or an expert, and fortunately I am all three. I am the manager of LaLutra, which is an environmental aquatic sciences and environmental resource company. Aquatic sciences involves chemical analyses, habitat enhancement, things of that nature.

I was -- if someone would help me with that --

MS. VROEGOP: Yeah.

MR. LATOUR: -- and I will get into that because I've only got a few minutes. I'm going to state fact base and submit new information that has not been considered. Okay. I operate in Pine Log. I operate in a eco-tourism business featuring science and stealth canoes where we go off into the swamps in the back waters in electric canoes and kayaks. I've had this business for about two years now. I operate unfortunately in TA-6, Tactical Area 6, and in Tactical Area 2.

MS. VROEGOP: I'm just going hold this up.

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MR. LATOUR: There we go. I got all of this here. I'll be -- I will be submitting a detailed white paper report by the 23rd, which will document some of these things as well, but I'm going to be focusing on the FWALS, the landing sites for the fixed wings, and the light aircraft -- I say practice, but it's not a practice, it's the LAPTs, okay, the proficiency training that they directly impact.

For those of us who use Tate's Hell all of the time, TA-6 is a plan to put a landing strip on Gully Branch Road, which is also a highway, and a park, and an evacuation route. T-2 is up on what we call County Line Road. The information I'm trying to present here is that there is an awful lot more activity on that area than perhaps is being considered. Gully Branch is right between the nicest RV section, recreational site in the park, okay, at Gully Branch. T-6 is all the way up the top of the Water Shed. I run my electric stealth canoes and trips where we go out to hear, smell, and see what's going on in the forest right through that particular area. There's trucks and planes -- trucks going by there all day. I have a real problem with the noise levels. Okay. I raise frogs, river

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frogs. Noise impacts everything in the forest. I really would like you to consider how much activity goes on in this particular section, in T-2 and T-6. I will give other details on other impacts later.

In summary, you have this wonderful chart here. It's changed a little bit in the latest version, but the one I have clearly indicates areas of yellow, which is severe noise impact. My statement here that I have said the Air Force has identified severe adverse impact. All right.

I am being cautioned my 30 seconds are running out. I had hoped to show a video this evening of what happens currently in the forest even before this is started with CV-22s flying over my house at treetop level. I'm told I can't present that in this forum, but we will be showing it in the chamber room immediately following this meeting.

I would like -- I appeal to you to consider this particular area is used heavily. I am working, right now currently working on a stealth pontoon, mini pontoon boat, electric powered to take wounded warriors up in the swamp so they can hear and see what's going on up there. Thank you, very much.

THE HEARING OFFICER: All right. Thank you for your comments, and certainly all of your comments

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that you've made orally and whatever you decide to present in writing we'll certainly look at those.

MR. LATOUR: I will be presenting a full white paper with all of these documents and substantiate everything by the 23rd.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you.

MR. LATOUR: Thank you. See you again.

[redacted]

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time. We have some time remaining. Is there anyone that would like to make any follow up or final comments?

MR. LATOUR: Can I make a comment? I would like to use a few seconds?

THE HEARING OFFICER: Mr. LaTour?

MR. LATOUR: Yes. The last little thing --

THE HEARING OFFICER: Sir, if you can --

UNDIENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sir?

MR. LATOUR: The last little thing I did not -- there's quite a few different things I didn't get to, but one of the key points I wanted to get to is this table, the Summary of Impacts associated with, with the EIS differs a little bit from the one that's up on the wall for some reason because the one I have here states that those are the 14 classifications that they judge the Environmental Impact Statement with on Tate's Hell. Seven of them are listed here in yellow, which is defined as significant and adverse impacts. Adverse impacts -- sir, you're shaking your head. I will go ahead and get to the page that says right here, agreement.

Let me read from the Environmental Impact Statement. Adverse impacts -- okay. The Air Force has identified a potential for adverse impacts for

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several resource areas. Okay. Resources that experience potential adverse impacts are shaded yellow on this table. It's in your book.

UNDIENTIFIED SPEAKER: Adverse.

MR. LATOUR: Yes. Seven of the 14 criteria that we rate Tate's Hell on are considered adverse. I don't see how the state forest can keep up the theme of restoration when you define adverse as unrecoverable and significant in this report. I don't know why that one isn't marked, and it has a little statement that says there's nothing adverse going on. That's just a clarification I would like to see in the impact statement. Thank you.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. [redacted]

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1 [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

6 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Mark Nobles.

7 MR. NOBLES: My name is Mark Nobles. Is that

8 working? Test. There we go. My name is Mark

9 Nobles. I am the current manager of the Carrabelle

10 Airport. I'm also an outdoorsman. I enjoy

11 utilizing the Tate's Hell Forest area and have for

12 years.

13 Also as a pilot, I have logged over 10,000

14 hours flight time with the majority of which were

15 low altitude law enforcement flights from the Swanee

16 River to the Alabama state line. I've experienced a

17 lot of situations with both Tyndall and Eglin Air

18 Force Bases. More often than not, they were not the

19 best contacts that I've had.

20 Before I go any further, I must point out that

21 our objection to your planned usage is not in any

22 measure a reflection of our patriotism. I proudly

23 served in the United States Marine Corp and have the

24 upmost respect for our young men and women that

25 serve our country today. It is also in concern for

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their personal safety during these training exercises that I point out make the deficiencies in your plans. We all stand behind our troops as they fight for the rights of the appressed whose liberties have been cast aside by government imposing their power over the will of the people, stripping them of their personal freedoms. Now, is that an oxymoron? I'm not sure.

Tate's Hell State Forest is possibly our greatest asset -- Tate's Hell State Forest is possibly our greatest asset as we are able to keep the land pristine for our generation and all generations to come. Anyone with a desire to use, and enjoy, and should always have available to them, is the state forest. It is also one of the largest employers within the county providing income for families that would otherwise be suffering. To turn this into -- did you say something?

THE HEARING OFFICER: No, sir. It was someone coughing.

MR. NOBLES: To turn this into an extension of Eglin Air Force Base would deny all from the values of the -- hello? Okay. There we go. It would -- the values of the CARL funds were intended for -- in the purchase of the property to begin with.

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I received many calls from pilots confused about the current airspace, not knowing -- hell, I can just talk louder than that. I received many calls from pilots confused about the current airspace, not knowing who or how to contact for transition through the military operations area. As pilots, they should know that this information is available through many venues. However, what they won't find is that regardless of what they find printed about whom to contact, they won't find that they can't talk to them at an altitude below 1500 feet or be seen on radar below 2,000 feet. Flying death and blind is the nearest assurance to disaster that a pilot could experience.

Now mix in military aircraft flying from 360 to 600 miles per hour doing maneuvers. If you need a clue, it's not getting any better. Now let's add a final increase. Young men and women repelling and parachuting from aircraft hovering in place in rather low altitudes or aircraft ascending from the ground where no airfields are pointed out on the charts. The only way to ensure their safety is to strip general aviation of their freedoms to fly by imposing restricted airspace to shift all blame and liability over to general aviation.

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THE HEARING OFFICER: Mr. Nobles, I need for you to wrap up your comments, please.

MR. NOBLES: To shift liability over to general aviation. This is no guarantee to avoid incident, only a measure for the Air Force to shift blame and responsibility to someone else. The best way to safeguard everyone involved is to abandon any thoughts of using Tate's Hell for this training, and relocate the trainings where proven radar and communications are currently tried and tested. Thank you.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. [redacted]

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1 [redacted]

14 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Lesley Cox.

15 MS. COX: Hi, my name is Lesley Cox, and I'm

16 here for the Florida Green Guide Association, and we

17 represent the "No Action Alternative."

18 The Florida Green Guide Association was

19 established in 2007 as a trade association to

20 support and market the local nature-based businesses

21 that were created by graduates of the 90 hour Green

22 Guide program of the Wakulla Environmental

23 Institute. We participate in a variety of

24 low-impact, "Leave No Trace," sustainable tourism

25 opportunities that include hiking, kayaking,

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canoeing, wildlife viewing, nature photography, and botanical walks, and there's many of us that do these in Tate's Hell State Forest.

In addition, the tourists, we take nature journalists from all over the world to experience and write about the exceptional diversity of Tate's Hell State Forest in the hope that their articles will bring visitors to Franklin County and the whole region.

An April of 2007 University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural of Sciences Fact Sheet stated that over 75 million visitors came to Florida in 2003 and spent over fifty one and a half billion dollars. Over 70 percent of these visitors participated in nature-based activities.

A goal of the FGGA is to bring some of these people to Tate's Hell State Forest to contribute to the economy of Franklin County by staying -- by lodging in hour hotels, and eating in our restaurants, creating jobs and buying from our local stores. The GRASI plan will not boost tourism, and outdoor activities in Tate's Hell State Forest to contribute to our local economy.

According to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory, Eglin Air Force Base is over 460,000

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acres. It's the largest forested military preservation in the free world. 86 percent of it is forested. 81 percent of that is sandhills, which means it's dry.

By contrast, Tate's Hell State Forest is just over 200,000 acres. It contains 19 natural communities of which only two percent are dry year-round. There are 29 surface water drainage basins in Tate's Hell State Forest, and many contain high quality natural areas with endangered plant and animal species.

Tate's Hell is a vast wetland that was purchased as a forested watershed protection for the Apalachicola Bay, and for rare species protection, particularly the Florida black bear.

The 2007 Tate's Hell State Forest Management Plan describes major ecosystems represented on the property as wet or basic flatwoods. That means they're wet part of the year, remnant savannahs, they're wet all year and a variety of swamp and marsh habitats.

Eglin Air Force Base whatever BI stands for, 13-212, Chapter Seven, you state that there is no driving, no off-road driving within 100 feet of any waterbody, wetland, or steep slopes. You dig no

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1 holes or clear no land within 100 feet of the water
2 body. These go on. All the things that you cannot
3 do near a water body. Tate's Hell State Forest is a
4 swamp. It was Tate's Hell swamp forever before it
5 became a state forest. It's mostly a swamp.
6 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, Ms. Cox.
7 MS. COX: Okay. Here's my written.
8 [redacted]

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1 [redacted]

11 THE HEARING OFFICER: Bruce McCormack. Is
12 there a Bruce McCormack?
13 MR. McCORMACK: My name is Bruce McCormack. My
14 headquarters is at [redacted]. I'm not here to talk about Tate's Hell
16 Swamp. I'm here to talk about an alternative for
17 using Tate's Hell State Forest.
18 I have been in special operations training
19 business since 1998 in Calhoun and Liberty County.
20 I have 90,000 acres under management, and we have
21 been training people there since 1998, and we
22 started that because of the loss of the Republic of
23 Panama in 1999. So we have a great alternative if
24 this doesn't work out for Tate's Hell State Forest,
25 and I turned in a -- I turned in an email to

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Mr. Penland (phonetic) back in January 23rd. So they are aware of that. I think Mr. Spaits is aware of it also. Thank you.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. [redacted]

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O_035

ID	O_035
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	Peggy Baker
Organization	Francis M. Weston Audubon Sociey
Affiliation	Agency/Government Representative
Comment	FROM THE EIS 3.7.1 Wildlife could also be disturbed by noise produced during small arms fire and use of ground burst simulators. Individuals could be startled by the firing of 5.56mm and 7.62mm inert rounds, with reactions similar to those described for overflight noise. The 7.62mm rounds would be the more impactive of the two sizes, producing noise levels of 102 cB at 1,000 feet from the firing point. There is a potential for nesting birds to be startled enough to displace an egg or nestling from their nest or even abandon their nest. However, most animals, (including birds) in the immediate vicinity of ground training operations would be aware of human presence and may move some distance away before munitions were fired, thus exposing fewer individuals to noise effects." 3.7.1. lines 41-45, 1.4. There are many studies that confirm that with repeated noise intrusions, birds will abandon or avoid the noisy areas. Nesting birds will abandon eggs and chicks in the nest if repeatedly disturbed by noise. Low flying aircraft and especially helicopters will result in a flush of roosting, nesting and foraging birds. When birds flush from a nest the eggs and the chicks are vulnerable to predators and the parents may abandon the nesting area if disturbed repeatedly. The impact of repeated loud noises on BRSF resident and nesting birds is too great a risk to take on this recovering longleaf/wiregrass ecosystem. The damage will be done before the effect is observable. And who and how will this damage be assessed?

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THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Gathana Parmenas.

MS. PARMENAS: My name is Gathana Parmenas. I represent the Panhandle Citizens Coalition. The group has been in existence for a number of years and includes members from Bay County, around the panhandle to Taylor County.

I've been asked to present the group's encouragement that the "No Action Alternative" be taken. The reasons are many. Mr. Cummins certainly covered a great deal about the sound issue, the noise issue. I want to note that we have not heard any information about why the national forests in this area were not considered. However, I would note that the National Park Service, for example, is deeply concerned about the effective noise on wildlife and has issued a 71-page annotated bibliography of what little studies have been done of the effective noise on species.

Included in that is the study done on red-cockaded woodpeckers, but that was about a single flight of a civilian helicopter, not the large military helicopters, and not the repeated flights, and I have yet to find any evidence that any specific distance from the red-cockaded

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woodpecker's nest would be helpful.

In the two studies, only one-tenth of all nests were abandoned after a single nearby flight of a civilian helicopter. We don't know what the effect of noise on many other birds would be, but we can certainly expect a great number of nest abandonments if this can be extrapolated to other birds.

I realize that the EIS doesn't have to take into account the many creatures of this Tate's Hell State Forest that are not rare, not have been labeled endangered or threatened, but simply in the plant life, the proposal is to give pictures to the personnel, all 72 personnel, on the ground and certain activities, and that way they will be able to avoid the rare plants.

As a member of the Florida Native Plant Society, I can tell you how hard it is to teach plant identification to people. Certainly a few photos are not going to do it, and are not going to guarantee that those plants are not trampled, especially at night.

I can't imagine that the definition of nonhazardous is used, that these are nonhazardous activities is the same one that we civilians would use. These activities are admittedly hazardous in

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terms of oil spills, in terms of accidents, in terms of fire danger, and, so, to call these nonhazardous activities, maybe in the military sense that means that no live ammo is being used, but it's certainly hazardous to the ecosystems here.

And finally, in conclusion, I would like to state that I don't know how continued and expanded military uses of Tate's Hell State Forest fit in with the stated primary objective of restoring the ecosystem, especially at the hybrid wet acreage which is the majority here, including wet prairie, wet flatwoods, strand swamp, bottomland forest, bay gall and floodplain swamps. Most of the acreage in Tate's Hell is wet most of the year. There is no way to stay hundreds of feet away from it. Thank you.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. [redacted]

[redacted]

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1 [redacted]

[redacted]

12 [redacted]

[redacted]

18 THE HEARING OFFICER: Yes, sir. Serge LaTour.

19 MR. LATOUR: I understand I'm supposed to make

20 a presentation to you. Can I put this copy

21 somewhere where you can see it?

22 THE HEARING OFFICER: We need to make sure that

23 as long as the court reporter is the most important

24 that can track and follow what it is you're saying,

25 sir.

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MR. LATOUR: Okay. I was going to put this up last night and see what we're talking about.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Sir, she is not going to be able to see it from that vantage point.

MR. LATOUR: Will that work?

THE COURT REPORTER: If you can turn it a little bit this way so I can see it.

THE HEARING OFFICER: And, Mr. LaTour, you may need to speak from the microphone.

MR. LATOUR: I understand. Thank you, very much, Colonel, for this opportunity to add some more comments. Last night I established it already as an owner of an eco-tourism business operating in what you technically call TA-6, Tactical Airspace Six, and Tactical Airspace Two. I also would like to add I am the Vice President of the Florida Green Guide Association, and I am also an expert and have prepared many EIS statements for various government agencies and (inaudible).

My first comment I would like to submit, excuse me, was made last night after reviewing of the video that we had hoped we were going to be able to enter into the record, and we will. We could not show it last night. We took your suggestion and we showed it publicly in the chambers, and there were some

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comments made there that I would like to have considered by your EIS. The comment was, "Oh, my God. I didn't know that."

The video, although it's about -- it shows two CV-22s doing low level flyovers over my boathouse, the important part is what happened after they left. After they left, the entire area went silent. No birds are runnings, no squirrels, no hawks in the sky, nothing. Everything shut down. Everything in the woods has to hear. Birds don't just sing to be -- for the heck of it. Gators bellow for a reason. The river frogs snore to communicate.

When communication shuts down, life in the swamp shuts down. They needed to establish territories. They needed to find a mate. They needed to find dinner or to avoid being dinner. When you get down into the swamp, sound, and smell, and hear is everything that's going on. The delay after the jet simple flyover lasted hour.

Now in your LAPTs, you suggested the -- it described the duration of the activities as being two hours long, five times a day, 232 days a year. Now in that context, you're referring to day as a 24-hour period. At the earlier hearing we were told that these activities would not impact hunting. We

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all assumed that meant that you wouldn't be doing any activity during hunting season. Now it's clear that what you're doing is you're going to do your operations two hours after sunset to two hours before sunrise. There's not going to be anything there for anybody to hunt after you guys get done, and the frequency, 232 days a year.

I think the EIS needs to address the other side of the impact statement. The whole purpose of the impact statement is to make sure -- oh, boy -- is to make sure that the State has correct and accurate information when they proceed with their decision.

So my comments here -- I know I have someone who is going relinquish some more time, perhaps I can continue. All right.

The next comment I was going to discuss was clarifications. I realize now where the clarification issue was -- the different discrepancies with these two charts are as a matter of contextual truth, and then I was going to do something on where the bears are going to go when all of this starts, and the fact that you're operating in a wetland.

THE HEARING OFFICER: You're out of time. Our next speaker would be Robin Vroegob.

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MS. VROEGOB: Colonel, I would like to save my time and privilege to speak to Mr. LaTour so he can finish his comments, please.

THE HEARING OFFICER: You're certainly allowed to do that. Mr. LaTour, you may continue.

MR. LATOUR: Thank you, very much. The discrepancy that came up last night that I discussed that was the difference in these two charts and the word -- the use of the word significant and the fact that the Air Force says there's no significant impacts. Well, these jets, it's significant to all the critters that are up there, and to us that live here.

Using value-laden terms like significant or better, is -- is considered contextual truth. It has to be in context. You can't use the term better without saying something. If I say my car is better than yours, it doesn't mean anything. Significant to us and significant to the Air Force may be two different things, and a clarification on this statement might read a little bit different, such as these are, the yellow are adverse impacts, and it has been determined by the Air Force that they are not significant to the Air Force, which could be significant to everybody else.

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On the bear issue, if you look at this map, okay, all of that activity, there's not -- the bear at night when you go in there and start doing all of this, where are bears going to go? We already have a problem with nuisance bears in Carrabelle, Lanark, and Eastpoint. At least those bears are garbage savvy and people savvy, pet savvy. They've learned that a piece of pizza is worth 3,000 acorns. The bears are going to come out of that forest after these operations. They're going to displaced, scared, angry, and dislocated. The encounters, well, where are they going to go? They are not going to run up to T-6, Boundary Line Road and in the forest because you've got planes landing there all night long and all day long, and then they can't go over to Tower Road off into the National Forest. You've got another airstrip there. They are going to come down. They are going to be in the streets, and I think the EIS needs to address the issue of the bear migration and bear interactions.

Third, my last point is the basin. The EI -- the EIS states that you are supposed to avoid wetlands, okay. This map here shows the wetlands. Gully Branch Road runs right through the wetlands. It is a drainage basin for the entire basin. I

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don't -- in fact, one of the dots on there is one of the designated wetland crossing areas. Okay. I don't know how you can stay 100 feet away from the wetlands when you're landing planes when the road is not even a 100-foot wide.

So I think, you know, those are the main issues I would like to see addressed in the final EIS statement. I will be preparing a white paper, and submitting that.

The whole key here is to make sure that when the State gets the final draft EIS, it is accurate and fact based like you wish it to be, and doesn't use contextual science and then, perhaps, the State can make a proper informed decision. Thank you.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. [redacted]

[redacted]

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MR. VROEGOP: I'll defer my time to Serge LaTour if you don't mind.

MR. LATOUR: I just wanted to make one -- one final comment I forgot to add. The video that we have will be available. We have it with us, and it will be posted online. It's rather dramatic to see how quiet everything gets after these events. Okay. We will have the video here in case someone wants to see it, and we will be posting on -- it will be submitted in final EI -- in my final white paper EI. Thank you.

[redacted]

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1 [redacted]

[redacted]

12 THE HEARING OFFICER: Charles Brannen.

13 MR. BRANNEN: Charles Brannen, President of

14 Franklin County Dog Hunters Association. We are

15 about 250 members strong. Charles, C-h-a-r-l-e-s,

16 Brannen, B-r-a-n-n-e-n. To start with, I oppose

17 anything that Eglin has to do with Tate's Hell.

18 We're strictly against it. This booklet y'all give

19 us is, is garbage. If you're going out there to

20 stop a turtle from crossing the ditch, you ain't got

21 time to train. Have you ever seen a turtle cross

22 the road? It takes them along time. So that's --

23 how are your people going to train out there?

24 They're not.

25 THE HEARING OFFICER: Sir, do you have specific

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comments to the EIS for purposes of the --

MR. BRANNEN: I understand. It seems like everybody is in the bed with everybody, start from the president, down to the governor, down to y'all, down to FWC, and down to the forest, and from the Dog Hunters Association, we're not sleeping with the enemy. Thank you.

[redacted]

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THE HEARING OFFICER: Dan Tonsmeire, Tonsmeire.

MR. TONSMEIRE: Dan Tonsmeire, T-o-n-s-m-e-i-r-e. I represent Apalachicola Riverkeeper. We have over 1,400 members including many local area citizens, and individuals from 26 states.

We strongly support adequate training and facilities for our troops. Our military protects our freedoms through their individual, family, and collective sacrifice in the line of duty and service to our country. This is not about effective training, and whether we support our military or better appropriate use of resources and meeting the long-term objectives of our nation and state.

The two alternatives evaluated by this EIC were disappointing. We were offered an all-or-none choice, and leaves us no option but to support the "No Action Alternative."

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I want to offer support for all of the comments made by those in the Carrabelle meeting last night, except for the one gentleman that felt like we were not supporting our troops by opposing the proposed action.

The level, intensity, and the frequency of the proposed action threatens the existing private citizen, public use, and enjoyment of the Tate's Hell State Forest. The level, intensity, and frequency of the proposed action will threaten the local eco-tourism economy, which the state, local communities, Franklin County, and individual business owners have worked to develop over -- around our natural resources.

Significant resources have been invested to create a destination for those looking for the outdoor recreation and solitude offered by the Tate's Hell State Forest. The level intensity and frequency of the proposed action threaten the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the Apalachicola River Floodplain and Bay--Delta system.

And, finally, the level intensity and frequency of the proposed action threaten the 20 years of restoration intended to reestablish the ecological functions of this vast wetland as a major component

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of the Apalachicola River Floodplain, delta, and estuary. Tate's Hell swamps sustains the primary nursery areas of Apalachicola Bay fisheries and wildlife habitat.

In short, the proposed action is not compatible with the purpose for which this land was acquired, nor the public use it provides now, and will, or should in the future.

The cumulative impacts of the proposed action when added to the current use would result in impacts from noise, air quality, and likely water contamination that cannot be tolerated by wildlife in their natural habitat on a recurring and frequent basis. The habitat would no longer be viable for nesting, resting, or foraging in a manner that sustains the overall ecological functions.

The potential for accidents can cause harm significantly greater than that evaluated is real. I believe much of the public use, and many of the ecological functions will be displaced by the proposed action.

The operational constraints considered in the draft EIS are not convincing that adequate protection is provided for these resources, but for distances, for noise, air quality, and water, and

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water resources -- wetland and water resources are not adequate to mitigate impacts from frequent disturbance. I question if the level of recurring intensity in this proposed action is considered was evaluated, rather it appears they evaluated individual occurrences in isolation.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Mr. Tonsmeire, I need you to wrap up, please.

MR. TONSMEIRE: Okay. So the Apalachicola River is a national treasure and has many designations. There are locations that the proposed action is more appropriate and should be considered as alternatives. We support the "No Action Alternative," and recommend you look to other areas not under ownership of or designated for purchase by the State of Florida for the protection and preservation of the Apalachicola Ecosystem, a national treasure in its own way. Thank you.

[redacted]

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1 [redacted]

[redacted]

17 MR. TONSMEIRE: Can I just add a paragraph

18 since I ran short on time?

19 THE HEARING OFFICER: Yes, sir. You sure can.

20 If you could restate your name for me, please?

21 MR. TONSMEIRE: Dan Tonsmeire with the

22 Apalachicola Riverkeepers. So just -- the part I

23 wanted to add on to is about the designations for

24 Apalachicola River and Bay. The Apalachicola River

25 host the highest biodiversity of any river system in

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North America. Apalachicola Bay is one of the most productive estuaries in the Northern Hemisphere.

The area in Tate's Hell State Forest is close to three State of Florida aquatic preserves, a National Estuarine Research Reserve, and the UNESCO, United Nations Biosphere Reserve as well as other lands that have been purchased through a number of conservation land acquisition programs for the conservation of natural areas, and one of those includes the Apalachicola Wildlife and Environmental Area managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

I just wanted to make sure that that point is emphasized that this is a very unique and important, both ecological area as well as the economy that is built around that entire system of ecological and conservation areas. Thank you.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. [redacted]

[redacted]

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1 [redacted]

19 THE HEARING OFFICER: Lisa Spooner.

20 MS. SPOONER: My name is Lisa L. Spooner,

21 L-i-s-a L. S-p-o-o-n-e-r. I'm a certified public

22 accountant. I'm a Carrabelle resident, and I'm also

23 the Chief Financial Officer for Gulf Unmanned

24 Systems Center located in Carrabelle, Florida.

25 I support the military reviewing the reasonable

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alternative site that was presented by Mr. Bruce McCormack, President of Gulf Unmanned Systems Center last night at the public meeting or hearing in Carrabelle.

The site, as presented, consist of approximately 90,000 acres under privately-held ownership that's primarily located in Calhoun County and adjacent counties. It's been used since 1999 for special operations training. The original EIS was approved in 2002, and re-approved again in 2011 for military operations.

While these military exercises would be located outside of Franklin County, primarily in Calhoun County, the property and project would be managed by our office in Carrabelle primarily by employees from Carrabelle and Franklin County. Mr. McCormack can be contacted at 850-720-1500 or at our office, which is located in [redacted]. Thank you for your time and consideration.

[redacted]

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THE HEARING OFFICER: Anita Grove.

MS. GROVE: That's Anita Grove, G -- A-n-i-t-a, G-r-o-v-e. I'm the Executive Director with Apalachicola Bay Chamber of Commerce. A lot of my concerns have been voiced here. We are an organization of almost 400 members, small business owners, who rely on the bay, Apalachicola River, and bay to produce their living, and most everybody is a small independently-owned business. I'll submit most of my comments in writing, but I've spent the last, almost 20 years being quite successful in filling a unique knitch here. We spend over $900,000 a year trying to advertise the area to people who want to come and get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, which includes the air traffic.

A lot of what I hear from tourists is they like what we don't have, which is a lot of light pollution, noise pollution, chain stores, that sort of thing. So it's more about what's not here than what's here, and we -- air traffic is extremely rare

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here. When a plane goes over, we all stop what we're doing and look because it's rare, and visitors comment on that a lot, and it's important that peace is maintained because I think that's why a lot of people come here, and as we seek to diversify our economy in concert with the Governor's office, and go deeper into tourism and geotourism, which is all about exploring nature and what's around us naturally, I think that it's important to consider how any of this would have an impact, and, of course, we certainly support our armed forces, but we are kind of the last place you can go to see some of this wildlife. So we're concerned about negative impacts on our traditional economy and our newly-found economy in tourism. Thank you.

[redacted]

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O_042

ID	O_042
Date Submitted	6/26/2014
Commenter	Robert Seidler
Organization	Educater and guide Wakulla and Franklin county
Affiliation	Organization
Comment	Mitigation: Presently we have a Nature based college developing in our county called Wakulla Environmental Institute. International tourism development is one of its primary goals. We have a trail system called the Capital City to the Sea Trail 180 miles of nature based heritage trails being built. All this works together with the regional brand. GRASI could and should be a partner in these primary missions of our counties. GRASI could build the trail link from Sopchoppy through Tates Hell and another link from Ochlockonee bay over the bridge to Carrabelle and then to East Point. This would be a marvelous compromise for all the parties involved. I brought this up at the Carrabelle meeting as well and it has support of WEI and the college as well as many others. I can put you in contact with the group thad completed the PD and E on the Cap City to Sea Trail to make the process seamless and enjoyable to all.

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ID	O_043
Date Submitted	6/6/2014
Commenter	Gayle Decker
Organization	Flashy Tack Rope Halters and horse equip.
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I know that you need to practice and train, but not over where we horseback ride. A helicopter just hovering over an area could cause a rider to be killed, and the horse seriously injured if it took off running through the trees. Please find another area to do these kind of exercises. I have already be seriously injured while riding, and don't need another injury at this time in my life. I'm 65 and don't have a lot of riding time left, and I want to do it in the safest places. I'm afraid that you will hurt the attendance of people coming to Coldwater to ride as well. Nobody I know would risk injury to themselves or their horses. My son is in the Navy and I truly respect the military. I grew up in a military household. But there is a place for everything, and Coldwater is not the place for military exercises.

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ID	O_044
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Brenda Foreman
Organization	Five Flags Arabian Horse Assoc.
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I am vehemently opposed to the military's proposed use of Blackwater Rive State Forest for training exercises. The training activities described in ES 4.1.2.7, ES 4.1.2.5, ES 4.1.2.14 and ES 4.1.2.17 are NOT compatible with recreation areas! This Forest has been utilized by the people of Santa Rosa and Okaloosa counties for generations, as a place for peace and tranquility, having 72 personnel coming down ropes from a helicopter hovering at treetop height is just insane!

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O_045

57

[redacted]

THE HEARING OFFICER: John Waldron.

MR. WALDRON: This is going to be difficult. If anybody here knows me, I can't talk in three minutes. Can y'all hear me?

THE HEARING OFFICER: Yes.

MR. WALDRON: Okay. I have four concerns primarily with this. First off, I have 40-plus years in outdoor recreation business, half of it was in the state park system. When I retired, the other half was in the state forest system, and I would have the luxury of being able to work in a lot of our large areas, and we coined a term out there called, "Space, Solitude, Self-reliance."

And that's the outdoor recreation experience that we have in our state forest system, and I'm retired now, so I'm speaking on behalf of the Florida Outdoor Recreation Coalition, but with that, when people come out there to those areas, they

GULF BAY REPORTING

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O_045

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1 expect that experience that they can't get anywhere
2 else anymore, and that is to have 200,000 acres,
3 maybe it's Tate's Hell or Blackwater, but to go out
4 there, and take your kayaks, to go out there, and go
5 hunting, to go out there -- and even just to ride
6 your truck out there on one of those roads just to
7 be in the peace and all of a land that large and not
8 to have it interrupted.
9 And that's what happens when you start going
10 into and placing things. Yes, you may come in now.
11 No, you can't come in here, back and forth. We lose
12 that freedom to be able to get out on those lands
13 and enjoy those outdoor recreational experiences of
14 being alone by yourself that is disappearing so
15 quickly on this earth.
16 Now, besides that, my other concerns real
17 quickly is the impact that anytime man has on any
18 piece of property, and as soon as we start putting
19 things out there in such fragile areas like
20 Blackwater, and I was there just last week, hiking
21 the trail, and finding out, wow, here's this big
22 pitcher plant bog right off the trail, and it
23 astonished me. How do we really make sure that we
24 protect that?
25 That gets to my third concern. How do we

GULF BAY REPORTING

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O_045

effectively monitor it? I want to make sure that is in place.

Fourth concern is accountability. When something goes wrong, when something does mishap, what are the steps in place, because we all have been experienced with government before. It can take you forever to get anything back together. We need something in place immediately that shows concerns when we see something on -- that goes on on these properties, and that's all I have to say.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. [redacted]

[redacted]

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B.5.3 Individual/Private Citizen Comments in Order by Identifier ID Number

I_001

[redacted]

From: Bob [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, May 14, 2014 12:36 PM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Subject: GRASI comment form

Mike,

[assume you are receiving the following comment on this form: http://grasieis.leidoseemg.com/Written%20Comment%20Form.pdf]

re the 5/14 front page article (NWFDN) by Lauren Reinlie, why is the Air Force proceeding with plans to use only public lands, when there are private forest lands available?

private forest lands in the Panhandle should also be considered for military training. as a private landowner I have expressed willingness to allow use of my land for non-destructive military training activities, but my offer was evidently disregarded with no evaluation.

Eglin AFB should do what it can to de-fuse public dissatisfaction with plans to use public parks and forest lands, and stands to score PR points by publicly addressing this issue:

"The use of nearby private lands for military training activities has been considered, but does not meet government needs because . . . ."

regards,

--b.

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I_002

May 23, 2014

Mr. Mike Spaits, Public Affairs Office

96 TW/PA, 101 West D Ave, Room 238

Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

The Air Force has always been very good at protecting and caring for all the lands they use for military needs. I say, go for it and use the BRSF and THSF lands.

Thanks for reading.

Fred Jones

Fred Jones

[redacted]

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I_003

[redacted]

From: Hulsizer, Chad W CTR N3, Navy Cool[redacted]
Sent: Thursday, June 05, 2014 8:27 AM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Subject: Training exercise on Blackwater
Signed By: [redacted]

Mr. Spaits,

I understand you are the messenger and not the point man.

I am totally against the thought of the USAF training to take place on Stop Camp road area. I accepted orders and moved into Florida because when I was attending school at NASP I enjoyed the fishing on the peers by NASP port ops and since 9-11 the area has been fenced off due to Security reasons, we as US citizens lost our freedom to fish freely and are put behind fences .
Now the USAF is wanting to take over the very spot I have hunted on since 2003!
I enjoy the hunting and safety of being in the stop camp area as it is very productive and SAFE.
I am a disabled vet who cannot venture for long hauls and the USAF is taking away a piece of public land that I value as being sacred. I have taken my grandkids in there for years and we enjoy the memories and time shared together in that very area.
Thanks again for taking away my FREEDOM to hunt as a retired US Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer!

I stood the watch to hunt freely in the free country which I defended and now my fellow service is punching me in the eye!

This is 100 percent unsatisfactory!

I say our roads and traffic is already over populated we don't need more so take the future influx and send it elsewhere!

Regrets,

Chad W. Hulsizer

Senior Chief Petty Officer USN (Ret.)

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I_004

30 May 2014

Mr. Mike Spaits

Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA

101 W.D Ave., Room 238

Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

Dear Mr. Spaits:

I read the Landscape Initiative Environmental Impact Statement and became quite concerned about the ***radar emitter*** part of the training exercises. I looked for the sites but couldn't find the information. We have been told on the news media that we should not get dental x-rays unless it's an emergency because a small dose of dental ray can produce a brain tumor. I sure don't want radar emitters in our area.

Please consider having the exercises placed in one of the huge national forests in the northwestern part of the U.S. where there are large areas without homes etc. The troops could also practice "deployment" exercises in getting there.

I am a senior citizen and it would be difficult for me to travel the distance to attend the meetings.

Sincerely

I.K. Walko

I.K. Walko

[redacted]

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I_005

ID	I_005
Date Submitted	6/7/2014
Commenter	Grace Agnew
Organization	
Affiliation	Agency/Government Representative
Comment	Fracking has been proven to permanently pollute ground water, contribute to air pollution, cause unsafe and dangerous traffic and lead to increased seismic activity. It does not belong in publicly owned parks.

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I_007

ID	I_007
Date Submitted	6/7/2014
Commenter	Sheresa Copeland
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I am against GRASI please leave our forest alone & allow us to preserve them in their current state.

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I_009

ID	I_009
Date Submitted	6/3/2014
Commenter	Marylyn Feaver
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I strongly recommend NO ACTION by the USAF decision makers. I am probably one of the few people who have tried to read the entire document. I have tried to learn about aircraft, radiation level, sound decibels in order to understand the consequences of the actions proposed. The report notes only tolerance levels for adults, not children and pregnant moms-to-be -- they are not even included as a protected species. I have at times been confused by what seem to be contradictory, certainly inconsistent data, given in the reports and appendices. For example: the mileage on the maps of fixed wing air strips, drawn to scale, shows each at 2,000 feet. The minimum land strip requirement of the C-17 is 3,000 feet and that's with a really nimble pilot. Trainees? What forest roads are being intersected and therefore will be blocked off when landing strips are being used? I do not draw the same conclusions as the report because, very frankly, I do not trust your capacity to fully mitigate against the identified hazards, particularly against biological damage. What you do not seem to understand, technocrats fail in this way, is that time and propitious coming together of conditions have created remarkable ecosystems throughout our world. It doesn't take much to destroy that and no future conjunction of possible events can ever recreate what was there before. We are not gods, nor ever will be -- we must husband and be stewards of what we have been given and not assume what we readily destroy, we can put together. How hollow and arrogant it seems to talk of mitigation when we are going to kill a specific ecosystem. There are aspects of the report which are irrelevant. A good example is the issue of noise. I did read that section and tried to understand decibels, frequency and intensity. And I downloaded additional information from neutral sources on sound and noise to try to fully understand the case being made. After having spent two days wracking my brain, feeling somehow that the issue was not being addressed, it occurred to me that you are not using the threshold of sounds in a wilderness where there is no encroachment of motorized noise, whether vehicular, aircraft, or home appliances, but only the sounds of a natural ecosystem. One can measure the decibels, and the frequency may be calculated and the intensity may be calculatable, but the quantitative results cannot reflect the ambiance of a natural system. The sound, forinstance, of spring peepers at night, does not disrupt sleep; waking at camp to the very loud and incessant chirping of the tiny wren cannot be compared to the din of a helicopter overhead. I have experience both, the latter while camping on the Blackwater River in Blackwater River State Forest. Decibels, frequency and intensity using the natural world as base line would show a totally different temp of sounds. Yet, even the loud hoots of barred owls in conversation, is not noise -- these are the night sounds of the forest and, for those who understand it, it can actually lull you to sleep. The decibels of a honey-bee-covered Ogeche Tupelo tree in the spring may rank as equivalent to a dishwasher. The timbre and rising and falling of volune of bees buzzing make it compatible with the total outdoor experience; the sound of a dishwasher would be jarring. No amount of measured decibels of aircraft noise in the many tables in this section can make a convincing case if your assumptions are faulty -- noise is unwanted sound and any motorized sound, whether once every 3rd day for an hour, or the const put-put-put of expendables (and the buffer zones are not sufficiently wide sound-free zones) is not welcome to someone who has gone into the forest to recreate.

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I_009

The noise buffer zones are token -- noise will still be disruptive. Noise generated from air operations are only protected within a narrow range -- a spare .67 miles for no overflight below 500 feet, not enough buffer to quell the cries of a frightened child.

We are familiar with Tate's Hell as paddlers and primitive campers. We have organized groups of paddlers for day trips and for a long weekend camp/paddle in that forest. This spring we took two mothers and their four grade-school children for a primitive camp and paddling experience in that forest. It is a great place to introduce wilderness to children -- there are no motorized sounds, except very occasionally the blurred sounds of a commercial jet line very high above or an occasional jon boat somewhere on the river. It hones their natural senses, exactly what the military is hoping to accomplish with the trainees.

We have paddled in Deep Creek and have surprised a mother bear and her cub on a tree. We watched as the cub instinctively climbed up the tree and the mother bear with an abrupt alarm sent is scooting down and into the palmetto. we have heard and seen raccoons mating, caterwauling like urban tomcats at night. We have been warned away from nests by hawks and by osprey with their sharp "chit, chit". These creatures, all part of the forest ecosystem, are not protected.

We have seen swallow tailed kits while paddling on the creeks and rivers of Tate's Hell. We know these creeks and rivers by name. The Ochlockonee, Crooked, New and Apalachicola Rivers. For creeks try Womack, Brandy, Tom Hahn, Pine Log, Roberts, Sunday Rollaway, Trout, Cash, Deep and Whiskey George over which is proposed two vehicular and troop crossings. We have paddled all but Sunday Rollaway and they are never the same, even our favorite Womack which we paddle weekly from the end of February through June and at least monthly thereafter to keep a log of the ecosystem of that creek. Tate's Hell Skies are not traversed by jets doing maneuvers as over the Apalachicola National Forest near Tate's Hell, nor does the chop chop chop of helicopter sound interrupt the bird calls or the mating calls of alligators. Wetlands are sensitive lands and the report would have as many as 72 troop, helicopters and vehicles in any given event and the report expects little or no impact. It is painful to hear our own foresters echo this mantra "little or no impact" because they otherwise.

And somebody, in all that attempt to quantify the sensory experience, forgot smell. Tell me about the smell of petroleum fumes. Tell me it doesn't overcome the sweet, demure fragrance of a native pinxter azalea which covers some of the creeks in spring. Tell me about the swamp roses and how their fragrance envelops their areas of the swamps, the swamp titi, the blackberries (except for the food it would be for foraging troop). Tell me about the smell of green leaves and plants after a rainfall. Tell me about the smell of expendable, of smoke grenades, of jet fuel borne on the wind by the swift rotors of waiting helicopters. How do you mitigate smell?

The native plants noted above, all but of that ecosystem, are not protected. Neither does the report note the endemic Cow Creek Spider lily, which grows only in a small area in the wetlands of Franklin, Liberty and Wakulla county. This is not protected. The green fly orchid, the only tree orchid in north Florida. Not protected.

The report mentions stream health and notes the mercury pollution of Crooked river. Do you know the cause? Unexploded ordnance from WWII when that area of Tate's Hell was a mortar testing ground. Mitigation? From the report's own tables, consumption of fish in Crooked River is not recommended.

The GRASI EIS on troop handling of its own waste -- no mention of a 200 foot zone from water. In Tate's Hell the primitive camp sites are on higher ground. Are these going to be where troops defecate? If you have soldiers traveling in the forest, who gets to carry the disposable john pack? Tate's Hell State Forest follows a pack it in, pack it out policy. The report doesn't mention depth of cat hole. Deeper than 6 inches I hope. In the wetlands, everything goes into the creeks and then to East Bay and then to the Apalachicola or down the eastern creeks to Ochlockonee Bay. More bacterial pollution is more than we want for the oyster industry. Cholera, anyone?

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I_009

Pack it in, pack it out is not practiced on the Eglin Reservation. A canoe club twice yearly holds a cleanup at the Eglin AFB river and creek landings. The trash they pick up is substantial, not pretty, nor smell pretty. Somewhere the report called for troops to self police. Are they really serious about that? How real a scenario is that if you are trying to simulate a real situation? And the statement "we will police" the pickup of expendables, over 3/4 million a year. What does "we will police" mean.

We have scant few wilderness areas in Florida. Earlier this year we paddled and camped the Florida Greenway. It was disheartening. there were motorboats, airboats, law mowers cutting large lawns along the Withlacoochee, chain saws, blow cleaners -- sound throughout the whole trip.

We still have wilderness in Tate's Hell.

Please, take the NO ACTION alternative.

You are parents of young children or grandparents. You know how it was when you were young and discovered a marvelous natural occurrence. If you were fortunate, you know how discoveries of natural things peaked your curiousity. You know that the natural world continues to be, in its natural state, the best classroom we Americans have. Our history is one where we relished our wilderness; Theodore Roosevelt sought it for strength and succor after the death of his wife. After we Americans cut down the trees and plowed up the prairies, we are now taking time to reflect on what we had and what we need to restore.

Please, take the NO ACTION alternative.

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I_010

ID	I_010
Date Submitted	6/10/2014
Commenter	Amber Edwards
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I'm against the military using state parks as training facilities. We must protect our environments and the life it supports.

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I_011

ID	I_011
Date Submitted	5/12/2014
Commenter	Gary Brooks (Ms) & Andrew M Hatch
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	GRASI-EIS - "MUNSON AIRFIELD" (BLACKWATER 8FD3, as per FAA designation) is currently used as a venue for community events, ranger heavy equipment training, fire suppression, Florida Forest Service survey uses, and recreational aviation use, including camping. The EIS identifies multiple airstrip options in both Blackwater River State Forest and Tate's Hell State Forest. 8FD3 far exceeds the necessary parameters needed to meet the intended USAF realistic training of operators; it being very long and very wide. The noise signatures of USAF aircraft using 8FD3 would negatively impact the existing Krul Campgrounds #1 and #2 located adjacent to the airfield. For all of these reasons I would very strongly object to USAF access/use of 8FD3 for anything other than dire emergencies.

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I_012

ID	I_012
Date Submitted	5/20/2014
Commenter	Larry Pung
Organization	None
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	As an ex-USAF military member, I am commenting specifically on the Krul Lake airstrip 8FD3(private) and the extremely close proximity to the general population. First, 3 sentences of history: I grew up camping in a similar situation to what you are proposing to place the Krul Lake campers under. In Michigan, KGOV lobbed live rounds over our heads all summer at a target about 3 miles away (R-4201A) from our lake. To be honest it was kind of neat to hear the whistle of the shell directly overhead and then the rumbling of the ground a few moments later. My friends found it a bit unnerving and I had a great time at their expense! I'm happy to say not one shell fell short. So I MIGHT be one of your only civilian supporters. In the case of Krul Lake (8FD3) campground, I think placing a military exercise only a stones throw away from vacationing civilians who hopefully are not drinking is an awesome idea! The kids will have a great time sneaking away from their parents so they can get as close as they can to the woof-woof-woofing blades. This will give you a great chance to practice spotting "hostiles" because most of the children should stay along the tree-line and not run out. Well, the teenagers might be cool enough to run out for a photo-bomb, you can definitely feel free to scare them back straight! Do you know the difference between a drone and a Remote Control Airplane? About 1 to 2 feet. Krul Lake is a destination for Remote Control Hobbyists because they can camp and fly at the same time. Again these small aircraft will offer great practice, because the people who use this field for hobby remote control flying will give you actual experience spotting drones and other small signature aircraft. When I was young we didn't have air-soft guns or paint-ball guns, but it sure would have been fun to paint one of those low flyers with a streak of paint (growing up, I sometimes I felt it necessary to duck while camping under R-4201A airspace...). In fact what you should REALLY do is invite civilian competitions as part of your exercises. The indigenous population would be camped in the Krul Lake campground like they are today and they could try to defend a flag placed on the middle of the bridge. You could even use the Big Bear Lake for a water landing and then attack the Krul Lake campground from both sides! With the commotion and noise of the ground assault landing at 8FD3 side of Krul Lake, you should be able to sneak right in the back door without taking on too many paint rounds. Now THAT would be fun for everybody! On weeks when the Classic Cars are on the 8FD3 field, there should still be just enough room to practice precision landings where both horizontal and vertical blade clearances can be adequately tested. The prudent thing to do an any situation though is to pick up the phone and speak with the ranger that cares for the land and the people at Krul Lake/8FD3 every day. This is the current protocol for the use of 8FD3, that I am sure you are already aware of. The ranger will be happy to let you know when there is nobody there and it is safe to do your thing. This way nobody ends up in the news after an accident that happened during an exercise on top of a public campground. I expect nothing but the best from my USAF! Larry J Pung

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I_013

ID	I_013
Date Submitted	5/29/2014
Commenter	Charles Chamberlain
Organization	Citizen / Aviator (Aircraft Owner / Flight Instructor)
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I am a local home owner, a former Special Operations Soldier, and current aviator who has been flying this area for almost 20 years, and I fully support the proposal. The Services have brought jobs and opportunities to Northwest Florida that may have never developed. Now we have homes, Blue Ribbon schools, businesses, and airfields where only swamp land and wilderness existed before. The economy has grown and both the public and military have benefited in the harmonious co-existence; the expansion of the Eglin AFB testing facilities within the ranges and the arrival of the 7th Special Forces Group are testaments to these facts. The Air Traffic Services of Cairns, Eglin, Tyndall and Pensacola provide outstanding services to the aviation communities and do excellent jobs controlling/supporting civilian / military operations. The forest lands associated in these areas have provided excellent training areas for our young Service Members; Doolittle Raiders (WW II), Son Tay Raiders (Viet Nam), US Army Ranger classes, home of Army and Naval Aviation including the Blue Angels, to identify some history. And, the area continues to support operations today. Use of National Forrest land is nothing new to the Special Operations community. Most of the proposed operations will remain fairly transparent to those wishing to share our natural resources and national treasures.

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I_014

ID	I_014
Date Submitted	5/29/2014
Commenter	Henry Cuchens
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	Eglin. Largest land owner in Northwest Florida. Why do you want more and more? Surely You must realize that opening the door will lead to more and more intrusion into public/private land issues. With the amount of area that Eglin has, surely this mission can be included into the present format. Where is the EPA when they should be doing their job?

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I_015

ID	I_015
Date Submitted	6/3/2014
Commenter	Anne Richardson
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	Please add my voice to those expressing opposition to the military's proposed use of our state forests. This land should be for the protection of wildlife and other natural resources, and the general public's use and enjoyment--not for military maneuvers. Eglin, as huge and diverse as it is, has served the military's needs well for decades. The base is more than sufficient for present and future training needs. Rationalizations otherwise simply are not convincing. The state forests should be off-limits to the military.

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I_016

ID	I_016
Date Submitted	6/3/2014
Commenter	Nicholas P Power
Organization	Florida Trail Association
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	As a veteran, I understand the need to maintain military readiness, but I don't believe the extension of training into BRSF is warranted. I am an avid hiker and like to take my two children to BRSF, and don't want to be surprised by an area of the forest being closed for certain dates due to military training. There are already so few areas of relative wilderness left in this area; the remaining portions of BRSF need to held to the strictest limits of use and access. My children, and one day their children, deserve at least that much from us.

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I_017

ID	I_017
Date Submitted	6/3/2014
Commenter	Mark J Scott
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	Comments concerning Emitter Site establishment on BRSF; What duration of time is equipment most likely to be installed at an Emitter Site? What actions are taken by Air Force personnel towards the forest user that comes upon the Emitter Site in operation? Hazardous radiation effects to personnel and or electrical/electronic equipment emitted from site (in feet if possible)? Will transportation of Emitter equipment be upon established forest roads? Will Emitter Site operations restrict or close forest roads in or near site location? When in operation; what is the operational noise levels in decibels (db)? Will information be provided in brochures concerning Emitter use in forest for visitors to forest who are from outside local area? Like from the local Forest Service office. Thank you in advance for considering my questions.

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I_018

ID	I_018
Date Submitted	6/3/2014
Commenter	Mark J Scott
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	What actions are military personnel to take when encounters with forest users occur? In a situation where military personnel are working in a forest area that is also being used by the public; which party would have priority as to forest use? BRSF maintains miles of hiking trail, what distance if any are military sites located from designated hiking trails? Trail question is important due to fact trails are used by many individuals hiking alone. Would military unit identify themselves to relieve tension in a situation where a hiker is encountered? What will be the buffer zone for operations involving paint ball devices from roadways, campsites and hiking trails? BRSF forest roads are mostly one tracks (one vehicle width), if forest user approached military vehicles on road, will military give way to forest user?

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I_019

ID	I_019
Date Submitted	6/3/2014
Commenter	Mark J Scott
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	What is the buffer, in feet, for military operations in BRSF that occur near privately owned lands that share property lines with or are surrounded by state forest?

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I_020

ID	I_020
Date Submitted	6/3/2014
Commenter	Mark J Scott
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	Something to consider to improve public relation with forest users is possible utilization of Air Force Red Horse Squadrons to train on BRSF at selected times. The direct result of the squadron's training would benefit the forest users through completed projects like forest road grading.

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I_021

ID	I_021
Date Submitted	6/4/2014
Commenter	Cindy Sheldon
Organization	conderned horse person riding in Blackwater River State Forest
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	Hello and thank you for allowing for comments and concerns from the folks that live in and ride in the area. I would like to request that you expand your restricted area. There are a lot of us that have used the trails in the Blackwater River State Forest for many, many years. Please consider no use of expendables or hovering aircraft in TA-5, or horse trail portions of TA-6." We have to say something to get our voices heard. Thank you for your time, sincerely, Cindy

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I_022

ID	I_022
Date Submitted	6/4/2014
Commenter	Jim and Cheryl Melaven
Organization	resident
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	We recently built a beautiful retirement home in Blackwater River State Forest. We intended to live out our lives in the peace and serenity of the woods. It is a blessing to hear the frogs at night, the birds sing and the wind through the trees. If the military moves forward with this plan our lives will be destroyed. We will be kept awake at night with noise from aircraft. Our pets and livestock will be frightened. We will have unsightly emitter towers. Our property value will decline. We, nor anyone else, will want to live in what is now considered a very desirable area. There are few places for the wild animals to go. Blackwater River State Forest is environmentally sound and a recreational area. Horseback riding, canoeing and hiking. Not a military training base. Put yourself in our place. We have worked hard to build our dream. Please do not take it from us. Respectfully, Jim and Cheryl Melaven [redacted]

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I_024

ID	I_024
Date Submitted	6/7/2014
Commenter	Christina Caasi
Organization	resident of santa rosa county
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I am against GRASI. Blackwater is beautiful in its current state.

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I_025

ID	I_025
Date Submitted	6/7/2014
Commenter	Kyle McArthur
Organization	Citizen of Santa Rosa County
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	NO. Whoever believes the Blackwater State Forest won't disappear at the hands of the DoD once they get their claws into it is sadly naive. The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior, and just a quick glance back in history will prove that the DoD does not relinquish lands alloted to them – they only continue to stockpile them under the guise of necessity and ultimately deny their access to the public – forever. Ever heard of The Choctawhatchee National Forest? The public in the Florida Panhandle used to have the Choctawhatchee National Forest in their backyard -- a United States National Forest established by President Theodore Roosevelt on November 27, 1908. With the outbreak of war in Europe, the "necessity" for a proving ground for aircraft armament was established at Eglin. The U.S. Forest Service ceded over essentially the entire forest – over 340,000 acres of the Choctawhatchee National Forest – to the War Department on 18 October 1940. Only a few thousand acres remained interspersed throughout the Panhandle. IMPORTANTLY -- The law that allowed for this provided that the land may be restored to national forest status by proclamation or order of the President when it was no longer needed for military purposes. Longleaf pine forest, a forest type reduced to 5% of its former range in the last few centuries, covers 200,000 acres of the Eglin range. Part of this forest, 6,795 acres, is old growth, making the base home to one of the most extensive old-growth longleaf pine forests in the world. Does this sound like something that belongs in the hands of the Forest Service or the Defense Department? The tiny Florida Panhandle is also no longer uninhabited as it was in 1940 and can no longer support the DoD's continued expansion to meet the "necessity" for weapons testing. These are not just my words – the Air Force knows this and it is exemplified by their most recent land acquisition: In August 2013, nearly 21,000 acres of conservation land was "acquired" to buffer Eglin's east boundary from future development, in part, due to an award from the Department of Defense 2013 Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program Challenge. The land purchase, approved by Governor Rick Scott and the Florida Cabinet Aug. 20, marks the LARGEST LAND ACQUISITION EFFORT IN THE HISTORY of the DOD's REPI Program. If they just acquired this – why can't they train with the forces there. So – the DoD and Eglin not only has never relinquished the forest back to Florida, but has only continued to seize additional lands now no longer available to the public. Now they want to encroach on the only remaining forest in the Panhandle which will ultimately deny its use to the public – even if only initially sporadically. The DoD brought the Special Forces here in 2010 through BRAC with full knowledge of how much range they had available. Now they want more – more – more.

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I_025

	It has to stop somewhere. They not only shouldn't be granted additional public lands, they should be moving these missions that require these humongous land mass areas to states that have the lands to spare – and turning back over the lion's share of the Choctawhatchee National Forest back to the public as they suggested they would after WWII.

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I_026

ID	I_026
Date Submitted	6/7/2014
Commenter	Marsha Fuqua
Organization	Save Blackwater River State Forest
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	God broke the mold when he made Blackwater River State Forest. Ever since I can remember, I have been in awe of Blackwater's beauty! My entire life has been spent in and around Blackwater - hunting, fishing, hiking, swimming, horseback riding, camping, or just driving circles through it. Have you ever heard the saying, "Don't mess with perfection?" This initiative is messing with perfection. It will be harmful to the woodlands, animals, and my recreational use of the forest. I am strongly in OPPOSITION to this proposal. I am a proud American, and I thank God for the men and women who constantly make sacrifices to protect my freedoms. However, GRASI is not the answer to the military's scheduling conflicts regarding training exercises. Blackwater is not for use by the military. Blackwater is for use by the species that inhabit it and the citizens that admire it. STAY OUT OF BLACKWATER.

1

I_027

ID	I_027
Date Submitted	6/7/2014
Commenter	Anthony MacWhinnie
Organization	Citizen
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	The Blackwater State forest is for public use. Any disruption of said use amounts to a taking, in the legal sense and is actionable. Four generations of my family have been on this land. I feed my family from this land. You have 400k acres of Eglin for your maneuvers. Stay out of the Forest.

1

I_028

ID	I_028
Date Submitted	6/7/2014
Commenter	The Rev. Christiana Olsen
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	C'mon guys, you don't already have enough acreage? Please leave something for us to enjoy, don't touch Blackwater

1

I_029

ID	I_029
Date Submitted	6/7/2014
Commenter	Carrie Neese
Organization	Individual
Affiliation	
Comment	This plan is ridiculous! I am an 18 year old who has been going to black water river parks all my life and my life would't be the same without it. That's where my mom played and my dad, and that's where my future children will play. We need our river and it is beautiful and safe without the federal government's help. Our park rangers are doing just fine!

1

I_030

ID	I_030
Date Submitted	6/7/2014
Commenter	Krissa White
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	No fracking! It will ruin millions of gallons of water per well, and the fracking waste is never disposed of safely because it is toxic! You have no right to poison public lands! It belongs to our grandchildren! It is not for short term profit taking for the few. Put solar panels and wind farms all over the park! Fracking and natural gas is not clean energy!

1

I_031

ID	I_031
Date Submitted	6/7/2014
Commenter	James Whaley
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	Blackwater State Forest provides a protected habitat for wildlife and a valuable recreational resource for the citizens of Northwest Florida. I do not want to see helicopters hovering, smoke bombs exploding nor paintball warfare in this normally quiet and pristine environment. I use the forest for cycling, hiking, kayaking, camping and other outdoor activities that these proposed training activities will interfere with as we'll has harming the flora and fauna of the forest. You need to improve the scheduling of training activities at Eglin A F B and stay out of our state forests.

1

I_032

ID	I_032
Date Submitted	6/7/2014
Commenter	Steven Snyder
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	Vote no. When the military gets hold of land, they will never let go It will be much larger areas than proposed due to buffer safety zones. When they are there, we are not. Eglin is big enough to do what they Need to do. No no no. Please no. Thank you.

1

I_033

ID	I_033
Date Submitted	6/7/2014
Commenter	Rebecca Herzog
Organization	Commuinty person
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	Hi, thank you for having a comment page. Individuals like me feel helpless, trying to save the forest for our kids. After all, it does not make money. The military is huge. It makes a lot of money. Money is a powerful thing in getting what you want. How can an indivudal and a forest compete? One of the great things about the forest, is that it is a place for getting away from the bustle of daily life. Making it a paint ball training zone for the military would destroy the reason people go to the forest. Wild animals are sensitive to sounds and movement and scents. Having large numbers of military people running all over the forest would be disruptive to the natural habitat. Did you know that there are unique plants and animals and insects that are only found in the forest? The military conducts training under water and the sound travels and harms the sea life. How can one not imagine the impact of the noise in the forest and what it will do to the birds and other creatures. Please listen. I am asking you to consider the things that can not speak for themselves. Please stay out of the Blackwater State Park and Tate's He'll forest.

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I_034

ID	I_034
Date Submitted	6/8/2014
Commenter	Barbara Whaley
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I am appalled that you want to use Blackwater River State Forest for military training! First of all, Eglin already controls a huge amount of land in north Florida. Better management of what you have should be adequate. Make what you already own work. Secondly, the forest is for public use and for wildlife, not military games. It should not be closed for military activity. Ordinary people have little enough space today to interact with nature. Thirdly, there is no way in this world that the noise and activity you propose won't impact the environment and wildlife. Any "study" that says otherwise is a blatant lie and misdirection skewed toward the outcome the military wants. Vehicles, paintballs, digging, loud noises are all disruptive to the wildlife. Filling back in a hole and covering it with grass to make it look like you weren't there doesn't change the fact that you negatively impacted the land and animals. DO NOT TAKE THE FOREST!!!!!

1

I_035

ID	I_035
Date Submitted	6/8/2014
Commenter	Nicole Hardy
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	Stay out of the Blackwater Management Area. This area belongs to the people, and is for us to enjoy with our families. Stay out. Stay out. STAY OUT!

1

I_036

ID	I_036
Date Submitted	6/8/2014
Commenter	Diarrhea Jean Sheffield
Organization	Citizen
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I do NOT agree with drilling oil from where people spend their summer's. Blackwater is a place many people and families have functions. Besides we've all have been pretty much raised in or near BlackWater River. Greed will NOT bring anyone or persons happiness. May God rebuke Satan and we the people will win.

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I_037

ID	I_037
Date Submitted	6/11/2014
Commenter	Kyle Hawthorne
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	As retired Air Force members, both my wife and I understand the need for diverse and realistic training. However, contrary to what is being advertised, the training projected for Blackwater River State Forest can be accomplished elsewhere. There are several locations throughout the US where this training currently and historically takes place by the Air Force and all other services. These locations are specifically set aside for military training--much like the BRSF is set aside for public use. Training in the BRSF seems to violate the purpose of setting aside areas to be used for the public. And in this case, I believe it also creates a safety issue. BRSF has equestrian camping, facilities, and several miles of horse trails that are used for pleasure riders as well as local, state, and regional events that have horses and riders scattered throughout the forest. It is a wonderful public service and one that draws people from all over the Southeastern US several times per year. But to place those riders in situations where the sounds, vehicles, and activities of military training take place puts those riders at risk. I realize the DoD expects to place some areas off-limits to protect people such as these riders (which itself is an impingement), but I don't believe it is so easy to completely mark off areas of forest, even assuming everyone traveled only by trail. Also, smoke and sound are not so easily contained by a few signs or flagging tape. And I know aircraft will not be limited to those areas. The first time a rider is injured because his or her horse was frightened by a low flying aircraft traveling to or from one of the training sites will, at the very least, create extremely bad press for the Air Force and Forest Service. Placing the entire forest off-limits during these events goes against what has been stated to this point about only causing minimal disruption. Again, as a retired AFSOC member, I understand the need for training. But this infringement on civilian usage of THEIR land is simply not needed, nor is it right. We are taking advantage of the local population's generous support to our military and it is as unfair as it is unnecessary. I foresee a backlash in the future that could have and should have been avoided.

1

I_038

Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI) ADDED SINCE 1'st PUBLIC FORUMS

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: Carrabelle, FL ***Please print legibly*** **Date:** 06/03/14

I would suggest Florida Forest Service reconsider their position in allowing GRASI Activities to occur on any State Forest, as these lands are held by the state for the use of the PUBLIC. Serious user conflicts are existent in this proposal. Noise levels, hydrocarbon leakage and exhaust, leftover detritus and land, water, and air disturbances are bound to occur with the proposed activities. (OVER)

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

Public comments are requested pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 United States Code 4321, et seq. All written comments received during the comment period will be considered during Final EIS preparation. Your provision of private address information with your comment is voluntary and protected in accordance with the Privacy Act and Air Force instruction 33-332. Your private address information will not be released in the Final EIS or for any other purpose, unless required by law. However, your private address information will be used to compile the mailing list for any further project notices. Failure to provide such information will result in your name not being included on the distribution list.

Name: Michael P. Vroegop

Organization: Florida Geotourism Associates, LLC

Affiliation: ☒ **Individual** ☐ **Government** ☐ **Tribe** ☐ **Organization**

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Zip: [redacted]

☒ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☒ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Please mail this form to:
Mr. Mike Spaits, Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

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I_038

Continuation Page

I would Also suggest the United States Air Force reconsider their position in this matter. Eglin AFB has become an environmental hazard zone due to present and past activities. A thorough post-operational impact study on Eglin grounds would reveal some of the occurences that will become common in Blackwater River and Tate's Hell State Forests.

I have recently spent time in Tate's Hell when V-22's were flying in the area. All wildlife ceases their usual chatter, stunned into silence by the noise levels and airspace disturbances. If these and other proposed activities continue to occur, eventually, all wildlife will migrate to undisturbed areas. Tates Hell and Blackwater River State Forests will become barren due to noise, physical and chemical disturbances. The citizens of the State of Florida are being blind-sided by a PR campaign to, in essence, use and use up, their resources.

Thank you for your input.

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I_039

As a resident of Franklin County and a concerned citizen, I am offended and appalled that the Air Force has stated that their intended use of Tate's Hell State Forest is not expected to result in any significant adverse cumulative impacts. Considering just one of the sections of the EIS would make it obvious that the tranquility of the state forest environment would be significantly adversely impacted for all users except the military.

ES.4.1.2.3

Use of Expendables (UoEX) involves use of various training munitions and pyrotechnics, including simulated munitions (consisting of plastic pellets or paintballs, and smoke grenades during training activities. At Tate's Hell State Forest, noise-generating expendables could be used anywhere.

5.56-millimeter blank -	576,000 Est. Max Quantity Per Year -	Estimated Average per Event ~10,000
7.62-millimeter blank -	196,200	
"	"	~ 8,000
Ground Burst Simulators -	5,172	
"	"	~2 to 5
M-18 smoke grenades -	4,038	
"	"	~2 to 5
Paintballs/plastic pellets -	50,000	
"	"	~5,000

It would seem obvious to anyone considering the nature of such munitions and pyrotechnics, that it would not be possible to clean up the fragments and residue left on the ground, vegetation, and water. This is not acceptable and is not compatible with the citizens stated desire for preservation of the environmentally fragile ecosystems of Tate's Hell State Forest and the tranquil environment needed for enjoyment by civilian users.

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I_039

I hereby state my assertion that the NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE is the only decision that should be made. I ask that Eglin find other places to conduct their expansion of military training and leave Tate's Hell State Forest out of any consideration for such use.

Betty Cummins
Resident of Franklin County

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I_040

Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: Milton, FL ***Please print legibly*** **Date:** 6/5/14

The EIS does not address the impacts of the recreational facilities. Most specifically Coldwater Horse camping facilities and horse trails. We the citizens of NWFL, have spent decades supporting BSF and building the Coldwater Horse facilities. Horse camping and riding trails require absolute tranquility to lower the risk of the horse and more importantly the rider. Any military activity within sight or sound of any horse + rider may cause horse to spook, unseat the rider, and cause serious injury and/or death of the rider. Blackwater State Forest, including Coldwater Horse facility, is the only sanctuary available to NWFL citizens. I vote for the NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE!

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

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Name: LINDA CARVER

Organization:

Affiliation: ☒ **Individual** ☐ **Government** ☐ **Tribe** ☐ **Organization**

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Zip: [redacted]

☒ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☐ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Please mail this form to:
Mr. Mike Spaits, Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

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I_040

Continuation Page

I am 6th generation Floridian born and raised here in Pensacola. My father is retired military. My career included contract work for DOD for over 20 years. I live across the street from the DOD Navy helicopter touch + go air strip in Pace FL.

As a NWFL Resident I can speak for our community. To live in NWFL means we support our military. It is who we are! But we draw the line at invading our recreational areas that are set aside for our public use.

Blackwater State Forest is our ONLY sanctuary available in the NWFL area. BSF is our only resource available to enjoy the outdoors. BSF is currently an untouched resource that allows the public to enjoy "Our Florida". A precious resource that is the only one of it's kind. BSF belongs to "US", the citizens and generations of Florida.

As a member of the NWFL horse community we have worked for decades to ensure the beauty and tranquility of our BSF including the Coldwater Recreational facilities, horse stables, camp grounds, and horse trails. 100% tranquility is necessary for the SAFETY of horseback riders.

I vote and demand that the military does NOT invade our precious forest.

VOTE NO ACTION Alternative!

Thank you for your input.

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I_041

Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: Milton FL ***Please print legibly*** **Date:** 6-5-14

I would like the military to keep on the Base (Eglin) I hunt + fish in Blackwater and we have a hard enough time keeping the deer herd calm where we hunt without military maneuvers going on in the middle of our hunting area. We share the woods with many people already hikers, birdwatchers, bird hunters. Many of the people who hunted Eglin in years past have already moved down to Blackwater to hunt. This addition will be too much pressure on the deer herd

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

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Name: Chris Fordush

Organization: Deer hunters

Affiliation: ☑ **Individual** ☐ **Government** ☐ **Tribe** ☐ **Organization**

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Zip: [redacted]

☐ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☑ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Please mail this form to:
Mr. Mike Spaits, Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

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I_042

Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: MILTON *Please print legibly* **Date:** 6/5/14

SENIOR LEADERSHIP AT EGLIN USAF SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF THEIR LACK OF VISION & LEADERSHIP SKILLS!

TO TAKE PUBLIC LAND IS A DISGRACE!

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

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Name: CHAD HULSZED

Organization: HUNTER

Affiliation: ☐ Individual ☐ Government ☐ Tribe ☐ Organization USN RETIRED

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Zip: [redacted]

☐ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☒ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Please mail this form to:
Mr. Mike Spaits, Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

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I_043

Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: Milton FL *Please print legibly* **Date:** 6-5-14

Black water state forest is owned by the public not the Gov. We need to keep the state forest for the people - Res of Florida Not the Gov. I hunt and do not want this. I think our military is important but does not need our state forest to do there jobs.

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

Public comments are requested pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 United States Code 4321, et seq. All written comments received during the comment period will be considered during Final EIS preparation. Your provision of private address information with your comment is voluntary and protected in accordance with the Privacy Act and Air Force Instruction 33-332. Your private address information will not be released in the Final EIS or for any other purpose, unless required by law. However, your private address information will be used to compile the mailing list for any further project notices. Failure to provide such information will result in your name not being included on the distribution list.

Name: David Johnson

Organization:

Affiliation: ☑ Individual ☐ Government ☐ Tribe ☐ Organization

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Zip: [redacted]

☑ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☐ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Please mail this form to:
Mr. Mike Spaits, Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

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I_044

Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: Milton ***Please print legibly*** **Date:** 6/5/14

I would like to keep the state forest clean and free of as much trash foot travel and over head noise I go out to hunt, fish, and relax not to be bothered by all the activity that will be going on with the military. I do think that the military is very important I do support them just not in our forest

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

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Name: Joey Lambert

Organization:

Affiliation: ☑ **Individual** ☐ **Government** ☐ **Tribe** ☐ **Organization**

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Zip: [redacted]

☒ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☐ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Please mail this form to:
Mr. Mike Spaits, Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

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I_045

Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: Niceville **Please print legibly** **Date:** 6-5-14

I think they should close all of Eglin Down if they need somewhere to do maneuvers that bad. LEAVE BLACKWATER ALONE!!

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

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Name: Christi Lambert

Organization: Self

Affiliation: ☒ Individual ☐ Government ☐ Tribe ☐ Organization

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Zip: [redacted]

☒ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☐ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

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101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

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I_046

Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: Holt ***Please print legibly*** **Date:** 6-5-2014

Blackwater State forest is for the Public to enjoy we hunt, Camp, fish, it's a place to teach your children the values of land. it's not a place to bring your kids to see area's closed to military only, and truck load's of Soldiers. if they need more land they should close Eglin Air Force base to hunting all together. and leave blackwater, and any other state forest alone. if we let this happen this will be the beggining of the end of our State forest as we know it. besides Eglin has 400,000+ Acres Stay on it

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

Public comments are requested pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 United States Code 4321, et seq. All written comments received during the comment period will be considered during Final EIS preparation. Your provision of private address information with your comment is voluntary and protected in accordance with the Privacy Act and Air Force Instruction 33-332. Your private address information will not be released in the Final EIS or for any other purpose, unless required by law. However, your private address information will be used to compile the mailing list for any further project notices. Failure to provide such information will result in your name not being included on the distribution list.

Name: Dustin Lambert

Organization: Self

Affiliation: ☑ Individual ☐ Government ☐ Tribe ☐ Organization

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Zip: [redacted]

☐ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☐ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Please mail this form to:
Mr. Mike Spaits, Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

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I_047

Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: *Please print legibly* **Date:**

Milton, FL meeting June 5, 2014

Please stay away from Coldwater and Blackwater forest areas. Horses and military training maneuvers will be a recipe for injuries, loss of nature, noise pollution, and loss of an amazing recreation area needed for overworked and over stressed, tax paying people to utilize for what it was designed to do — relax and enjoy peace and quiet and nature.

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

Public comments are requested pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 United States Code 4321, et seq. All written comments received during the comment period will be considered during Final EIS preparation. Your provision of private address information with your comment is voluntary and protected in accordance with the Privacy Act and Air Force Instruction 33-332. Your private address information will not be released in the Final EIS or for any other purpose, unless required by law. However, your private address information will be used to compile the mailing list for any further project notices. Failure to provide such information will result in your name not being included on the distribution list.

Name: Nancy Lishefske

Organization: self

Affiliation: ☒ Individual ☐ Government ☐ Tribe ☐ Organization

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Zip: [redacted]

☒ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☐ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Please mail this form to:
Mr. Mike Spaits, Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

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I_048

Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: ***Please print legibly*** **Date:** 6/5/14

Bearded –

1) The DEIS states that the ~~the~~ "Increased potential for wildfires is unavoidable." This is unacceptable.

2) DEIS states that ~~EMR~~ radiation (EMR) emitters up to large safety buffer distances will be used. How ~~is~~ will it be in close proximity to populated areas. ~~what~~ If proximity to human is unsafe, then how is it safe for wildlife including endangered species. What are biological effects from radiation (EMR) exposure to wildlife – reproductive effects, shortened life span.

3) Why are vehicle maintenance activities conducted in the forest rather than on-base. These activities generate unused/ overspray, solvents + paints which must be stored + could cause ~~contam~~ contamination

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

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Name: Sherry Sterling

Organization: Self

Affiliation: ☑ **Individual** ☐ **Government** ☐ **Tribe** ☐ **Organization**

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Zip: [redacted]

☑ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☐ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Please mail this form to:
Mr. Mike Spaits, Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

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I_049

Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: ~~MAH~~ BA *Please print legibly* **Date:** 05 JUN 2014

CURRENTLY, BLACKWATER AIRFIELD (8FD3) HAS BEEN OPENED TO LIMITED USE BY LOCAL RECREATIONAL PILOTS THROUGH AN AGREEMENT WITH THE FES. WILL USAF USAGE OF 8FD3 SHUT OUT GA PILOTS? WILL THE AIRFORCE CREATE AN EXPANSION OF THE RESTRICTED AIRSPACE TO COVER BWSF? EGLIN'S ALREADY EXTENSIVE AND EXPANSIVE RESTRICTED FOOTPRINT IS A HASSLE AND ANNOYANCE TO LOCAL PILOTS. ANY ~~E~~ FURTHER EXPANSION WOULD BE UNWELCOME. WILL AIRSPACE USAGE BY ANNOUNCED THROUGH NOTAM? WILL INCREASED TRAFFIC CONFLICT WITH EXISTING NAVY TRAINING OUT OF NSE + NDZ. NAVY AIRCRAFT ALREADY OPERATE IN BUSY AND CONGESTED AIRSPACE SURROUNDING WHITING FIELD.

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

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Name: SPENCER K WILSON

Organization:

Affiliation: ☑ **Individual** ☐ **Government** ☐ **Tribe** ☐ **Organization**

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Zip: [redacted]

☑ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☐ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Please mail this form to:
Mr. Mike Spaits, Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

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I_050

Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: *Please print legibly* **Date:**

Black Water,
Have been Hunting there for 30 years and love Camping and being in the out doors, have Respect for Military, but they have there own Land We as hunters have alot to deal with already, control Burn's seems being cut short would prefer Black Water Forest Be left for Camping, Fishing and most of all Deer Hunters!!!

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

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Name: James E. Burkett

Organization: Deer Hunters

Affiliation: ☑ Individual ☐ Government ☐ Tribe ☐ Organization

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Zip: [redacted]

☐ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☑ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Please mail this form to:
Mr. Mike Spaits, Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

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I_051

Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: Milton ***Please print legibly*** **Date:** 5/ /14

Please consider using the over 400,000 acers of land the air force Already has —

Stay out of the Blackwater AND TATE's Hell /

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

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Name: Chris Pack

Organization: Paddler's lover of land & Water

Affiliation: ☒ Individual ☐ Government ☐ Tribe ☐ Organization

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Zip: [redacted] feel free to visit!

☒ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☐ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Please mail this form to:
Mr. Mike Spaits, Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

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I_052

Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: Gualachicola *Please print legibly* **Date:** 6/4/2014

I support our military, but I am opposed to this misuse of our National Forest lands

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

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Name: Kristi Anderson

Organization:

Affiliation: ☑ Individual ☐ Government ☐ Tribe ☐ Organization

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Zip: [redacted]

☑ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☐ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Please mail this form to:
Mr. Mike Spaits, Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

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I_053

Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: Apalachicola ***Please print legibly*** **Date:** 6/4/14

[Wants notification (postcard) when Final EIS is released.]

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**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

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Name: Dennis & Celia Winterringer

Organization:

Affiliation: ☐ **Individual** ☐ **Government** ☐ **Tribe** ☐ **Organization**

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Zip: [redacted]

☐ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☐ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Please mail this form to:
Mr. Mike Spaits, Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

I_054

[redacted]

[redacted]

Subject: FW: U.S. Air Force Proposal for the Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Landscape Initiative (GLI)

Attachments: GRASI COMMENTS.pdf

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

-----Original Message-----
From: Morres, David [redacted]
Sent: Friday, June 13, 2014 11:55 AM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Cc: David Morres home
Subject: U.S. Air Force Proposal for the Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Landscape Initiative (GLI)

Michael, attached are my comments on the above subject subsequent to and in response to the public hearing held in Bagdad, FL on Thursday night, June 5, 2014.

David P. Morres, P.E.

Dep Customer Survey
[redacted]

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I_054

Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: (BAGDAD) MILTON, FL *Please print legibly* Date: JUNE 5TH, 2014

I HAVE ATTENDED BOTH THE HEARING HELD EARLIER THIS YEAR IN MILTON, AND THE ONE HELD IN BAGDAD ON JUNE 5TH 2014. I HAVE KEPT UP WITH THIS PROCESS AND REVIEWED DOCUMENTS. I AM ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO THE AIR FORCE PROPOSAL TO USE ANY OF THE BLACKWATER RIVER STATE FOREST WHICH BELONGS TO THE STATE OF FLORIDA AND ITS CITIZENS FOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AND RECREATION BY ITS CITIZENS. MY PASTIMES ARE HORSEBACK RIDING AND CAMPING, AND I USE THE BLACKWATER RIVER STATE FOREST ON A VERY REGULAR BASIS. THE AIR FORCE PROPOSAL COULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON MY USE OF THE STATES RESOURCES, AS IT WOULD FOR NUMEROUS PEOPLE I KNOW WITH THE SAME PASTIMES. WHEN YOU FIGURE IN THE GROUPS OF HUNTERS, HIKERS, KAYAKERS & CANOE ENTHUSIASTS, CAMPING FAMILIES, CITIZENS

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

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Name: DAVID MORRES

Organization: SELF & HORSE RECREATION ORGANIZATIONS

Affiliation: ☒ Individual ☐ Government ☐ Tribe ☐ Organization

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Zip [redacted]

☒ Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.

☐ No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.

Please mail this form to:
Mr. Mike Spaits, Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

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I_054

Continuation Page

THAT LIVE IN AND AROUND THE FOREST, THERE'S A MAJOR IMPACT TO A LARGE NUMBER OF THE POPULATION OF THE AREA THAT USE THIS FOREST. AND THIS DOESN'T EVEN TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS THAT WILL OCCUR TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE WILDLIFE, SOME THREATENED OR ENDANGERED, THAT LIVE IN AND AROUND THE BLACKWATER RIVER STATE FOREST. THIS IS A VERY SENSITIVE ECOSYSTEM THAT CAN NOT SUPPORT MILITARY OPERATIONS WITHOUT HAVING A SERIOUS NEGATIVE IMPACT.

AND JUST WHAT IS THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE AIR FORCE TO IMPACT THIS ENVIRONMENT AND THE LIVES OF THE CITIZENS OF THE AREA? SCHEDULING ISSUES WITH ITS CURRENT LAND MASS WHICH COVERS HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF ACRES? KNOWN AS EGLIN!

I DON'T THINK THAT THE ENVIRONMENT OF A VALUABLE AND IRREPLACEABLE STATE ECOSYSTEM AS THE BLACKWATER STATE FORREST, AND THE RECREATION OF A LARGE NUMBER OF CITIZENS OF THE AREA, INCLUDING MYSELF, SHOULD BE SO IMPACTED AS IT WOULD BE BY THIS AIR FORCE PROPOSAL. I ALSO DO NOT THINK THAT THE JUSTIFICATION OF SCHEDULING CONFLICTS WITH ITS CURRENT PROPERTY IS SOMETHING THAT CAN NOT BE RECTIFIED WITH A LITTLE EFFORT AND THE USE OF THE STATE FOREST IS A MATTER OF CONVENIENCE FOR THE AIR FORCE.

I STRONGLY REQUEST THAT YOU TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO RECTIFY THE SCHEDULING CONFLICTS WITHIN THE CURRENT EGLIN PROPERTY, AND DO WHATEVER IS NECESSARY TO TAKE NO ACTION ON THE CURRENT PROPOSAL THAT WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE ENVIRONMENT, WILDLIFE AND ECOSYSTEMS OF THE BLACKWATER RIVER STATE FOREST, AND THAT WOULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT THE LIVES OF THE CITIZENS OF THE AREA! ALSO, PLEASE STAY THE HELL OUT OF THE BLACKWATER & YATE'S HELL STATE FOREST! THESE AREAS BELONG TO THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA AND WE DON'T WANT THE AIR FORCE/MILITARY CONTROLLING & IMPACTING THEM.

THANK YOU,

David Morris

Thank you for your input.

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I_055

ID	I_055
Date Submitted	6/14/2014
Commenter	Gwen Beatty
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I am a retired Environmental Specialist III with 22 years experience conducting environment assessments in the State of Florida. My background/education is in geology. I am concerned about groundwater and surface water contamination resulting from proposed military maneuvers in our state forests. I have had experience working with Eglin AFB to determine the source of hydrocarbon contamination detected in groundwater in a pit located on Eglin AFB near the Holley Landfill. According to anecdotal information, two field exercises were conducted in that area during the 1980's. Witnesses related that trucks were parked around the pit but Eglin AFB would not confirm that military exercises ever occurred in that area. Our assessment detected toluene, ethylbenzene and BNAs in shallow monitoring wells located downgradient to the Eglin pit at levels exceeding regulatory limits. These analytes were not detected in shallow wells upgradient to the pit therefore the Holley Landfill was ruled out as the source. Benzene and total xylenes were also detected at higher levels in wells downgradient to the pit. FDEP concluded that the Eglin pit was the source of the contaminant plume under the pit and in wells that were located downgradient to the south. Eglin consistently denied that they were the source of the contamination and maintained an adversarial relationship with FDEP and Santa Rosa County throughout the assessment. The State of Florida spent over $275,000.00 conducting an investigation that was conducted from July 2003 through June 2010. If Eglin AFB is allowed to conduct military activities on Blackwater and Tate's Hell State Forests, it is probable that there will be contamination. Spent shell casings will be discarded and will result in metals contamination. Plastic paint ball casings will be left on-site. Incomplete combustion of plastics result in dioxin contamination and will be a source of contamination if prescribed burns are conducted as part of routine maintenance. If refueling occurs, there will be spills and dumps. If accidents occur, there will be glass and metal debris, solvents and hydrocarbon contamination. Military participants will leave miscellaneous cans, plastic wrapping and paper debris. Based on my experience working with Eglin AFB, they will deny any culpability and will refuse to clean up any contamination. Florida will be left with their contamination as well as the cost of cleanup. I urge you to deny military access to Blackwater State Forest and Tate's Hell State Forest.

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I_056

ID	I_056
Date Submitted	6/16/2014
Commenter	Alex Almario
Organization	none
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	Comment on GRASI EIS: I am writing to comment on the military's proposed use of Blackwater State Forest for training purposes. I oppose the use of our State Forest for use by the Military for training, State Forests were set aside for timber, hunting, hiking and general ecological preservation for the people not for the military. Use Military bases and lands for training not Public lands, especially sensitive Forests. Our forest ecology can't support increased human activities, by allowing 100's of Military staff to trample and drive all over the Forest, the Military would destroy all the environmental achievments that have been accomplished so far. Please use the Military lands already at your disposal more efficiently for training rather than asking for use of the People's Forests for your exercises. Thanks Alex Almario

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I_057

[redacted]

-----Original Message-----
[redacted]

-----Original Message-----
From: Stephanie [redacted]
Sent: Friday, June 13, 2014 3:08 PM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Subject: Attached is my response to the Public Hearing GRASI

Dear Mr. Spaits: Please accept the attached form with my comments regarding the AF's use of Blackwater Forest.

Respectfully,
Dr. Stephanie Friedman

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I_057

Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: Pensacola, FL ***Please print legibly*** **Date:** 12 June 2014

99% of the time, I am in full support of our military. However, in this case, I am against the military use of Blackwater Forest. One, Eglin owns property that stretches at least three to four counties & ~~three~~ two — the forest needs to remain pristine (no paintballs, ~~not~~ no loud, military-type noises, troops (numerous people all at once) entering the forest, disturbing the wildlife, nesting, predator-prey journeys, etc. FL needs to protect ~~the~~ this area for generations to come, + for us!

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

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Name: Dr. Stephanie Friedman

Organization:

Affiliation: ☒ **Individual** ☐ **Government** ☐ **Tribe** ☐ **Organization**

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Zip: [redacted]

☐ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☒ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.** (Already receiving info through horse club)

Please mail this form to:
Mr. Mike Spaits, Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

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I_058

ID	I_058
Date Submitted	6/17/2014
Commenter	Patricia Rigel
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	NO, I do not want the military to use the Blackwater State Forest for training missions. The state forest is for private individuals and NOT military use.

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I_059

ID	I_059
Date Submitted	6/18/2014
Commenter	Pamela Hall
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	Blackwater State Forest is a vital bird habitat, and all species of birds found in this forest should be considered. Any training will disrupt birds, whether they are stopping over during migration or building and maintaing a nest. This forest should be protected for its inhabitants as well as all of the people who bike, hike, swim, and camp in this area.

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I_060

ID	I_060
Date Submitted	6/18/2014
Commenter	Vonn Ryals
Organization	none
Affiliation	Agency/Government Representative
Comment	I think this forest needs be left alone considering you have close to a million acres of land that at one time belonged to my family

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I_061

ID	I_061
Date Submitted	6/19/2014
Commenter	Dan Hatch
Organization	
Affiliation	Agency/Government Representative
Comment	Please do not come to Blackwater State Forest. Thank you for you consideration

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I_062

ID	I_062
Date Submitted	6/19/2014
Commenter	Stephany Railey
Organization	Individual
Affiliation	Training Activities at THSF
Comment	Use of the 90,000 acres of privately held land located primarily in Calhoun County for these exercises is a preferred alternative to use of the ecologically sensitive Tate's land. These Calhoun, and adjacent counties, lands have been used since 1999 for Special Operations Training.

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I_063

[redacted]

[redacted]

Subject: FW: GRASI LI Pledged Support - new comment
Attachments: image005.png; image006.png; Public Input_KRasmussen_17June14.pdf

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

-----Original Message-----
From: Kay Rasmussen [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2014 5:03 PM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Subject: GRASI LI Pledged Support

Dear Mr. Spaits:

Please find attached my documented pledged support for the GRASI Landscape Initiative public input.

If any additional information is needed, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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I_063

Regards,

Kay

Kay Rasmussen, CEcD

Associate Director

Economic Development Council

Okaloosa County, Florida

[redacted]

Economic development is an investment;

and the payback is in the future!

The EDC is a 501(c)(6) non-profit private-public partnership organization.

[redacted]

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I_063

Kay Rasmussen

June 17, 2014

Mr. Mike Spaits
Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office
96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238,
Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

Re: GRASI LI Support Pledge

Dear Mr. Spaits:

Per the Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative's (GRASI) Landscape Initiative draft Environmental Impact Statement invitation, please accept my public input pledging my support.

The United States military service units provide national security for all citizens of America. In order to accomplish that goal, our warfighters need to train in a fashion that prepares them to fight; they require tools of the highest technology possible; and those tools need to be researched and thoroughly vetted. As fellow Americans, we need to ensure the needs of our warfighters are being met and provided for.

As such, as a local resident, a professional business woman, and a military dependent of three generations, I fully support the GRASI Landscape Initiative to fully integrate test and training capabilities within the Blackwater River and Tate's Hell State Forests as needed to achieve the military mission.

Eglin AFB has a long documented history of accolades for installation excellence, natural resources conservation, and environmental stewardship. There is probably no better entity to care for the natural environment within the footprint of the State Forests. Eglin AFB has proven itself to be a good neighbor, partner and collaborative teammate.

Please feel free to contact me directly if I can provide any assistance.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kay Rasmussen, CEcD

[redacted]

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I_064

Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: ***Please print legibly*** **Date:**

THERE is THOUSANDS OF SQUARE MILES OF COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, INVESTMENT LAND IN NORTH WEST FLORIDA. MUCH OF IT OWNED BY PAPER AND LOGGING COMPANIES. MUCH OF THIS LAND IS LEASED TO HUNTING CLUBS. WHEN THE HUNTING CLUB LEASES ARE UP, WHY DOES THE AIR FORCE, THEN LEASE THESE LANDS FOR THEIR AIR FORCE'S OPERATIONS. I AM SURE THAT A PAPER COMPANY OR OTHER TYPE OF COMMERCIAL LAND OWNER WERE OFFERED A LITTLE MORE MONEY, THAN A HUNTING CLUB WOULD PAY THAT WOULD BE GOOD BUSINESS PRACTICE TO INCREASE THEIR

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

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Name: THOMAS H. BARBIG

Organization: AUDABON SOCIETY

Affiliation: ☐ Individual ☐ Government ☐ Tribe ☑ Organization

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Zip: [redacted]

☑ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☐ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Please mail this form to:
Mr. Mike Spaits, Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

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I_064

Continuation Page

INCOME, WHILE STILL GROWING TREES FOR LUMBER AND PAPER PRODUCTION. THE AIR FORCE PROBABLY HAVE TO SHARE ROAD MAINTENCE WITH THE LAND OWNER. TREES TAKE DECADES TO GROW, BEFORE THEY CAN BE CUT, SO THE AIR FORCE WOULD HAVE LONG PERIODS TO RESPONSABLY USE THE LAND.

IT SEEMS LIKE A WIN WIN SOLUTION FOR EVERY ONE INVOLVED. THE AIR FORCE ~~COULA~~ COULD CONDUCT THEIR OPERATIONS. THE LAND OWNER COULD HAVE MORE INCOME THAN HE OTHERWISE HAVE. THE PEOPLE OF NORTH WEST FLORIDA CAN HAVE THEIR STATE FOREST THAT THEY CAN RECREATE IN. THE ENVIORMENT CAN CONTINUE TO EVOLVE AND ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES OF BIRDS, ANIMALS, + PLANTS WOULD BE PROTECTED.

THE FEW HUNTERS FROM THE HUNTING CLUBS ON THAT COMMERCIAL LAND CAN THEN GO AND HUNT IN BLACKWATER STATE FOREST, AS IT WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO THEM, & LIKE ALL THE OTHER GROUPS INTERESTED IN THIS ISSUE.

MY FATHER AND I BOTH WERE IN THE MILITARY SO WE ARE PRO MILITARY, BUT NOT IN BLACKWATER STATE FOREST, WHICH WAS ORIGINALLY SETUP TO KEEP SOME OF N.W. FLORIDA FROM BEING BUILT UP AND OVERUSED BY "PROGRESS" AND FOR THE COMMON MAN AND WOMAN TO BE ABLE TO GO TO IN THE OUT DOORS AND AWAY FROM URBINIZATION, THAT IS CITY LIFE. THERE ARE NOT MANY PLACES, A PERSON CAN GO FOR OUT DOOR ACTIVITIES; ESPECIALLY IN THE HILLS, UPLAND AREAS, AWAY FROM THE COASTAL AREAS OF N.W. FLORIDA. ALSO TOURISTS COME FROM FAR AWAY TO BIRDWATCH, HIKE THE TRAILS AND SEE THE LAKES

Thank you for your input.

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June 11, 2014

Mr. Mike Spaits
Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office
96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238
Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

Dear Sir:

Enclosed are my comments on the U.S. Air Force's April 2014 draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative Landscape Initiative.

Sincerely,

Dennis Winterringer

Dennis Winterringer

[redacted]

Enclosure

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COMMENTS ON U.S. AIR FORCE'S
APRIL 2014 DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS) FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE

1. Executive Summary, Figure ES-1 (page 2) and Figure 1-1 (page A-1).

Delete the "Case for Change" and "Vision of Success" boxes on these figures. They contain self-serving statements promoting approval of the initiative through the development of a strategic plan for "this national treasure" that improves "economic prosperity of the region," results in a Northwest Florida region that is "prosperous," and strengthens "relationships among civilian and military interests." These biased statements have no place in an EIS, which is required by the National Environmental Policy Act to include an objective analysis of a proposal.

In addition, the "Vision of Success" box states that the initiative "will" (rather than "would") be carried out. This implies that the decision on the draft initiative has already been made by the U.S. Air Force. This is in conflict with the National Environmental Policy Act, which requires analysis of a proposed Federal action before a decision is made.

2. Executive Summary, section ES.3 Decision to Be Made (page 5).

Please identify the person (by title and location) who is authorized to make the decision on whether the U.S. Air Force will proceed to apply for permits with the State of Florida to carry out the proposed action.

3. Acronyms and Abbreviations (pages xvi through xxi).

These five pages list 235 acronyms and abbreviations used throughout the draft EIS.

The use of so many acronyms and abbreviations makes the document virtually unreadable and incomprehensible. This overuse of acronyms and abbreviations causes the EIS to not be in compliance with the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ's) regulation at 40 CFR 1502.8, which requires the EIS to be written in plain language so that it can be readily understood.

To be in compliance with CEQ's regulation, reduce the number of acronyms and abbreviations used. Consider restricting the use of an acronym or abbreviation to those instances when a term is used more than 20 times.

4. Executive Summary, section ES.5 (pages 22 through 25).

The title "Alternative Impact Analysis Summary" does not accurately describe the contents of this section. This section summarizes the impacts of the proposed action, but it does not address impacts of alternatives to the proposed action. Accordingly, the title of this section should be revised to read "Proposed Action Impact Analysis Summary."

The paragraph defining "Neutral or No Effect" (page 24, lines 11 through 15) has several problems.

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- Presumably, a neutral effect would occur when adverse impacts are offset equally by beneficial impacts. If this is so, explain this. If this is not so, explain what constitutes a neutral effect.
- The paragraph states that low intensity impacts are "imperceptible." If impacts are truly imperceptible, the U.S. Air Force would never be able to predict that they would occur or document that they occurred. "Imperceptible" effects are not impacts. Low intensity impacts are perceptible.
- Low intensity impacts in fact have effects. Equating low intensity impacts with "no effect" is plainly wrong.
- Low intensity impacts are a subcategory of insignificant impacts and should be described in the "Insignificant" paragraph (the "Insignificant" bullet starting on page 23, line 38 and ending on page 24, line 10).
- The paragraph states that "Resources experiencing neutral or no effects are identified as 'green' in Table ES-24." Replace "neutral or no" with "low intensity, adverse." The discussion of yellow-colored impacts (page 23, line 27) will have to be modified to describe insignificant impacts that are greater than the green-colored impacts.
- Mitigation measures have been incorporated into the proposal. Following section ES.7 Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations states that these proposed measures result in the avoidance of impacts or minimization of impacts. With respect to the minimization of impacts, section ES.7 states that in most cases impacts to resources would be minimized such that impact significance levels would be reduced. Thus these impacts would occur, but at a low intensity (i.e., they do not have no effect).

5. Executive Summary, section ES.5 (page 24, lines 31 through 35).

This section states that "There are no unknown risks or impacts that may be considered controversial in nature associated with emitter site use or training activities (such actions have been extensively analyzed in this EIS and other Air Force documents as referenced in this EIS), and the Proposed Action is not precedent setting because the DoD utilizes public lands throughout the United States for both emitter sites and military training" (underlining for emphasis added). In the context that it's used, the phrase "unknown risks or impacts" makes no sense, and "unknown" should be deleted. Also, "may be" should be deleted and replace with "are." Consider revising the sentence to read "There are no risks or impacts associated with emitter site use or training activities (such actions have been extensively analyzed in this EIS and other Air Force documents as referenced in this EIS) that are considered controversial in nature . . .".

6. Section ES.7, Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations (page 26).

This section states that "in most cases impacts would be minimized such that impact significance levels would be reduced from "adverse" (yellow) to "neutral" or "no effect" (green) in Table ES-24." See my comments on Table ES-24 under section ES.5 (a bullet within my comment number 4). Green-colored impacts are low intensity, insignificant, adverse impacts, and yellow-colored impacts are higher-than-low-intensity, insignificant, adverse impacts.

7. Chapter 2, Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives.

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The draft EIS Force analyzes the environmental consequences of only one alternative to the action proposed by the U.S. Air Force (described in section 2.3). This alternative action is no action (described in section 2.4), which the CEQ regulation at 40 CFR 1502.14(d) requires to be analyzed. For various reasons, the draft EIS dismisses several other alternatives that it considers unreasonable (section 2.2.4).

CEQ's regulation at 40 CFR 1502.14(a) requires the Federal agency preparing the EIS to rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives. Analyzing only the required no action as an alternative to the proposed action is not a rigorous exploration and objective evaluation of all reasonable alternatives.

As discussed in CEQ's answer to question No. 2a of the Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ's National Environmental Policy Act Regulations, "[r]easonable alternatives include those that are practical or feasible from the technical and economic standpoint and using common sense, rather than simply desirable from the standpoint of the applicant."

The EIS must analyze the following additional, reasonable alternatives.

- As analyzed in the draft EIS, the proposed action consists of two components (section 2.1, page 2-1): establishment and use of emitter training sites on Gulf Regional Air Space Initiative partner lands (hereinafter referred to as component A) and applying to the Florida Forest Service and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to be a permitted user of the northwest Florida state forests for nonhazardous training activities (component B). To broaden the range of alternatives and to give the Air Force decisionmaker the flexibility to pursue one but not both of the components (as required by 40 CFR 1505.1(e)), the EIS must include not only the proposal for pursing both components A and B (as analyzed in the draft EIS) but also the alternative for pursuing component A but not component B and the alternative for pursuing component B but not component A.
- Section 2.2.4 (bullet E, page 2-4) states that the U.S. Air Force considered analyzing the impacts of using each state forest individually for training exercises rather than the proposed use of both forests. It states that it rejected this consideration because "one forest alone would not support the purpose and need of the Proposed Action." The all-or-none rationale (the proposed action or no action (no training activities off Eglin Air Force Base)) is faulty, because training on one forest certainly alleviates some of the problems with scheduling and conducting testing activities on the base. To broaden the range of alternatives and to give the Air Force decisionmaker the flexibility to pursue training on either of the forests (as required by 40 CFR 1505.1(e)), the EIS must include not only the proposal for pursuing training on both forests (as analyzed in the draft EIS) but also an alternative for each forest individually.
- Section 2.2.4 does not indicate that the Eglin Air Force Base tried to use other military bases for training exercises. Figure 2-2 (page 2-3) shows that Tyndall Air Force Base, Fort Rucker, and Fort Benning are within 150 nautical flight miles from Eglin Air Force Base, which is one of the selection criteria for training sites. The EIS must consider these military bases as alternative sites for training activities and analyze their suitability using the selection criteria discussed in section 2.2.1. Bureaucratic impediments (e.g., the

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possibility of the U.S. Army not wanting to accommodate the U.S. Air Force, a sister agency within the Department of Defense, in using the army bases) are not valid reasons for not rigorously exploring this as a reasonable alternative. The CEQ regulation at 40 CFR 1502.14(c) requires reasonable alternatives not within the jurisdiction of the lead agency to be analyzed. In applying this regulation to the Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative, the EIS must consider as possible reasonable alternatives the use of U.S. Army military bases not under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Air Force but under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense.

8. Figure 2-2 (page A-4).

Figure 2-2 shows rings extending 100 nautical flight miles (NM) from Hurlburt Field, 120 NM from Hurlburt Field, 120 NM from Eglin Air Force Base, and 150 NM from Eglin Air Force Base. According to section 2.2.1 (page 2-1), one of the selection criteria for conducting nonhazardous operations off the Eglin Range is training sites must be located within a 1-hour flight time (150 NM) from Eglin Air Force Base/Hurlburt Field to allow for day-trip training missions. Of the four nautical flight mile rings shown on Figure 2-2, only the 150 NM ring is pertinent to the selection of training sites. To alleviate the confusion that the other three rings cause, they should be eliminated from Figure 2-2.

9. Section 2.3.2, term of permit or lease for proposed activities.

The description of the proposed action does not state what permit or lease period the U.S. Air Force will seek. With respect to the emitter-sites component of the proposal, the draft EIS only states that "Emitter training sites identified would utilize FFS and FWC lands via leasing agreements" (page 2-6, line 1). With respect to the training-activities-on-State-forest component of the proposal, the draft EIS only states that a Landscape Implementation Team and a Gulf Landscape Initiative Liaison would coordinate with the Florida Forest Service to develop leases and agreements (page 2-9, line 6).

Statements are made that "The significance of impacts was determined by evaluating the context, intensity, and duration of the action" (page 22, lines 27 and 28; page 2-36, lines 25 through 27). Impacts do need to be assessed taking into consideration the duration of the action, but the draft EIS does not do this because it does not assess the effects of the proposed project over the total number of years that the permit or lease would run. Effects of a single use of an emitter station or a single training exercise might not be significant, but the cumulative effects of multiple emitter station exercises or multiple training exercises over the entire life of the permit or lease could be significant. (See below my related comments on cumulative impacts.)

In order to adequately assess the environmental impacts of the proposed action, the U.S. Air Force must state the term of the permit or lease that it will seek and analyze the impacts for this time period. If the length of the permit or lease term is uncertain, then the U.S. Force for the purpose of impact analysis must pick a reasonable term for the permit or lease (e.g., 10 years) and analyze the impacts that would occur during this time period.

10. Section 3.3.3, Noise, General Training Activity Impact Assessment.

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The draft EIS states the following.

> "USEPA has stated 44 dB and 51 dB as typical DNL noise levels at a farm area and a low-density residential area, respectively (USEPA, 1974). Based on noise levels measured in similar settings, ambient noise levels (i.e., while military training is not under way) at the forests are assumed to be 45 dB DNL"

(page 3-16, lines 10 through 13).

The analysis of noise impacts has advanced appreciably in the 40 years since the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency published its document in 1974. The draft EIS needs to cite a recent authoritative source.

The draft EIS underestimates baseline levels for noise at Tate's Hell State Forest. Rather than relying on and applying a general noise baseline guideline to the forest, the U.S. Air Force should collect baseline data at the forest and surrounding areas. Baseline noise levels in the forest are more like a wilderness area than a farm or low-density residential area. If for good reason the U.S. Air Force declines to collect actual baseline noise data, the EIS should assume a baseline noise level for the forest that like a wilderness area (i.e., lower than a farm or low-density residential area).

The draft EIS further states the following.

> "Social surveys suggest that at noise levels below 45 dB day-night average sound level for subsonic noise (DNLmr), less than 1 percent of the affected population can be expected to become highly annoyed, while at 65 dB DNLmr, about 7 percent of the population can be expected to become highly annoyed by the noise."

(page 3-16, lines 14 through 17).

Provide a reference for the "social surveys."

Recreational users of the forest (hikers, hunters, kayakers, etc.) come to the forest to get away from the maddening crowd. They are more sensitive to unnatural noise than the noise levels cited in the draft EIS.

11. Table 3-14 and section 6.3.3, noise impacts.

In the draft EIS:

> Table 3-14 states that "Noise [from aircraft operations] may be annoying to transient users [of the state forests] and permanent residents" (page 3-22).
> Noise Impact Summary section 6.3.3 states that "Noise associated with aircraft operations and munitions use would result in annoyance to some recreational users and residences" (page 6-13, lines 24 and 25).

In the jargon of the EIS, transient users and recreation users of the state forests, permanent residents, and residences are "noise receptors."

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Other noise receptors are recreationists that launch their boats out of Carrabelle just south of the forest and fish in Apalachicola Bay. Sound travels over water farther than it does over land (page 3-19, lines 39 and 40), and offshore sport fishermen would hear aircraft and other noise emanating from exercises at Tate's Hell State Forest. The EIS needs to consider these fishermen as being within the region of influence for the noise analysis.

The EIS also needs to analyze the impacts of noise to persons along the path of aircraft flying to Tate's Hell State Forest (including persons in Franklin County not only adjacent to the forest (e.g., Carrabelle) but also Apalachicola, the county seat, to the west of the forest). They are likewise within the region of influence with respect to noise. Apalachicola has the only municipal airport in Franklin County, and aircraft activity and noise is currently very low. Increased activity and noise will be an irritant to county residents and nonresident tourists, who have come to the "Forgotten Coast" for peace and quiet.

12. Section 3.11, Socioeconomics/Environmental Justice.

The draft EIS states that "Within the context of this EIS, 'socioeconomic resources' refers to the populations, economic activity, recreation, and tourism associated with the surrounding areas proposed for use" (underlining for emphasis added, page 3-88, lines 6 and 7). This statement needs to be revised to indicate that the socioeconomic resources are those not only in the area of proposed use but also in surrounding areas.

13. Section 3.11.1.1, Regulatory Drivers for Socioeconomics/Environmental Justice.

This section states that "There is no applicable regulatory setting for socioeconomics" (page 3-89, line 1). This statement is incorrect.

Section 102(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 requires the preparation of an EIS when there is a proposal for a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the "human environment."

As defined in the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1508.14:

> " 'Human environment' " shall be interpreted comprehensively to include the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with that environment. (See the definition of "effects" (Sec. 1508.8).) This means that economic or social effects are not intended by themselves to require preparation of an environmental impact statement. When an environmental impact statement is prepared and economic or social and natural or physical environmental effects are interrelated, then the environmental impact statement will discuss all of these effects on the human environment."

(Underlining for emphasis added.)

Because the U.S. Air Force has decided to prepare an EIS for the proposed project, and because the socioeconomic and natural and physical environmental effects of the proposed project are interrelated, the socioeconomic impacts of the proposed project must be analyzed in the EIS. Section 102(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act and the definition of "human

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environment" in the Council on Environmental Quality regulations at 40 CFR 1508.14 are the "regulatory drivers" for the socioeconomic impacts analysis.

14. Section 3.11.3, General Training Impact Assessment.

The draft EIS states the following.

> "A concern was expressed during the scoping comment period that housing values would be negatively impacted by noise associated with military training activities in the forest. There are many factors that influence the market value of a home including location, square footage, amenities, year built, and surrounding environmental conditions such as noise and safety. However, based on Sections 3.3 (*Noise*) and 3.4 (*Safety*), the training activities would avoid noise sensitive locations such as residences, schools, etc., therefore no significant impacts to housing values would be anticipated as a result of the proposed action" (page 3-92, lines 1 through 7).

(Underlining for emphasis added.)

Occupants of houses adjacent to Tate's Hell State Forest would be subjected to noise over long periods of time, and values of houses would certainly be negatively impacted under the maximum-use scenario. (See my comment number 15.) Under this scenario, living next to Tate's Hell State Forest would be like living next to an airport. Houses next to airports have lower values.

The draft EIS skirts the issue of noise impacts to housing values by stating that assessment of effects of the proposed project on housing values is complicated and that housing values would not be significantly impacted. The EIS needs to definitively state that under the maximum-use scenario the proposed project would negatively affect the value of houses adjacent to the forest. If the U.S. Air Force concludes that these devaluations would be insignificant, it must in the interest of full disclosure state the basis for this conclusion.

15. Section 6.11, Socioeconomics/Environmental Justice.

The draft EIS states that the region of influence for the socioeconomic impact analysis of the proposed action taking place on Tate's Hell State Forest is Liberty County and Franklin County, Florida (page 6-61, lines 12 and 13). The City of Carrabelle, which is one of only two incorporated towns in Franklin County, is adjacent to Tate's Hell State Forest. Its economy, and the economy of Franklin County, is reliant on tourism in a large way, but the draft EIS fails in the affected environment section to document the economic impact of tourism, and in the environmental consequences section fails to analyze the adverse impacts of the proposed project (e.g., noise from aircraft operation) to the local economies of the city and county. (Table 6-52 states the summary socioeconomics impacts conclusion for each of the tactical areas within the forest but doesn't address areas outside the forest in the region of influence.)

Also the draft EIS is flawed in that it considers the socioeconomic impacts of single events (e.g., the type, context, intensity, and duration of a single training exercise conducted within Tate's Hell State Forest) rather than the cumulative socioeconomic impacts of many events over the duration of the lease or permit and over the duration of a renewed lease or permit. (See my

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comments below on Chapter 7, Cumulative Impacts.) Many tourists are drawn to Franklin County and the "Forgotten Coast" because of its remote, quiet environment. Tourists from such places as Tallahassee and Atlanta seek an escape from the noise, congestion, and pollution of the cities. Frequent exposure of these tourists to noise would cause these persons to vacation elsewhere. The EIS needs to assess the adverse, cumulative impacts to the local economies of the City of Carrabelle and Franklin County that result from tourists staying away from the area due to the military's activities.

The draft EIS uses a "maximum-use scenario" as a basis for evaluating impacts.

> ". . . this EIS analysis evaluates impacts based on a "maximum-use scenario" that has been developed for each training activity. Evaluation of this scenario ensures that impact characterizations are conservative and do not underrepresent potential impacts should there be an occasion where maximum potential use would occur. Additionally, each maximum-use scenario is applied and analyzed for each forest in the event that one forest is unavailable for a certain type of training due to scheduling issues or other factors; this ensures that each forest is similarly treated in terms of potential impact" (page 2-10, line 24 through 31).

For proposed training activities in the two state forests and on the air base (i.e., the proposed training activities in each forest under the maximum-use scenario), the draft EIS indicates the following levels of activities.

- Light aviation proficiency training: 5 times/day, 232 days/year, 2 hours duration, day and night (table 2-5, page 2-15).
- Low-level helicopter insertions/extractions: 2 times/month, 2 hours duration, day and night (table 2-6, page 2-15).
- Airdrops (insertion and/or resupply of personnel via release of troops or equipment over land-based drop zones or over water): 4 times/day, 232days/year, 24 hours duration (table 2-8, page 2-17).

Under the maximum-use scenario for the above activities, the EIS must analyze the cumulative impacts of noise on the local economies of Carrabelle and Franklin County over the term of the permit or lease (my comment number 9) and the reasonably foreseeable extension of the permit or lease (my comment number 15). If the term of the permit or lease can reasonably be expected to be 10 years and the permit or lease can reasonably be expected to be extended for another 10 years, the cumulative impacts of noise from the above activities on the socioeconomic region of influence, including Carrabelle and Franklin County, must be assessed over the 10- and 20-year periods.

For instance, aviation airdrops over a 10-year period in Tate's Hell State Forest would occur 9,280 times (4 times/day X 232 days/year X 10 years = 9,280 separate airdrop incidents). Airdrops in the forest over a 20-year period would occur 18,560 times. The cumulative adverse impacts of this noise (in combination with the noise caused by light aviation proficiency training, low-level helicopter insertions and extractions, and by all other proposed project activities in the forest) on tourism and the economies of Carrabelle and Franklin County must be analyzed.

15. Chapter 7, Cumulative Impacts.

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In the introduction to the Cumulative Impacts section (page 7-1, lines 2 through 5), the EIS quotes the first sentence of the CEQ regulation at 40 CFR 1508.7 definition of "[c]umulative impact." Owing to the importance of this definition to the understanding of what "cumulative impacts" are and what the EIS must do to analyze them, quote the CEQ definition in its entirety (i.e., additionally quote the second (last) sentence of the CEQ definition).

As set forth at 40 CFR 1508.7,

> " 'Cumulative impact' is the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time."

(Underlining of second sentence added for emphasis.)

For the following reasons, the EIS cumulative impact analysis is flawed and inadequate.

- The proposal does not indicate the length of time for which the U.S. Air Force would seek a permit or lease. Without a designation of this time period, an assessment of cumulative impacts over the permit or lease period is not made. The lack of a cumulative impact analysis over the entire term of the permit or lease is not in compliance with the cumulative impact analysis requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. (See my comment number 9.)
- The CEQ regulation definition of "[c]umulative impact" requires that the cumulative impacts of "reasonably foreseeable future actions" be analyzed. Extensions of the permit or lease that the U.S. Air Force would obtain from the State of Florida are reasonably foreseeable future actions. Thus the draft EIS must analyze not only the cumulative impacts that would occur over the life of the permit or lease but also the impacts that would accrue during permit or lease extension periods. For example, if the original permit or lease term is 10 years and it is reasonable to expect that the U.S. Air Force would conform to the terms of the initial permit or lease and that the permit or lease would be extended for another 10 years, the draft EIS must analyze the cumulative impacts over a 20-year period. (See my comment number 9.)
- Draft EIS section 7.2, Cumulative Impact Assessment Methodology, states that "Cumulative analysis therefore focuses on the potential for cumulative impacts associated with the Proposed Action and each state forest region, as well as northwest Florida as a whole" (page 7-3, lines 28 through 30). Contrary to this statement, the draft EIS does not do this.

  Section 7.3 separately analyzes the cumulative impacts of the proposed action on the Blackwater River State Forest. Section 7.4 separately analyzes the cumulative impacts of the proposed action on the Tate's Hell State Forest. No section separately analyzes the cumulative impacts that would occur at Eglin Air Force Base. The EIS must analyze the combined, cumulative effect to each resource that would occur from carrying out the

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proposed action on Blackwater River State Forest, Tate's Hell State Forest, and Eglin Air Force Base.

For instance, the EIS must analyze the combined, cumulative impacts to the gopher tortoise, a state-protected species, (and black bear, indigo snake, bald eagle, etc.) that would occur as the result of disturbances on the two state forests and the Air Force base. Another example is that the EIS must assess the cumulative, hydrologic impacts that would occur regionally in Northwest Florida as the result of activities on all three areas.

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17 HEARING OFFICER: Carole Tebay?

18 CAROLE TEBAY: Good evening, I'm Carole Tebay,

19 Carol, C-A-R-O-L-E, Tebay, T-E, B as in boy, A-Y.

20 HEARING OFFICER: Could you speak, move just a

21 little bit closer to the microphone?

22 CAROLE TEBAY: Yes, is this better?

23 HEARING OFFICER: Yes, thank you.

24 CAROLE TEBAY: Good evening. I have the

25 following questions concerning your plan. Eglin Air

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Force Base has a number of acres which are restricted due to hazardous materials. Could this land be cleaned up to increase the amount of acreage available for training? In your EIS you mentioned working with hunters but not the occasional hikers, birders, horseback riders, kayakers, wanderers and people living in the forest. How will you conduct your missions, especially dropping up to 200 personnel and their supplies while hovering at tree top level onto water bodies and roadways without affecting residents and visitors?

Concerning the emitters, will they be as noisy as a home generator? How often will they be fueled? What about fumes and radiation? How will the emitters affect civil aviation, business and residential, electronic transmission, emergency transmissions and radio communication systems? Of will they affect bats and migrating birds, marine turtles, whales and falcons relying on their own electronic directional homing capabilities?

It is stated that cleared forests will be utilized for helicopter landing and drop off. How long do you see these areas being left unplanted? How will your landing affect compaction of the soil, erosion and undestroyed plants and wildlife?

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The Forest Service does not have long-range plans to continue clear cutting the forest but will selectively thin. What will the military do about landing sites when clear cutting ends? Roads and stream beds were not constructed to handle the additional Humvee and 2.5 ton trucks traffic. How will these highly erodible areas be maintained? Will the need for maintenance be monitored?

Wildlife fleeing the noise of war games may become entrapped in your concertina wire. Will these animals be rescued? How will they be cared for? Can you use a simulation of concertina wire?

During the 56 days per year of survival training if personnel eat three meals per day, there will 3306 meals consumed. Will personnel have time to cook deer and hog or will they be consuming smaller residents of the forest? Will monitors issue -- ensure that endangered animals and species of concern are not consumed? How will the human waste created as a result of all these meals, approximately 1120 pounds per year, be captured or will they be left to erode into the watershed?

I favor the no-action alternative. Thank you for your time.

[redacted]

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[redacted]

HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Thomas Barbig or Barbee?

THOMAS BARBIG: Hello, my name is Thomas Barbig, B-A-R-B-I-G.

Eglin Air Force Base is huge. It should be able to accommodate Air Force maneuvers or operations. Currently there are no hostile armies likely to land on our shores and invade our country, therefore, I do not see why the Air Force needs to use Blackwater River State Forest. In view of there are so few places a person can go in America commercial and industrial land in America is very locked up. If there is a dirt track through the woods, they are always blocked off. The public needs to have some place that they can go outdoors without the Air Force from preventing people from going hiking, bird watching, and camping, canoeing, hunting, fishing, dirt biking, four-wheeling, et cetera. Thank you.

[redacted]

GULF BAY REPORTING

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DANNY WHITE: My name is Danny White, W-H-I-T-E, White.

I think that a lot of stuff has already been said but it's, the impact on the forest I can't understand why it is it can't be used, but what I'd recollect from what I've heard is it's already been destroyed, the areas that they need to use for this purpose has already been destroyed, so they can't use it for that. So what makes us think -- I mean, we would have to be deaf, dumb, blind and stupid to not see what it's going to be doing to Blackwater State Forest. Are we not going to get the same thing, the same results? All the reports are already in. We don't have to have anymore reports. They're already in. I mean, you look at what's happening at Eglin. How dumb do you have to be not to see that?

I'm sorry, I don't understand why as many acres as Eglin has got, I'm not against the military. I was in the military. I thank God for the military, and we need them desperately but they're pushing something over on us that is not right. It's illegal in fact if you get right down to it. This is not a legal move. They have no right to come into the state and take state property that belongs

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to us. It doesn't belong to the federal government. And then our elected officials and everybody concerned here is going to come along and take control of what belongs to us without our say-so whatsoever. They're going to, oh, well let's see how you feel about it, okay? You don't like it, we're going to do it anyway. That's not right. There's nothing right about that.

So where are we going to go from here? What about the people that use the thing? I know that they've talked about the people that are using it. There's people in there every day. They're going to run them out. That's exactly what they're going to do. And they said, okay right now we've got all these things into place to protect the forest right now. But we're going to do more in the future. That could be the day after they get the permit. I don't know how long they're going to wait before they go in there and destroy everything but it's not going to be long. You can count on that.

I say that the government has already taken enough away from the people. They're supposed to be working for us, not trying to destroy us. Give us our forests back. Please don't take it from us. And I don't think there's very many people here that

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I_069

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1 wouldn't agree with me on this.

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GULF BAY REPORTING

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I_070

[redacted]

HEARING OFFICER: Austen Asquith?

UNIDENTIFIED: How do you spell it?

HEARING OFFICER: A-S-Q-U-I-T-H.

UNIDENTIFIED: That's correct.

AUSTEN ASQUITH: My name is Austen Asquith, A-S-Q-U-I-T-H. A lot of my concerns have already been discussed tonight, and I thank this gentleman who was just up here. He did a wonderful job of it, but maybe I can offer a partial solution to the Air Force's problem. It seems they stated that they need the land because of scheduling conflicts. I think everybody in this room has a family. They make schedules. They have to maneuver change whatever they have to do. I see no reason the Air Force can't reschedule and fit it in without taking public lands that we use and enjoy. In the meantime I guess when I get up in the morning, I'll continue my pursuit of happiness and head for the Blackwater and hopefully the Air Force won't get in my way because I will paddle. Thank you.

[redacted]

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I_071

CIINDY AUSTINO: Hi, I'm Cindy Austino, A-U-S-T-I-N-O. I guess basically to start off I just want to say that it is common sense this will hurt the environment. There's no ifs and buts about it. This will destroy the land. Eglin, you have destroyed it, and you have allowed people to grow in there -- come in there and build and live, so now you have to move where there's less population. Well there is a lot of population here. There's wildlife and there's people that go in there.

One of the groups that go in there is horseback riding. There's many horses that go in there and what this will do to the horses will scare them, spook them. People will get hurt. And there are many children that ride these horses in there. Okay? They will get hurt by a horse. When it rears up or it runs or something, they could get killed. Okay? And by looking at your pictures you'll be all over on top of where these horses go, all in -- you'll be there. You'll be in the bushes. You'll be doing grenades. You'll be -- there's smoke bombs.

And then they -- I was reading in here the chemicals, the toxins, everything that you're going to have, that will destroy this land. It's

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I_071

1 beautiful. Okay? It's not our fault that you close
2 bases everywhere else. That's not our problem.
3 Okay? That's the government's problems but don't
4 come in on us. This is a state park, state. All
5 right? Go back to your federal land or go back to
6 Eglin and clean it up and do what you need to do.
7 You don't -- you need to stay out of our place. And
8 the forestry, please, you need to vote no on this.
9 You need to do it for us. You're the "state"
10 forest, "state". Okay?
11 [redacted]
12 [redacted]
[redacted]
22 [redacted]
[redacted]

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I_072

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HEARING OFFICER: Ellen Roston or Ellen Ruston?

ELLEN ROSTON: My name is Ellen Roston, R-O-S-T-O-N. In my mind the forest is a sanctuary. It is a place for people to get away from everyday life. It is a natural environment with animals and birds and the quiet whispering of the trees. The use of this sanctuary by the military for exercises of any kind is simply wrong, wrong, wrong. Is there no one in this state, no governmental representative who will oppose the misuse and destruction of this sanctuary? Thank you.

GULF BAY REPORTING

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I_073

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1 [redacted]

11 [redacted]

22 HEARING OFFICER: Sandra Cantu?

23 SANDRA CANTU: Thank you. My name is Sandra

24 Cantu, C-A-N-T-U. As a retired Navy veteran, I

25 agree with the people that have spoken tonight.

GULF BAY REPORTING

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I_073

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Eglin, it should be big enough with all the training that needs to be done, and you don't need to come in and take the forest away from us.

I'd like to know how long our government officials knew that this was in the making. I never heard anything about it until the last couple of days. Did our government officials know about this and keep it from us?

(Comments from the audience.)

SANDRA CANTU: You said something about off-road vehicles and said there wouldn't be any off-road vehicles and then yet in the brochure it had something about off-road vehicles, so you're not telling us the truth. Helo sites, I can't believe that any of the helos that you have that are going to be landing out there are going to be able to do it in something where you don't have to cut down at least 50 or 60 trees.

The emitter sites that you said, you know, you can't have trees in the vicinity of it, I have helos, and some of the large helos that come right over my house at treetop level, right over my pasture. My horses run from them every day. I can't believe that it's going to be any -- it's not going to be any worse than that when you all

GULF BAY REPORTING

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I_073

increase the number of helicopters there.

My understanding is that the number of personnel in all the military is going to be decreasing in the next few years. Why do we need more sites for training? Thank you very much.

[redacted]

GULF BAY REPORTING

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I_074

HEARING OFFICER: Christa Aguila?

CHRISTA AQUILA: Hi, my name is Christa Aquila, A-Q-U-I-L-A. You know, growing up, I grew up in Los Angeles, and I lived 10 years in Philadelphia, so I grew up in an urban area. Moving down here, we fell in love with it because of Blackwater. For the sake of our family, stay out of Blackwater.

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I_075

[redacted]

HEARING OFFICER: Lonnie Hutchinson?

LONNIE HUTCHINSON: All right, first of all, how many people in this room are for a Blackwater military outpost? I don't see any hands.

UNIDENTIFIED: One.

LONNIE HUTCHINSON: All right. This speech is to the Air Force and the forestry division. I'm here tonight in opposition to military maneuvers and war games in Blackwater management area, but first I believe a little education would be, to enlighten the ignorant as to the ownership of Blackwater management area and the severity to stop this proposal.

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I_075

I put together some facts for you. The Federal Aid and Wildlife Restoration Act was established on September 2, 1937. This is commonly known as the Pittman Robertson Act. This act included an 11 percent tax on ammunition to be used to pay for 75 percent of the 180,000 original acres of land acquisition. This land is Blackwater management area, not Blackwater State Park. This means this land was bought by hunters. The Pittman Robertson Act was established to secure and preserve hunting lands now that we have established ownership and purpose of Blackwater Management Area, a hunting preserve by hunters for the preservation of hunting. Without that being I feel a deep depth of gratitude to the Nature Conservation Society for the recognition of the importance of this environment. I am proud to share the forest with anyone who sees the importance of protecting this priceless resource.

The forestry division claims that if there is any negative impact that's seen then they will cease permitting use. If any negative impact? Impact is inevitable. More vehicles, more erosion. Forest animals are sensitive to human movement and encroachment. White tail deer have already become

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I_075

seasonably nocturnal and have changed their breeding cycle by months because of human contact.

The forest is home to 2500 species of plant and 300 species of birds. The forest is also home to many endangered species. Included in this are, one specie of fish, five amphibian, eight reptile, five birds, three mammals, fifty-four invertebrates and nineteen plants.

One could say that the forest ecosystem is fragile, sensitive and irreplaceable. There is not another watershed like this in the world, so helicopters, soldiers, war games, blank ammunition in this sensitive area? All I can promise is nothing but negative impact.

I do not know understand why the Division of Forestry feels like they have the right to lease the property they have been entrusted to protect. Basically what they are doing is leasing our forest to the biggest corporation in America to have large scale paint ball wars in. This land is ours, not the division of forestry or the Air Force.

The serenity of Blackwater Management Area apparently has a price. The Division of Forestry wants to sell our serenity for a couple of hundred thousand dollars. I say it's not worth it.

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I_075

Blackwater Management Area is priceless and not for sale. As I recall, about a year ago we fought off oil and gas for exploring Blackwater Management Area and further.

HEARING OFFICER: Mr. Hutchinson, you need to wrap up your comments, please.

LONNIE HUTCHINSON: No, I -- I'm almost done.

The military claims they need more land. I am in disbelief. They already have 464,000 acres of reservation encompassing four counties. This land has been given solely to the military. Seventy-five percent of this land, 324,000 acres, are restricted and trespassing if prohibited and punishable by federal law. What an interesting concept of sharing the land the military has.

I also want to comment on a statement the Air Force has issued. They said that if the proposal doesn't go through, the military will leave the area. I am a resident of northern Santa Rosa County, and the military doesn't have a fraction of the impact on the economy on the north end of the county as the forest does.

HEARING OFFICER: Mr. Hutchinson, I'll have to ask you to end your comment at this time.

LONNIE HUTCHINSON: All right. I -- two more.

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I_075

I say quit trying to steal the most valuable resource real estate in the state of Florida. I do not believe we are going to have anymore wars in the last three percent of wire grass forest so why not pack up and move to the desert where wars are fought and land is cheap.

I have come here tonight to educate the Air Force the ownership and intended usage of this land. I'm also here to rally any fellow hunters and conservationists to take a stand against the federal threat -- theft of our resource.

HEARING OFFICER: Mr. Hutchinson --

LONNIE HUTCHINSON: As a 6th generation Native Floridian I want to ensure my son, a 7th generation native, will see the last wire grass forest that inspired his entire culture and all of his customs.

HEARING OFFICER: Mr. Hutchinson, you're --

LONNIE HUTCHINSON: Stay the heck out of Blackwater Management Area. This is going to get uglier than anyone can imagine. This is my culture and how I feed my family, and I will protect that right with my last breath if necessary.

[redacted]

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I_076

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1 [redacted]

23 HEARING OFFICER: William Dunaway?

24 WILLIAM DUNAWAY: I'm Will Dunaway,

25 D-U-N-A-W-A-Y. I'm a citizen of Escambia County,

GULF BAY REPORTING

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I_076

and a fellow paddler with many of these people here.

One of the impacts that I think that the public is having a problem they're having with this EIS is that it provide no alternatives. This is where it is fatally flawed. The whole purpose of NEPA is to inform the decision maker of the reasonable alternatives for the proposed action. We've already heard that the proposed action is simply whether we do it or not. That is insufficient under NEPA. It's insufficient under the process and it's going to fail.

The process through the range of alternatives is guided by the Council on Environmental Quality. You have the whole process is laid out, the whole first question is addressing the range of alternatives. The alternatives that CEQ looks to talked about an unlimited number of alternatives. They even then say well maybe you would narrow it down to a couple of hundred. You have provided no alternatives. This is a fatally flawed document and it is going to fail. Your purpose and need states that, in your analysis is that whether you are going to implement the proposed action. The proposed action then talks about the use of both Blackwater and the Hell's Tate Forest (sic). Then you say that

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I_076

the Hell's Tate Forest may have been eliminated because of criteria.

The criteria you established was one and a half hours from Eglin. Military training occurs throughout the world. There is no reason to narrow the criteria to one and a half hours. If you were to simply try to find a more narrow definition of alternatives, you couldn't do a better job than what you've done with your criteria. You have eliminated the possibility of doing what NEPA asks you to do, provide the citizens with a process by which we can evaluate alternatives to what you are trying to do. You say you are trying to make the regional shortfall of military training and testing in the area. You state that the demand for the range and the use of the restricted area over Eglin creates scheduling problems. Others have addressed that. John Veasey was absolutely right, get a better scheduler. Figure it out.

There's 600 and some 40 square miles of land in Eglin alone. You have plenty of room throughout this process. This whole idea is designed for flexibility and mission creep. It's our state forest and it is not going to survive a NEPA analysis and a litigation challenge. Count on it

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I_076

1 and be prepared for it.

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GULF BAY REPORTING

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I_077

1 [redacted]

2 HEARING OFFICER: Wallis Mahute?

3 WALLIS MAHUTE: My name is Wallis Mahute. First

4 name W-A-L-L-I-S. Last name M-A-H-U-T-E.

5 First of all, the first comment I have to make

6 I see that there are no elective officials present

7 at this meeting. If Governor Scott is so big on

8 supporting this effort, where is he? And also in

9 the past, one of our county commissioners has

10 insinuated that if you are not in support of this

11 effort, you are not patriotic. That is bull.

12 UNIDENTIFIED: Which one is that?

13 WALLIS MAHUTE: Everyone in this room supports

14 the military, they just do not support the military

15 in the Blackwater Forest.

16 I heard in your presentation in your own

17 propaganda presentation this evening that radar will

18 need improved roadways so there you go. We start

19 off with improving roadways. You're already

20 invading the forest. It will need tree cutting or

21 topping. Invading the forest. You're changing it.

22 You are changing it right away.

23 It was stated that if adverse impacts were

24 identified, additional resources, specific

25 mitigations would be used. You're telling us right

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I_077

1 away that there will be adverse impacts if you're
2 already thinking of mitigation. The fact that
3 protection levels were identified tells me that
4 protection is an issue. Insignificant impacts are
5 still impacts. Cumulative impacts, one impact on
6 top of another impact could mean really, really bad
7 things for the future of the Blackwater Forest. How
8 can you mitigate cumulative impacts?
9 And to the Forestry Department I would say this
10 forest is priceless. Don't sell it out.
11 [redacted]

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I_078

[redacted]

HEARING OFFICER: Ashlynn Smith?

ASHLYNN SMITH: Hi, it's Ashlynn Smith, A-S-H-L-Y-N-N, Smith, S-M-I-T-H. I live and reside in technical area 8, and I apologize to you all because I have not had that much time to read a five hundred and something page draft, but I felt like it was important to come up here and at least say something, so I wanted to point out specific concerns that I had in the statement.

On table 46 you say that four out of the twelve emitter sites are in forest lands or wetlands. I just wanted to make a recommendation that those, at least those four sites are removed from the final copy statements. Also in Chapter 5.2.3, your airspace impact summary, you say in summary air

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space management impacts would be regional and would include some positive impacts. In parentheses you say those positive impacts are reduced scheduling conflicts at Eglin Range and some negative impacts. In parentheses, increased air traffic and air space over Blackwater State Forest. It seems like the only positive impacts are to Eglin Air Force Base. There's nothing positive for the public.

In Table five-four your air space impact summary says that there's going to be increased air traffic, primarily at low altitudes over Blackwater State Forest and in your presentation this evening it stated that the GRASI objective was to have high altitude military airspace so there was a conflict there that could be clarified in the final. The draft also didn't account for who might hold you all accountable for what you say you're going to do. I know as a public citizen, I don't have access to equipment that let's me know if your airplanes are flying at a certain altitude or not so I would just -- I would wonder who would hold you accountable to those things. Also, how would you avoid threatened plants and animals in the dark?

I know during hunting season you say that you're going to reduce your times to two hours after

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I_078

dark and two hours before light. If you could address that in the final statement as well as to how you would do that at night. I mean, I don't know, is everyone wearing night vision goggles or -- I'm not in the military. I don't know how that works. And that's all I have. Thanks.

[redacted]

GULF BAY REPORTING

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[redacted]

HEARING OFFICER: Tonya Delfo?

TONYA DELFO: My name is Tonya Delfo, T-O-N-Y-A D-E-L-F-O. I retired out to Coldwater -- Blackwater Forest, and I have horses. I love going out on my porch and enjoying the -- the peacefulness. I ride every day. We have a lot of national events that are now held out there because we're the only ones that -- northwest Florida that have this many miles. This is going to really interfere a lot with the equine population. I also want to point out that your noise abatement protocol is a joke.

I'm married to ex-military and that is, a thousand feet is nothing. Eglin wants training mostly at night but they practically have full access night training on the following ranges and areas of Eglin property: All western ranges B70, B71, B75, excuse me, Ranger Camp Sumpte, 7th Special Forces compound, eastern ranges, Shelby ranges in Mississippi and Fort Rucker ranges. Some type of a

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I_079

lot of property y'all have right there.

Also you said you will use biodegradable paint balls. Well, biodegradable refers to how readily something decomposes into the environment, however, it really has nothing to do with whether or not it isn't toxic. Now, do we have any long-term proof that this will not be a problem to any of our animals or going into the soil or to the water, especially to all of us who live out there, and we all have wells.

Also, you're going to be using aircraft. What are you going to do when these aircraft are actually taking out some of these endangered birds, the birds we're trying to protect? Aviation -- my husband being ex-aviation I know that's going to happen so what happens when you take out an eagle or some of these woodpeckers and they have a nest of babies that are now going to starve or be taken by predators because their mom's not going to return? So I think there's a lot when you -- we really need to think out -- outside the box here. Thank you.

[redacted]

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I_080

[redacted]

[redacted]

HEARING OFFICER: Is Jan Leech still here? Is Jan Leech still here? Ladies and gentlemen, please, if you could quiet down. Is Jan Leech still here? Jan Leech.

JANNA LEECH: I'm here. Good evening, my name is Janna Leech, J-A-N-N-A L-E-E-C-H. I'm one of many people that have a home out in Blackwater or right on the boundaries of. My concern is we have a lot of problems out there to begin with. Our roads need a great deal of repair. Our rivers flood. The bridges need repair. We have helicopters flying over our rooftops, C 130s flying over. I've seen what it does to the deer with fawns in my front yard. It scares them.

The deer are completely out of their cycle of having their young. They're abandoning their young in my front yard. Too many things are happening. I'm concerned about all the wildlife, not just the few endangered species, all of them. My biggest concern is the planes. What is going to happen if they have an emergency? I've already had one helicopter land in the field just north of my house. They had an emergency. Had it not been for me

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I_080

having my house phone they could not have made contact to have somebody come out with a trailer and a truck to pick up their bird. It could have been my house. I'm right there. Not even 50 yards from my house it went down. I don't want to lose my house.

You talk about scheduling. How long will it be before they say the scheduling into Blackwater, well I'm sorry, we need it to where then the public no longer has access because your scheduling is more important? I respect the military. I understand their need for training, but I draw the line when they want to come and play in my back yard.

The public and the military have no business being together during that point. And we are all there right around it. We are there all the time. You'll be in. You'll be out. We get stuck with the damages done. I don't want that. I want to live there. I don't want my house to be landed on, crashed, burned out or anything else. I moved there because I like the solitude. When the planes start coming over, and it scared me the first time I heard it. I thought it was going to crash. We don't need any of that. We have enough problems out there without the military coming in there. Find another

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I_080

area to play.

Training is important, yes, but not in our back yard. If you have a scheduling problem, there are lots of mothers here that we know how to schedule. Call any one of us, and we'll help out.

[redacted]

GULF BAY REPORTING

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HEARING OFFICER: Susan Creer?

JUDI RUSSELL: Creel.

UNIDENTIFIED: You got it.

HEARING OFFICER: Susan Creel.

SUSAN CREEL: Thank you. I just wanted to comment on all the great people that have come before me to make their comments, and I support them. I support no participation with the Air Force and Blackwater. Thank you.

GULF BAY REPORTING

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I_082

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1 [redacted]

[redacted]

15 HEARING OFFICER: Chris Pack?

16 CHRIS PACK: Hi, my name is Chris Pack, Poppa,

17 Alpha, Charlie, Helo. I know all about the

18 military. My father was a colonel. My husband was

19 a commander. My bother's a two-star general. I

20 think that makes me an expert.

21 I would like to tell you that my husband

22 couldn't be here tonight because he gets very angry

23 about what is going on. We paddle, we camp, we love

24 our forest. One of the first adventures we ever had

25 probably 12 years ago was seeing a fox squirrel.

GULF BAY REPORTING

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I_082

I'd never seen one in my life, and now they're endangered. And furthermore, I just wanted to tell you that I do have a couple of concerns for the record, and I hope I get to see my name in print someday so here I go.

I'm a conservationist, a paddler, a wildlife lover, and a tree hugger, and I would like to quote that we are a nation of people who stood up for what they believed, and I thank you all for coming tonight because you stand up for what you believe. And even if you are for this, you're still doing the democratic process so I thank God for that.

Low-flying aircraft to and from drop sites morning and evening concerns me greatly. This is a real good one for me. Who's going to clean all this up, spent cartridges and paint-ball waste from 230 plus days of use, and who will fix the roads and the trails? I'm presuming that the forest service will probably not do that. That would be us who clean up. And I want to tell you something else. I've never ever cleaned up anything after hunters, ever. They are very good, but I can't tell you about the military.

The only other thing I really want to ask you is it has been said that it is a sanctuary. The

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I_082

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1 forest and the rivers around here are sanctuaries,
2 so several of us, we go on this camping trip, and
3 we're on a little crystalline beautiful sand bar
4 enjoying ourselves. Then you get the picture of
5 we're being surrounded by men in camouflage with
6 face paint, and we're being hit with paint balls.
7 Now who's going to protect us? And don't tell me
8 you're not going to interfere with the public
9 because we are there every day and that has been
10 stated 70 times tonight, at least 70. So I beg of
11 you to reconsider all plans. And stay out of the
12 Tate's Hell too.
13 [redacted]

GULF BAY REPORTING

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I_083

1 [redacted]

13 HEARING OFFICER: Dennis Hettenhaus?

14 DENNIS HETTENHAUS: Hi, my name is Dennis,

15 Dennis Hettenhaus, H-E-T-T-E-N-H-A-U-S. I

16 absolutely support most everyone that does not want

17 the military in Blackwater. I'm with them 100

18 percent. We're war weary. That doesn't mean we

19 don't support the military and all the wonderful

20 people in it. I'm a combat veteran. I have the

21 medals and the ribbons, and I served my six years.

22 I don't want to share the forest with the military.

23 I don't want to be reminded. It's a place to get

24 peaceful. It's a place to relax and the military

25 with their vehicles, their troops not going to be

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I_083

too relaxing. I already decided if we lose, I will not go to Blackwater anymore. Head for Alabama I guess.

Anyway, also various things that have been covered, the EMF transmissions, electrical magnetic waves, probably been no wildlife studies on exactly how much they will affect the wildlife, how much they will affect the hunters and people enjoying at what distance. You know, it's a problem. It's a growing problem, tumors all of that sort of thing, people moving away from cell phone towers.

Yeah, the other thing, Eglin, seven years I've been knocking around on Eglin. I've been hunting. I've been paddling all along streams, even been camping. Covered a lot of distance, and you know, something, I never saw any troops, never. And I'm talking hundreds maybe even thousand acres. I never saw anybody other than the private dicks. So that's all I have to say.

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I_084

1 [redacted]

20 HEARING OFFICER: Anthony Bailey?

21 ANTHONY BAILEY: Hello, my name's Anthony

22 Bailey. It's A-N-T-H-O-N-Y B-A-I-L-E-Y. I'd like

23 to say for the record that I'm a Vietnam veteran,

24 and I support our military in every way, it's just

25 not in this endeavor that they're proposing tonight.

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I_084

And I want to share a few figures with you.

I don't know if any people know the size of Eglin. According to the figures that I've got it's 11,000 square miles. That's 7,040,000 square acres in comparison to 190,000 acres for Blackwater. That means Eglin is 37 times as large as Blackwater but yet the Air Force needs more space?

They talk about needing non-hazardous -- are they going to do non-hazardous training? Well, non-hazardous training requires las -- less land space or land mass for the training than the hazardous training does, so they've got plenty of mass, plenty of land to do their non, so called non-hazardous training. Okay?

They also talk about impact on the environment, okay? They say they're going to minimize that impact. Well, when I was in Vietnam, I was involved in setting up some camp sites, setting up helicopter pads and things like that, and let me tell you, we got the word to minimize environmental impacts too. And at the same time we were told get the job done, and that's what it's going to be. It's going to be get the job done.

If that 100 year old live oak tree is sitting out there in the middle of where that helicopter

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I_084

patch is going to, supposed to be, do you think they're going to move that helicopter pad? It's already been designated where it's going, folks, and that's where it's going. Okay?

There was something else too. We talk about these surveys. You know, you can make a survey say anything you want it to. Okay? But they always come about these surveys and these endangered species. Well you know what, last time I checked, I'm one of them, so is my wife, so is my children, so is my grandchildren, so is everyone of you and all the families that's represented here. When they going to start thinking about how it endangers us? I think that's just another example of how in this case the Air Force has gotten their priorities all mixed up. Okay?

The other thing is, you know, when you -- if you're out -- if you've ever been out around Eglin, I'm not knocking Eglin but what Eglin has got going for it is dirty, dirty dirt, scrub oaks, palmettos and, oh what was I telling, stickers. Okay? You come out to Blackwater, you've got beautiful live oaks. You've got beautiful forests, beautiful undergrowth. We've got beautiful white sandbars on crystal clear creeks, and we've got peace and quiet

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I_084

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that allows us to get out and enjoy a family environment. Okay?

HEARING OFFICER: Mr. Bailey, you need to wrap up, please.

ANTHONY BAILEY: Okay. That will go away. That's going to go away. Okay?

The only other thing is God bless America because God knows that's what we need. Okay?

[redacted]

GULF BAY REPORTING

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HEARING OFFICER: Glynda Cupp?

GLYNDA CUPP: My name is Glynda, G-L-Y-N-D-A, Cupp, C-U-P-P, and my family has been in the forest, lived in the area before the forest was developed. We've been there since the early 1900s. We pay our taxes just like everybody else, but I've watched the forest change over my lifetime. As a child, I hunted with my father, and we could find quail everywhere. Now it's very unusual to see a covey of quail. It's very unusual if you're anyone that's living in the area, unless you own property on the river, to be able to get to the river. There are only certain areas that you can go in.

I've watched the forest service come in and dump truckloads after truckloads of dirt so, into places where we've never, we've always been able to go, and you no longer can go. And what we were told

GULF BAY REPORTING

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was that the traffic to the river made the river not be clean, and yet we're talking about all kind of things being brought in, which I find very strange.

I do -- the other thing that concerns me when I read the proposal, they talked about some of the survival training might require that they eat small animals, which includes quails, rabbits, squirrels I'm assuming. And again, we've watched the animals go down in all of these areas. When I was growing up, when I -- when we came out of my house to go anywhere, we always saw animals cross the road. You always did and now it's very seldom I see anything cross the road, so I am very concerned about the impact.

Yet -- the noise, you -- we talk about the proposal has said they won't do it until two hours after sundown and two hours, they'll quit two hours before sunrise, and as someone's already said, this is a management Area. This is not a park. This is not -- does not own, belong to the federal government. This belongs to the state of Florida, and we are the state of Florida, so I'm concerned. You're going to -- again, the proposal said they would not be in, in the daytime during hunting season, but you're going to have the hunters in,

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which they belong there and then four hours later you're going to have the other helicopters, planes, whatever coming in, so you've got constant noise.

And I don't know when the study was done, if they took into -- if they counted how much Air Force is already over the forest every day, and we're talking six to seven hours sometimes.

HEARING OFFICER: Ms. Cupp, I need you to wrap up with your comments, please.

GLYNDA CUPP: But I do think that we need to remember, this belongs to us. This doesn't belong to the federal government. It doesn't belong to the forestry service or wildlife management, and we do not want them in the forest. Thank you.

[redacted]

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1 [redacted]

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15 HEARING OFFICER: Sandra Castille?

16 SANDRA CASTILLE: Sandra Castille, last name

17 C-A-S-T-I-L-L-E, a concerned citizen.

18 We've heard many comments tonight, both

19 instructive, well thought out, a lot of emotional

20 reaction, and everybody understands where that

21 emotion comes from. Most of what I had on my long

22 list has been covered, so there are just one or two

23 things that I'd like to bring up again.

24 The agreement, in my going through the

25 executive summary I could not find anything about

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the duration of the agreement for use before it's re-visited or re-evaluated, or who would be in charge of seeing that things were carried out the way they were supposed to be. So, you know, I'd like a little bit -- is it going to be forever once that paper's signed? Is it forever?

Another thing I found interesting, the amphibious operations, there aren't that many river -- there's one river but it's all recreation. There are a couple of little lakes but they're also recreation so I'm just curious about how the military will operate their amphibious maneuvers. And the business of having to check the schedule in order to be able to use the forest. It's just not acceptable to have it restricted for the public at "any" time.

I'm just going to close with one comment. This is from the mission statement from the State Forest Department. Its primary mission is managing these lands to protect and maintain the biological diversity of the many ecosystems found in and around the state forests while integrating public use of the resources. So I don't think the military is really covered in that public uses. I think it's for us. Thank you.

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HEARING OFFICER: Judi Russell?

JUDI RUSSELL: That's J-U-D-I R-U-S-S-E-L-L. I'm a retired teacher so I've got to have my visual aids, so this is the first one.

HEARING OFFICER: Ms. Russell, I'll have to ask you to stand near the microphone.

JUDI RUSSELL: Oh, you want me to stand here? Okay, wait a minute. I'm talking about visual aids. This one, "GRASI is a terrible secret," you ask people do they know about GRASI, nobody knows. I talked to a Boy Scout leader. Wouldn't he know what's going on in the forest? No. He said, GRASI, what is that? You ask anybody on the street, they don't know what it is.

This is a very non-transparent action and it is not right. This land is land that was bought with Florida Forever funds. That's how they got Tate's Hell. Forever, are we at forever now that the military wants to take this land and use it? Is that where we are? I don't think it's forever yet. I think the military needs to get out.

Where did the sunshine go? We have a sunshine law. It seems we're a little bit confused. Mike Spaits says that the Pentagon has the final decision. Pentagon, what happened to the

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Acquisite -- Acquisition and Restoration Council? I got it right. What happened to them? That's who -- where I think the decision's made about what's going to happen in Florida. This is not Pentagon land. This is Florida land.

I would say well that's the only thing. No, no, that's not. I say that the military should stay on the land they already polluted. Clean it up. But there are a lot of other solutions that they could take. They could take the closed bases and put this training there. What's wrong with that? Then there are individual land owners. I have a letter here from an individual land owner who would like to rent his land to the Air Force, but they don't want to rent anything. They want to take it for free from us. So he says, We have a thousand or more acres in north Walton County that could be suitable for the described activities, and this has low military air activity over it all the time.

When this GRASI proposal was first announced in the Daily News, the article indicated that privately owned land was also being considered. More than a year ago I contacted the OPR of Eglin about possibly using our land. My offer was summarily disregarded. As a retired Air Force officer with experience in

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special ops, I have a basic understanding of what the military needs in this regard. Using private land for at least some of this training would take a bit of pressure off the public lands. That's the (inaudible) with service link certainly consider making our land available for non-destructive military training, but you have to pay for it. Well, how would we would pay for it? We certainly have wasted tons of money overseas that if we would stop paying mercenaries to fight our wars, and pay them $100,000 a year compared to what we pay our real troops and then let them do the dirty work, we have a lot of money that we could use to buy suitable desert for the military to train on.

A very wise person once said that we do not own the land. We borrow it from our children.

UNIDENTIFIED: That's right.

JUDI RUSSELL: Well, we ain't going to borrow it. There's nothing going to be left for them.

HEARING OFFICER: Ms. Russell, you need to wrap up your comments, please.

JUDI RUSSELL: You haven't given me 15 minutes like you (inaudible).

What -- I want to know what's going on with the water management district. Do they have some kind

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I_087

of secret deal about Econfina? Econfina is the most beautiful creek in Florida. How dare they consider giving that to anybody.

I also want to say that what will 50 survival troops eat on the way up the river. Well, endangered gopher tortoise is delicious and so are woodpeckers. They even have it in their little booklet about how you can catch a bird, head it and eat it.

HEARING OFFICER: Ms. Russell, I have to ask you to --

JUDI RUSSELL: Okay, I have to say one more --

HEARING OFFICER: -- finish your statement.

JUDI RUSSELL: -- thing and then I'll quit.

Only -- this is an Indian, Crete Indian statement. 'Only after the last tree has been cut down, only after the last river has been poisoned, only after the last fish has been caught only then will we learn that money can't be eaten.'

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[redacted]

HEARING OFFICER: Donna Scott?

DONNA SCOTT: Hi, Donna Scott, S-C-O-T-T.

I'm a retired bank credit officer so I look at things a little differently. My market area included the Florida panhandle. I've watched the real estate in this area decrease by 30 to 40 percent, and my concern is for the homeowners in the area since their homes are their largest asset. The impact that they -- on the homes and real estate in the area with the military moving in, so many people have been impacted so negatively that actually, and have worked so hard to hold onto their homes, and they're -- if for any reason they decided to vacate the area because of the activity and the noise, will they be able to get even what they owe on their property or will it push certain homeowners into bankruptcy?

And for the lady that talked about horse riding? Actually I rode with a cohort today with my 10 year old granddaughter. I told her I was coming to this meeting, and I hope it's there for her grandchildren to ride too. Thank you.

[redacted]

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24 HEARING OFFICER: Sherry Starler?

25 SHERRY STARLING: My name is Sherry Starling,

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and that's S-T-A-R-L-I-N-G and not S-T-E-R.

And I actually am an environmental professional with over 25 years experience in this, hazardous waste inspector and environmental consultant. I've worked at Eglin and nearby in environmental programs so I do know they have a good program. I do have some concerns, though, and I've only had a few minutes to review this, this Draft Environmental Impact Statement. I wish I had, had more time because just in a few minutes I picked out some things that just sort of really threw me off base.

The DEIS states that the increased potential for wildfires is unavoidable. How many of you heard that? If I applied for a permit to do some activity in Blackwater River and told them that oh, one of the side effects is increased potential for wildfires, do you think I'd get the permit?

UNIDENTIFIED: No.

SHERRY STARLING: I just -- yeah, okay. I mean, we're concerned about wildfires in our forest and this is going to increase the number of them.

Secondly, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement states that radiation emitters, that's what they are essentially doing is emitting radiation, with large safety hazard distances will

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be used. So that means the area around them to mitigate the effects is going to be quite large because of the amount of radiation that's emitted and can be unsafe, the nature of that radiation to humans. And it says the use will be restricted in close proximity to populated areas. It exposure to -- if exposure to humans is unsafe, what's it doing to the wildlife in that area? You know, biologically, what is it doing to their reproductive activities? How is it affecting all species, including the endangered species, that are being affected by this radiation? So they're concerned with people, which is good, but what about the wildlife and isn't that why we have a national forest, to protect wildlife so that the people can enjoy it so that maybe the deer don't have three heads? I mean, maybe that would make it easier for the hunters, but -- okay.

And just the third point that I saw just briefly going through that three or four page -- pound document, maybe five pound document. I mean, I hope you all have read it.

JUDI RUSSELL: Uh-uh. I couldn't even download it.

SHERRY STARLING: The third one is why are

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vehicle maintenance activities conducted in the forest rather than on base? It says in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement that during the time that they're out there they're going to be actually doing maintenance activities on their vehicles and collecting waste, hazardous waste like solvents, paints, oils, et cetera, and those are going to be stored in containers, and there's the potential for release and contamination of the forest.

Okay, those are just three points. If I had a few hours to spend with this document, I could find a whole bunch of other things that disturb me. But it is a protected area. It's for the use of the Florida residents. I don't -- you know, I -- I worked out at Eglin. It's gigantic. They've got places to train our guys. I've seen all the camps. I've seen ranger camps. I've seen all of them. I don't know why they need our forests. Okay, thank you.

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1 [redacted]

20 HEARING OFFICER: Jack Bonney? I believe it's
21 B-O-N-N-E-Y.
22 JACK BONNEY: Correct. Hi, my name is Jack
23 Bonney, B-O-N-N-E-Y, and I do not have anything
24 prepared because I did not know I was going to speak
25 tonight. Thank you Gary for signing me up.

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What I do want to say is that I have never been more proud to stand in front of a group like this that's so supportive of this Black Forest area. It is very, very nice. Thank you for coming out.

My other comment is that I'm very disappointed and not proud of the Florida State Wildlife Commission and the Florida state control of our state forests. There's obviously some political pressure here because I know most of the time whenever I talk with people who are in jobs like they have, they're fearful of their job. We have a list of species in Florida that needs to be protected. It's not mentioned in this document. I'm very, very disappointed that the people in charge of those species are not raising holy hell. There's only one reason. They fear their job. What we need to do is take our energy, and we need to let Governor Scott know you ain't getting reelected if this crap goes through. Thank you.

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[redacted]

20 HEARING OFFICER: Dave Smith? Dave Smith? One

21 last call for Dave Smith.

22 LAURA PLOWMAN: That's my brother-in-law, and

23 he had to leave so can I speak for him?

24 HEARING OFFICER: What's your name, ma'am?

25 LAURA PLOWMAN: I'm on -- number 43.

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HEARING OFFICER: Are you Laura Plowman?

LAURA PLOWMAN: Plowman, yes.

HEARING OFFICER: Yes, ma'am.

LAURA PLOWMAN: Thank you. My name is (inaudible).

(Court reporter asks Ms. Plowman to speak into the microphone.)

LAURA PLOWMAN: I'm an American citizen for 56 years --

(Ms. Plowman is asked to spell her name.)

LAURA PLOWMAN: P-L-O-W-M-A-N -- and born into a military family. I have a son that's recently out of the service from eight years serving and going back to school. My father's 85 years old, retired military pilot, Dave Smith, who was here, so -- a retired Lt. Col. in the Marines, helicopter pilot, another brother-in-law who is also retired Navy helicopter pilot, and I am here representing myself, my children, my grandchildren, your children, your grandchildren, their children and grandchildren and in support of my fellow friends that camp and paddle, and my husband who hunts on these lands, and I'm ashamed.

I'm really, really ashamed that forestry service people who studied to do what you do, and

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you have been doing so well in protecting these lands and the species and this environment and keeping us following those rules would sell out to whatever pressure it is, to lose your job, budget cuts, whatever it is and whoever politically is pushing this through. And look at that, is there, is there a political entity in here at all? Is there an elected official in here at all in our, from our area that represents any of this? Not at all. That I'm not surprised at, at all, but I am really ashamed. Shame on y'all for selling out to this.

I support the military. I was born into the military. I'm a ultimate Navy brat. My sisters, my brother-in-law, I know that we need to protect and our -- our -- ourselves and our people and our freedoms. This does not protect our freedom.

I would like to read my Facebook. And the attorney that was here earlier, everybody take note this will be litigated, and we will stand up to support that litigation in every single way we possibly can, and this will not just be our local area. We will make sure that it becomes national. It will not be snuck by everybody.

I posted on my Facebook, which I have friends

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in Japan that are on my Facebook that I was stationed with. 'My local Facebook friends, those of you who are my friends because of mutual love of paddling and camping already know about this but, 'I am pleading with those of you who don't know about this to please join us tonight, Thursday, June 5th, in Bagdad. The military is pushing through taking over much of our Blackwater and Tate's Hell State Forests for military operations. This will greatly restrict the common citizens ability to use and enjoy hunting, fishing, hiking, paddling and camping. They have been wheedling out these plans for years on the down low in an effort to keep us from knowing what they will do and to avoid public opposition. As politicians know well, if you bury your intentions in hundreds of pages of legalese and confusing language, you can deceive the masses to follow you down any self-serving destructive path.'

HEARING OFFICER: Ms. Plowman, your time's up.

LAURA PLOWMAN: 'The environmental impact is unacceptable, and I want to let the government know that my hard-earned money taken from me most of my life,' I was a candy striper at Ft. Belvore at 15 years old, in the hospital --

HEARING OFFICER: Ms. Plowman, we have

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additional speakers that we need to get to before the close of the hearing.

LAURA PLOWMAN: Can I add to my -- my speaking time?

HEARING OFFICER: No, ma'am.

LAURA PLOWMAN: I'll have to get back up.

HEARING OFFICER: No, ma'am -- if we have -- if we do have time at the close of the hearing, but we're approaching the time of the hour that we will have to end the hearing, and there's a few other that need to speak so --

LAURA PLOWMAN: 'We want to be able to teach our children how to respect this home and this stewardship that we've been given to be over, and we won't have that opportunity to teach them in our state forests.'

[redacted]

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CHRYS HOLLEY: I am definitely outnumbered here but the great thing about gatherings like this is if you have the love of God in your heart, you can still love everybody and disagree with one another. And -- oh, my name is Chrys Holley, C-H-R-Y-S H-O-L-L-E-Y.

As a Department of Defense employee from 1948 to 1959 in a highly sensitive top secret cosmic cleared position, I want to state that I am in favor of the proposed use of Blackwater State River Forest. While we are mandated by our creator to

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protect the environment our creator also gave us wisdom to make decisions which would ensure the safety of personnel.

Our military need extensive training to execute their mission. The training site criteria that was shown on the screen here showed that the Blackwater meets these criteria. I'm satisfied that all potential dangers have been investigated and addressed prior to the proposal to use the Blackwater River State Forest. I don't expect any applause. I just want you to know I'm glad you're out here taking a stand for what you believe in. God bless you all.

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[redacted]

14 HEARING OFFICER: I believe it's Julia

15 Pearsall?

16 JULIA PEARSALL: It's Julia, J-U-L-I-A

17 Pearsall, P-E-A-R-S-A-L-L, and we've just had so

18 many speakers and covered so many topics, I just

19 would like to ask why would we even want to consider

20 this plan? Is there something I missed that would

21 benefit us, that would benefit the forest? What

22 would the Air Force bring that would have a positive

23 impact on this local community or on the forest

24 service? There were many, many negative things

25 which we all know there would be environmental

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impacts, but there were nothing that would seem to be of any benefit to the forest or the population in this area. There were even mentions of if additional road work needed to be taken care of that would be the responsibility of the forest. It's like oh, no, we won't mess with your forest. We're not going to do your roads the wrong way or whatever. But it's like so what is it bringing? It's placing an additional burden many ways, just not on the environment but the people who try and do the work. It's going to decrease resources in terms of funding. People coming from out of state and they come, and you're closed because there's military? Do we (inaudible)? I'd be hesitant. I wouldn't want to plan ahead and come here and find out I couldn't use the resources that were here.

I pay my little two dollars if I want to go into the park. I don't use much of the park. I don't spend that much time there. I put my little two dollars. That benefits the park somehow I would think. If groups come in, they pay for the use, and they're not there. They better not be messing with the environment. Commercial groups can even come in, but there are rules and regulations and it benefits the park in some ways even though there are

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more people in the forest, not park. So I just don't see why anyone would even say oh, yes, we want this. It seems like a all around negative.

They may be small impacts. They may add up. It will impact me. I'm not going to want to be in there. And, you know, I feel like I pay my share. I'm not going to go cause any damage. I wouldn't want to, and it seems to me that the Air Force should be bringing something that would benefit the forest and citizens around here, not just negative impacts.

[redacted]

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HEARING OFFICER: Matt Fish?

MATT FISH: Matt Fish, F-I-S-H. I'm like this man right here. I pay to use the national forest not a park. I deer hunt. I use dogs to deer hunt. These radio telemetry towers that y'all want to use in Blackwater National Forest are going to affect us as a user group because we are being forced, or supposedly being forced this coming up year by the State of Florida to use a telemetry or a GPS tracking device on every dog that is turned loose in the national forest. Do you know what these GPS's run off of? They run off of VHF bands, the same thing that the military uses. So we are going to be affected whenever y'all are using these, so if we

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can't get our dogs up in time before they get on somebody else's property, private property we're going to get ticketed for it, not the government. Okay? We already have enough problems getting around people who've moved up in that forest that don't know what's going on up there anyway. We don't need anybody else up there, and that's all I got to say.

[redacted]

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I_095

ID	I_095
Date Submitted	6/20/2014
Commenter	Eileen Verbeck
Organization	Public
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I am against the use of these protected public lands for military training. The military use is not compatible with recreational uses and the protection of sensitive plant and wildlife species

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I_096

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[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

17 LONNIE HUTCHINSON: I have a question. I have
18 a question. Why can't we hear everybody in all the
19 entirety of what they have to say instead of herding
20 us in and herding us out the door like cattle, like
21 we're some number, because we're not military?
22 We're not numbers. We're not military. We're
23 people.
24 [redacted]

[redacted]

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I_097

ID	I_097
Date Submitted	6/21/2014
Commenter	Sharyn Shields
Organization	Individual
Affiliation	
Comment	Although I am the daughter of a career Air Force officer, I object mightily to the use of Tate's Hell as a base for training. It is inconceivable that the type of activities described and the numbers of human beings involved would NOT have an adverse affect on the natural resources of the area including wildlife. This swamp was named as it was for the humanly uninhabitable conditions of the area and was set aside in more enlightened times as a wetland and place of special natural phenomena. Please do not destroy it with training activities that may or may not be useful to our troops in the future. There are some places where people are just not meant to go, and this is one of them. I object. I object. I object. Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns.

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I_098

ID	I_098
Date Submitted	6/21/2014
Commenter	Chad Patterson
Organization	N/A
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	This is a blatant attempt to circumvent DoD Instruction 4165.71, "Real Property Acquisition," January 6, 2005. It also allows the Air Force to ignore DoD policies regarding the management of training lands. There are multiple endangered species living within the confines of BWSF. The use of lands within BWSF by the Air Force will absolutely have a major effect on those species. Proposed landing strips will put military aircraft in the air at extremely low altitude over populated residential areas adjacent to and within the boundaries BWSF. Air Force use of BWSF lands will also deny Florida residents use of the lands their tax dollars pay to maintain. The damage alone to roadways within the BWSF area by modern military vehicles will deny citizens access to the very lands that they pay for. Not to mention the costs of eventually repairing those roads which will fall squarely on the citizens of Florida. Recent land acquisitions from International Paper by the state south of US Hwy 90 under the guise of recreational use were made in order to connect BWSF to Eglin AFB. This makes it clear that this backdoor deal has been in the works for much longer than the Air Force or the state of Florida have told the public. This fact alone proves that the public is being lied to by both Air Force officials and state officials. By all outward appearances, this is an obvious vehicle for the Air Force to ignore DoD policies and for the state to get their hands on large amounts of Federal funds. I am by no means an environmentalist, but I am intimately familiar with DoD regulation involving the procedures for acquiring land for use as ranges and training lands. None of the normal procedures or requirements have been followed with this deal. It's time for the individuals involved to come clean.

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I_099

ID	I_099
Date Submitted	6/21/2014
Commenter	Karen Stewart
Organization	U.S. Navy Ret.
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	Having let my children grow up in Blackwater for the past 40 some of years, I am stronley against letting military in the forest. Having been in Navy for 30 years I know what military can do to something. I know we need the military to keep us safe but I also think that we need a place to beable to take our kid's and grandchildren to spend time outdoors. I love Blackwater and have spent time there since 1963. You have plenty of space on Eglin to do your training, use and leave Blackwater to people that love it.

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I_100

ID	I_100
Date Submitted	6/21/2014
Commenter	Frances Dunham
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	As a 40 year resident of southern Santa Rose County, I am accustomed to living near military operations; however, the proposal to usurp Florida forest land is not acceptable. I object vehemently to the use of Blackwater River State Forest and Tate's Hell State Forest for military purposes of any kind and to the "flexibility" intended to make such use easier. It is clearly not true that military training and testing is constrained by shortage of land and airspace in Northwest Florida. The planned emitter and training activities will surely disturb creeks, streams and wetlands, degrading water quality. Amphibious and opposing forces vehicle operations operations would be especially harmful to the forest and recreational areas. Both areas will experience negative impacts such as erosion, noise, and personal safety issues. Erodible soils and streambanks in BRSF are a particular concern. It is absurd to imagine that wildlife habitat, including threatened species such as sea turtles, will be spared the harmful effects of these operations. I strongly support the No Action Alternative. The Eglin AFB occupies over 640 square miles. If that is not sufficient to meet the purpose and need for the proposed action, the purpose and need should be revisited. Approval of any of the other alternatives would set a precedent in claiming state land for military operations, and that alone is enough to demand rejection of this plan. Unfortunately, the precedent would be combined with real and lasting physical impacts. Potential damage to these important state lands could take years to reverse, and both areas might never recover.

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I_101

ID	I_101
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Ed Feaver
Organization	citizen and tax payer
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I am a certified Master Naturalist (UFL) by the University of Florida and a frequent kayaker on the rivers and creeks in Blackwater River and Tate's Hell State Forests. Over the past three years, my wife and I have thoroughly studied the plants on one of the Tate's Hell creeks and are maintaining a blog entitled "A Paddler's Guide to the Flowering Plants on Womack Creek." I know how fragile the environment is in both of these forests. The proposed activities noted in the GRASI EIS will have devastating effects on these environments and the threatened, endangered and endemic plant and animal species that inhabit them. For example, landing of fixed winged airplanes, helicopter fly overs and drops, up to 72 personnel in each forest for 232 days each year, over 3/4 tons of expendables (paint balls, plastics, smoke grenade waste) deposited in the forests annually, and creek crossings. The statement alleges that these activities will have little, if any, impact and that mitigation will be conducted in those instances where damage is done. The statement tries to dismiss the potential impacts by saying birds can just move their nests to another area, gopher tortoise burrows can be moved to safer areas, and if a fire is started accidentally, it is probably a good thing since fire is good for forests. This cavalier dismissal of environmental impacts displays total ignorance of how the integrity of ecosystems is maintained and provides perfect evidence of the lack of respect for the restoration and conservation purposes for which these forests were established. Rather than comment further on the specific provisions of this statement, I will highlight critical issues that are missing or not adequately developed: 1. The statement does not include baseline date on water and ambient air quality so that the impact of proposed activities can be properly monitored and changes noted over time. 2. The statement does not provide any information on the impact of noise on animal behavior, reproduction or communication. It implies that the only concern related to noise is what can be tolerated by humans. 3. The statement does not provide information on the amount of time required for mitigation practices to repair damaged soil, water quality, or plant and animal life. Mitigation rarely works and takes years to accomplish if it is successful.

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I_101

4. The statement does not describe an independent monitoring procedure, including the funding for this, that will insure the public that there is no environmental impact from the proposed activities.

5. The statement does not provide a mechanism for immediately halting training activities at the point a violation of the provisions of the plan with respect to environmental protection is detected.

6. The statement does not specify who will be responsible for paying for any mitigation that might be required, nor does it establish any penalties for failure to comply with the provisions of the plan related to the environment.

7. The statement does not include a financial impact component that identifies potential costs to the state, local communities and land owners adjacent to the forests related to buffering themselves from the commotion created by the proposed training activities.

8. The statement does not commit the USAF to funding all cleanup and other detrimental effects resulting from the proposed training activities. No budget for mitigation is included.

9. The statement does not indicate how long the USAF intends to abuse these forests with these training activities.

10. Finally, the statement does not provide the legal basis for allowing the USAF to violate the purpose of the Florida Forever Act which funded the creation of these forests for restoration and conservation purposes.

I support the "No Action" alternative.

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I_102

ID	I_102
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Steven Phillips
Organization	ex esc ems, ex 12 year bagdad fire fighter
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	florida is one of the few southern states to have such gorgeous beaches and forest for hiking and hunting. NY have a nice beach or forest or just lots of subways. keep florida clean at least for another 50 years or so by then our population will kill off all forest and vacant area in the country.

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I_103

ID	I_103
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Jack and Shirley Bonney
Organization	Bream Fisherman Association
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	My wife and I are definitely opposed to the use of Blackwater Forest State Park for the purpose of military exercises. First and foremost it is a State Park and not a military base. Using it as a base will cause the park in its entirety or certain areas of the park to be closed for civilian use during the military exercise period. Civilians, both local and tourist, should not lose the rights to the use of the park for recreational activities. Some hiking clubs and equestrian clubs come from as far away as Michigan to enjoy the open forests of the park. These other users of the park will have their free time available to the park limited if the military is doing exercises. No one wants to lose their freedom of use just because the only time they have available for vacation conflicts with the time the military has scheduled an exercise. Inability to schedule on Eglin AFB was given as the reason why the military needed to expand its base of operations. If they can't schedule well at Eglin then how would you not expect to see even greater scheduling conflicts when civilian hiking and riding clubs from different states are involved? Secondly, the use of the park by military vehicles will cause devastating harm to the environment. Crossing streams, for instance, will cause sedimentary erosion and foul the waterways thus affecting the wildlife. The environmental impact study must evaluate all endangered species per the State listed list and not just the limited Federal list. Lastly, hovering helicopters and low flying jets will be harmful to nesting birds. Having a 500-foot rule is ridiculous. Do you not know that a jet going within 500' of a nesting woodpecker will destroy that nest? You would not want a screaming F22 or F35 coming within 500 feet of you and the birds certainly don't either. They will not be able to find suitable nesting sites and will die off. Lastly, the criteria picked for travel time is totally bogus. What army only has to go 1-½ hours to get to a skirmish? By using that criterion other military bases in south Mississippi and Alabama are automatically eliminated. The proposal should be evaluating options but by using this bogus criteria there are no options. The study is flawed and must be redone to provide alternatives.

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I_104

ID	I_104
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Carol Blais
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	Please don't tear up native vegetation under the guise of training. You already have plenty of land at your disposal. Thank you.

1

I_105

ID	I_105
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Mark Cole
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I do not have a soapbox or rant I would just ask that you please not do this in Blackwater or Tate's Hell. There is more than enough space on Eglin for their needs. I understand that there are many units using Eglin but maybe instead of taking over a state park and further alienating the public they should work on a unit deconfliction plan, maybe some sort of "shared ground" plan sorta like a "shared air" plan. I am active duty and I do not support nor agree with this action in any way.

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I_106

ID	I_106
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	George Knetzger
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	No action alternative expressed

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I_107

ID	I_107
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Patricia Edmisten
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	As frequent users of the Blackwater State Forest, we respectfully ask you to refrain from using this PUBLIC treasure, created for the RE-CREATION of citizens, to bring them closer to woodlands, plants, animals and cold, clear water. Those great minds that had the foresight to imagine a system of State Parks never envisioned that one day the site would be used for training men and women for war. The problem is not with the training. All of us respect that a nation must be prepared; What is at issue is the taking of a public conservation site and using it for said training. No, a thousand times, no.

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I_108

ID	I_108
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Carole Butler
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I am im favor of no action of the military in our State Forests

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I_109

ID	I_109
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Carole Butler
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	No military action in State Forests.

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I_110

ID	I_110
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Nancy Pelling
Organization	private citizen
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	Please do not allow Blackwater River State Forest and especially Coldwater Recreation area to be put under federal control. This is a state forest and should remain so. It is one of few and a very unique place to enjoy the outdoors as a family. We camp and ride horses at Coldwater and can tell you that the presence of overhead aircraft and military vehicles will make it a much less safe and enjoyable environment. The noise will definitely take away from the tranquility that we go to the forest to find.Also,most horses are threatened by the presence of low flying aircraft and this could be a potentially very dangerous problem for horseback riders. Please do not change the people's forest. Sincerely,Nancy Pelling

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I_111

ID	I_111
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Larry Chamblin
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I am opposed to allowing any military operations in the Blackwater River State Forest. I am concerned about the impact on all species of plants and animals within the forest, including the human species. It is a well established fact that we humans need natural areas for re-nourishing the human spirit and connecting to the natural world. To have the necessary benefits, our experience of these natural areas must be free of the kind of intrusions that military maneuvers would involve. Richard Louv, in his book "Last Child in the Woods," cites many studies that show the therapeutic and learning benefits children receive in spending time in natural areas, away from the digital world that too often keeps them disconnected from the real world. Adults also receive similar benefits, though these benefits may not be easy to quantify. The fact that they can not easily be measured dos not mean they are not real. I urge those making this decision to give serious consideration to the human need for direct contact with the natural world without the intrusion of industrial or military operations.

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I_112

ID	I_112
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Brooke Broderick
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I ask you to please reconsider the use of the beautiful blackwater forest for "training excersizes" This is such a peaceful lovely area with the wildlife and plants in balance and to destroy this is just not right. Eglin is a huge area, why would you need more room for your training? Can't some things be left alone to preserve nature and afford countless country people a place to ride their horses, go down to the river and safely swim without military presence? We're losing more and more of the natural habitates and I feel this needs to be stopped. I'm a senior and have seen so much destruction in the name of need and hope I can still know the blackwater is going to be left alone. Thank you. Brooke Broderick.

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I_113

ID	I_113
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	William E. Spencer
Organization	Citizen of Santa Rosa County
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I do not see the reason for this training in a State Forest Area. Hasn't the Government taken enough away from the people of these supposedly free United States. Everyone I know enjoys the Black Water River areas. The Government has closed valuable Military Bases through out the United States and now they want to take a public recreation area away from us. Well I say NO NO NO this is wrong!!!!

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I_114

ID	I_114
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Nancie and Michael Warner
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	We are against training in the state forests....they are for citizen recreation and conservation.

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I_115

ID	I_115
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Walter Jetter
Organization	None
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	We drive seven hours several times per year from the Tampa Bay area to camp and paddle in Blackwater State Forest. It is a gem for anyone that loves to get away from the noise and activities of city living. The activities that would be approved by the proposed action would destroy the peace and tranquility that we go there for.

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I_117

ID	I_117
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Anthony DeRaimo
Organization	Property Owner
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I am very much opposed to the training activities proposed by the military for Blackwater River State Forest. As a property owner I am concerned that the noise will impact our peaceful life there and will affect our property values. The training proposed is for 232 days per year and as much as 4 times daily. This is just crazy! The noise level from the helicopter's is already deafening.

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I_118

ID	I_118
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Charles R. Creel
Organization	none
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	My name is Charles R. (Randy) Creel. I am a resident of Santa Rosa county. My activities in Blackwater State Forest as a user over many years has involved fishing, hiking, paddling, camping, swimming, and more. After review of the GRASI document outlining plans, and expectations for expanding Air Force training into Blackwater andTates Hell State Forests, I wish to raise some issues and concerns. My feedback will be directed toward Blackwater State Forest exclusively. The first issue will be amphibious crossing. This activity can cause serious erosion problems, particularly in the BSF area which has a lot of sandy, and loose soil. Amphibious crossings may also conflict with recreational canoe, and kayak paddlers. The next issue relates to both Low Level Helicopter, and fixed wing aircraft. The noise from these activities will adversely affect both humans and animals. Noise from low level aircraft maneuvers might be expected to cause disturbances to animal, and bird mating, and nesting behavior. And, noise from such activity would be expected to create a conflict situation with any typical BSF user in close proximity. Another issue of concern is that of Stream and Wetland Crossing. Due to the fragile nature of BSF streams, particularly with regard to stream beds, vegetation, and stream embankments, such activity can cause permanent stream bed, and bank erosion. If such activity is allowed, military vehicles should only cross streams on established bridges. The next issue of concern relates to Overwater Hoist Operations. These activities would likely be conducted in BSF fishing lakes which are located near campgrounds. These lakes are utilized by fishermen who are required to restrict their boat motors to electric only. OHO activities in the lakes adjacent to campgrounds could be expected to adversely impact fisherman, campers, and water fowl . The impact would be from noise, and possibly other factors associated with operation of the aircraft, and hoist equipment.

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I_119

ID	I_119
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Betty Cummins
Organization	Franklin County FL- Resident-Taxpayer-Voter
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I am a resident of Franklin County, FL where we, the people, enjoy the beauty and solitude of Tate's Hell State Forest as a respite from noise and development. We treasure the protection of endangered species that the forest habitat offers. Both Blackwater River and Tate's Hell State Forests are environmentally fragile areas that must not be put at risk by the military training being proposed under the Eglin AFB GRASI initiative. These state forests are currently places where we can take our children and grandchildren to hike, fish, and camp without the sounds of war games and military equipment becoming part of their childhood memories. The wild flora and fauna whose survival depends on the natural habitat in these state forests should not be subjected to the noise and toxic residue from military aircraft and munitions such as paint balls, blank bullets, ground burst simulators and smoke grenades or radar emitters. Please do not allow the military to expand training into the state forests when Eglin AFB already has vast tracts of land for this purpose. The draft EIS did not consider cleaning up tracts of land already contaminated on Eglin AFB and using those areas for training instead of placing environmentally fragile eco-systems in our state forests at risk of new contamination. Clean up the damaged tracts inside Eglin to use before making a grab for our state forest lands. Eglin's explanation of need to expand for scheduling convenience seems like a poor reason to place our state forests at risk of environmental damage and destroy the tranquility of the state forests we treasure as civilians. Our tax dollars were used to preserve these state forests as conservation lands for future generations to experience nature in these few remaining natural tracts. Do NOT allow any military training to compromise these treasured areas. The NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE is the only rational decision that can be made since military training is incompatible with the current civilian use and sensitive environmental ecology of Blackwater River and Tate's Hell State Forests.

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I_120

ID	I_120
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Betty Cummins
Organization	Franklin County FL- Resident-Taxpayer-Voter
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	As a resident of Franklin County and a concerned citizen, I dispute statements by the Eglin/Air Force that their intended use of Tate's Hell State Forest and Blackwater River State Forest is not expected to result in any significant adverse impacts. Considering just a few of the sections of the EIS would make it obvious that the tranquility and environmental health of the state forest environment would be significantly adversely impacted for all users except the military. ES.4.1.2.3 Use of Expendables (UoEX) involves use of various training munitions and pyrotechnics, including simulated munitions (consisting of plastic pellets or paintballs, and smoke grenades during training activities. At Tate's Hell State Forest, noise-generating expendables could be used ANYWHERE. 5.56-millimeter blank - 576,000 Est. Max Quantity Per Year - Estimated Average per Event ~10,000 7.62-millimeter blank - 196,200 " " ~ 8,000 Ground Burst Simulators - 5,172 " " ~2 to 5 M-18 smoke grenades - 4,038 " " ~2 to 5 Paintballs/plastic pellets - 50,000 " " ~5,000 It would seem obvious to anyone considering the nature of such munitions and pyrotechnics, that it would NOT be possible to clean up the fragments and residue left on the ground, vegetation, and water/wetlands. This is not acceptable and is not compatible with the citizens stated desire for preservation of the environmentally fragile ecosystems of Tate's Hell State Forest and the tranquil environment needed for enjoyment by civilian users. The draft EIS does not adequately describe what measures will be used to remove small fragments and fine particulate residue that result from the use of training munitions and pyrotechnics which would be a source of unnatural litter and potential toxins on soil, vegetation, and water/wetlands, nor does the draft EIS address the adverse effects of the debris and residue or the toxic components thereof.

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I_120

I also have concerns about section 2.3.2.14 Emplacement of Obstacles EoO which involves placement of concertina wire along unpaved roads. Even if the area is manned, I am concerned about forest animals being placed at risk of injury by the concertina wire during their normal foraging activities and movement across their native habitat, especially if animals run scared when panicked by sudden loud military training noises. The adverse effects of having concertina wire in place for any length of time and the potential for injury to animals attempting to cross the concertina wire blocked habitat has not been adequately addressed in the draft EIS.

I have additional concern about section 2.3.2.18 Natural Resource Consumption Table 2-10 NRC Details

Why would paintballs/plastic pellets, M18 smoke grenades, and 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62mm blanks, GBSs have any role in procurement of natural food sources such as small game, rodents, and vegetation while utilizing survival techniques such as trapping/snaring? The mission descriptions in the draft environmental impact statement appear to be overreaching in scope for the activities outlined. The adverse effects on the environment and soil, vegetation, and water/wetlands from small fragment debris and fine particulate residue associated with the use of training munitions and pyrotechnics while utilizing survival techniques such as trapping/snaring is not identified in the draft EIS nor is there any explanation of why they would have any role in Natural Resource Consumption survival training.

I hereby state my assertion that the NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE is the only decision that should be made. I ask that Eglin find other places to conduct their expansion of military training and leave Tate's Hell State Forest and Blackwater River State Forest out of any consideration for such use.

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I_121

ID	I_121
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Charlotte & Thomas O'Laughlin
Organization	Homeowner
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	My husband and I purchased our property which borders the Blackwater State Fores[redacted] little over a year ago. We moved from Navarre where we had purchased a home in 2009 and just after purchasing our home Navarre we realized all the bombing and shelling from Eglin and Hurlburt Bases could be heard all the time and of course it seemed like it would most times start around bedtime and go all night long and the helicopters that would fly so low sometimes seemed like it was going to land on the roof your house. When my husband comes home from working hard he wants his peace and quiet and he wants to relax with a good night's sleep. Now you could say well you purchased property too close to the base and I would say true enough so we packed up and moved an hour north and I traded in my beach sandals for hiking boots and our walks on the beach are now hikes in the forest and our days spent on the beach have been replaced with kayaking down the Coldwater River and instead of watching the dolphins swimming in the ocean, we now watch the deer running and feeding in our woods and we love it, we don't miss our beautiful Navarre home at all because we have so much beauty in nature out here. Now we are all for our military getting the best of training our youngest son is in National Reserve and our oldest son served a year in Iraq and his girlfriend now serves in the U.S. Army and we want them to have the best training the military can provide and if Eglin didn't have enough property for training would be one thing but Eglin has thousands more than the Blackwater Forest has and they have Hurlburt , Tindall, Whiting Field, and the NAS Base. There is more than enough military property in the area for all bases to have more than enough training and if more space were needed I think the military should consider using some of the bases that have been closed or what about using some of the recreational property ya'll have opened to the public. How could the military ever consider taking away the peace and tranquility of not only our homes but the home to so many wildlife that lives in the forest?

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I_121

Now we know the military is going to clean up like they were never there! Right? But can you tell me who is going to pick up the 576,000 5.56 millimeter blank rounds (every single round and remember your operations will be done mostly at night)? And who is going to pick up the 196,200 blank rounds? And who is going to pick up the 4,038 smoke grenades? And the 5,172 ground burst simulators what kind of impact will that have on the environment? And the 50,000 paintballs/plastic pellets are you going to tell us that none will get on the trees and greenery in the forest, who is going to wash it off all the trees? Let me guess you are going to wait for the rain to come and hope it washes away all the paint on the trees and all the greenery and hope the plastic remains will be absorbed into the soil sooner or later.

Who is going to prevent our wildlife from getting caught in your concertina wire? Oh let's not forget the use of catholes that has been approved in the BRSF. Now let's add this up 72 men per night x 232 nights, now if each man dug only one cat hole per night that is a total of 16,704 catholes in our forest a year and over 10 years it's 167,040 catholes in our national forest now that's a lot of toilet paper used and buried. Shame on you! Our wildlife live and eat in this forest.

Let's face it you are going to destroy this beautiful forest and scare off the wildlife with all of your pyrotechnics, smoke grenades and your hundreds of thousands of blank's and paintballs, not to mention the thousands of added airplanes and helicopters flying above our heads and it's not because you don't have the property because you do but it's because you have a scheduling problem. Now this is the U.S. Military! Not some mom and pop organization because if it were we would just tell them to "FIRE YOUR SCHEDULER AND HIRE YOU A NEW ONE!" But it's not it's our men and women; the ones who work hard to give us the freedom to enjoy this beautiful forest. Please don't take it from us.

You have your thousands of acres that you have blocked us from entering and it's for safety reasons and we respect that and we want you to have the best training and we even support all the military training but keep it on your own property don't destroy ours.

We didn't invite you here and we don't want you here. How many times and how far will we have to move to get out from underneath the noise of the military? I love this area and we bought this place with the plans of retiring here and one of the perks was that it borders the beautiful Blackwater River State Forest. Please is there anyone that can help our U.S. Military with their scheduling problem so they won't become ours.

Thank you,
Charlotte & Thomas O'Laughlin

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I_122

ID	I_122
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Erin Fuqua
Organization	n/a
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I feel like this initiative is a gross misuse of land that has been set aside for civilian use. What is the point in protecting and defending this great nation if you don't leave any of it for the citizens. Roads in and around Blackwater have been closed for quiet some time due to over erosion of the soil and its adverse effects on the environment and waterways. Because of this it is damaging to the ecosystem if any type of vehicle maneuvers were to be performed in the area, I honestly can not believe it is even being considered. Combat simulations could endanger certain species in the area and although a restriction is put on how close interactions with such species would be there is no way to guarantee the complete and total safety of these animal species. It is absolutely irresponsible to allow such activities in one of the last treasures we have in this area, this one move could essentially reek havoc on surrounding towns causing a severe drop in tourism. People come from around the world to visit these forests and this initiative would rob them as well as the locals of the right to enjoy its natural beauty. This may be a small forest in comparison to most but it is loved by so many there is absolutely no reason to disturb it. No one can justify destroying an ecosystem, a community and its tourism profits, or a civilians right for the sake of combat simulate paintball training or aquatic maneuvers. How would you like it if someone came into your home and started shooting paintballs and deploying smoke bombs? This is our home, our ancestors home, and hopefully one day our children's home there should be nothing that would ever justify taking it from us. An understanding of nature and outdoors is absolutely important to instill in young minds and when you encroach on lands that had been supposedly secured for the people you not only take it from us but you take it from future generations. Please reconsider this initiative, please think of the people you will be hurting, please think of the wildlife, and please think of the generations of memories both past and present you will be stealing from us. We love our heritage, Blackwater is our heritage, and no American should ever be robbed of their heritage no matter what, but especially not for any of the reasons outlined in any part of this initiative.

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I_123

ID	I_123
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Medora Mullins
Organization	Five Flags Arabian Horse Association
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I am a concerned citizen, Forestry volunteer, horse enthusiast, dog Field Trial supporter, and in-holding property owner. My comments pertain to portions of BRSF TA-5, and BRSF TA-6. You may refer to Figure 2-6 BRSF Tactical Areas, or Figure 5-42 Land Use Types at BRSF. There are Forest uses needing protection for which you have not given consideration, in a large portion of BRSF TA-5 (the connected large area west of Juniper Creek), and a small portion of BRSF TA-6 (the small area west of Juniper Creek. These are the areas of the horse trails and Dog Field Trial Area. The horse trail routes and Field Trial Area can be viewed in Figure 5-42 Land Use Types at BRSF. The route of the horse trails should have the same Noise Protection Level (Figures 5-16 and 5-17), and Ground Operations Protection Level (Figures 5-6 and 5-7), as the Coldwater Recreation Area Campground. The protections given to the campground should extend into the Forest for the lengths of all the horse trails and the Field Trial Area. Noise: Horses and dogs have sensitive hearing, and the areas they traverse should be considered "noise-sensitive areas". In addition, children are likely to be riding on horses at any given time, or accompanying the Field Trial dogs during competitions and training days. The above mentioned areas within BRSF TA-5 and BRSF TA-6 should have noise constraints of "Not approved for Overflight below 500 feet AGL", and "Not Approved for HLZ/DZ". (Figures 5-16 and 5-17). Safety: There is a safety risk associated with helicopter overflight, which could cause a horse to spook, and has potential for injury to the rider, who could be a child. Wildfires caused during the Proposed Action, which are not scheduled controlled burns, could trap horse riders and Field Trial dogs and other event participants. Land Use: (Figure 5-42) Areas within TA-5 (the large area west of Juniper Creek), and TA-6 (the small portion west of Juniper Creek) are primarily used for horseback riding and dog Field Trials. HLZ/DZ and any Proposed Actions using paintballs and smoke grenades are not appropriate, or compatible, in these areas. Socioeconomics/Environmental Justice: The quality of a visitor's experience could be adversely impacted by the Proposed Action in BRSF TA-5 and BRSF TA-6, in the areas of the horse trails and dog Field Trial Area. Families who have an adverse experience will choose to NOT return to the Forest, causing an adverse economic impact on FFS revenue. Children participate in horse activities on the horse trails, and in activities within the dog Field Trial Area, and could experience an adverse impact from the Proposed Action.

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I_124

ID	I_124
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Murray White
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	It is quite obvious that the GRASI proposal is in conflict with the State Forest Mission. The majority of the Forest users and residents are opposed to the military activities proposed by GRASI. My biggest complaint is the proposed aircraft and vehicle noise which will ruin the experience to enjoy peace and quiet for the the visitors and wildlife. The Forest is very fragile and dependent on vegetation to prevent erosion. Additional vehicular disturbance proposed by GRASI will lead to increased erosion and sedimentation of our streams, rivers and bays. I would much prefer the Air Force to find a different solution to the training problem. Since the Forest is owned by the people of Florida, the matter should be put to public vote. If the GRASI proposal is determined to proceed, I suggest a compromise where the military activity is only allowed for 6 months of the year. This would make it possible for visitors to plan ahead to visit and stay for some weeks and know there would be no military activity during their visit. In this way the GRASI proposal would not deter as many tourists and visitors from coming and enjoying the sanctity of the State Forest.

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I_125

ID	I_125
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	Suzanne Wells
Organization	Equestrian, camper
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	There are Forest uses needing protection for which you have not given consideration, in a large portion of BRSF TA-5 (the connected large area west of Juniper Creek), and a small portion of BRSF TA-6 (the small area west of Juniper Creek). These are the areas of the horse trails and Dog Field Trial Area. The horse trail routes and Field Trial Area are shown in Figure 5-42 Land Use Types at BRSF. The route of the horse trails should have the same Noise Protection Level (Figures 5-16 and 5-17), and Ground Operations Protection Level (Figures 5-6 and 5-7), as the Coldwater Recreation Area Campground. The protections given to the campground should extend into the Forest for the lengths of all the horse trails and the Field Trial Area. Horses and dogs have sensitive hearing, and the areas they traverse should be considered "noise-sensitive areas". Children are likely to be riding on horses at any given time, or accompanying the Field Trial dogs during competitons and training days. The above mentioned areas should have noise constraints. Helicopter overflight can cause a horse to spook, and has potential for injury to the rider, who could be a child. Proposed Actions using paintballs and smoke grenades are not compatible with the uses of these areas. If a visitor has an undesirable experience due to the Proposed Action, they will not return to the Forest, causing a loss of revenue for the Florida Forest Service.

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I_126

ID	I_126
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	Susan Waggle
Organization	Florida Panhandle Canoe & Kayak Connection
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	Although I support the military, the proposed use of Tate's He'll and the Black Water State Forest lands alarms me greatly. Conservation of these public lands for now and the future should have priority. Damage is often irreversible and difficult to measure in such complex natural ecosystems. Our children are being left with fewer and fewer options to get outdoors and discover the peace and beauty of a wildlife habitat. Please don't take away even more!

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I_127

ID	I_127
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	Jessica Koelsch
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	Although I support the military, the proposed use of Tate's He'll and the Black Water State Forest lands alarms me greatly. Conservation of these public lands for now and the future should have priority. Damage is often irreversible and difficult to measure in such complex natural ecosystems. Our children are being left with fewer and fewer options to get outdoors and discover the peace and beauty of a wildlife habitat. Please don't take away even more!

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I_128

ID	I_128
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	James A. Brady
Organization	self
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I do not believe that the draft EIS complies with the requirement stated in section 1502.14 of CEQ regulation 1502 on EIS preparation as stated below. ...agencies shall: (a) Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives, and for alternatives which were eliminated from detailed study, briefly discuss the reasons for their having been eliminated. (b) Devote substantial treatment to each alternative considered in detail including the proposed action so that reviewers may evaluate their comparative merits. The GRASI program proposes two disparate actions--(1) develop an electronic airspace in the central Gulf region, and (2) provide for on-ground training of special forces personnel. First, these two actions do not seem to be intimately interrelated and a reasonable alternative could be to implement one (emitters) but not the other (on-ground training). Why is this not considered and discussed? Second, no other alternatives besides the use of state conservation lands for special forces training are considered and discussed, despite the presence of significant private acreage within the travel times described as limiting in the EIS. Third, the environmental impact of special forces training on the natural resources of these state conservation lands is described as insignificant without any discussion of baseline population studies of any species, nor is there any commitment to pre-training surveys or follow-on monitoring to actually validate that very unscientific conclusion. I therefore conclude that the draft EIS on GRASI has failed to meet the federal requirement to "explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives" and is therefore flawed in its lack of compliance with both the spirit and the letter of the NEPA and its implementing regulations. The draft EIS must be withdrawn and substantially revised to include the reasonable alternatives suggested above as well as a discussion of other possible actions such as biological surveys, and resubmitted for public comment before being further processed within the chain of command of USAF and forwarded to the Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force for Installations and Environment for approval.

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I_129

ID	I_129
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	Ryan Arvay
Organization	Citizen
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I am against training activities in the Blackwater River State Forest. I have been a property owner and tax paying citizen in Santa Rosa County for over eight years. The property we own is in [redacted] and is close to the BRSF. The property has ben in my wife's family since her grandparents purchased it and built the family home there. I do not want the increased air traffic and noise, the environmental impacts, nor do not want any restrictions placed on one of the largest state forests in the state. As Theodore Rossevelt had inscribed on the entrance to the first national park in the U.S. (Yellowstone) .... "For the Benefit of the People." This is true of any state park as well. I know the military mission is important...but it is wrong to divest the American people of something that is theirs to enjoy and find inspiration to fulfill a mission that can be met by other means. This seems like a suspicious back-door way to turn the forrest into an extension of Eglin Air Force base...and I (and many others who you may not hear from) am against it. In addition, a military designation can open the door for other uses that are even more undesirable that are not as clear or even disclosed to the public under the current hypothetical scenario. Please respect the rights and wishes of the citizens that have called this area home and enjoyed the state forest for several generations.

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I_130

ID	I_130
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	Sue Early
Organization	N/A
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	These written comments are intended to supplement the verbal comments I made at the June 3, 2014, public hearing in Carrabelle. At that hearing I respectfully requested that a public meeting be advertised and conducted in Wakulla County so that potentially affected Wakulla County residents will be informed of the GRASI proposal and will have a timely opportunity to provide comments for consideration. Because no such public meeting was or has since been advertised in Wakulla County's local newspaper for Wakulla County residents, I am now reiterating that request and am also asking that the time period for submitting comments be extended for a reasonable time period after a public meeting is conducted in Wakulla County. Again, I live directly across the Ochlockonee River from Tate's Hell State Forest, less than 4/10 mile from the nearest forest road and about 6/10 mile from the Womack Creek Recreational area. There are over three miles of Wakulla County residents such as myself living along the river across from THSF/TA-3, who are very much potentially affected by this proposal, who were not given proper notice or opportunity for input. I would not have known about the proposal or hearings in other counties had I not happened across an article in the Tallahassee Democrat, a Leon County newspaper. Many of my neighbors do not read newspapers from other counties and do not even know about this proposal, so it is imperative that Wakulla County residents be notified in the Wakulla News (or by mail) and a meeting conducted in Wakulla County (Sopchoppy or Crawfordville), followed by a reasonable comment period. While I appreciate efforts to provide noise buffers for residential areas, I request that further studies be conducted and protections expanded to ensure the proposed noise protection levels are sufficient to ensure quiet enjoyment of our homes at all times. Noise travels much differently across the river than it does through the forest, and residents are there at all times--even when the hunters and recreational users are not. As such, additional restrictions proposed for inhabited recreational areas and for night operations during hunting season should be provided year-round and at all times near residential areas. In addition, the more restrictive noise protection level proposed for Carrabelle should be applied to all residential areas. I am also very concerned about the environmental impacts of the GRASI proposal to the state forests and the associated rivers and bay. I strongly recommend the No Action Alternative. Thank you,

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I_130

Sue W. Early

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I_131

ID	I_031
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	Jeffery Pooley
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	To whom it may Concern , As Military Veteran , I know during trainingof the US Armed Forces takes the Utmost Concern when it comes to environmental impact during training Exercises . However , I have some concerns to the Use of my Home State area's which were initiallly meant for public use . These training exercises , I am almost certain would restrict areas that were intended to be free to use for the open Public . I feel this is an Infringement on Florida Citizens rights to Use these "State Parks " as seemn fit and intended . Furthermore , I have some other concerns about the wildlife impact of certain proposed uses . One Major Example is the Document describes the use of Smoke Grenandes . But does not describe if the use of CS Gas Grenades will or will not be . I know the use of the said Devices are considered non harmful , but the residue left (even if temporary) Could impact an area where some wildlife could be utilizing . I know as training for some forces NBC is of great concern and one way to do this is expose troops to CS gas and don NBC protective Equipment . Residue would be left over from such training and could cause a disruption in normal behavior Patterns for any Wildlife within an Affected area . I'd also like to add that Eglin AFB and the Naval Base already have Large Areas in which to " Train " . So I am curious as to why would our State Park needs to be invaded and Utilized as well . I believe and I'm sure many other Citizens would see this as a Land Grab and it will not be welcomed . In closing , I believe the Areas already being used by the US Armed Forces of NorthWest Florida Region are more then satisfactory for any current or future Exercises . Leave Our State Parks as they are " For the Citizens Only ".

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I_132

ID	I_132
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	Chares Branson Carlton
Organization	NO
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	This whole plan makes me sick. Since 911, and the following period of fear and loathing, this nation of sheep, mind controlled by the mass media, has allowed itself to be subjugated to the destruction of our constitution and withering of our personal freedoms. This whole land grab by the military industrial complex, which your efforts are part of, is just one more way our society and culture is being militarized and rendered into a total police state. There are few places an individual may escape to enjoy our god given right to exposure to nature in it's glory. That includes freedom from air flights, noise, pollution, electromagnetic exposure of all frequencies including the visible, harassment to flora and fauna, and the mere presence of quasi military and military personelle and their trail of refuse. There are plenty of other places the military can train and play Army. Your bloated budget, which is pornographic in its scale already, insures that. Go somewhere else to do your bidding. Leave the people who have lived here in quietude, and those who have come here to find this dwindling resource, alone. Please! Charles B. Carlton Kayaker Previous resident of Franklin County Honorably dischared veteran, US Army And concerned citizen.

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I_133

ID	I_133
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	Tina Murphy
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	To Whom It May Concern: I registered my concerns on the GRASI website during the scoping process as well as attended the meeting in Milton to voice my concerns publicly. So many others, both connected to BRSF and THSF, also have done so. We, in good faith, volunteered our time and incurred personal expenses to study the proposal, attend meetings, write letters, make phone calls, send emails, all in an effort to get up to speed on this proposal so that we could present our concerns and help to educate the members of the GRASI panel about the sensitive ecological nature of these forests and the recreational and emotional benefits they provide to the surrounding communities. Unlike the members of the military and the state forest employees, who get paid to attend meetings, study the data, publish documents and have their expenses reimbursed, ours are not. We have acted in good faith, making these sacrifices because the forests are that important to us (and to the flora and fauna that live there). So you may imagine my surprise when I opened the EIS document and found no indication that our voices were heard or our concerns taken in to consideration. In fact, the activity levels in the EIS proposal are much higher than I anticipated, considering all that has been presented to the military by our local concerned citizens. This is disheartening. I am not sure my voice will be heard this time around either but I will at least respond in good faith and register some my concerns again. My primary concern is noise pollution. From the official GRASI EIS website, the chart on Use of Expendables shows a proposed allowable use of 800,000 (rounded) shots per year! How can 800,000 rounds of ammunition be discharged in the forest and not impact the wildlife and the people? I fear it will drive both away. Will one stop the sound of gunfire and explosives at the edge of a hardened campsite? Will one adequately clean up 800,000 rounds year over year? What will be the cumulative effects? I feel there is a misconception about those of us who use the forest regularly and I will reiterate what I explained earlier in the scoping process. We, the recreational users of the forest, do NOT stay solely within the boundaries of Krul, Bear, Hurricane and Karick Lake recreation areas. There seems to be a presumption among the GRASI panel that these are the only areas where a concern for recreational users is to be made. We are in the woods, the creeks, the dirt roads and the trails throughout the forest. We seek solitude and nature. This is where one finds peace and can enjoy sighting birds, other wildlife and pretty blooming wildflowers.

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I_133

I am not a hunter but it seems to me that the pressures of hunting during the day followed by explosives, aircraft and vehicles during the night (restrictions suggested during hunting season) will drive these game animals (and non-game animals) out of the forest permanently. Too much stress and they will not be able to sustain themselves or reproduce. The hunters and people like me, nature watchers, will be impacted due to this decline in animal population. Our quality of life and quality of experience will be diminished.

And if 800,000 rounds each year were not enough, we have the additional noise of airdrops and landings.

Per the Airdrop Details Per Event chart in this EIS proposal, there can be up to 928 air drops per year with up to 4 aircraft involved. 928 x 4 = 3,712 aircraft events in the area over the course of a single year! This, in addition to the Whiting Field helicopters that are already in BRSF. I recognize this is a maximum amount but this proposal is totally unrealistic. There are people living in the forest scattered throughout.

And I will reiterate: We, the recreational users of the forest, do NOT stay solely within the boundaries of the Krul, Bear, Hurricane and Karick Lake recreations areas. We are in the woods, the creeks, the dirt roads and the trails throughout the forest. We seek solitude and nature. This is where one finds nature in tact. We go there to listen to the sounds of frogs, crickets, birds, and the wind in the trees. We take photos of pitcher plants and other flowering plants.

Having this number of aircraft flying over, some hovering at tree level and some landing, will absolutely have a detrimental effect on the quality of life for all concerned: the residents, the recreational users and the wildlife. It simply goes against common sense to state otherwise.

And on the ground, the request in the OPVO Details Per Event chart is for up to 50 trips by Humvees each week for a total of 2,600 trips per year!

Again, I find it remarkable that so many people went to such lengths to educate the military on the nature of the forest to have a request so high. How can it not have an impact on others who are traversing the forest, riding bicycles on forest roads, birdwatching, etc?

2,600 humvee trips on the roads plus 3,712 air drops plus 800,000 rounds of ammunition --- in just one year. Then again the following year and then the next. What will be the cumulative effect? No one can reasonably state that these activities, especially in the quantities listed above, will have little to no impact on the quality of life for the residents, visitors and wildlife of the forest.

The forestry has made great strides in both BRSF and THSF in improving water quality and managing for wildlife and recreation. These state forests are now gems to be cherished. Please select the "no action alternative" for both BRSF & THSF, so that they may continue their work to improve the ecological services and public use opportunities of the forest for our generation and the generations to come.

Thank you,
Tina Murphy

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I_134

ID	I_134
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	Helen Wigersma
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	In the interest of full disclosure, I am a member of Audubon, Florida Trail Assn., National Parks & Conservation Assn., National Wildlife Federation, and Nature Conservancy. I have carefully read the entire GRASI Draft Environmental Impact Statement and I am adamantly opposed to the level of military training that is being proposed by the USAF, even with the multiple mitigation recommendations included in the draft EIS. In my opinion, national military exercises on state-owned public lands which are open to multiple citizen user groups as well as the general public jeopardizes the health and safety of those publics, not to mention endangering and degrading habitats of native species of birds, wildlife and plants. If the military is allowed to make use of the forest 232 days out of every year, the experiences of citizens also using the forest will potentially be degraded as well. In the recently developed Ten-Year Resource Management Plan for BRSF, there are six primary mission statements, listed in this order: Forest management; Outdoor Recreation Opportunities; Viability of Biological Diversity; Protect Archaeological, Historical . . .Resources; Protect . . .Water Resources, Wetland, Aquatic Communities; and last, Cooperate with US Military. (I wanted to emphasize in bold, the word "last" but this form doesn't appear to allow for such!) The report itself states (Section 2-37, page 103): "Other than providing benefits to Air Force training capabilities, the Air Force has not identified ANY significant or insignificant beneficial impacts under the Proposed Action." (my emphasis) With that in mind, why in the world would any Florida citizen welcome such intrusion on state-owned property?!? There is concern that if any level of military training is allowed at this time, this would only be the beginning of a gradual increase that would be to the detriment of citizen users. This statement from the report lends credence to that concern, (Section 2-4, page 70): "The training capacity of each state forest individually. . .still does not fully meet the training requirements as part of the GRASI planning process. . .does not resolve the anticipated future capacity issues." Will the military take action in the future to subsume even more of BRFS for its use, reducing access by the public? My specific concerns include the following: The report identifies noise pollution as an "annoyance." I identify it as an "assault." Above all things, the forest offers solitude and serenity and the ability to hear the songs of nature. I am personally offended by the number of helicopters currently being allowed to use the airspace. To increase it to levels implied in the USAF documents, would be nothing but an all-out assault on the senses. The idea of listening to helicopters hovering for up to a half-hour to do drops/pick-ups is unacceptable. So I, for one, am offended by the EIS use of the word, "annoy." Much too cavalier an attitude in a report of this substance.

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I_134

In Section 3-73 (page 185) is this statement, "However, animal species would likely habituate to aircraft presence over time, given the ongoing tempo of day-to-day training." Why should animal species be subjected to this when they are in their native setting? I would postulate that we will see diminishing of diversity of species if these actions are allowed to go forward.

Day-to-day training implies that for at least 60 - 65% of the year, somewhere in the forest, there will be troop movements, helicopters, large wheeled vehicles, bivouacking activities, airplanes, and war games – all of which will contribute to other forms of pollution or degradation including air pollution and ground degradation, especially trampling of sensitive environmental species. Sharing the forest with small numbers of Special Ops troops is one thing. Regularly having 72 troops, on a "day-to-day" basis doing cross-country maneuvers and having large trucks or helicopters delivering bivouacking resources to support those troops, is a different kind of assault on the experience of recreational users who may find themselves encountering any of these on the roads or in the forest.

I urge those completing this final EIS to recommend significantly scaling back the number of days and the number of military operations of each type which involve noise-generating and pollution-generating equipment and/or personnel. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

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I_135

ID	I_135
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	Larry Goodman
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	June 23, 2014 Subject: Comments and concerns regarding GRASI Landscape Draft EIS Appendix A Dear Sir: I have read most of the Draft EIS for Air Force usage of Blackwater River State Forest (BRSF) and Tates Hell State Forest (THSF) for training exercises and emitter sites. I appreciate that you have included information on the number of participants, projected frequency of usage, numbers and types of equipment, etc. However, I remain very opposed to military training exercises in the two forests. For years, I camped, backpacked, and canoed in the BRSF with my sons and Scout Troop as well as occasional overnight canoe trips with family and friends. Currently, I do a lot of birding and nature photography in Blackwater. Military training exercises such as low-level aircraft operations and the possibility of encountering military activities such as ground maneuvers or closed areas will diminish the outdoor experience by the public considerably. These same disturbances will also affect wildlife although such effects will be very difficult to quantitate. Of particular concern are possible effects on the Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) colonies. In Table 2-24, it states that there will be a 200' buffer around RCW cavity trees for ground operations. However, in Section 2-32 O), it states that activities within 200' of identified RCW trees will not exceed 2 hours and Section 2-25 states that there is an air operations buffer of 500' around RCW trees. If troops are within the buffer zone, I feel that they should get out of it as soon as practical. The dirt and gravel roads in BRSF are very erodible and several of them are currently almost impassable except be truck or 4-wheel drive vehicles. If military vehicles further degrade such roads or stream crossings, some of the forest will become inaccessible to people without 4-wheel drive. Also, there is at least one eagle nest in BRSF. Check with the local Florida FWC detachment at BRSF for the location(s) and correct the information in Table 2-24. In Table 2.21, a restriction on watercraft usage is "No power boats in Bear Lake (BRSF)" I believe that only electric motors are allowed in BRSF lakes and the language should be changed in table 2.21 to reflect that. Will aircraft perform low-level simulated strafing or bombing runs on the emitter sites? If so, it should be addressed in the EIS. Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the draft. Larry Goodman

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I_136

ID	I_136
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	Laura Straw
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I support our military BUT please stay out of Blackwater River State Forest. I don't want it destroyed by the training sessions. I want the forest to stay beautiful for my kids, grandkids and many more generations to come. I've hunted, fished, ridden horses, swam and canoed in BRSF and loved every minute of it. Why can't the training be done at Eglin, Whiting or NAS and not in BRSF?

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I_137

ID	I_137
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	Joshua Wilks
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I do not agree that the Blackwater River State Forest should be used for military exercises. The ecosystems are too fragile to sacrifice. We should have not have to damage or destroy natural resources for national defense.

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I_138

ID	I_138
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	Wuilk Fung, MSgt. USAF, Ret
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	Having been stationed at Hurlburt Field from 1991-94, I understand how desirable this locale is for training. I also know first hand how supportive and patriotic the surrounding civilian community is to the Air Force and the country in general. Northwest Florida is very unique where they balance year-round tourism and being an outstanding neighbor to the Department of Defense. I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to equally serve my country and also enjoy world-class recreation in the same area. Upon a request from a long-time friend and resident, I reviewed the GRASI Landscape Initiative. I immediately had a "Huh?" moment when reading the "Why Is The Proposed Action Needed?" panel. The stated reason, as I read it, is that there is conflict when attempting to schedule non-hazardous operations because, naturally, hazardous ops take priority and trump all others. So this proposal is to create other dedicated non-hazardous (for now) zones in order to maintain readiness of our forces. My comment is this: There will always be a hierarchy and priority list for operations; even hazardous activities have to be scheduled amongst themselves. Someone in charge is not assigning the proper priority to these non-hazardous training operations. The answer cannot be to just create new training areas, expand boundaries, or to disregard/dissolve land-use agreements. The stock response is that both hazardous and non-hazardous activities need to happen concurrently. However, I know that this has been the way we've been training all these years--just the proposed scope will increase. And that may be the real issue. One thing I was taught about bureaucracy and organizations is that they inherently have their self-interest and justification first and foremost in mind. In the matter of national defense, to be able to do the absolute best you can is to be commended, but to do it with disregard for collateral damage is shameful. That can't happen here. I urge the decision makers in this matter to take another long look at the overall impact to this area and reflect on the established partnership with our civilian neighbors and not jeopardize what has been earned over the years. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity.

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I_139

ID	I_139
Date Submitted	6/21/2014
Commenter	Anne Updike
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	Please help keep some parts of the Panhandle wild. So much of our land has been developed and its forcing wild animals to forage in neighborhoods. Black water river is one of the few resources we have left to leave to our children. Thank-you for your time.

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I_140

ID	I_140
Date Submitted	6/21/2014
Commenter	Amy
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I am against the forest out in Blackwater to becoming a training area for our local military to do their practice exercises. It will take away from the beautiful natural scenery and environment, it will also effect all living habitat out in the forest area. It will have many negative effects on all of us locals that live in the area, that take our families out there to enjoy the many things the Blackwater forest state park offers all of us to enjoy and do with our families.

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I_141

ID	I_141
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Lynda
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	DO NOT use our state park/forest lands for training. There are military bases set aside for that purpose.

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I_142

ID	I_142
Date Submitted	6/22/2014
Commenter	Susan Creel
Organization	self
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I live in [redacted] and am a regular visitor of the forest for many reasons. I have concerns about the use of Blackwater and Tate's Hell State Forests by Eglin for military training and maneuvers. One of my concerns is ground water contamination from fueling; plastic paint balls; smoke bombs and other contaminates that will be left due to training and maneuvers. Another concern is the low flying jets and helicopters in the area. The loud noise will be disruptive to local residents, animal behaviors; and persons using the forest for recreation. A big concern is the higher risk of wild fires due to maneuvers and radiation that is the result of the emitters. The grasi report addresses the harm of radiation to humans but does not address the effects on wildlife. Both forests have unique and sensitive habitats and endangered species. Your report states that maneuvers would be restricted in sensitive areas but you don't address that to cross country maneuvers and night time maneuvers CCDM and BD and VSWC. Another concern is the procurement of natural food (PNF). There is a concern that many endangered species are in both forest and there would be very little interest in trying to avoid them being trapped or gathered for food. One more concern I have is VSWC (Vehicle Stream and Wetland Crossing). Due to the very nature and fragility of both State Forests to erosion and need for conservation and management This is not appropriate. Your report does not give any other alternative for Eglin's need for more space due to scheduling. I feel this report is faulty and does not represent the best interest of the public that utilize and live adjacent to the forests and for the local communities that will be affected by the military training in their forests. I strongly urge you to reconsider the decision and deny Eglin's expansion of training in Blackwater and Tate's Hell State Forests.

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I_143

ID	I_143
Date Submitted	6/23/2014
Commenter	Carole Tebay
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I am very much against the military using state forests/parks for military training. The state forest is a habitat undergoing restoration which is attracting and supporting the wildlife and plants that were there before northwest Florida was clear cut and the long leaf ecosystem destroyed. Not only will the noise from planes, helicopters, and vehicles destroy the serenity of the forest for visitors, it will be unsettling for the animals and make it difficult for them to communicate. The soil in the forest is highly erodible. The park service's stream crossings were not developed for the heavy traffic of Humvees and 2.5 ton trucks. This traffic will affect the water quality and the organisms that depend on that quality. Survival training will deplete the forest of animals that have been attracted to this restored environment and affect the food supply for the animals living there. The military has pledged to avoid only those animals that are federally listed, with no consideration for animals of concern in Florida. Suggested alternatives would be cleaning up hazardous areas on Eglin Air Force Base and leasing or purchasing unrestored land.

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I_144

ID	I_144
Date Submitted	6/20/2014
Commenter	Chad Hulsizer
Organization	USN Retired
Affiliation	Organization
Comment	It is with the highest level of hope that I write you sir and request that you stand for the people of today and tomorrow with request that the USAF remain at Eglin and STAY OUT of Blackwater STATE forest. The Balckwater STATE Forest is for the people of this great area to live and enjoy the great outdoors provided to us and it does not provide a co-habitable platform to have the USAF conduct training exercises within. I can say this from experience as I lived in upstate New York and seen firsthand how the ARMY attempted to co-exist with hunters and explorers in the Forests of Fort Drum. This approach tampers at putting people's lives at risk in the simplest way such as not knowing what grids are HOT for exercises and which grids are "suppose" to be open (I say "suppose" based on the past that took innocent lives on Fort Drum). Soldiers & Airman leave footprints behind which is not conductive to such a delicate echo system as the Blackwater State Forest area. I too stood the watch for my country for 23 years in the United States Navy. I commissioned and made multiple deployments on two nuclear powered submarines and retired at as a Senior Chief Petty Officer. I bleed red, white & blue blood so please do not discredit my love to the military nor my knowledge of training needed. I made sacrifices so that my children and their children could live the American dream and enjoy OUR LIBERTIES. One of the greatest liberties is enjoying the great outdoors of which we have the abilities to do in the Blackwater STATE Forest without military restrictions. The Senior USAF leaders need to go back to the table and modify their schedules and stay on Eglin's government land or send their influx of troops to other bases if they can't find a way to work out a schedule conflict or place the overflow at designated military training areas around the globe on Government land so they can get any training needed. If a business over schedules past their capacity to perform, they don't just take over another business's facilities due to their inabilities to manage. The USAF should not have any threat over us of the great Northwest (such as their threats of leaving the area). Our roads in the Northwest are getting terribly over populated as it is and we don't need the influx to create more pollution, accidents and crime in our great area of the Northwest Florida. I personally attended the meeting earlier this month in Milton Florida, where over 200 local people attended including; residents of the Blackwater Forest area, local horseback riders, kayakers, outdoor enthusiasts and hunters most of whom Protested to keep the military out of the forest. There was only 3 people in the group who supported this potential movement one of which still demanded that more be wrote into the proposed GRASI manuscript to protect the land, people and wildlife. Many of those in attendance just heard of this GRASI proposal. I only heard mention of it that very morning at 0530 from radio on way into work.

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I_144

Please support keeping the USAF out of the Blackwater Forest and I am sure the people will continue to support you sir.

Give us our LIBERTIES & let our youths of tomorrow also enjoy our beautiful forest just the way it is with NO Military restrictions!

**Future scenario; A father wants to take his son & grandson hunting in the forest. Father plans to take them to the area he has pre-scouted and is familiar with. Father finds out last minute USAF has training exercise taking place in that area. Father/grandfather does not want to disappoint his son and grandchild so they go into another "unfamiliar" area. The area is populated with other hunters now because grids closed for USAF training (causing hunters to be on-top of one another). The group encroaches on several other hunters as they venture into the forest (now group and other hunters are mad at each other). Group finally ventures deep enough in the forest, into the "unfamiliar" location and grandson shoots a deer. As the group attempts to track the deer night sets in and the group becomes lost in the "unfamiliar" area of which they were forced to hunt in because they lost the liberty to hunt on the area that their father/grandfather previously scouted and was familiar with!...I hope you get the just as this and many other stories like it that can & will come about.

Very Respectfully,
Chad Hulsizer
[redacted]
Senior Chief Petty Officer USN (Ret.)

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I_145

[redacted]

-----Original Message-----
From: Robin Rickel Vroegop[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2014 2:38 AM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Subject: Comments On GRASI EIS

Robin Rickel Vroegop
[redacted]
Florida Master Naturalist
Certified Florida Green Guide
Certified Florida Marine Science Educator
[redacted]

"The future is determined by those who show up. If we don't get involved, we are entrusting our future to those who may have a very different vision for our world."

"The best way to protect your own freedom is to watch everybody else's back. That's the essence of community." ---- Bode Miller

"The greatest power of the mass media, is the power to ignore. The worst thing about this power, is that you may not even know you are using it."
---Sam Smith

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I_145

Robin Rickel Vroegop
[redacted]

June 23, 2014

Via Email - michael.spaits@us.af.mil
Mike Spaits
Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office
96 TW/PA, 101 West D Avenue, Room 238
Eglin AFB, FL 32572-5499

RE: Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative
Environmental Impact Study: Comments to
Draft EIS

Dear Mr. Spaits,

Enclosed please find my comments on the subject enironmental impact study (EIS). Please ensure that these comments are addressed by the Air Force as part of any final EIS which may be prepared.

Sincerely,

Robin Rickel Vroegop

Citizen Comments: US Air Force Proposal for the GRASI Landscape Initiative
Page 1 of 2 with two reference documents

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I_145

My name is Robin Rickel Vroegop and I have been a resident of Franklin County for over 20 years. For the past ten years I have frequented many of the public lands in Northwest Florida, including Tate's Hell S. F. and Blackwater S.F., as a volunteer, as a student, as a teacher, for personal recreation and study, and more recently, as a guide. My husband and I operate Florida Geotourism Associates, LLC, located at [redacted]

My specific comments will address my concerns regarding ES. 4.1.2.2 Fixed-Wing Aircraft Landing Sites and also ES.4.1.2.1 Helicopter Landing Zones/Drop Zones in Tate's Hell S. F., the area with which I am most familiar. Currently Tactical Map ES-5 shows three proposed FWALS for T.H.S.F. in TA-2, TA-6, and TA-8. I am familar with those dirt roadways that are proposed in support of aircraft operations, such as CV-22 landing zones. According to the two reference documents that I have attached to these comments, I do not think the proposed areas can be utilized within the restriction parameters listed in Tables ES-2 and ES-1. I have attached as reference an article from Air Force Civil Engineer, Vol. 21, No.3, 2013 regarding improvement of unimproved landing area on Melrose Air Force Range, N.M. to provide suitability for repeated take-offs and landings of CV-22 Osprey aircraft. The article indicates that to meet training requirements, the landing area must be a minimum 240-foot diameter circle. I question whether that criteria can be met at the locations proposed for FWALS in Tate's Hell State Forest, without additional clearing, or disturbance of wetlands or floodplains as stated in Tables ES-2 and ES-1.

In addition, I note that the tables state, "no new impervious surfaces". I would like the Air Force to define impervious as it relates to the construction materials/methods allowed in LZ/DZs as well as FWALS. Specifically, will the Air Force or Florida Forest Service be employing the use of aggregates or synthetic fluid soil treatments to stablize these areas against structural and heat damage on roads from CV-22 exhaust and downwash as described in detail in the *Air Force Civil Engineer* article about the MAFR landing pad construction? I am concerned that these construction methods and landings/takeoff/hover operations will result in significant adverse and irreversible impacts to the hydrology, water, and soil quality to the immediate area, and cumulatively, to the water table, leaving sterile zones that will persist for decades and be nearly impossible to mitigate.

From a military fact-sheet published online, I have learned that the CV-22 Osprey aircraft purportedly has a maximum downwash speed above 80 knots, more that the 64 knots lower limit of a hurricane. Video that I have viewed of these machines in operation appears to bear this out.

Furthermore, footnoted information found elsewhere states the following:

> Heat from the V-22's engines can potentially damage the flight deck on some amphibious ships of the U.S. Navy. Naval Air Systems Command devised a

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temporary fix of portable heat shields placed under the engines, and determined that a long-term solution would require redesigning the decks with heat resistant coating, passive thermal barriers, and changes in ship structure, similar changes are required for F-35B operations. In 2009, DARPA requested solutions for installing robust flight deck cooling.

That information has led me to ask the Air Force to address my second Environmental Impact Statement concern: the potential hazards created by the heat and petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL) from aircraft engines. Please refer to my second attached reference document, dated April 2, 2014, from the Department of the Air Force, Air Fore Civil Engineer Center on Tyndall Air Force Base Florida. This is an Engineering Technical letter (ETL) providing guidance to Air Force and Naval engineers on surface treatments to alleviate damage to portland cement concrete caused by extreme exhaust heat and POVs from CV-22 landing, take-off, and hover operations. According to the letter, at times, the concrete can become so hot that the water inside becomes vaporized, causing scaling of the concrete. While the roads in Tate's Hell are not concrete, they do contain some of the same chemical compounds found in concrete, such as calcium carbonate, but in a more permeable form.

Such intense aircraft exhaust heat poses a serious fire risk in times of drought. Even though Tate's Hell is mostly wetlands, the open, grassy and weedy areas along roadsides are often the first to dry out. On other public lands, such as St. Vincent NWR, wildfires have been known to start from just the contact of high, dry, roadside grass with the hot underside of truck chassis. For that reason, I am very concerned about the compatibility of military aircraft and ground training operations with the sylvaculture and management missions of these state Forests. For example, when others are under a "no fire or fireworks" red flag condition, would these high-risk operations and manuevers with pyrotechnics continue, and under what provisions?

Likewise, I am concerned that the present road surfaces in Tate's Hell will not provide an effective barrier to retard the migration of POVs into the water table during rainfall events, while the extreme heat from the engine exhaust will likely hasten the process. As such, CV-22 operations in T.H.S.F. would seem to pose an unacceptable risk of significant adverse and irreversible impacts to the hydrology, water, and soil quality to the immediate area the entire basin which drains to Apalachicola Bay. The costs to mitigate those impacts would likely be high both in economic terms, and in terms of further damage to the ecosystem.

In conclusion, due to my above-outlined concerns regarding the environmental impacts of this proposed action, I must recommend that no action be taken to implement the GRASI Landscape Initiative.

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Special Ops CEs Engineer a Unique Low Dust LZ

1st Lt. Matthew Buscemi
27 SOCES/CEO

Finding ways to reduce aircraft maintenance costs is a critical step in saving money and time.

This is especially true for the CV-22 Osprey, whose primary mission is the infiltration and exfiltration of special operations forces and cargo in austere locations. These locations frequently come with a lot of dust, which can cause a huge aircraft maintenance problem for the Osprey.

Because of its resemblance to Afghanistan, Melrose Air Force Range, located 23 miles west of Cannon Air Force Base, NM., provides some of the most realistic training available to special operations forces. But the dust conditions there reduce engine flight hours to 140 to 250 as opposed to the designed 500 in normal conditions. Once the limit is reached both engines are removed from the aircraft and rebuilt — a maintenance cost of approximately $1.6 million a year.

Due to these high costs, Air Force Special Operations Command tasked the 27th Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron to engineer a solution — a low-dust landing pad — that could extend the lifecycle of the CV-22's engines while maintaining realistic training on MAFR.

Design

While there are many commercial methods for dust control, none are capable of withstanding the intense heat of the CV-22 engine's exhaust. Options considered for the problem included a full-depth concrete pad, large river rock and a liquid polymer or synthetic fluid soil treatment. The soil treatment method was ultimately selected as the most cost-effective and expedient.

Having never constructed such a project, 27 SOCES engineers consulted experts from the U.S. Marine Corps as well as the U.S. Army Dust Control Field Handbook. Marine Wing Support Squadron 374 has used the soil treatment method in constructing several helicopter landing zones and a short field runway for heavy aircraft. There was major concern about the limited amount of data on the durability of the chosen technique.

Choosing the right commercially available dust control product was crucial. There are two main types of products on the market: synthetic fluids and liquid polymers. Synthetic fluids are oil-based and control dust by binding soil particles together. However, this can cause large chunks of soil to stick to aircraft landing gear, a safety issue that immediately excluded synthetic fluids from consideration. This left liquid polymers, which are water-based and control dust by gluing particles together. Once dry, the liquid polymer doesn't stick to aircraft tires.

Our application needed a product with polymer content greater than the 20 to 30 percent in most commercial products. The MWSS 374 recommended the SoilWORKS product called SoilTAC with a polymer content of 50 to 60 percent that allows for greater strength while reducing the amount of product required. Using data from the U.S. Army Dust Control Field Handbook and information provided by the MWSS 374, 27 SOCES engineers developed a mixture using SoilTAC, Portland cement, recycled asphalt and water.

To meet training requirements, the landing pad is a 340-foot diameter circle with an inner 240-foot-diameter landing area and an outer 100-foot-diameter dust control

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zone (see figure). The landing area consists of six inches of recycled asphalt, Portland cement, SoilTAC and water. The dust control zone was created by applying a SoilTAC and water mix to the graded surface, in quantities determined by following the recommendations of both MWSS 374 and SoilWORKS engineers.

Construction

The landing pad construction area was an existing unimproved heavy landing zone. The heavy equipment shop spent three weeks excavating and hauling soil from a borrow pit, and then backfilling to bring the site up to grade. Recycled asphalt (840 cubic yards) was used to further improve the soil. With the site prepped, the final mixture of SoilTAC, water, recycled asphalt and Portland cement was placed and mixed in under two days.

The manufacturer recommended an asphalt reclaimer or tractor with disk plows to mix the materials, but such unique equipment was unavailable in the local area and sourcing from a larger metropolis wasn't cost effective. So, the 27 SOCES improvised and used a grader for mixing.

With the pad complete in less than a month it was time to test it. The initial assumption of the 20th Special Operations Squadron at Cannon was that the pad wouldn't be able to withstand the loading of a CV-22. An Air Force CV-22 completed nine test landings, including several low hovers a few feet over the pad. The pad showed no sign of structural or heat damage.

Five months and more than 100 landings later, the pad is holding strong with no signs of damage. Leadership from AFSOC and the 27th Special Operations Wing was so impressed that the 27 SOCES was tasked to construct three additional pads before the end of the calendar year.

1Lt Buscemi was the officer-in-charge, Operations Engineering, 27 SOLES, Cannon AFB, N.M. He's now the Energy Manager, 8 CES, Kunsan AB Republic of Korea.

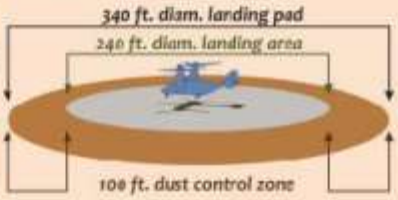
Building a Better Landing Pad

(1) Grading the recycled asphalt after it was placed on the site.

(2) Placing portland cement before the SoilTAC and water was applied.

(3) A grader mixes the SoilTAC, water, Portland cement, and recycled asphalt together. At the same time a water truck sprays the SoilTAC and water into the center of the pad.

(4) The SteelWheel roller compacts the pad. (U.S. Air Force photos by 1st Lt. Matthew Buscemi)



(Figure) Design dimensions for landing pad

A CV-22 Osprey makes a test landing on the low dust landing pad constructed by the 27th Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Erica Engblom)

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AIR FORCE CIVIL ENGINEER CENTER
TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE FLORIDA

2 APR 2014

FROM: AFCEC/CO
139 Barnes Drive Suite 1
Tyndall AFB FL 32403-5319

SUBJECT: Engineering Technical Letter (ETL) 14-2: Preventing and Repairing Concrete Deterioration Under MV-22 and CV-22 Aircraft

1. Purpose. This ETL provides guidance on (1) Portland cement concrete (PCC) surface treatments to reduce or eliminate spalling, scaling, and other surface damage caused by heat and petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL) from aircraft engines, and (2) repairing PCC damaged by CV-22 or MV-22 operations.

Note: Use of the name or mark of a specific manufacturer, commercial product, commodity, or service in this ETL does not imply endorsement by the Air Force.

2. Application: All bases supporting MV-22 or CV-22 operations on PCC pavements.

2.1. Authority:
- Unified Facilities Criteria (UFC) 3-260-02, *Pavement Design for Airfields*
- Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 32-10, *Installations and Facilities*
- AFPD 10-2, *Readiness*

2.2. Effective Date: Immediately.

2.3. Intended Users:
- Major Command (MAJCOM) engineers
- Base Civil Engineers (BCE)

2.4. Coordination:
- Naval Facilities Engineering Command Engineering and Expeditionary Warfare Center (NAVFAC EXWC)

3. Acronyms and Glossary:

APU	- auxiliary power unit
BCE	- Base Civil Engineer
°C	- degrees Celsius
°F	- degrees Fahrenheit
FOD	- foreign object debris
MAJCOM	- Major Command

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NAVFAC EXWC	- Naval Facilities Engineering Command Engineering and Expeditionary Warfare Center
NFESC	- Naval Facilities Engineering Service Center
PCC	- Portland cement concrete
pH	- measure of the acidity or basicity of an aqueous solution
POL	petroleum, oil, and lubricants
PPE	- personal protective equipment
TDS	- Technical Data Sheet
TSP	- trisodium phosphate
UFC	- Unified Facilities Criteria
UFGS	- Unified Facilities Guide Specification

4. References.

4.1. Air Force:

- AFPD 10-2, *Readiness*, http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/
- AFPD 32-10, *Installations and Facilities*, http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/
- ETL 02-7, *Preventing Concrete Deterioration Under B-1 and F/A-18 Aircraft*, http://www.wbdg.org/ccb/browse_cat.php?o=33&c=125

4.2. Navy:

- Naval Facilities Engineering Service Center (NFESC) Technical Data Sheet (TDS) 2058-SHR, *A Concrete Solution to the F/A-18 Parking Apron Problem*, September 1998
- TDS NAVFAC EXWC-CI-1403, *Mitigating Concrete Damage Caused by Engine Exhaust Surface Temperature below 600°F*, December 2013 (supersedes TDS-2058-SHR)209 208 6144
- Naval, L.J., Rossetti, P., Technical Report TR-2314-SHR, Naval Facilities Engineering Service Center, Port Hueneme, California, October 2010

4.3. Joint:

- UFC 3-260-02 *Pavement Design for Airfields*, http://www.wbdg.org/ccb/browse_cat.php?o=29&c=4
- UFC 3-270-03 *Concrete Crack and Partial-Depth Spall Repair*, http://www.wbdg.org/ccb/browse_cat.php?o=29&c=4
- UFC 3-270-04 *Concrete Repair*, http://www.wbdg.org/ccb/browse_cat.php?o=29&c=4
- UFGS 32 13 99, *High Temperature Concrete for Airfields*, http://www.wbdg.org/ccb/browse_cat.php?o=70

4.4. New York State Department of Transportation Materials Bureau:

- NY 703-19 E (2008), *Moisture Content of Lightweight Fine Aggregate*

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4.5. Industry:

- Anderson, John R., Marian P. Rollings, Michael Ayers, and Raymond S. Rollings, *Auxiliary Power Unit (APU) Resistant Concrete: State-Of-The-Art*. Transportation Systems 2000 Conference, San Antonio, Texas, 1 March 2000
- Hironaka, M.C., Malvar, L.J., "Jet Exhaust Damaged Concrete," *Concrete International*, vol. 20, no. 10, October 1998, pp. 32-35
- McVay, Michael, Jeff Rim III, Chris Sawyers, Shirk McKeown, and Charles Beatty, "Cements Resistant to Synthetic Oil Hydraulic Fluid, and Elevated Temperature Environments," *ACI Materials Journal*, March-April 1995, pp. 155-163

5. Background.

5.1. MV-22 or CV-22 engine exhaust can damage ordinary PCC pavements. The damage occurs in the form of scaling or spalling of the top 1 to 2 inches (25 to 50 millimeters) of the pavement. Pavement fragments from these surface scales have the potential to produce foreign object damage (FOD) to aircraft engines. The exhaust temperatures, coupled with spilled fluids (POL), damage ordinary PCC airfield pavements. The damage occurs progressively to the pavement surface under repeated thermal cycling and chemical reaction of the spilled aircraft fluids with the cement paste.

5.2. Testing by NAVFAC EXWC and the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) (reference report, paragraph 4.2) has shown that there are three primary mechanisms causing the damage: thermal fatigue, vapor pressure, and chemical degradation. Thermal fatigue has produced failures without the presence of POL. Damage due to vapor pressure has also been observed when the water vapor pressure cannot be relieved fast enough during the heating phase. Chemical degradation results in a significant loss of strength — up to 50 percent in some cases — which accelerates the failure. Chemical degradation by itself can result in raveling of the concrete, which has been observed under the auxiliary power units (APU) for the B-1 and F-16. It does not produce scaling, but accelerates scaling.

5.3. There are three techniques to reduce damage from MV-22 or CV-22 exhaust.

5.3.1. Applying sodium silicate dramatically improves a concrete pavement's ability to resist damage from exhaust temperatures below 500 °F (260 °C). Applying sodium silicate is the most affordable way to reduce damage to existing undamaged pavement because reconstruction is not required.

5.3.2. When new construction is planned, a high-temperature aggregate such as an igneous traprock, expanded shale, or expanded slate should be used as the coarse aggregate in the concrete mix design. Unlike a concrete mix for an F-35 vertical landing pad (see UFGS 32 13 99, *High Temperature Concrete for Airfields*), the fine aggregate can be a natural sand. For best results, sodium silicate must also be applied; however, the sealant must not be applied any earlier than 70 days after placement of the concrete.

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5.3.3. Multifilament polypropylene fibers at a dosage of 3 pounds per cubic yard of concrete further improves concrete durability when subjected to exhaust.

5.4. In cases where existing pavement has been damaged, repairs in accordance with ET_ 02-7, *Preventing Concrete Deterioration Under B-1 and F/A-18 Aircraft*, will provide a level of protection against further damage in the affected areas. For best results, a sealant must also be applied; however, the sealant must not be applied any earlier than 70 days after placement of the repair material.

6. PCC Surface Treatment.

6.1. Sealing with Sodium Silicate. (Note: Do not apply to asphalt pavement).

6.1.1. The sodium silicate surface sealer is absorbed into the top 0.125 inch (3 millimeters) of the concrete, providing resistance to high exhaust temperatures and preventing POL stains. The sodium silicate will need to be reapplied if surface wear occurs.

6.1.2. The sodium silicate surface sealer needs to be a colorless, water based solution containing 9 percent sodium silicate. Many manufacturers provide a product with this concentration. Higher-concentration products need to be diluted to 9 percent sodium silicate. The 9 percent sodium silicate provides optimum concrete penetration with three applications. Eucosil (Euclid Chemical Company), Woodeze SRU-145 (Rutland), or CARS Liquid Glass (Hubbard-Hall) are sodium silicate products that can be used to seal the concrete surface, however, the concentrations may need to be diluted. The sodium silicate sealer is applied to PCC subject to the heat and POL from MV-22 and CV-22 engines.

6.1.3. Before application, clean the concrete with a rotary power washer/scrubber to remove tire rubber, curing compound, and POL. If heavy POL contamination is present, follow the procedures in paragraph 6.2 before applying the pavement sealant.

6.1.4. Apply the sodium silicate no earlier than 70 days after the pavement has been placed. Testing has determined that sodium silicate applications prior to 70 days result in surface flaking of the PCC. The pavement joints must be properly sealed before applying the sodium silicate. If the joint seals are not in good condition, repair or replace them before applying the sodium silicate. All paint markings (including shadow markings) must be in place, in good condition, and contain no cracks or chips before applying the sodium silicate. Damaged markings must be repaired or replaced before applying the sodium silicate. The concrete surface must be dry for 24 hours before applying the sodium silicate and after the pavement markings have been applied. Air temperature must be 40 °F (4.4 °C) or higher, and relative humidity must be 80 percent or lower, both

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during application and for 48 hours after application. It is acceptable to apply the sodium silicate over pavement markings and glass beads

6.1.5. Recommend sealing only those areas most susceptible to POL and direct exhaust: a circular area 5 to 7 feet (1.5 to 2.1 meters) in radius, centered where the engine exhaust is directed at parking, maintenance, and preflight check areas. For taxiway and taxilane hold points, the sodium silicate should be applied in two stripes 90 to 360 feet (27.4 to 109.7 meters) long and 10 to 14 feet (3.0 to 4.2 meters) wide, centered 24 feet (7.3 meters) on either side of the taxiway centerline. The length of the treated area is determined by the number of aircraft anticipated to hold at a time.

6.1.6. Apply three coats of the sodium silicate solution with low-pressure airless spraying equipment to ensure uniform application. Start applying the solution at the highest point in the pavement and continue downgrade. Each coat must cover not more than 200 square feet per gallon (4.9 square meters per liter). Avoid excessive application, as it will cause efflorescence and reduce friction. Allow the sodium silicate to penetrate for two hours, then wash off any visible excess (ponded) solution. Allow the area to dry for at least 24 hours between each coat.

6.1.7. After allowing the last coat to dry for 24 hours, evaluate the surface for any excess silica or dusting. Wash off any excess silica or dusting as needed. Protect the application from any pedestrian or vehicular traffic until the last coat has dried.

6.2. Cleaning Heavy POL Contamination of PCC and PCC Joints.

6.2.1. If POL stains are present, treat the entire stain before sealing the pavement. Several methods to remove POL stains and, in the case of POL stains on joints, improve the bond to the joint surface are described below. Most stains require several applications and may require the use of more than one treatment method. By implementing all of these steps, maximum removal will be achieved; however, one or more of the steps can be omitted to achieve acceptable results. Steam may be used; however, steam alone will provide some cleaning of the immediate surface but will not penetrate deep enough to provide a long-term result.

6.2.1.1. Dawn (or Simple Green) Dishwashing Detergent and Hot Water. Apply to the stained area and scrub to develop a thick lather. Let set for several minutes then rinse with warm/hot water. Use of steam to pretreat the area and rinse may aid removal.

6.2.1.2. Trisodium Phosphate (TSP). TSP (also called sodium orthophosphate) is available in many hardware stores. Note: Some states have banned this product because the phosphate can cause problems with nearby waterways. Check with the environmental office before

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using. Mix one measure of TSP with six measures of water. Apply over the stain with a paintbrush and allow it to dry completely before scraping off the dried paste. Rinse the concrete surface and scrub with a stiff brush and clean water.

WARNING: DO NOT MIX TSP WITH ANY ACID! A violent reaction can occur and release noxious gas. You can use both products but they must be used separately, with a thorough rinsing with water between applications.

Alternate application method: Dissolve 1 pound, 8 ounces of TSP in a gallon of water. Add enough finely ground calcium carbonate (also called whiting or agricultural lime) to make a thick paste. (Agricultural lime is available at garden supply stores.) Spread the paste over the stain and allow it to dry for a day. If possible, Brush off the dry paste with a stiff brush and scrub the concrete with water. The paste has a high pH so personal protective equipment (PPE) must be used and the paste should be kept away from aircraft. If it is windy, protect the treated area until the area is cleaned and rinsed to keep the caustic material from blowing around the apron.

9.2.1.3. Sodium Hydroxide. If TSP is not available or not allowed, use sodium hydroxide, such as Horado Super Cleaner (Zep® Superior Solutions, http://www.zep.com/ZepSearch/singleproduct.aspx?search=0866&nem=1&match=Exact&country=U?frame=true&width=620&height=400). Make a solution of 6 percent sodium hydroxide (caustic soda: NaOH). Apply it over the stain with a paintbrush and allow it to dry for at least 24 hours. Rinse and scrub with clean water then repeat as required. This has a high pH, so PPE must be used and the solution should be kept away from aircraft. If it is windy, protect the treated area until the area is cleaned and rinsed to keep the caustic material from blowing around the apron.

9.2.1.4. T.S.P. Substitute. T.S.P. Substitute (DAP® Products, http://www.dap.com/product_details.aspx?product_id=317), a sodium carbonate (washing soda) plus other chemicals, can be used as a substitute for TSP or sodium hydroxide; however, it does not work as well and may take more applications to remove the PCM. Apply as directed. Rinse well with water. This is an organic salt. If it is windy, you need to protect the treated area until the area is cleaned and rinsed to keep the salt from blowing around the apron.

9.2.1.5. Phosphoric Acid Cleaner. Apply Phosphoric Acid Cleaner (Miracle Sealants Company, http://www.miraclesealants.com/c_pre_cast_concrete_clean.htm) as directed. Rinse well with water and sodium carbonate (washing soda or soda ash) to neutralize the pH, then rinse with clear water. This product will etch the concrete so do not leave it on too long and ensure the area is rinsed well to ensure no acid is left on the concrete.

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6.2.1.6. Eximo® or G Force. Eximo® (CAF® Environmental Solutions, http://myycaf.com/eximo.php) or G Force (Winsol Laboratories, http://www.winsol.com/G-Force.htm) are biological materials (bacteria) that consume POL. No matter what method is used to remove the stains, use of one of these products is recommended as a final treatment because the bacteria stays in the concrete and will eliminate any remaining POL over time. Follow the product directions.

6.2.1.7. Concrete Sealant. Once the POL stain is removed, joints sealed, and markings added, the PCC surface should be sealed to minimize future POL contamination (see paragraph 6.1). For areas not subject to direct or prolonged exposure to MV-22 or CV-22 exhaust, a silane- or siloxane-based concrete sealer that contains no silicone can be used in lieu of sodium silicate (with the approval of the MAJCOM pavements engineer), but it must be reapplied every 12 to 24 months. Products that allow the concrete to breathe work best. Available products include, but are not limited to, Aquapel (L&M Construction Chemicals), MasonrySaver (SaverSystems®, http://www.saversystems.com/products/masonry-water-repellent-products.html), and Protecrete® Densifier plus Repeller™ (Applied Concrete Technology, http://concretesolution.com/densifier-plus-repeller.html). Sodium siliconate products such as SealGreen® concrete sealers (http://sealgreen.com/concrete-sealer.html) may also be used (with the approval of the MAJCOM pavements engineer) but require reapplication every 24 to 48 months.

6.2.2. If the contamination is too heavy then removal/repair of the area may be required.

7. PCC Repair. Repairs to PCC damaged by MV-22 or CV-22 exhaust should be accomplished in accordance with ETL 02-7. In the event that an entire slab must be replaced, a high-temperature aggregate such as an igneous traprock, expanded shale, or expanded slate should be used as the coarse aggregate in the concrete mix design. Unlike a concrete mix for an F-35 vertical landing pad (see UFGS 32 13 99), the fine aggregate can be a natural sand. For best results, sodium silicate must also be applied; however, the sealant must not be applied any earlier than 70 days after placement of the concrete repair material.

8. Point Of Contact. Questions or comments about this ETL are encouraged and should be directed to the Pavements Subject Matter Expert, AFCEC/COSC, DSN 523-6439, commercial (850) 283-6439, afcec.roc@tyndall.af.mil.

ANTHONY A. HIGGON, Colonel, USAF
Deputy Director

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1 Distribution List

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-----Original Message-----
From: Jim R Cummins [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 22, 2014 9:24 PM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Subject: Comments on GRASI Landscape Initiative (GLI) EIS

Mr. Spaits,

Attached are my comments on the GLI EIS in MS Word 2010 format. If another format is needed, please let me know ASAP. I believe that the NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE is the only acceptable choice.

Jim R. Cummins

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Comments on the GRASI Landscape Initiative (GLI) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Section 3.5.1.3, page 3-36, lines 12-15: Shouldn't this section discuss air quality rather than noise?

NOISE

Noise is specifically addressed in sections 3.3, 4.3, 5.3, 6.3, and Appendix H of the EIS. It is also commented on in various other sections in relation to effects on specific receptors. The discussion in Appendix H is particularly good as relates to general overview and definitions. Unfortunately nowhere in the EIS is the uniqueness of the forest environment addressed. This environment is exceedingly quiet and what sound is present; e.g., wind, insects, birdcalls, etc.; is generally considered pleasant and/or soothing to humans and animals. The intrusiveness of foreign sounds, i.e., noise, is very great and noise criteria should reflect this. The EIS fails in this regard.

Aircraft

Table 3-9 gives the sound exposure level (SEL) at ground level for various aircraft. These are assumed to be single event SEL, therefore multiple aircraft would have 6dB to 12 dB higher levels depending on the number of aircraft. In addition as stated in Appendix H.1.2.5, these levels should have an "onset adjustment" of up to 11 dB added to them. The onset adjustment would be higher for low flying aircraft (below 1000 ft.) and less for aircraft at higher elevations such as 10,000 ft. Combining these adjustments the values in Table 3-9 are 11 dB to 23 dB too low. The higher values should be used to perform the impact on the receptors in the forest.

Not only are the adjusted SEL higher than was previously used, the criteria for noise levels in the forest are overstated. The references used to determine allowable Day-Night Levels (DNL or L_{dn}) are for urban or suburban areas where there are continuous sound sources present. The forest is even quieter than a rural setting as there are few highways, few farms or ranches and no concentrated housing. There are very few vehicles, no air conditioner units, no emergency vehicles, and no or few businesses. The criteria for the forest area should be 5 dB to 10 dB quieter than the suburban area and at least 5 dB quieter than a rural area. This means that all criteria lines as shown in Figures 5-21 through 5-24 for the Blackwater River State Forest (BRSF) should use a DNL criterion of 45 dB, rather than 55 dB. The noise impact analysis represented by Figures 6-12 through 6-22 should be redone using the higher SEL and lower criteria to determine THSF noise protection levels. A similar analysis to that for BWSF should be done for the Tate's Hell State Forest (THSF) fixed wing landing sites. In addition there should be a standard or typical contour or "footprint" for helicopter landing zones (LZ) and drop zones (DZ) for both areas. This would allow the determination of the acceptability of an LZ/DZ site selection.

The effects of noise on the forest and the use of the forest have not been adequately addressed. The expectations of people visiting the forest are for a serene, quiet and clean environment. The intrusion of noise as either flyovers, or military training and vehicles is much higher than in rural or suburban areas. Military activities will disrupt at least some civilian activities and traditional uses of the forest, whether it is hunting, fishing, bird watching, hiking, etc. These interruptions will be exaggerated but will lead to fewer people using the forest, reduced property values, and bad publicity. Individuals exposed to excessive noise levels will be very annoyed and have negative reactions such as avoiding future trips to the forest, protests, contacting news media, contact of local, state and national political office holders and legal action. No

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definitive studies have been made but anecdotal evidence indicates the high noise levels can and will damage local wildlife, scare off targets of hunting, and frighten birds, bears, and other creatures. There have been no positive civilian effects identified with having training in the forest and only minor military scheduling benefits.

Expendables (Bombs and Blanks)

The use of ground burst simulator (bomb) and blanks in the forest provides a uniquely adverse impact. As pointed out in Table 3-12 the noise level of 5.56 mm blanks is still 87 dB (pk) at 525 feet. While Army Regulation 200-1 recommends this sound level for land use purposes, this is not a land use issue but a noise avoidance issue so is excessive for the forest environment. A criteria that is more consistent with the background sound for the forest would be 65 dB(pk) or 55 dB CDNL. This would modify Table 3-12 as shown below.

Table 3-12. Munitions Noise Threshold Distances (Feet)

Munitions Type	65 dB	87 dB	104 dB
5.56-mm blank	6609 525		176
7.62-mm blank	47,575 3,779		851
Distance in Feet at Which Noise Is Below CDNL			
	55 dB	62 dB	70 dB
Ground burst simulator	5,684 2,539		1,201

Note that the distance for 5.56-mm blanks and ground burst simulator is over a mile while for the 7.62-mm blanks is over 9 miles. Using these criteria will require updating numerous maps in Section 5 and 6 and other protection areas.

AIR QUALITY

The methodology of the EIS on air pollution grossly underestimates the effects of the Proposed Action on the forest and the users of the forest. Comparing total annual emissions in tons per year reduces the actual impact to insignificance. A more proper method would be to compare short-term pollution levels in parts per million (ppm) to allowable exposure limits. As an example, what is the possibility that a visitor to the forest, either hiking or canoeing will cross the path of the smoke? The EIS should determine the dissipation time of any emissions from smoke bomb and other ordinance to determine exposure time to plants, animals and humans. Regardless of the dissipation time some residue will occur. The EIS should determine both the amount and constituents of the residue from these devices and the likelihood that the residue would go into the environment. The EIS needs to be revised to include these items.

OTHER

This section addresses several concerns that do not fit nicely elsewhere.

Paint balls are planned for use in both forests. Not all of the paint balls will hit their target. Where and how is the contamination of the "misses" taken into account? Are sections of the forest going to be painted and how long will this eyesore last? What kind and amount of contaminate will the paint balls introduce? Is it harmful to plants, animals or humans?

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Comments on the GRASI Landscape Initiative (GLI) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

A major concern is that the intrusion of the military into the state forests with noise, pollution, and activity will deter people from going to and using the forest. A reduction of use will cause a reduction of jobs in this area that is so strongly dependent on tourism. Even without the Proposed Action, there are instances of eco-tourists being delayed or denied the use of the forest due to military actions. Add to this the effects of noise annoyance and gunfire, especially at night, and property values will be depressed as old residents move out and new owners are reluctant to buy. The only option that does the least harm to the forest, the community and the tourists is the NO ACTION option.

SUMMARY

The EIS is deficient in several areas and should be revised to address the issues raised in this comment. As stated in Section 2.6 of the EIS "…Air Force has not identified any significant or insignificant beneficial impacts under the Proposed Action"

- Noise impact of aircraft with multiple aircraft and onset adjustment factor.
- Appropriate criteria for a very quiet forest environment should be used, say 35 dB DNL.
- Charts showing protection levels should be revised.
- Aircraft takeoff and landing sound contours should use the 45 dB DNL as the criteria.
- Helicopter noise contours should be produced and used for LZ/DZ protection areas.
- Helicopter LZ/DZ areas should use the 45 dB DNL contours criteria.
- Use a 65 dB(pk) level criteria for blanks usage.
- Use a 55 dB CDNL for ground burst simulator usage.
- Determine significance of air pollution using a short-term (1 hour) ppm criteria.
- Determine the significance and toxicity of paint ball misses.
- Determine the dissipation time, toxicity and extent of smoke bombs.

Submitted by Jim R. Cummins

[redacted]

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[redacted]

-----Original Message-----
From: Tanya Alvarez [redacted]
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2014 2:41 PM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Subject: GRASI EIS public comments

Hello Mr. Spaits,

Please accept this email and attachment as my official submission of comments associated with the GRASI EIS.

Thank you,

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Tanya Alvarez McHale
[redacted]

June 23, 2014

Mr. Mike Spaits
Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office
96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238
Eglin AFB, Florida 32542-5499

Dr. Mr. Spaits,

My name is Tanya Alvarez McHale. I appreciate the opportunity to provide my comments on the draft GRASI Landscape Initiative Environmental Impact Statement (GLI EIS). I submit my comments as a concerned Florida citizen whom owns and lives on property which boarders Blackwater River State Forest (BRSF) located in TA-9 and adjacent to TA-8. I have a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Biology and have experience as a Field Biologist and a Regulator.

One of my main concerns is the lack of an Alternative Action (GLI EIS Executive Summary ES 4.3 pg 22) and the reason offered for the proposed utilization of public lands for military training. Eglin AFB consists of approximately 463,000 acres. Why not utilize the existing space which is designated for military use? Why not close some of the existing open areas and utilize those areas on Eglin AFB for the non-hazardous training missions. Why are the limiting factors for training activities limited to an 1.5 hour drive or an 1 hour flight time from Eglin AFB (GLI EIS 2.2.3 pg 2-2). The Gulf coast has a number of military bases. Kessler AFB, NAS Gulfport, Camp Shelby, NAS Pensacola, NAS Whiting Field, Eglin AFB, Hurlburt AFB, Tyndall AFB and MacDill AFB. The Gulf coast is connect through railroad lines and Interstate. Why not utilize the facilities already designated for military use prior to utilizing public lands? I do not think the loss of time for travel (GLI EIS 2.2.4 D. pg 2-4) is a reasonable justification for the use of public lands for military training.

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I would like to provide substantive comments on the GLI EIS. Please see below for my specific comments and concerns.

1. Which consulting firm(s) provided input and drafted the Environmental Impact Statement?

2. GLI EIS Executive Summary (ES) 4.1.2.1 (pg 10) states "Existing cleared areas within the state forests would be utilized as HLZs/DZs for personnel and equipment from various aircraft (either fixed or rotary wing)… These sites would be open areas that have already been cleared of tall vegetation by the FFS through regular forest management activities."
   Most existing cleared areas are associated with Silviculture Activities. The Blackwater River State Forest 10 Year Management Plan (BRSF10YMP), Section VI, Subsection B.2 Silviculture Operations (pg 43) states "Stands of off-site species with merchantable volume will be scheduled for harvest, followed by a subsequent reforestation with the appropriate tree species." My concern associated with this activity is the areas designated as HLZ/DZ will not successfully regenerate or reforest as stated in the BRSF10YMP with constant ground disturbance.

3. The Blackwater River State Forest 10 year Management Plan (BRSF10YMP), Section II, Subsection E.5 (pg 20) states that the Memorandum of Understanding entered into by FDACS and the USAF "is constructed in such a manner as to preclude interference with public use and access, limit any resource damage, and preclude any impacts to areas containing threatened or endangered species."
   GLI EIS Executive Summary (ES) 4.1.2.1 through 4.1.2.21 (pgs 10-20) outlines a variety of activities which all have a range of duration and frequencies. These activities will require areas of the Blackwater River State Forest to be closed to the public. This a direct conflict with the BRSF10YMP Section II, Subsection E.5 (pg 20).

4. GLI EIS Executive Summary (ES) 4.1.2.13 (pg 16) states the restrictions for blackout driving will only occur on closed/designated roads. It also states "Roads used for this activity would be temporarily closed". Roads that are designated as closed in the Blackwater River State Forest are closed because of erosion issues or because of sensitive habitat. Driving on closed roads may cause erosion issues which will be direct conflict with the Blackwater River State Forest 10 year Management Plan (BRSF10YMP), Section IV, Subsection A.2 (pg 22). In addition, temporarily closing roads would be in direct conflict with the BRSF10YMP Section II, Subsection E.5 (pg 20), which states the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) entered into by FDACS and the USAF "is constructed in such a manner as to preclude interference with public use and access."

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5. The Blackwater River State Forest 10 year Management Plan (BRSF10YMP), Section IV, Subsection C.2 (pg 25) takes in to consideration State Listed species when managing for wildlife species. The plan specifically states "Specialized management techniques will be used, as necessary, to protect or increase imperiled and other protected species, as applicable for both plants and animals." GLI EIS Executive Summary (ES) 4.1.2.14 (pg 16) states concertina wire and barb wire will be placed for a frequency of 10 times per year for a duration of the length of the exercise. This type of obstacle poses a direct threat to wildlife with the potential of impacted species listed in the BRSF10YMP.

6. GLI EIS Executive Summary (ES) 4.1.2.15 and 4.1.2.16 (pg 17) states "There may be slight surface ground disturbance (within 6 inches of ground surface) from placement of tent stakes and pickets. How will this ground disturbance occur? Will heavy equipment/machinery be used to level the ground? Is so, is this taken into consideration when concluding the Air Force has not identified any significant beneficial or adverse impacts associated with training activities or emitter use (GLI EIS Executive Summary ES 5 pg 24)? Who will pre-assess the designated sites? I would recommend utilizing and coordinating with the experts from State Agencies for the expertise in the local flora and fauna.

7. GLI EIS Executive Summary (ES) 4.1.2.17 (pg 18) describes the use of amphibious vessels on the waterways. Which specific waterways will these activities occur on? How and where will these vessels be fueled/refueled? In addition, one of the Restrictions is to avoid public boaters. How can this be accomplished when most of the navigable streams are utilized by canoers, kayakers and tubers? GLIEIS Executive Summary (ES) 4.1.2.17 (pg 18) also states the amphibious vessels will have outboard motors ranging from 35 hp to 200 hp. Normal use of the waterways in the State Forest consist of canoers, kayakers and tubers, which do not utilize gas motors or produce noise. In addition, outboards create wake which is a huge factor in shoreline/bank erosion. Has this been taken into consideration when determining no adverse impacts will occur (GLI EIS Section 5.8.3 pg 5-59)?

8. GLI EIS Executive Summary 4.1.2.18 (pg 18) describes Opposing Force Vehicles Operations with up to 10 vehicles and a frequency of up to 5 times per week. Will the designated roads be closed to the public? This would be a direct conflict with the Blackwater River State Forest 10 year Management Plan (BRSF10YMP), Section II, Subsection E.5 (pg 20), which states the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) entered into by FDACS and the USAF "is constructed in such a manner as to preclude interference with public use and access."

9. Table ES-22 (pg 21) discusses various buffers associated with various protection levels. Who will be delineating these buffers and how will they be marked? I

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would recommend utilizing local professional staff whom are familiar with the local flora and fauna. Would it not beneficial to ground mark these buffers in addition to maps and GPS points?

10. GLI EIS Section 1.2 (pg 1-3) states "This GLI EIS, therefore, evaluates the environmental impacts of the Proposed Action that is ready for decision on FFS, FWC, FDEP, or NWFWMD lands that meet the military's GRASI training needs". Will the comments from the State Agencies be incorporated into the Final EIS?

11. GLI EIS Section 1.4 (pg 1-4) states "The demand for the land range and use of RA over the Eglin Range Complex creates scheduling conflicts for nonhazardous training." Why not close some of the existing open areas and utilize those areas on Eglin AFB for the non-hazardous training missions. Isn't utilizing the existing space which is designated for military use a better option than using public lands?

12. GLI EIS Section 2.3.2 (pg 2-9) states "As part of the Proposed Action, Eglin AFB would establish a Landscape Implementation Team (L.I.T.) and a GLI Liaison". Who will be chosen for the LIT and what will their professional requirements be? Again, I would recommend utilizing and coordinating with the experts from State Agencies for the expertise in the local flora and fauna.

13. GLI EIS Section 2.3.2.1 (pg 2-11) states "While there may be a need for gravel surfaces for vehicle parking, no land development or other improvements would be required by the Air Force." Gravel is a semi-impervious substance which will most likely require a Stormwater Permit from the State.

14. GLI EIS Section 2.3.2.9 (pg 2-18) discusses the use of hardened surfaces for Forward Air Refueling Point/Hot Gas Operations. Who will be responsible for monitoring the fueling activities, a civilian or a soldier? It would be beneficial to have civilian monitors.

15. GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 1 (pg 2-28) General Operational Constraints states prior to implementation of the Proposed Action, the Air Force will develop a mitigation plan identifying Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations to be implemented, responsible parties for mitigation implementation and compliance evaluation, and monitoring mechanisms for evaluation of mitigation effectiveness. What type of staff will develop this mitigation plan and what is the mitigation plan approval process? Shouldn't the mitigation plan be developed prior to the Final Environmental Impact Statement?

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16. GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 3.e (pg 2-30) General Operational Constraints states unit commanders and training personnel will be provided with both a visual and written presentation of restrictions annual briefings, additional site specific environmental briefings (i.e., BRSF and THSF), and/or through the Eglin AFB Center Scheduling Enterprise (CSE). Shouldn't these briefings occur prior to EVERY training mission conducted? At a minimum, quarterly or bi-annual briefings should be required. If not, how can Eglin AFB ensure the soldiers participating in the training understands the restrictions?

17. GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 3.l (pg 2-30) states Eglin AFB will coordinate with the FFS to periodically review and update the affected environment condition of each Proposed Action location and update as necessary the operational constraints and/or mitigations identified in this EIS, as well as any of the GLI Protection Level maps if required. How often is "periodically" going to occur?

18. GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 3.m (pg 2-30) states Eglin AFB will monitor conditions of high-use training areas, including the hardened camp sites, HLZs/DZ, and FWALS to ensure areas are not overused (e.g., show signs of degradation or adverse impact) and do not expand beyond established boundaries. How often will these sites be monitored?

19. GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 3.p (pg 2-30) states in addition to close examination of the area around proposed new training locations for protected/sensitive species, survey the areas surrounding existing training areas every two years to ensure that no new noise-sensitive land uses have been established. What does close examination constitute? Who will conduct the close examination? Every two years is not an adequate time frame. Quarterly or bi-annually would be more acceptable.

20. GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 5.m (pg 2-32) During Training states "Do not use sensitive vegetation (e.g., protected species) as part of natural resource consumption. Confer with GRASI Liaison and Eglin Natural Resources Section to identify protected vegetation." Will the Liaison be on site? Will they soldiers be required to confer prior to the training missions?

21. GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 5.r (pg 2-33) During Training *Dismounting Maneuver* Avoid concentrated troop movements on steep slopes and in wetlands. What is concentrated troop movements?

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22. GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 5.s (pg 2-33) During Training *Dismounting Maneuver* Do not step on, fill, or in any way cause a gopher tortoise burrow to collapse. Will there be anyone in the field with the soldiers ensuring gopher tortoise burrows will not be damaged? If so, whom? It would be beneficial to have a civilian monitoring activities.

23. GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 5.t (pg 2-33) During Training *Land Disturbance* Digging is only approved in these areas through coordination with the GLI Liaison and Eglin AFB prior to field activities. How will the digging be implemented? What type of heavy equipment, if any, will be used?

24. GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 5.x, y and z (pg 2-33) During Training *Wheeled Vehicles* Will there be anyone in the field with the soldiers ensuring prohibited areas will be avoided, eroded areas, gullies and restoration will be avoided and disposal/discharge of hazardous materials will not occur on the ground or in the water? If so, whom? It would be beneficial to have a civilian monitoring activities.

25. GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 5.dd (pg 2-33) *Bivouacking* Minimize water consumption from rivers and streams. What needs would constitute water consumption from rivers and streams and how much will be needed.

26. GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 5.jj through bbb (pgs 2-34, 2-35) *Expendable Use* Will there be anyone in the field with the soldiers the proposed action and alternatives will be met? If so, whom? It would be beneficial to have a civilian monitoring activities.

27. GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 6.a (pg 2-36) *After Training* Police training areas to ensure that no trash, ammunition boxes, wire, or other debris has been left in the area and all excavations are filled. Take to appropriate landfill or recycling points. Who will be responsible for policing the training areas? It would be beneficial to have a civilian monitoring activities.

28. GLI EIS Section 2.6 (pg 2-38) Alternative Impact Analysis Summary states these impacts would be insignificant based on the context, intensity, and duration of the identified impacts as described throughout Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6. I would argue that the secondary impacts would be significant based on the amount and duration of use over a long period of time. Secondary impacts should be considered and mitigated for.

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29. GLI EIS Section 2.6 (pg 2-41) Water Resources states there are unavoidable direct adverse impacts to wetlands and floodplains from incidental surface disturbances (ISDs) associated with ground movement (e.g., troops walking through wetlands) and amphibious operations (e.g., boats landing along the shoreline). Impacts to wetlands and surface waters may require an Environmental Resources Permit per Part IV of Chapter 373, Florida Statutes.

30. GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-42) Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigation states the Air Force would post signs collocated with existing Forest Service signage and in Forest Service stations notifying forest users of the potential for encountering training in the forest. When will these signs be placed in relation to the mission? Is this the only notification system for the public proposed?

31. GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-44) Earth Resources states "Construct and maintain an FWALS drainage system that collects and discharges stormwater runoff in a non-erosive manner." This may require a state permit for stormwater authorization per Part IV of Chapter 373, Florida Statutes.

32. GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-44) Earth Resources states "Avoid clear zone maintenance during wet soil conditions. All soils are highly sensitive to mechanical compaction or rutting damage when wet." What constitutes wet soil conditions?

33. GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-44) Earth Resources states "Depending on extent of damage, soil structure amendments could be made with hand tools or motorized tillage equipment. Areas may also need to be reseeded to native species to reduce bare ground and encourage the establishment of soil protecting ground cover." Will the reseeding to native species be monitored for success? Reseeding does not constitute mitigation if the reseeding is not successful.

34. GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-44) Earth Resources states "Maintain at least a 100-foot exclusion buffer around sensitive steephead slopes and closed depression subsidence areas to prevent accelerated soil erosion of slopes and wet soil rutting." Where does the buffer start in relation to the steephead? The top of the slope?

35. GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-45) Earth Resources states "To the degree possible, avoid the repetitive use of the same hardened egress and ingress locations within the same year for amphibious operations." What constitutes repetitive use?

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Three landings, twelve landings? Is encouraging multiple egress and ingress locations increasing the potential for multiple sites to be disturbed?

36. GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-45) Earth Resources states "For sites where vegetation damage could result in loss of plant cover, reseed with native species to encourage the reestablishment of vegetative cover." Will the reseeding to native species be monitored for success? Reseeding does not constitute mitigation if the reseeding is not successful.

37. GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-45) Water Resources states "Use only FFS-approved, designated vehicle water crossings in "Good" or "Fair" condition". What constitutes "Good" or "Fair". Impacts to wetlands and surface waters may require an Environmental Resources Permit per Part IV of Chapter 373, Florida Statutes.

38. GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-45) Water Resources states "If off-road vehicle use is required for any reason the respective FFS Management Office would need to be consulted prior to occurrence". This is in direct conflict with GLI EIS Section 2.3.2.11, Section 2.3.2.20 and Table 2-24 which states vehicles are restricted to forest/established roads.

39. GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-45) Water Resources states "To minimize localized damage potential from foraging and dismounted troop movements, the size of troop units will be kept to small manageable numbers. Troop use would be rotated within and among TAs to prevent concentration of activities in particular locations." What constitutes "small manageable numbers? What would be the rotation schedule?

40. GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-45) Water Resources states "Roads, trails, and stream/wetland crossings would be inspected before and after each training mission to identify maintenance issues that could cause problems if not repaired. Training activities would be shifted or redirected if conditions of roads and stream and wetland crossings require repair or other measures to prevent erosion from impacting surface waters and wetlands." Who will be responsible for these inspections? It would be beneficial to have a civilian monitoring activities.

41. GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-45) Biological Resources states "Develop and implement a process that will notify Eglin Natural Resources of the dates and locations of upcoming training events to support spot surveys/inspections for

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compliance." Does Eglin Natural Resources have enough staff to meet this requirement? If not, is their funding to increase staffing?

42. GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-45) Biological Resources states "Survey proposed new training locations (including fixed wing aircraft landing sites and HLZs) for protected/sensitive species, and survey existing training areas at least every 3 years to identify any new sensitive species that have moved into the area." Every 3 years is not adequate. Surveys should be, at a minimum, completed annually.

43. GLI EIS Section 3.3.4 (pg 3-23) Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations states "Aircraft would not operate below 500 feet AGL except while engaged in approaches to, departures from, or training at designated HLZ/DZ, OHO locations, or FWALS." 500 feet AGL is not an acceptable flight level. This will subject property owners and recreational visitors to excessive noise levels. The noise and reverberation has the potential of damaging foundations of houses within the flight pattern.

44. GLI EIS Section 3.11.2 (pg 3-92) Economic Activity states "based on Sections 3.3 (*Noise*) and 3.4 (*Safety*), the training activities would avoid noise sensitive locations such as residences, schools, etc., therefore no significant impacts to housing values would be anticipated as a result of the proposed action." As a home owner in the direct flight line and relatively close to FWALS DNL-TA-9, I strongly disagree with that statement. Having large military aircraft fly over on a regular basis will not only lower the value of my house, it will make it more difficult to sell. Any professional realtor or appraiser would concur.

45. GLI EIS Section 3.11.2 (pg 3-92) Recreation and Tourism states "Some recreational users, such as hikers, may be annoyed by noise from aircraft operations." It is safe to say the "most" recreational users will be annoyed from the noise and it will have a negative economic impact on the Blackwater River State Forest and surrounding communities.

46. GLI EIS Section 5.6.2.1 (pg 5-33) Land Disturbance states "As discussed in Section 3.6.3, HLZs/DZs, point impacts, consumption, and incidental land disturbance would have no adverse impact on soils. Impacts to BRSF earth resource identified in Section 5.6.1 would generally be the same as those described in Section 3.6." This is in direct conflict with GLI EIS 5.6.1.2 (pg 5-28) which states "Approximately 112,755 acres (55 percent) of the BRSF is composed of highly erodible soils. Generally, BRSF soils are considered very susceptible to soil erosion due to the dominance of sandy soil textures and extensive areas of

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moderately to steeply sloped topography." If over one half of the Blackwater River State Forest has highly erodible soils, it would be very difficult not to have adverse impacts on soils.

47. GLI EIS Section 5.6.2.2 (pg 5-34) Ground Disturbance states "ground movement has the potential for causing soil erosion; however, this potential is considered negligible given general operating procedures identified in Section 2.5 and the Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations identified in Section 3.6.4." This is in direct conflict with GLI EIS 5.6.1.2 (pg 5-28) which states "Approximately 112,755 acres (55 percent) of the BRSF is composed of highly erodible soils. Generally, BRSF soils are considered very susceptible to soil erosion due to the dominance of sandy soil textures and extensive areas of moderately to steeply sloped topography." If over one half of the Blackwater River State Forest has highly erodible soils, it would be very difficult not to have adverse impacts on soils.

48. Looking at table 5-38 on page 5-50, it appears there is a bald eagle's nest on Hurricane Lake in TA-3 not accounted for.

49. GLI EIS Section 5.8.3 (pg 5-59) states "based on these factors the Air Force has identified insignificant adverse impacts to the natural environment." GLI EIS Section 5.8.1 Vegetation (pg 5-46) states "In combination with the Conecuh National Forest, BRSF is home of the largest contiguous longleaf pine/wiregrass ecosystem in the world and contains some of the richest plant and animal diversity. GLI EIS Section 5.8.1.4 Sensitive Habitat (pg 5-51) states "Longleaf pine communities provide habitats for many plants and animals, including many classified as endangered, threatened, or species of special concern (SSC)." This ecosystem is susceptible to impacts created from long term ground disturbance which will cause the succession of the natural community.

50. GLI EIS Section 5.10.3 (pg 5-66) Land Use Impact Summary states "Minor, short-term small-scale closures of areas (HLZs/DZs, road segments) during training activities would not preclude use of the forest and access would be allowed once training activities have ceased. This is in direct conflict with the Blackwater River State Forest 10 year Management Plan (BRSF10YMP), Section II, Subsection E.5 (pg 20), which states that the Memorandum of Understanding entered into by FDACS and the USAF "is constructed in such a manner as to preclude interference with public use and access, limit any resource damage, and preclude any impacts to areas containing threatened or endangered species."

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51. GLI EIS Section 7.3.1 (pg 5-66) BRSF Regional Past/Present/Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions states "Multi-use strategies to utilize and conserve state forest resources include:

• Support state forest management objectives and sustain efficient sources of revenue through the implementation of sustainable forest management practices.
• Provide resource-based outdoor recreational opportunities for multiple interests.
• Restore and manage healthy forests and native ecosystems and ensure the viability of listed plants and animals.
• Protect archaeological, historical, cultural, and paleontological resources.
• Restore, maintain, and protect hydrologic functions of water resources and health of aquatic communities.
• Cooperate with the military to facilitate mission-essential training in a manner that does not adversely impact natural resources, forest management, or public access (FDACS, 2013)." The proposed training missions are in direct conflict with the first four management practices.

In closing, as Florida Citizen and homeowner with property bordering Blackwater River State Forest, I have many concerns with the proposed activities. I appreciate the opportunity to provide my comments and hope they will be taken into consideration when preparing the Final EIS. I would hope Eglin AFB will coordinate with State Agencies to help develop monitoring and mitigation and to ensure all proposed mitigation is adhered too. I strongly oppose the military using public lands for training, when in my opinion, there is adequate land on Eglin AFB which could be utilized. However, if this plan moves forward, I would expect Eglin AFB to continuously monitor the training activities to ensure impacts are minimal.

Sincerely,

Tanya Alvarez McHale

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[redacted]

From: prvs=1245392c9d=michael.spaits@us.af.mil on behalf of SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA <michael.spaits@us.af.mil>
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2014 2:49 PM
To: Tom Jacobs
Subject: RE: Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative Landscape Initiative Draft EIS, Objection
Signed By: michael.spaits@us.af.mil

Mr. Jacobs,
Thank you for your input. Your comments will be added to the Administrative Record and included for consideration in the analysis of this Proposed Action. For more information, or to stay current with this proposed action and alternatives, please refer to this link for the most up-to-date information: http://grasleis.leidoseemg.com/

Thanks,
Mike Spaits
Eglin Environmental Public Affairs
O - (850) 882-2836
C - (850) 621-3391

-----Original Message-----
From: Tom Jacobs [redacted]
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2014 8:55 AM
To: SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA
Subject: Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative Landscape Initiative Draft EIS, Objection

Mr. Spaits,
This email is submitted in opposition to the use of Tate's Hell and Blackwater State Lands for military excercises. I am a professional ecologist and recreational user of the subject lands. The anticipated adverse impacts to both the environment and passive use of these areas is unacceptable. Despite the use of the word in the contemporary lexicon, there is no such thing as sustainable use of the natural environment by humans. Use of these areas will cause adverse aesthetic, noise, light, and physical impacts to areas that are in the process of recovering from past management mistakes. Introducing repetitive military access will cause unnecessary harm.

Thank you

Thomas Jacobs
[redacted]

Sent from below the dam!!

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ID	I_151
Date Submitted	6/24/2014
Commenter	Leah Oliver
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I do not support the proposed use of Blackwater River State Forest or Tate's Hell State Forest for military maneuvers and training. Such activities are starkly incompatible with the intent of the parks. Parks provide natural spaces critical to ecosystem function and human health. Multiple endangered species inhabit this area. Citizens of NW FL enjoy the forests, creeks and trails for hiking, paddling, biking, hiking and fishing. Military use is incompatible with ecosystem and human health due to noise, physical damage, and potential chemical contamination associated with the proposed maneuvers. Risks to citizens and soldiers are too great; training activities must be uncompromised by environmental and safety concerns. Simulations of combat situations are incompatible with citizen recreational use, and best located within existing military boundaries.

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ID	I_152
Date Submitted	6/24/2014
Commenter	Riley Hoggard
Organization	self
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	1. Purpose and Need Purpose and Need - The Need portion states the proposed action is needed because there is a projected regional shortfall of military training and testing land and airspace in the GRASI region and scheduling conflicts are created for nonhazardous training. A true analysis of this statement shows there is no shortage of testing land if military training is not trying to utilize the same land. Airspace needs are not even addressed in this EIS. As such, the only shortfall is in military training space and that is not even a primary mission of Eglin AFB! The proposed action does not support the primary mission of Eglin AFB. If land training of troops has become such a significant part of the Eglin AFB mission, the official mission should be changed in order to give land training on base lands higher priority. Otherwise, the use of public lands for military purposes has not been adequately justified. 2. Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives Emitter Sites - Numerous alternative emitter sites should be considered as part of the EIS; the current analysis was much too limited. With scheduling to avoid conflicts with primary usage, sites are available throughout the various counties that could easily meet the site and training requirements. Sites such as Navy OLFs, public airports, large parking lots (especially those associated with vacant stores/shopping centers), churches, schools, playgrounds, and a host of others could be utilized. Action Alternatives - There are numerous alternatives to the proposed action that should be considered. A range of alternatives is usually required to insure that the best decision is reached. With a mere two alternatives, the proposed action and no action, one can hardly expect an adequate evaluation and decision-making process! Possible alternatives include: o As the main mission of Eglin Air Force Base is testing and evaluation, the ground training mission could be relocated to another military installation with adequate land areas available. o Military activities within the state forests could be reduced in number and frequency to be more compatible with traditional forest uses. o Military use of the state forests could be limited to 'off season' periods to reduce conflict with seasonal forest users. This could also avoid impacts to nesting wildlife. Timing military use to lessen impacts to both humans and wildlife would help to incorporate some reasonableness into the proposed action. Proposed Action Affected Resource Assessment

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The impact analyses of the identified key resources are flawed due to consideration of the General Operational Restraints. The listed General Operational Restraints are far too numerous to be practical as a field tool. They are entirely unworkable for field level military operations. The expertise and knowledge required to implement these Restraints would not be possessed by the field troops, enlisted or officers. Do we really expect a special operations soldier to identify a RCW cavity or gopher tortoise burrow? Some natural resource professionals still have problems with those identifications.

In addition, the Restraints are much too cumbersome to expect implementation in the field on training day. One of the identified criteria for training sites was proximity to Eglin AFB in an effort to maximize time. Implementation of the Restraints could realistically take days. The Restraints are entirely unrealistic for troop use and should therefore not be considered in impact analysis.

However, the General Operational Restraints are an excellent start on natural resource protection. Unfortunately, implementation would require trained natural resource professionals. Additionally, the Restraints should be implemented prior to any field actions on a seasonal basis. This would require additional staffing for either the Forest Service or Eglin's Natural Resource Office. Neither could undertake this program with existing staff. The FS has identified insufficient staffing in their 10-Year Plan and Jackson Guard has barely enough staff for Eglin proper. The addition of 190,000+ acres is just not achievable.

Some of the mitigations identified in the General Operational Restraints are inadequate to provide meaningful protection such as noise mitigation for aircraft and landing zones. The mitigations and stated distances are not adequate to protect regular forest users or wildlife beyond the campgrounds and known threatened and endangered species nesting sites.

All site surveys identified as part of the mitigations should be conducted by natural resource professionals. To avoid conflict or bias, 3rd party experts could be utilized.

Many of the conclusions reached as part of the impact analysis were not supported by the analysis, especially with consideration of the identified mitigations. The conclusions need to be revisited. For example, the potential for wildfire was partially mitigated by the fact that both Eglin and the FS use fire as a management tool. That's true but fire is only used when a very narrow set of conditions are met and adequate wildland fire personnel are present. Wildfire is a potential impact of many of the proposed activities and should not be downplayed.

Another example is cultural resources. With more than 90% of BRSF lands either inadequately surveyed for cultural sites or having no surveys, it is entirely impossible to mitigate potential impacts through use of the General Operational Restraints. Again, it takes a very experienced eye to recognize a potential cultural resource, not something possessed by field soldiers. This potential impact cannot be dismissed so easily and adequate field surveys should be completed before any military use.

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	Impacts to forest ecosystems and visitors have both been grossly understated. No natural resources other than T&E species have been considered. On the human side, only campground users, hunters, and adjacent residents have been looked at. That is not nearly adequate given these lands were purchased with funds specifically for public use and recreation and natural resource protection. These issues must be considered and the legalities of using state lands researched before the EIS can be considered final.

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I_153

ID	I_153
Date Submitted	6/24/2014
Commenter	Riley Hoggard
Organization	self
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	In my earlier comments I forgot to include that for the reasons I stated, the No Action alternative is the alternative of choice. Actually, given the potential for impacts, it's the only alternative. Riley Hoggard

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THE HEARING OFFICER: Robin Rickel Vroegop.

MS. VROEGOP: Yes, ma'am. That's me. I agree with my associate, Mr. Latour, and I want to defer my privilege to speak at this time so that someone else may speak later at the end of the meeting.

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[redacted]

THE HEARING OFFICER: Okay. Thank you, Michael Vroegop.

MR. VROEGOP: Yes, ma'am.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Sir, if you could step -- if you could come up to the microphone if you're going to make remarks, please.

MR. VROEGOP: I agree with Mr. Latour, and I would -- I would encourage the Air Force to consider the noise impact that's going to be created. I was in Tate's Hell recently, close to Mr. Latour when a V-22 came by, everything else that I had been hearing stopped immediately. All other wildlife were stunned by what was going on, and it was

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probably a good 30 minutes before it started again, before you could hear any other animal in the forest after one V-22 came by. okay.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Okay. Thank you.

MR. VROEGOP: Thank you.

[redacted]

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[redacted]

THE HEARING OFFICER: Mr. Jim Cummins.

MR. CUMMINS: Good evening. My name is Jim Cummins. I live at [redacted], Florida. I'm here to speak primarily about the acoustic noise sections of the GRASI ESI.

As background, I'm a registered professional engineer in Florida, a Board Certified (emeritus) member of the Institute of Noise Control Engineering, and I have over 45 years in the fields of environmental acoustics and industrial noise control.

Before I retired I was the vice president of engineering for a major noise control equipment designer and manufacturer. In that role, I was responsible for multiple products including mufflers, silencers, air filtration and emission suppressors.

Before I do a detail look at noise aspects though, I would like to point out some areas that concern me about the ESI. While I see that the Air

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Force is planning on using commercial mufflers on their vehicles, nowhere do they mention the use of spark arrestors or tailpipe shields to reduce the chance of fire caused by these hot components.

The US Forest Service has long required their use in the national forest. Such devices are usually more important for off-road vehicles, and I think I speak for the community when I say we do not want any accidents and uncontrolled fires in our forest.

Next I noticed that the air pollution sections used units of tons per year for the entire county for comparison. This seems egregious as one prescribed burn will swamp out any other source of pollution. It would seem more appropriate to use Part Per Million or PPM as a measure of a localized air pollution presence due to smoke bombs and other devices. Also, I wonder about the inhalation of dust, smoke, and the amount of residue that might remain after the use of smoke bombs.

Focusing now on my main concerns. I'm puzzled about the methodology and analyses of the noise impact. First, I'm somewhat dismayed that the day-night level, the DNL, in the report or called capital L. subscript D. N. in the noise-control

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literature, was used to categorized the noise emissions for the different activities, especially munitions and aircraft noise. The DNL is a reasonable good measure of the intrusion of steady noise into a community from sources such as air conditioning or an industrial plant or something like that, but it's more appropriate if the intruding noise is not too much greater than the background or ambient levels.

It's generally a long term or continuous average with nighttime levels receiving a 10 decibel penalty. This is very inappropriate for impulse or sharp duration noise such as gunfire, bombs, and low flying aircraft. It's also somewhat questionable being used for vehicular noise with only a small number of vehicles.

The results of using the DNL as a criteria will lead to underestimating the impact of the proposed area -- activities in the area. I understand the forest is very quiet. The assumption of 35 dBA at night, 45 daytime is a good one but is somewhat misleading.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Mr. Cummins, I need you to wrap up your comments, please.

MR. CUMMINS: In summary, in spite of the

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measures and I left out much about the aircraft noise, the measure is less than optimum. The results of the EIS are still in most cases, the proposed use is inappropriate for the area and will cause damage. So I think that we have to say use the no op -- action option, Section Eight. Thank you.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Betty Cummins.

MS. CUMMINS: I would like to use my time so he can continue his.

MR. CUMMINS: If that's acceptable?

THE HEARING OFFICER: Yes.

MR. CUMMINS: I want to point out that the ambient levels in a forest can vary by as much as 10 dBA, A-weighted decibel, depending on conditions such as wind. Wind can cause a significant increase in noise. However, we typically perceive these sounds as soothing and non-intrusive. The impact of a gunshot with the sound of a 30 to 40 dBA above the ambient is akin to being hit over the head with a mallet.

In addition, these type of noise travel much longer distances than steady noise with the same intensity leading to an underestimate of impact.

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Table 3-12 gives the minimum distance to achieve different noise thresholds taken from the US Army of Regulation 200-1 as a method of land use planning, but it may not be a good trajectory of either actual noise propagation or a community response.

Looking at air operations for a moment. In Tables 5-5, 5-6, 6-4, and 6-5 the expected ground sound levels from operations at elevations below 1,000 feet are above the OSHA prescribed limit of 90 dBA for hearing loss. They also exceed the speech intelligibility limits commonly found in a noisy factory. Even with operations at 10,000 feet, the noise levels still exceed the US EPA limit for acceptable community sound level. Frankly, I'm appalled. How can anyone expect that these noise levels will ever be acceptable? I might even worry that the soldiers who are being exposed to these levels will have permanent hearing loss without ever being in combat.

In summary, in spite of using a measure that's less than optimum, the results of the EIS are that in most cases the proposed use is inappropriate for the area and will cause damage to the area and annoyance to the community, and this is only addressing the noise issue. Thank you.

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1 [redacted]

[redacted]

19 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Okay. If
20 there are no other comments, I would like to --
21 yes, sir.
22 MR. CUMMINS: Ma'am, can I make a very brief
23 comment on the format of the report?
24 THE HEARING OFFICER: On the formatting of the
25 report?

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MR. CUMMINS: Yes.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Well, sir, that is just a draft.

MR. CUMMINS: I understand. I understand. This is -- but you see this chart?

THE HEARING OFFICER: Yes, sir.

MR. CUMMINS: And in the chart it says that the dot indicates an interaction between the training activity and the forest, and then it colors green everywhere even the ones that don't have a dot. Now it seems to me that those should be blank, white perhaps, so that you really get an indication between the interactions which are adverse and are not. So what would happen at that point, then most of this chart which is now green would no longer be green. It would be white with a lot of yellow, and I think it would give a better indication of the adverse impacts overall that would be caused to the forest. Thank you.

MR. SPAITS: Sir, could you please restate your name, for the stenographer?

MR. CUMMINS: My name? My name is Jim Cummins, C-u-m-m-i-n-s.

[redacted]

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1 [redacted]

17 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Sue Early.

18 MS. EARLY: Hello. I'm Sue -- can you hear me?

19 Hello, I'm Sue Early, and I appreciate this

20 opportunity to make comments. Can you hear me?

21 THE HEARING OFFICER: If you could keep it

22 closer.

23 MS. EARLY: Okay. Okay. My name is Sue Early,

24 and I live on the Ochlockonee River. I live on the

25 Wakulla side of the Ochlockonee River. Okay. We

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were not noticed in Wakulla County of any of these issues. We were not given a workshop notice. The only way I knew about this was by reading it in the Tallahassee -- Tallahassee because I happen to work in Tallahassee. This is not working very well.

So what I would like to say is that I am -- I am directly across the river from TA-3. Okay. I am directly across the river on the Wakulla side, directly across the river from TA-3, which is -- my home is three-tenths of a mile from the forest road in Tate's Hell across the river and seven-tenths of a mile from Womack Creek Recreational area. There's about a three-mile stretch along the river that runs between N T Smith Road and Wood Lake Road, just over three miles directly across the river, and I don't believe most of these residents even know about this proposal because we were not noticed.

I would respectfully request that a workshop be noticed and held in Wakulla County because it affects much of Wakulla County. We're just across the river. We, homeowners, we're there all night long, not just during hunting hours, okay. And, for example, just I pulled up the property appraiser's website to find out how many residences I have within a 1,000 feet of me. Just within a 1,000 feet

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I have 47, and that doesn't include the whole three-mile stretch. So I believe the impact to the homeowner should be considered more, more closely.

When looking at the materials, I see that there are restrictions for various activities, and that some activities are designed to -- are limited restrictions to avoid impacts to private landowners. However, those restrictions -- there are many other restrictions that do not even address the private landowners.

There are other restrictions throughout that are provided for inhabited recreational areas, but what happens if the recreational areas that are directly across the river from my home, what happens when they're not inhabited? Okay. I don't want helicopters coming over the river right outside my house, okay. I like to sleep with my windows open at night.

I actually have a medical condition where I have a sensitivity to chemicals, odors, and gases, and I stay at the river because I don't want to be in that, that climate. I don't want to smell any -- you know, smell any type of -- I don't want any air quality issues. I don't want to hear anything. I don't want to see anything.

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I also noticed that there are restrictions that are just before two hours before sunrise. I'm saying that wrong. It starts -- well, you know, what I mean, for the hunters. I can't say that right now, and I would like those restrictions to be applied at least in the residential areas around the clock, not just during, you know, the nighttime hours when the hunters can't be there.

Also on the noise protection levels --

THE HEARING OFFICER: Ms. Early?

MS. EARLY: -- I noticed that -- pardon me.

THE HEARING OFFICER: I'll give you a couple more seconds to wrap up because of the microphone issues, but if you'll wrap up your time, please.

MS. EARLY: Okay. Thank you. I noticed on the noise constraints that there are considerations for homeowners, but there's a higher level of restriction where it's not approved for overflight below 500 adl, and that consideration and restriction was given to the Carrabelle area, but has not been given to any of the river areas, such as my residential area, or the areas that run along the, I guess, that would be the New River, that runs, you know, north of Carrabelle.

So I would encourage, again, workshops, greater

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1 restrictions for the residential areas, and I would
2 also encourage the "No Action Alternative" because
3 in so many areas -- I'm just addressing residential
4 use, and it just really does seem to be
5 inappropriate to me. Thank you.
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1 [redacted]

[redacted]

12 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Mr. Robert
13 Seidler.
14 MR. SEIDLER: Robert Seidler, Sopchoppy,
15 Florida. The one thing I see here, Tate's Hell
16 State Forest in -- and it's only been in public
17 ownership for 20 years. We have the Wakulla
18 Environmental Institute that is just starting up in
19 Wakulla County, and it's whole theme is nature-base
20 heritage tourism. Noise is pollution. Activity is
21 pollution, and there has been an awful lot of people
22 that have worked incredibly hard to get all of these
23 natural areas saved in Florida.
24 Our county is 73 percent public land and this
25 county is 80, and just at the time that we're

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getting somewhere with it, it's all being taken way, and I can't even imagine a county where 80 percent of the land is locked up in military operations. There may be some ways of compromising. We're working on a large trail system called Capital City to the Sea Boot Trail, and may be there's a way to incorporate a couple of links to that through the forest as mitigation of other things. You know, if this doesn't be a no bill, maybe there's some other opportunity, and I would like to work toward more opportunities where the people of the area get something, and you get something, too. I think that's the biggest thing. Thank you, very much.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. [redacted]

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1 [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

11 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Carole
12 Butler.
13 MS. BUTLER: Good evening, everyone. Can you
14 hear me? Can you hear me now?
15 THE HEARING OFFICER: Yes, ma'am.
16 MS. BUTLER: Okay. My name is Carole Butler,
17 and I am a concerned citizen. I'm also an avid
18 kayaker, and I'm a member of the Apalachee Canoe &
19 Kayak Club in Tallahassee, Florida.
20 I have just a couple of questions. I want to
21 know if -- will the military use in the state forest
22 be permanent? How long do you plan on being there?
23 There was really nothing -- nothing addressed to how
24 long you will be there, and the Choctawhatchee
25 National Forest became Eglin Air Force Base in 1940

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and still is. I was just wondering if you had plans to turn State Hell -- Tate's Hell into an air force base, and also what is your exit strategy? There's absolutely no room for an exit strategy that I could find, and I want to thank you for the opportunity to ask these questions, and I look forward to an answer to my questions in your final report. Thank you.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you.

MR. SPAITS: Ma'am?

MS. BUTLER: Yes.

MR. SPAITS: Tom would like to address that.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Yes, sir.

MR. TOLBERT: Sure. I don't think we're going -- can you hear me? Hello. Okay. So, ma'am, thank you for your questions. At this point, we are not contemplating doing anything like converting the forest into another Eglin.

So to answer your second question, that's not on the table at this point. Where we are in the process is we will request use from the Forest Service at the end of this process. At that point, we would determine the length of time where we would be able to access those properties. So we don't have an answer to that at this point.

Our exit strategy, as far as your question is

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1 concerned, there's discussions at this point have
2 been at the Air Force, but, of course, we leave any
3 property that we use the way we found it, and that
4 would be monitored by the Florida Forest Service.
5 So some of those questions we don't have good
6 answers for. We've got to determine what uses are
7 appropriate at this point. At that point, we will
8 enter into discussions with the Florida Forest
9 Service on how long we can do that, but nothing like
10 Eglin Air Force Base being contemplated or proposed.
11 [redacted]

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[redacted]

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Jennifer Bowers.

MS. BOWERS: I have a loud voice so I'll talk from here because I just have a few brief comments. I am a property owner here in Carrabelle, Florida, and have been for awhile.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Ma'am, I apologize. Our court reporter needs to be able to hear you. She can't quite hear you from there.

MS. BOWERS: She can't hear me. Oh, I thought I had a loud voice. All right. Can you hear me? I am a property owner here in [redacted], Florida. The reason I am very concerned about the proposal is because I use Tate's Hell as a place for recreation.

I'm also very concerned about the noise levels. We've had some exercises from, I believe, it's been the sheriff or some other entity going around in Carrabelle, and I can hear them. They shake my windows. I can just imagine being in the forest where I'm enjoying, enjoying the peace and quiet, and hearing helicopters. The noise level is a very big concern.

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I also would hate just to be out walking and hear hooka, hooka, hooka, hooka, and these military men coming through. It just doesn't seem right. I just don't understand why they have to take our state forest away from us. This is why I moved here, for the peace and quiet. I really am opposed to this.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. [redacted]

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[redacted]

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Gray Cerfus or Cerfus. I'm sorry. Gary.

MR. CERFUS: Like the previous lady, I live also in [redacted], and I was at a meeting in Apalachicola this winter --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can't hear you.

MR. CERFUS: Hello. All right. Hey, as the previous lady, I also live in [redacted]. This winter I was up at Apalachicola with a meeting. I basically had an open mind until this winter when she probably experienced the same thing that I did with these helicopters flying over. The length of this room is probably a 100 feet. These things were flying at about treetop level, which is about the length of this room vertical.

The river, they're saying they are going to restrict them to 500 feet. These are 1,000 horse power machines, and like the lady said, things

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shook. You can have an infant -- put an infant down -- this is over five hours. You cannot put an infant down or children down at night much less keep your animals under control.

Now, we have a gentleman here that was an expert in acoustics. I wish he would have had more time addressing the vibrations that these machines make. I had another gentleman here that was willing -- 90,000 acres, sir? This gentleman here he had 90,000 acres.

MR. McCORMACK: Yes.

MR. CERFUS: All right. There's millions of acres that St. Joe has or had and sold to a Utah company. There's nothing there. All right. Number three, or another aspect, I have a vacant lot there. I plan to build. I'm getting taxed on a vacant lot. If you have been up and down Highway 98 in this county, unfortunately we're not doing too good. All right. One of the few bright spots is the development at that corridor. For property tax purposes they have a base. Right now it's getting taxed as an empty lot because I'm not going to build a house on it if we're having helicopters flying over with no notice or very short notice.

So the County is going to be hurting because

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that land is not going to be developed, and I'm all for having this gentleman over there volunteering his property, or looking at the millions of acres that St. Joe or whoever has, and now the Utah company has out there that you guys can do what you want because really they're just looking at pine trees growing. And if anybody knows anything about the lumber industry, St. Joe sold it for a reason. There's no money in pine trees anymore.

So it sits there and grows. I say have at it and use our tax dollars for once on something that is a true partnership, which means win/win, develop it, and use it in the middle of nowhere as you want. Thank you.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. [redacted]

[redacted]

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1 [redacted]

[redacted]

15 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. And Skip
16 Frink.
17 MR. FRINK: Thank you, Colonel. Not at this
18 time.
19 MR. BRYAN: Skip, would you defer to me to say
20 a few words?
21 MR. FRINK: I'd be glad to defer if I can cast
22 my three minutes over this way.
23 THE HEARING OFFICER: All right. Sir, as long
24 as -- if we can get your name, please?
25 MR. BRYAN: James Bryan. My name is James

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Bryan, B-r-y-a-n. I've lived in Carrabelle for 24 years. I went in the Navy in 1950, sworn in in Jacksonville. I fought in the Korean War, 14 months of combat without training. The poor people over in Korea, our soldiers, were unprepared, untrained. How little we forget.

What about Camp Gordon Johnston, from Carrabelle to the Wakulla River -- or the Ochlockonee River? They trained our soldiers to free Europe, and keep the Japanese from coming here, and us speaking Japanese now. Without training, we're nothing. I've got too many friends. I go to the VA, and sit there, and watch these guys with their legs blowed off, and here these people are talking about a little noise coming over their house. They ought to be proud that that noise is coming over their house because we're getting prepared for whatever comes along. It irritates me that people soon forget.

Self-preservation is the first law of the jungle, and that's what we should do is worry about our self-preservation, and not worry about the tree huggers. Thank you.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, Mr. Bryan.

[redacted]

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1 [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

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[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

14 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Ms. Cummins.

15 MS. CUMMINS: Betty Cummins. Can you hear me?

16 THE HEARING OFFICER: Yes, ma'am. I can.

17 MS. CUMMINS: I don't have a very loud voice.

18 UNDIENTIFIED SPEAKER: Here. Why don't we take

19 this down?

20 MS. CUMMINS: How about that?

21 THE HEARING OFFICER: It works.

22 MS. CUMMINS: All right. Just quickly, I'll

23 just put the evidence -- just read this, and I

24 prepared it. Here it is. As a resident of Franklin

25 County and a concerned citizen, I am offended and

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appalled that the US Air Force has stated that their intended use of Tate's Hell State Forest is not expected to result in any significant adverse cumulative impacts.

Considering -- considering just one of the sections of the EIS would make it obvious that the tranquility of the state forest environment would be significantly adversely impacted for all users except the military.

Use of expendables, in Section ES.4.1.2.3, in parenthesis (UoEX) involves use of various training munitions and pyrotechnics, including simulated munitions consisting of plastic pellets or paintballs and smoke grenades during training activities.

This is the part that I was really upset about. It says that Tate's Hell State Forest, as unlike in Blackwater River, noise-generating expendables could be used anywhere, and I'm quoting from your EIS. And you give all of these, what they are, 5.56-millimeter blanks, 576,000 estimated max quantity per year. Estimated average per event 10,000. 7.62 millimeter blanks, 196,200, approximately 8,000. Ground burst simulators -- it's all in your breakdown of how many there would

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be, and how many times per year, two to five times per year.

It would seem obvious to anyone considering the nature of such munitions and pyrotechnics that it would not be possible to clean up the fragments and residue left on the ground, vegetation, and water. Tate's Hell is a wetland, a swamp. This is not acceptable, and is not compatible with the citizens' stated desire for preservation of the environmentally fragile ecosystem of Tate's Hell State Forest, and the tranquil environment needed for enjoyment by civilian users.

I hereby state my assertion that the "No Action Alternative" is the only decision that should be made. I ask that Eglin find other places to conduct their expansion of military training, and leave Tate's Hell State Forest out of any consideration for such use. Thank you.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Okay. If there are no other comments, I would like to -- yes, sir.

[redacted]

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Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: *Please print legibly* **Date:**

DESTIN, FL

BE CONSIDERATE OF THE OTHER

FOLKS WITH A DIFFERENT OPINION.

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

Public comments are requested pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 United States Code 4321, et seq. All written comments received during the comment period will be considered during Final EIS preparation. Your provision of private address information with your comment is voluntary and protected in accordance with the Privacy Act and Air Force Instruction 33-332. Your private address information will not be released in the Final EIS or for any other purpose, unless required by law. However, your private address information will be used to compile the mailing list for any further project notices. Failure to provide such information will result in your name not being included on the distribution list.

Name: JIM LINK LT/COL RET.

Organization: RETIRED

Affiliation: ☒ **Individual** ☐ **Government** ☐ **Tribe** ☐ **Organization**

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Zip:

☒ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☐ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Please mail this form to:
Mr. Mike Spaits, Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office, 96 TW/PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238, Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

or scan and email to: michael.spaits@us.af.mil.

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Public Hearing Written Comment Form

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: Apalachicola **Date:** June 4, 2014

Figure ES-1

The Gulf regional airspace is a national treasure that previously had no shared strategic plan.

Conflating the function of the Gulf regional airspace with the value associated with a national treasure desecrates the very notion of a national treasure. The wealth in this initiative lies in the existence, restoration, and preservation of unique ecosystems and feral and botanical habitats. At the same time our wealth lies in the young men and women who serve in the military.

In addition, the inference that the Air Force has not synchronized the security of this area with the Coast Guard or the Navy insults the other branches of military service. The Coast Guard has been the primary face-to-face presence in the area prior to this initiative.

… resulting in a Northwest Florida region that is prosperous, with relationships among civilian and military interests strengthened.

The unintended consequences of this initiative point to greatly diminished prosperity for a number of civilians, including:

- Oystermen, whose efforts to rebuild their resources following drought conditions would be inhibited by upstream military activity with prospective water pollution
- Sports fishermen, particularly stream- and river-fishermen, due to noise pollution
- Eco-tourism enterprises, which are just beginning to gain traction following extensive restoration efforts by the Florida Forest Service and environmental groups
- Homeowners, due to property value decline and quality-of-life attenuation
- Hikers, campers, birdwatchers, kayakers, canoeists, star gazers, etc., who are grateful for the woods, clear water, fresh air, darkness, and silence
- University-sponsored researchers who rely on controlled environmental conditions for their studies
- Worm grunters and other fishing-worm harvesting people

These civilian relationships with Air Force command are rapidly becoming adversarial.

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Figure ES-1. GRASI Regional Airspace

Without changes in airspace management, military missions and civilian utilization will be seriously constrained, having adverse impacts on their respective missions and on the economic prosperity of the region.

1.2 BACKGROUND, SCOPE, AND HISTORY OF GRASI PLANNING

Because civilian flights require access to safe and navigable airspace, commercial carriers could decide to relocate or reduce operations if the airspace over the region becomes too congested. Businesses that rely on general aviation and business aviation traffic could compete with increased military use.

Adding additional aircraft flight paths to a region that is on the road to becoming too congested makes absolutely no sense. If the intent of this initiative is to force commercial carriers to relocate to protect military traffic from potential collisions, the economic impact to the area has not yet been evaluated.

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1.4 NEED

Obtaining the necessary permits to use new areas for nonhazardous training and placing training emitters in remote locations would create flexibility, improving training outcomes through better scheduling and reducing the competing demands on RA. Eglin AFB's primary mission is test and evaluation, and training activities sometimes have a lower priority.

Inadequate planning and a conflict over priorities on the part of Air Force command are evident throughout this document. The inefficient use of Eglin Air Force Base properties does not justify the use of public lands for training.

From a civilian point of view, the survivability and welfare of our sons and daughters is primary. Test and evaluation of weapons systems trails a poor 3rd, following behind the goal of providing competent military leadership.

One solution to the problem of competing demands at Eglin Air Force Base would be the consolidation of advanced weapons system testing with test ranges in Nevada, California, and Utah.

Another potential solution, particularly if the need for training under sub-tropical woodland conditions is a priority for an as yet undisclosed offensive, is the consolidation of training activities with Air Force ranges in Mississippi, Louisiana, Japan, and other Florida sites.

If neither of these solutions is viable, due to command compartmentalization, perhaps Pentagon efficiency and communication experts could be consulted.

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1.4 NEED (continued)

placing training emitters in additional locations … These measures would allow some mission activities a place to operate when the airspace is already being used by other mission activities. Emitter sites create realistic threat scenarios for pilots and more realistic training scenarios by simulating an integrated air defense system (IADS), which helps with identifying and countering enemy missile or artillery threats from land or sea.

The inadequacy of current defense systems for enemy threats from land or sea would be cause for concern, if there were data to support such an evaluation. But this initiative provides no training at all against air strikes, which, given the proliferation of nuclear and long-range missile systems, seems much more likely.

Does the Pentagon anticipate invasion from Canada? If so, emitter-supported training missions might be better served in colder and drier locations. If the anticipated threat concerns Cuba, *The Navy has no capability to sustain operations beyond its territorial waters and focuses on defense of the Cuban coast*, according to the most recent Federation of American Scientists report.

Separation of emitter site proposals from troop training activities would define strategic intent in line with protection of Gulf Coast air space from an as yet speculative land or sea invader. Emitters described in this document do not appear to be dependent upon efficient use of Eglin Air Force Base; and site permits could be issued by the communities in which they would be located, some of which would not impact fragile ecosystems. This would allow the Air Force to build and maintain emitter sites on an incremental basis.

Any specific threat potential to the Gulf Coast requiring the density of training emitters described in this initiative has not been described.

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2.3.2.2 Fixed Wing Aircraft Landing Sites

At THSF, three dirt roadways are proposed for FWALS in support of aircraft operations. These roadways are located in TA-2, -6, and –8.

How would the Air Force protect civilians who could be working in the clearings or traveling on the roadways concurrent with the training mission? Sirens? Flares?

There is no indication in this initiative that indigenous human safety is a priority, even though there are numerous references to "minimize or alleviate adverse impacts to the human and natural environment". In addition, the additional environmental impact of any warning noise and/or lights is not evaluated.

This question also applies to Section 2.3.2.1.

2.3.2.2 Fixed Wing Aircraft Landing Sites

Road improvements such as widening or compacting … Any needed improvements would be coordinated with the FFS; such improvements may not be approved or may require supplemental environmental impact analysis.

Site construction projects that have the potential for changing existing water flow patterns from aircraft damage to the roadways can affect other agencies as well. FFS coordination is necessary, but input from water flow experts, habitat restoration agencies, and concerned members of the public would minimize any unintended consequences to both recreational and commercial fishing.

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2.3.2.4 Light Aviation Proficiency Training

Aircraft would fly from the surface to approximately 3,000 feet above ground level (AGL) 90 percent of the time and up to 10,000 feet AGL the remaining 10 percent of the time based on training requirements.

There is no explanation for the use of paintballs/plastic pellets, or smoke grenades in this aspect of training. Indeed, it is hard to imagine how their use could improve or accelerate the skill level of pilots.

This question also applies to Sections 2.3.2.18 and 2.3.2.19.

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2.3.2.5 Low-Level Helicopter Insertions/Extractions

… involve flying helicopters near treetop level and above to an HLZ/DZ and inserting or extracting [up to 50] *personnel.*

En route to HLZs/Dzs, helicopters would fly at 100 to 500 AGL …

For those areas of THSF adjacent to the Apalachicola National Forest, the impact of low-level flying on National Forest ecosystems, wildlife, and human inhabitants has not been evaluated.

The likelihood of piping plover in-flight kill by helicopter maneuvers within Tate's Hell State Forest (THSF) has not been evaluated. No plan for helicopter avoidance of the airspace above plover critical habitat or forage areas has been defined.

In-flight kill of other protected bird species within Blackwater River State Forest (BRSF) or THSF, by any aircraft, has not been evaluated. Even though buffer zones have been defined for the red-cockaded woodpecker, eagles' nests, and wood stork habitat, the potential for bird kill of the following species is widespread throughout the defined Tactical Areas (TAs):

- Red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) BRSF TA-1, TA-2, TA-3, TA-5, TA-6, TA-8; THSF TA-1, TA-4, TA-5, TA-8, TA-9, TA-10
- Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) BRSF and THSF, any TA
- Scott's seaside sparrow (*Ammodramus maritims peninsulae*) THSF TA-10
- Limpkin (*Aramus Guarauna*) THSF, any TA
- Little blue heron (*Egretta caerulea*) THSF, any TA
- Reddish egret (*Egretta rufescens*) THSF, any TA
- Snowy egret (*Egretta thula*) THSF, any TA
- Tricolored heron (*Egretta tricolor*) THSF, any TA
- White ibis (*Eudocimus alba*) THSF, any TA
- Southeastern American kestrel (*Falco sparverius paulus*) THSF, any TA
- Woodstork (*Mycteria Americana*) THSF, any TA
- Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) THSF, any TA

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2.3.2.6 Temporary Combat Support Areas

[Up to 50 personnel] *May arrive at location via various aircraft or land vehicles.*

Overland military training support routes have not been identified. Passage of a convoy of cargo trucks, Humvees, armored personnel carriers, jeeps, etc., through populated areas, particularly at night, would unnecessarily alarm civilians. This could result in trainee casualties if civilians perceive that they are being invaded. The potential for an ill-fated encounter involving civilians is particularly likely in communities where their understanding of the 2nd Amendment to the Constitution is almost as holy as the Bible.

2.3.2.7 Airdrops

Up to 4 total aircraft … Up to 72 [personnel] *… Land drops: approximately 15 cubic foot container of water (~ 300 pounds); containerized delivery system (~500 pounds)*

There is no process described to clearing the area of humans or non-protected species of animals prior to the drop. If personnel are dropped before equipment, perhaps the platoon's communication could minimize any adverse impact. However, dropping containerized cargo or water from 500 – 1,000 feet AGL, particularly at night, would certainly kill any backcountry camper or herd of deer in the drop zone. There is no provision in this document for handling the accidental injury/death of animals or humans as a result of airdrops.

Does mission planning include packing out the cargo/water? Or are airdrops intended only for the establishment of other training operations, e.g., a temporary support combat area?

2.3.2.9 Forward Air Refueling Point/Hot Gas Operations

This activity will likely only occur at local airports in the vicinity of the forest.

Saint George Island, Apalachicola Regional, and Wakulla County Airports are very close to THSF. Even though a refueling accident would probably not impact the forest, it would certainly threaten soil and water ecosystems and the fishing and oyster harvests. There is no provision for fuel spill containment in this document.

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2.3.2.10 Cross-Country Dismounted Movements

CCDM may occur on or off roads or on unimproved trails. … Up to 72 [personnel] … *Avoid inhabited recreational sites.*

It is almost impossible to avoid civilian activities in the State Forests, and not all of them occur at recreational sites.

Does this training objective reserve the option to use vacant recreational sites? With or without a FFS dated permit?

What is the outcome of trainees who encounter a hunter, stargazer, or birdwatcher who carries binoculars and a spotting scope? Would they assume that this civilian is a threat to their security?

- Even though statements like "Live rounds are not authorized." appear throughout this document, the potential for civilian death or injury due to a frightened or startled trainee has not been addressed.
- If a the civilian is held under arrest until their presence in the State Forest is vindicated, under whose authority would the arrest be made: military, Florida State Police, or FFS?

These questions also apply to Sections 2.3.2.4, 2.3.2.5, 2.3.2.6, 2.3.2.7, 2.3.2.8, 2.3.2.16, and 2.3.2.20.

2.3.2.13 Blackout Driving

Roads used for this activity would be temporarily closed (likely in concert with emplacement of obstacles) to the public to prevent safety mishaps.

Where would road closures be placed? If road closures are established at the State Forest boundary, how far in advance of the training mission would the public be notified? If road closures are established at the edge of a buffer zone for the training activity, how would the Air Force ensure a safe turnaround area for the civilian vehicle?

How would collisions with deer be avoided in blackout conditions? The safety of the trainee is an important consideration where vehicle-deer collisions are likely.

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2.3.2.14 Emplacement of Obstacles

… emplacement of concertina wire along unpaved roads and Hardened Camp Sites …

What provisions would the Air Force make for the care and rehabilitation of any animals inadvertently injured by razor wire? Does the Air Force have working agreements in place with veterinarians in the vicinity of BWSF and THSF?

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6.8.2.4 Sensitive Habitats

Piping plover are especially susceptible to human disturbance. Troops would avoid potential impacts to piping plover by accessing TA-10 through those areas that do not contain piping plover critical habitat.

Avoiding the nesting areas of piping plover is a reasonable training objective. However, food sources, such as worms and insects, may occur beyond the buffer zone intended to protect the birds from disturbance.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) publication titled *Piping Plover Critical Habitat* lists military maneuvers as an activity that could adversely affect critical habitat. By law this includes "*food, water, light, minerals, or other nutritional or physiological requirements*" and "*habitats … representative of the historic geographical and ecological distributions of a species*". Since the historical distribution of the piping plover during the winter includes all the Gulf, river, and stream banks of THSF TA-10 as forage area, it is difficult to understand why ANY portion of this area is being promoted by the Air Force as suitable training grounds during migration periods and the over-wintering period. If an economic analysis of the use of TA-10 has determined that the value of training outweighs the value of preserving the habitat, it needs to be distributed to those agencies in Franklin and Liberty Counties that are concerned with the preservation of the piping plover sensitive habitat.

Coordinate with the GLI Liaison and Eglin AFB to repair any damage caused to sensitive habitats due to wildfires caused by training missions. [Section 2.5]

Where wildfires are more likely, whether from incendiaries, aircraft, ground vehicles, fuel stores, or careless smoking behavior, additional precautions need to be established for piping plover foraging areas. The Audubon Society states on its website that *research shows that even a small drop in the number of birds that survive the winter can threaten the recovery of the species.* Therefore, training activities must incorporate a zero tolerance policy for loss of life of the piping plover due to military presence. It may be preferable for training activities to be prohibited altogether within a kilometer of foraging shorelines.

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2.5 GENERAL OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

*Limited Use-1 (LU-1) … **Not Approved**: use of smokes, flares, or simulators; off-road vehicle use – all vehicles must remain on established roads; land development and point land disturbance outside of previously disturbed roadbeds and road shoulders. LZ/DZ use except on approved FFS sites …. No refueling of vehicles or aircraft allowed.*

*Limited Use-2 (LU-2) … **Not Approved**: off-road vehicle use – all vehicles must remain on established roads.*

Who is responsible for informing civilians about prohibited activities in limited use areas? Should a concerned civilian report observed deviations to the FFS? A draft Mitigation Plan and feasible Landscape Implementation Team (L.I.T.) should be available for public review on accountability, not only to the FFS.

Identify and implement funding/reimbursement mechanisms to pay for leases/agreements and surveys (i.e., pre/post surveys for damage to sensitive species/habitats).

This is an honest acknowledgement by the Air Force that damage to State Forest ecosystems is a valid concern. However, in addition to financial appropriations for any surveys or restoration projects, a stop-order should be issued for further training activities in the State Forests until the reason for the damage is ascertained and training plans are amended to prevent a recurrence of the damage. The FFS, local environmental groups, and university experts should verify the validity of pre/post surveys, remediation plans, and restoration implementation; and funds will need to be allocated for validation.

Establish a process for notification of locally affected residents prior to training operations.

Local residents are not the only civilians who need to be notified prior to training activities. Tourists, some of whom travel from foreign countries, visit BWSF and THSF to study or enjoy unique ecosystems, not to be subject to the sounds, smells, and disruption to wildlife caused by military activity. Professional people who work in BWSF and THSF also need warning, especially scientific researchers, fishing guides, tour boat operators, and eco-tourism specialists, as the financial consequences of interruptions would be extreme.

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2.5 GENERAL OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS (continued)

In addition to close examination of the area around proposed new training locations for protected/sensitive species, survey the areas surrounding existing training areas every two years to ensure that no new noise-sensitive land uses have been established.

Why is there a requirement for redefinition of land use, seemingly in perpetuity? Section 1-2 states that increased airspace availability is necessary until 2017. Is the need for additional land use going to be any different? How?

Before Training

Prior to any training activities, Unit personnel must be cognizant of environmental restrictions by: … Coordinate with Eglin AFB to schedule an in-briefing on environmental restrictions for Commanders, student trainers, and operational unit personnel prior to first time training at the emitter sites, BRSF and THSF; then at least annually thereafter.

Which other service entities are to be scheduled for training in this area -- Air Force Commands other than those at Eglin AFB? Army, Navy Marine Corps, Coast Guard? Respective National Guard Units? As questioned above, is this initiative intended to become a permanent, ever-increasing encroachment upon BWSF and THSF ecosystems?

During Training

In the event of unexpected discovery of cultural resources, cease activity in the immediate vicinity; notify the GLI Liaison and Eglin AFB.

Leave any artifacts visible on the ground in place; notify the GLI Liaison and Eglin AFB.

Notification should also include FFS and Florida Historical Society. If artifacts found in THSF appear to be of native origin, local leaders of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Florida should inspect the site to determine whether they should be returned to Miccosukee, Muscogee, or other Seminole survivors. If such artifacts are found in BRSF, Choctaw leaders should be contacted before artifact removal.

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2.5 GENERAL OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS (continued)

If an indigo snake, gopher tortoise, or black bear is sighted, allow the animal to leave the area undisturbed; notify the GLI Liaison and Eglin AFB.

The GLI Liaison appears to be a member of the Air Force and may not be knowledgeable about animal behavior. Generally, "educated" black bears know that humans carry food and will persist, sometimes destructively, in efforts to find it. Experienced FFS personnel should brief all trainees on safe methods to discourage bears. Under no circumstances should the Air Force authorize trainees to injure or kill a black bear in lieu of surrendering his food supply.

Activities within 200 feet of identified RCW trees will not exceed two hours.

If a buffer zone of 200 feet is established, why would activity of any duration disturb the nesting habitat of a red-cockaded woodpecker?

Use chemical latrines for human waste disposal whenever possible during field training missions and only in areas approved by the FFS. When chemical latrines are not available, a cat-hole latrine or saddle trench latrine can be used in accordance with service command directives.

Wouldn't compost latrines be more environmentally friendly for hardened campsites?

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Expendable Use

At BRSF, use of noise-generating expendables is restricted to the hardened camp sites. Live rounds are not authorized.

At THSF, use of noise-generating expendables is restricted to those areas shown on the GLI Protection Level maps. Live rounds are not authorized.

Are live rounds to be completely forbidden in the State Forests? The 1981 movie *Southern Comfort* delivers a prophetic warning of the threat to trainees armed with live munitions who clash with residents who are familiar with the terrain.

Portable generators must be approved by the GLI Liaison, Eglin AFB and FFS, and used in accordance with each respective policy, including containment measures and spill kits.

Sound carries in the woods. All portable generators should be equipped with sound baffles, and times of use should be limited.

Do not release chemicals or metals into streams, wetlands, or water bodies.

Do not release toxic aerosols within 300 feet of streams, wetlands, or water bodies.

Does Eglin AFB provide a list of authorized toxic substances to training units? It needs to be made public so that environmental groups and clean water monitoring agencies can be prepared for spill abatement.

Amphibious Operations

No power motors are allowed in Bear Lake (BRSF).

What kinds of power motors will be authorized for use in other areas, e.g., Crooked River, Trout Creek? To protect river and creek spawning areas, trolling motors should be the only motorization permitted in season?

Name: Margherite Williams
Affiliation: Individual
Address: [redacted]

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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE PROPOSAL FOR THE GULF REGIONAL AIRSPACE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (GRASI) LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE (GLI)

Please submit hearing comments to the address below or via the GLI EIS website (grasieis.leidoseemg.com) by June 23, 2014.

Location: Apalachicola **Date:** June 4, 2014

2.5 GENERAL OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS (continued)

After Training

Police training areas to ensure that no trash, ammunition boxes, wire, or other debris has been left in the area and all excavations are filled. Take to appropriate landfill or recycling points.

Policing cleanup following training activities needs to be fully defined. Monitoring the relative cleanliness of training sites may prove to be problematic for Cross-Country Dismounted Movements, Bivouacking/Assembly Areas, Natural Resource Consumption, Opposing Forces Vehicle Operations and any other activities where troops are engaged physically.

Would individual trainees be held accountable for their trash, such as cigarette butts, candy wrappers, condoms, and food waste?

Who would certify that an area is "clean", the FFS, tourist guides, or environmental groups? Would a heuristic definition include the removal of paintball splashes from trees, vegetation, and soil? Certainly no nature lover wants to visit a place where wildflowers, especially orchids, are fouled with neon-colored dyes, even if the half-life of biodegradation is only a week.

Name: Margherite Williams
Affiliation: Individual
Address: [redacted]

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2.6 ALTERNATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Other than providing benefits to Air Force training capabilities, the Air Force has not identified any significant or insignificant beneficial impacts under the Proposed Action.

If this is true, then why would environmental groups, commercial fishing interests, or nature lovers endorse the initiative?

I, for one, agree 100% with this statement, and would be extremely unlikely to camp, hike, birdwatch, photograph wildflowers, or repeat any other activities I have enjoyed over the past 20 years in Tate's Hell State Forest and, to a lesser degree, in Blackwater River State Forest if this initiative is approved. The "silence" in the woodlands and wetlands, while measurable in decibels, has a healing quality that is extremely beneficial to my well-being, and military training would destroy its properties. The economic impact from loss of tourism to the State Forests and surrounding areas that are subject to overflights of low-altitude aircraft has not been evaluated.

Training Activities

Airspace Management

Impacts to ongoing operations would be expected to be minor as the proposed GLI training would not require blocking off a volume of airspace to be used exclusively by Air Force aircraft. Other operations would be able to continue to transit the area while GLI training is under way. Impacts would last for the entire life of the action, as air traffic tempo over the state forests would remain slightly elevated for as long as GLI training continues to occur.

If there would be no dedicated airspace blocking civilian aircraft flyovers and, presumably, no warnings posted at local civilian airports, would the safety of the training flights be compromised? The safety of pilots, as well as trainees, has not been addressed at all in this initiative.

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3.2 AIRSPACE MANAGEMENT AND USE

3.2.1.3 Impact Levels

Adverse airspace impacts may result in scheduling and coordination conflicts and issues … Uncoordinated activities would be unsafe for Department of Defense personnel or civilians, and new special use airspace would be required and result in major overhaul of ongoing flight procedures.

If scheduling issues are in sufficient disarray at Eglin AFB that this initiative is even considered, broadening the communication/coordination disorder into the State Forests will probably not solve the problem.

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Location: Apalachicola **Date:** June 4, 2014

3.3 NOISE

3.3.1.2 Assessment Method

… training locations that are ideal for training initially become less desirable over time due to vegetation growth and other factors, and so new training locations would occasionally be required. In addition to close examination of the areas around proposed new training locations, the areas surrounding existing training areas would be surveyed every two years to ensure that no new noise-sensitive land uses have been established.

Isn't it more likely that the reason that initial training sites become less desirable over time is NOT that the vegetation has been restored, but that it has been damaged to the point that it no longer provides a "natural" setting for training activities?

To restate the comment for Section 2.5, why would a requirement for redefinition of land use, seemingly in perpetuity, transpire unless the habituation of troop activity created the need for more troop activity?

3.3.2 General Emitter Activity Impact Assessment

Site FWC-2 does not have a connection to electrical utilities available on-site, so a generator would be used to power the emitter. … Generator noise would be localized, low intensity, and brief. While it may be audible when ambient noise levels are low, the Air Force does not expect the noise to be disruptive at any noise-sensitive locations.

Site FWC-2 is located in the Apalachicola River wetlands, although the initiative map definition is insufficient to tell whether it is adjacent to Huckleberry Creek, Pine Log Creek, or in Box-R WMA. The FWC bird list described 50 species known to breed in the Box-R WMA. These include the protected bald eagle and red-headed woodpecker. Also nesting in the area are the rarely sighted yellow-crowned night heron, broad-winged hawk, pileated woodpecker, eastern screech owl, great horned owl, barred owl, wild turkey, hooded warbler, Bachman's sparrow, and blue grosbeak. Any assumption that generator noise would not discourage the nest establishment of these desirable birds this close to the Great Florida Birding Trail is unproven.

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Location: Apalachicola **Date:** June 4, 2014

3.3.3 General Training Activity Impact Assessment

Low-altitude flight minimizes the chances of detection. Lower-altitude flights are louder for people directly overflown, but noise levels drop off relatively rapidly with lateral distance from the aircraft.

The effect of noise annoyance on people has been minimized throughout this document. In addition, the effect of noise pollution on birds, mammals, crustaceans, fish, desirable insects such as butterflies, moths, and dragonflies, etc. has very little scientific data to support any assertions of irrelevance. Moreover, the effect of repeated low-level aircraft noise on ongoing scientific studies that require controlled environments is not addressed at all.

The migration pathway of the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) to Mexico follows the Apalachicola River and its major tributaries. The fall migration (October and November) is a major tourist attraction in the THSF area; and some areas are subject to monarch overwintering, due to increased winter temperatures, which also attracts tourists. Monarchs are known to remain in the southern areas of THSF during January and February. Spring migration in March, while not as spectacular, also draws tourists.

The economic value of the disruption of monarch migration from noise and air turbulence has not been evaluated by this initiative. In addition, monarch survival is dependent upon the availability of nectar plants, and one of them, Godfrey's blazing star (*Liatris provincialis*) is a protected species verified in TA-1 and probable in all other areas. Any breeding monarchs that stay in the area require host plants to support emerging offspring. One of them, Southern milkweed (*Asclepias virdula*) is a protected species verified in TA-1 and probable in all other areas.

However, it is not possible to know at any given time where all of the users of each forest are located.

Given the potential number and duration of daily low-level overflights of State Forest lands (five times per day, 232 days per year, up to four aircraft per sortie), the number of forest "users" should decrease over the long term. The economic impact of forest DISuse would be an unintended consequence of this initiative.

Name: Margherite Williams
Affiliation: Individual
Address: [redacted]

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Location: Apalachicola **Date:** June 4, 2014

3.3.3 General Training Activity Impact Assessment (continued)

Munitions Use

Approximately 8,000 blank 7.62-millimeter (mm) (M240) and 10,000 5.56-mm (M4) rounds would be fired per training event. In total, 576,000 blank 5.56-mm rounds and 196,200 blank 7.62-mm rounds would be fired annually.

Approximately two to five ground-burst simulators would be used during each training event, for a total of 5,172 ground burst simulators used annually.

The effect of noise generated by munitions detonation, compared with aircraft annoyance, should include assessment of the much longer duration and the unpredictability of bursts. Habituation (getting "used to") the sound of gunfire is not a desirable attribute to State Forest use. As commented on the use of low-flying aircraft, the effect of noise pollution on birds, mammals, crustaceans, fish, and desirable insects is probably quite relevant.

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3.4 SAFETY

3.4.1.2 Assessment Method

[Safety Attribute Intensity – High] *Substantive change in the safety environment that results in elimination of existing unavoidable high-level safety risks (such as loss of life or property) or introduction of new unavoidable, high-level safety risks. Examples include closure of a hazardous test and/or training area or introduction of a new hazardous test and/or training area.*

No hazardous tests or training have been described in this initiative. If the Air Force anticipates that the State Forests will be used for new hazardous tests and/or training areas, a process of communication of these additional activities should require full disclosure to affected residents, commercial interests, State Forest patrons, and environmental groups.

3.11 SOCIOECONOMICS/ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

3.11.3 General Training Activity Impact Assessment

Recreation and Tourism

Some recreational users, such as hikers, may be annoyed by noise from aircraft operations.

Most birdwatchers, photographers, writers, and researchers hike the State Forests to view wildlife. The Blackwater River and its major tributaries, Juniper Creek, Coldwater Creek, and Sweetwater Creek, are well-traveled by kayaks and canoes, some of them as part of eco-tourism caravans. In THSF waterways are well traveled by sports fishermen and nature lovers alike.

If wildlife flees from the noise of aircraft or troop movement, or becomes silent to evade a perceived enemy, there is no reason to hike or paddle there. The economic impact to Franklin and Liberty Counties would be quite substantial when hikers and boaters go elsewhere.

Name: Margherite Williams
Affiliation: Individual
Address: [redacted]

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3.8 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

3.8.3 General Training Activity Impact Assessment

Wildlife

Wildlife could be directly impacted by land disturbance, temporary disturbance and displacement from ground movement and vehicle and boat collisions, and noise and wildfire from UoEX.

3.12 SOLID AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS/WASTE

3.12.3 General Training Activity Impact Assessment

Additionally, troops would be required to recover shell casings and other expendable by products (e.g., GBS canisters) from the training sites to the extent practicable. While it would not be feasible to collect every casing or other expendable by-product, the amount that may be missed or left behind would be minimal.

There is no evaluation of the impact paintball and smoke grenade components would have on wildlife.

For instance, the typical medium for paintball dyes (and artificial smoke) is propylene glycol, a hygroscopic synthetic chemical. It is often assumed to be completely harmless, but degradation in soil causes excessive bacterial growth, called bioclogging, which interferes with water filtration. Given the quantities of expendables projected for each event, the impact of bioclogging would extend well beyond the immediate training area. Expendables containing propylene glycol would de-oxygenate water in the area, affecting fish and crayfish habitats.

In addition, propylene glycol is known to be toxic to domestic animals, causing blood diseases in cats and various forms of toxicosis in dogs. There is no data for toxicity in wild animals. Therefore, the use of paintballs and smoke grenades would, in effect, become a series of uncontrolled experiments on the effects of ingestion, dermal absorption, and inhalation by wild animals, some of which are protected species.

Name: Margherite Williams
Affiliation: Individual
Address: [redacted]

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5.8 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

5.8.1 Affected Environment

5.8.1.2 Wildlife

*The Great Florida Birding Trail passes through BRSF, and many birds can be found such as mourning dove, myrtle warbler, red-tailed hawk, red-headed woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*), and the Carolina wren.*

The Great Florida Birding Trail also passes through Tate's Hell State Forest; Deep Creek Tract is in TA-8. Aircraft flight paths would also affect nearby segments of the Trail, including:

- Tate's Hell State Forest: High Bluff Coastal Hiking Trail
- Apalachicola River Wildlife and Environmental Area
  - Cash Bayou
  - Sand Beach Tower
  - Bloody Bluff Tract
- Apalachicola National Forest:
  - Fort Gadsden Historic Site (currently closed)
  - Wright Lake
  - County Road 22 Pond
  - Post Office Bay, Forest Road 123 Northeast
- Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserve: Garden of Eden Trail

All concerns about noise impact on nesting and foraging habitats and bird kill due to collision with low-altitude aircraft apply to these areas.

Name: Margherite Williams
Affiliation: Individual
Address: [redacted]

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Location: [redacted] ***Please print legibly*** **Date:** 6/5/14

The time limit for these comments is ridiculous!

The military began coveting Fl. Forests in 2001 as per an article published Monday, Oct 8th, 2001 by Thomas B. Pfankuch, a Times-Union staff writer ~~for the~~ from ESTIFFANULGA. Please see attached article. Don't try to

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

Public comments are requested pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 United States Code 4321, et seq. All written comments received during the comment period will be considered during Final EIS preparation. Your provision of private address information with your comment is voluntary and protected in accordance with the Privacy Act and Air Force Instruction 33-332. Your private address information will not be released in the Final EIS or for any other purpose, unless required by law. However, your private address information will be used to compile the mailing list for any further project notices. Failure to provide such information will result in your name not being included on the distribution list.

Name: JUDI RUSSELL

Organization: Posterity

Affiliation: ☐ Individual ☐ Government ☐ Tribe ☐ Organization ☑ FUTURE GENERATIONS

Address: [redacted]

City/State/Z [redacted]

☑ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the GRASI Landscape Initiative EIS.**

☐ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

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Continuation Page

[illegible] that Grasi is different. It's just a [illegible] approach to a sneaky land grab.

Sadly

Saddened at your gr[illegible] and insincerity and disregard for posterity,

Judi Russell

Thank you for your input.

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1 [redacted]

[redacted]

8 MS. CUMMINS: Betty, B-e-t-t-y, Cummins,
9 C-u-m-m-i-n-s. I spoke at the Carrabelle meeting
10 last night and have welcomed this additional
11 opportunity to more specifically address some items
12 within the draft EIS, and make it clearer so that
13 hopefully my comments will be considered
14 substantive.
15 As a resident of Franklin County and a
16 concerned citizen, I dispute statements by the Eglin
17 Air Force that their intended use of Tate's Hell
18 State Forest is not expected to result in any
19 significant adverse impacts. Considering just a few
20 of the sections of the EIS would make it obvious
21 that the tranquility and environmental health of the
22 state forest environment would be significantly
23 adversely impacted for all users except the
24 military.
25 I spoke at the previous meeting about the Use

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of Expendables, and there are so many of them, and I won't go over that list again, but those involve training munitions, and pyrotechnics including the simulated munitions, plastic pellets, paintballs, smoke grenades during training activities.

It would seem obvious to anyone considering the nature of such munitions and pyrotechnics, that it would not be possible to clean up the fragments and residue left on the ground, vegetation, and over the wetlands.

This is not acceptable and not compatible with the citizens' stated desire for preservation of the environmentally fragile ecosystems of State's Hell -- Tate's Hell State Forest, and the tranquil environment needed for enjoyment by civilian users.

The draft EIS does not adequately describe what measures will be used to remove small fragments and fine particulate residue that result from the use of training munitions and pyrotechnics, which would be a source of unnatural litter and potential toxins on soil vegetation and water wetlands. Nor does the draft EIS address the adverse effects of the debris and residue or the toxic components thereof.

I also have concerns about Section 2.3.2.14, Emplacement of Obstacles, EoO, which involves

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1 placement of concertina wire along unpaved roads.
2 Even if the area is manned, I am concerned about
3 forest animals being placed at risk of injury by the
4 concertina wire during their normal forging
5 activities and moving across their native habitat.
6 The adverse effects of heavy concertina wire in
7 place for any length of time is a potential for
8 injury to animals attempting to cross the concertina
9 wire blocked habitat has not been adequately
10 addressed in the draft EIS.
11 There's also the potential for spooking these
12 animals and causing them to dash in ways that might
13 not be anticipated by the personnel manning those
14 concertina wire blockades.
15 I have additional concerns about Section
16 2.3.2.18, Natural Resource Consumption, Table 2-10,
17 NRC Details. Why would paintballs or plastic
18 pellets and the smoke grenades and 5.56-mm blanks,
19 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs have any role in procurement of
20 natural food -- food sources such as small game,
21 rodents, and vegetation while utilizing survival
22 techniques such as tracking and snaring.
23 THE HEARING OFFICER: Ms. Cummins, I need for
24 you to wrap up your comments, please.
25 MS. CUMMINS: The emission describes in the --

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description in the draft Environmental Impact Statement appear to be overreaching the scope or the activities outlined. The adverse effects on the environment and soil vegetation and water wetlands is from small fragment debris and residue associated with these training missions and pyrotechnics while utilizing survival techniques, such as trapping and snaring is not identified in the draft EIS, nor is there any explanation of why they would have any role in the natural resource consumption and survival training.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, Ms. Cummins.

MS. CUMMINS: That's -- please, "No Action Alternative."

[redacted]

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1 [redacted]

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[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

15 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Next to
16 speak, and I do apologize, it appears to be
17 Margherite Williams.
18 MS. WILLIAMS: It is.
19 THE COURT REPORTER: And, Ms. Williams, can you
20 spell your first name, please?
21 MS. WILLIAMS: Sure. I'm Margherite Williams,
22 M-a-r-g-h-e-r-i-t-e. Williams is normal. I'm a
23 resident of Alabama. I have spent a significant
24 amount of time in Tate's Hell camping and bird
25 watching, stargazing, and also in Blackwater River

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when I lived in Mobile. My comments, therefore, apply to both potential aspects of the EIS.

Cleanup has already been mentioned, but my concern is the debris that tends to get left behind a group of 18 to 25 year olds. You've got candy wrappers, cigarette butts, and prophylactics.

In addition to the paintball media, which is generally polyethylene glycol. The MSDS for polyethylene glycol says that it is toxic to certain animals, specifically dogs, but it certainly has never been tested on bears or other mammals.

It also is presumed to be biodegradable. That's also annotated on the MSDS as not really biodegradable in sandy soil. So the Air Force needs to do some serious investigation on what media is used in the paintballs.

My second concern is interaction by the trainees with the wildlife. It says in the EIS that if a black bear is cited, they will allow the animal to leave the area undisturbed. Now, I've been camping for almost 55 years. I have never seen a black bear leave a human interaction without checking out if they have any food, which gets us back to the paintball business. If they think that's a load of M&Ms, they are going to ingest it

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and become very ill. This ain't nothing if they decide that somebody has food and they want it.

So there's something that needs to be done about whether or not the animal is going to be -- is going to hang around for awhile, and how is that going to be handled by the training personnel.

My final concern is humans. As personnel security, we have some issues in Florida apparently called stand your ground, and we have a lot of people that come in and out of the state forest who are kind of rowdy. The worm grunters, I'm speaking thereof, and some of the fishing people, and, of course, the hunters. Now, a bunch of trainees dropping out of, in a landing zone might be considered to be a threat, and if they're not armed, some of our residents may be, and there could be problems with that.

Turning it around on the other side, my world view, you know, I'm just one old bat who is in her 70's and likes to wonder around in the woods, but I carry binoculars, a camera, and scope. I wonder if somebody would consider me a threat to the national security, and shoot me, or arrest me, and that does concern me. Thank you.

[redacted] [redacted]

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1 [redacted]

[redacted]

20 THE HEARING OFFICER: All right. Darrian

21 Turner.

22 MR. TURNER: I'm Darrian Turner, D-a-r-r-i-a-n,

23 T-u-r-n-e-r. I'm speaking on behalf of the

24 oystermen. We put millions of dollars of shells out

25 there now to try to get this bay back going again.

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One spill will kill this bay. We do not need no planes, no nothing up there right now. Five or ten years down the road it may be fine, but right now we can't afford nothing. We're struggling as it is, and you've got the bald eagles in Tate's Hell. What's -- whose going to protect them? I can take you up there right now, and show you 50 bald eagles' nests. You know, they are supposed to be on the endangered species list. How are you going to protect the endangered species with an airplane flying over top of them?

THE HEARING OFFICER: Mr. Turner, could you speak a little closer to the microphone.

MR. TURNER: I said there are bald eagles there in Tate's Hell. How are you going to protect the bald eagles with an airplane flying over top of it? You're not. You're going to kill the little ones. The jet fuel coming out of the jets -- you can't tell me you're not going to fly below 500 feet. We've had them over the top of our house every night from Tyndall. If we get Tyndall in here and Eglin, you're not going to get no sleep nowhere in this county. Thank you.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. [redacted]

[redacted]

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I_172

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1 [redacted]

[redacted]

24 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Guy Hogan.

25 MR. HOGAN: My name is Guy Hogan, G-u-y,

GULF BAY REPORTING

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I_172

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1 H-o-g-a-n. I'm an [redacted] resident, and I hunt
2 and fish in Tate's Hell, and I just hope that the
3 Air Force fails in everything that they attempt to
4 do in Tate's Hell. Thank you.
5 [redacted]

GULF BAY REPORTING

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[redacted]

[redacted]

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Any other individuals that wish to make a comment? Yes, sir.

MR. VENABLE: I had not planned to speak and yet feel there's one particular point --

THE HEARING OFFICER: Sir, can you --

MR. VENABLE: I'm Frank Venable of [redacted] and live right here. I live right up on the edge of Tate's Hell swamp, but I think back about nine months ago, one night, some kind of aviation exercise took place for well over an hour right over my home with helicopters and I think fixed wing. I went outside repeatedly to look and see what in the world was happening. It was very, very oppressive for the sound of the chop, chop, chop, chop. I understand, and I appreciate that. My date of commission is 2 June 1958 going through Fort Knox.

So there's no one in this room more patriotic than I am. Please, anybody understand that, and that guy that wrote the letter and said that if anybody complained, I got a bone to pick with him if he wants to talk about it.

Now what I'm saying right here that for the rest of my life, and I moved here 21 years ago from

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I_173

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Georgia because of everything that's been described here of the peace and solitude. That's why the tourists come here, and is becoming the most important economic factor of this whole county is the tourism.

If you look at the Gulf Coast from here west for the next 200 miles, all the way over to Gulf Shores, there's four and a half million tourists come in there. If they had helicopters chop, chopping over two hundred fifty something days a year --

MR. AKSTULEWICZ: 232.

MR. VENABLE: Two hundred-plus, I'm alarmed. That's the first time I've heard that identified. I'm very alarmed. What is the flight pattern of access to Tate's Hell area? If it's anywhere over my house, and over anybody else's home it will destroy, detour, and reduce dramatically the economic values of your real estate.

So I can only assure you that my personal circumstances relies substantially on the value that I have in my real estate and my home, and if I wanted to put that on the market tomorrow, and they said, hey, you're going to have to listen to those helicopters 230 days a year because it's too far

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I_173

from Eglin, so there's no-wheel access vehicles there, totally aviation, that's significant.

Now, you let me put something in your environment where you live, and where you and all of the other representatives here have your life's commitment established, and let me come in there and change it. Not just on a periphery, but on a periphery and throughout cross section and a grid, anywhere you want to measure it. We had to listen to 35 minutes of minutia up here from those gentlemen that complied with certain rules or certain something anywhere else. Hey, I dozed through all of that, and then tell me that I've got to be restricted to three minutes is a slap in the face.

So, if there has been any credibility, it would have been with the Forestry Service here or the State of Florida, that gentleman that came over. If you, also, being a state employee, had revealed to us that this was pending and gone beyond six or seven years of discussion, that destroys any credibility. Do you understand what I'm saying?

If I came with a great big program to change your lifestyle, your environmental picture, and started it six years earlier, is wrong, is wrong.

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I_173

Come up front and tell me what you are going to do to me and for me, not reveal it after you've had six years of planning, and like the gentleman there with the -- the representative of the seafood workers says, hey, and the dogs hunter there. We represent what is established here and has been our life, our whole lifestyle.

So this is too substantial. It is too significant, and it will change dramatically the quality of life we have here. That, I was resent, and all of you who came here from out of town, I resent the whole effort, and the way that it's been presented. Thank you.

THE COURT REPORTER: Sir, can you spell your name for me, please?

COMMISSIONER SANDERS: Spell your name for her, Mr. Frank.

MR. VENABLE: Bubba, B-u-b-b-a, or you can spell it with an e-r. It's pronounces exactly the same.

THE COURT REPORTER: What's your last name? Is that your last name?

MR. VENABLE: I don't really need to give you that, my name. This is a public issue.

THE COURT REPORTER: I need to have it for the

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I_173

record so they will know who was speaking.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Sir, when the final EIS is addressed, they will be addressing your specific comments as well as --

MR. VENABLE: Let them come and look me up. Y'all have been trampling on me for six years, and have just showed up to announce it.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Yes, sir. If you could -- if you wouldn't mind, if you can just give your last name so that we can have it for the record.

MR. VENABLE: I will in a minute.

[redacted]

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I_174

ID	I_174
Date Submitted	6/26/2014
Commenter	Elisa Jones
Organization	
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	I am a horse enthusiast who uses the Blackwater River State Forest and am very concerned about proposals for using this beautiful area for training activities. There are Forest uses needing protection for which you have not given consideration, in a large portion of BRSF TA-5 (the connected large area west of Juniper Creek), and a small portion of BRSF TA-6 (the small area west of Juniper Creek). These are the areas of the horse trails and Dog Field Trial Area. The horse trail routes and Field Trial Area are shown in Figure 5-42 Land Use Types at BRSF. The route of the horse trails should have the same Noise Protection Level (Figures 5-16 and 5-17), and Ground Operations Protection Level (Figures 5-6 and 5-7), as the Coldwater Recreation Area Campground. The protections given to the campground should extend into the Forest for the lengths of all the horse trails and the Field Trial Area. Horses and dogs have sensitive hearing, and the areas they traverse should be considered "noise-sensitive areas". Children are likely to be riding on horses at any given time, or accompanying the Field Trial dogs during competitons and training days. The above mentioned areas should have noise constraints. Helicopter overflight can cause a horse to spook, and has potential for injury to the rider, who could be a child. Proposed Actions using paintballs and smoke grenades are not compatible with the uses of these areas. If a visitor has an undesirable experience due to the Proposed Action, they will not return to the Forest, causing a loss of revenue for the Florida Forest Service.

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I_175

ID	I_175
Date Submitted	6/26/2014
Commenter	Bob Ballard
Organization	Wakulla Environmental Institute
Affiliation	Individual
Comment	Tates Hell was puchased by the State for, in part, recreational opportunities. You will be diminishing those opportunities. We are looking to place a recreational trail in this area called the "Capitol City to the Sea loop trail". I and others would go out of our way to support your efforts if financially you support this fine recreational project. Putting money up to help build this trail would help replace the recreational opportunities that would be lost due to your project. If you put $15,000,000 into the trail project, we could muster up enough support to get your project approved. Call me if you need more information. [redacted personal information]

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I_177

[redacted]

From: prvs=1245392c9d=michael.spaits@us.af.mil on behalf of SPAITS, MICHAEL E GS-12 USAF AFMC 96 TW/PA <michael.spaits@us.af.mil>
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2014 7:57 AM
To: [redacted]
Subject: Re: GRASI

Mr. Hulsizer,
1. Thank you for your comments. I am responding on behalf of Brig Gen David A. Harris, the Commander of the 96th Test Wing. The Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (or GRASI) Landscape proposal is an Air Force led effort to help ensure that there is enough training capacity to support the DoD's non-hazardous missions. The initiative is needed so that our military forces can continue to receive the critical training required to maintain the highest level of readiness and capability.
As we analyze potential alternatives to solving this complex issue, we are continuing to solicit public feedback as part of the National Environmental Policy Act. There is no effort to "take over" Blackwater River State Forest. Rather, we are studying the potential to be another compatible user of the forest with all the other current and future users. Use of the Blackwater River or Tate's Hell State Forest areas, if pursued, is intended to generate more training flexibility for compatible military activities, when there are no options to train at Eglin, AFB do to training or testing restrictions.
The Air Force has not made any final determination to pursue a permit to conduct training in either Tate's Hell or Blackwater State Forest. The Air Force will not pursue use of the State Forests for training until the impacts are fully understood and the Environmental Impact Statement analysis is completed. The Florida Division of Forestry will have final say on what, if any, activities they will allow in the state forests.

2. Brig. Gen. Harris appreciates your concerns and wants to ensure you that your comments will be considered in the EIS analysis and forwarded to the Decision Maker for this effort.

Thanks,
Mike Spaits
Eglin Environmental Public Affairs
[redacted]

"Commander,

Please don't go down in history as the CO who could not work out a schedule conflict and had to take over public Blackwater STATE Forest! We the people desire to have our LIBERTIES and the public land is a valuable LIBERTY which many hold dear.
I stood the watch of this great nation for 23 years in the US Navy Submarine service. I commissioned two nuclear submarines and made my sacrifices so I can take my children and grandchildren in the Blackwater forest and enjoy it for what it is without worrying what grid is closed because the USAF is conducting training exercises that can be done elsewhere. Please stand your watch and use what the Government has given you. Taking from the public is not honorable!
The Blasckwater STATE Forest was bought by hunters and placed in trust of the STATE for Hunters Not for the USAF!

Again please stay out of Blackwater it is sacred and needs to be for the youth of tomorrow!"

Sincerely,
Chad W. Hulsizer
Senior Chief Petty Officer USN (Retired)

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B.6 AIR FORCE RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

As stated in Section B.4.3, Locating Responses to Comments, the Air Force responded to substantive comments submitted on the Draft EIS. The Air Force will take public and agency comments into consideration in its decision-making process.

Commenters that submitted only non-substantive comments have been identified with an asterisk (*) before their name in the second column of Table B-4, Directory of Comments; in the third column, non-substantive comments that were part of a submittal that also contained substantive comments have been marked with an asterisk (*) as well. Responses for these comments have been consolidated into one response. See the first row of Table B-5, Air Force Responses to Comments, for the response to all General non-substantive comments.

Table B-5. Air Force Response to Comments

Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
All General Non-Substantive Responses	General, non-substantive comments are those that do not require a specific response, per NEPA.	Thank you for your comment. The Air Force appreciates your input as part of the NEPA process.
A_001-R1	I understand that there are no new flights planned over Gulf Islands National Seashore . . . It would be great if the GRASI and all future EIS's for Eglin [AFB] acknowledge and address that Gulf Islands National Seashore: 1) is a unit of the National Park Service, 2) is within x miles of Eglin, 3) within x miles of the proposed action , 4) if the proposed action would affect an increase or decrease in current levels of flights over Gulf Islands National Seashore and 5) If there were a proposed change (increase) in flights over the Seashore, Eglin would consider analyzing the impact to the acoustic environment at the NPS unit, using "time audible" and "time above" metrics that take into account the duration of aircraft noise events, the number of aircraft noise events, and the absolute sound level of events that could be used to compare with NPS baseline data at the Seashore. The National Park Service policy is to provide the same level of protection that is required for federally listed T & E species, to state listed species with in the boundary of the Seashore. According to the Organic Act, the National Park Service is charged with " conserving the scenery and the natural and historic object and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. The "scenery," includes the natural soundscape, as well as the landscape. Natural and cultural sounds are integral components of the suite of resources and values that NPS managers are charged with preserving and restoring.	Section 2.3.2 of the Final EIS has been revised to include additional details describing flight routes to and from the proposed state forest training sites to better define the GRASI GLI proposal. Language has also been added to Section 2.3.2 of the Final EIS to clarify that no change in the frequency or duration of flight activities over the Gulf Islands National Seashore is anticipated.
A_004-R1	Coordination The goal stated in the "Memorandum of Agreement between the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Environment and Logistics and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for the Provision of Military Training on State Lands" is to work together in an effort to enhance both Parties' ability to carry out their respective missions. To this end, we recommend that the Air Force coordinate with the Area Biologist on Box-R WMA regarding training missions conducted at the emitter sites. Also, please be aware that FWC biologists conduct wildlife surveys, including nighttime surveys, and other management activities on all proposed training sites, and FWC law	As part of the L.I.T described in Section 2.5 of the EIS, the Air Force will include FWC area biologists to coordinate emitter site establishment and use to ensure compatibility. This has been clarified in Section 2.5 of the Final EIS.

Table B-5. Air Force Response to Comments, Cont'd

Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
	enforcement (LE) officers actively patrol these areas. We provide a list of FWC points of contact for the proposed training areas below: Box-R WMA (Emitter Sites) Jerry Pitts, Area Biologist; Blackwater River State Forest Barbara Almario, Area Biologist; Olin Rondeau, LE Captain; Tate's Hell State Forest Diane Alix, Area Biologist; Rob Beaton, LE Captain.	
A_004-R2	Sensitive Species and Habitats The Area Biologists listed above can assist in identifying protected species locations and sensitive habitats. For example, Table 2-24 on page 2-27 states that there are no eagle nests on either forest. In actuality, there are documented eagle nests on both forests that are monitored by FWC; the Area Biologists can provide these locations. Page 2-9, line 4 references a team and liaison that the Air Force will establish to coordinate with the Florida Forest Service (FFS) on implementing the proposed actions. We recommend including the Area Biologists in this process so that they may serve as resources on protected species locations and sensitive areas. The following are additional comments related to protected species and sensitive areas, organized by page and line number. Page 2-32, line 21, k: We recommend adding Florida pine snake to the list of species. Pine snakes are often encountered by FWC staff working on Blackwater and could potentially occur on Tate's Hell. Page 2-45, line 39: We recommend amending to "Annually provide training units with global positioning system (GPS) coordinates for known sensitive species locations and habitats, including bald eagle nests and wood stork feeding/roosting habitat." We recommend establishing a mechanism for FWC staff to provide updates to known sensitive species locations and habitats. Page 5-49, line 12; page 5-52, line 34: Although no individuals have been found in many years, the reticulated flatwoods salamander pond complex in TA-9 is designated federal critical habitat and should be protected and listed as sensitive habitat in Blackwater. Page 5-52, line 34; page 5-56 lines 12-13; page 5-57 lines 3-5: The Florida bog frog, a protected species in Florida, breeds along Garnier Creek and Julian Mill Creek in TA-9. FFS and FWC are working on significant habitat enhancement projects in this area, which should be avoided. We recommend including a buffer around the bog frog habitat in any and all maps where restricted training activities are delineated. Table 5-39 on page 5-52 should include bog frog habitat. Page 5-52, line 34; page 5-56 lines 12-13; page 5-57 lines 3-5: The Southeastern American kestrel, a	The Air Force appreciates the input provided by the FWC and agrees with many of the recommendations provided. The EIS text and figures have been updated to incorporate additional species and habitat occurrence information and FWC spatial data for the reticulated salamander, bog frog, bald eagle, kestrel, and pine snake on BRSF. The potential occurrence of the pine snake at THSF has been added. The Air Force also agrees that a mechanism for coordinating the latest sensitive species data with the FWC should be established prior to GRASI training. The recommendation to establish such a mechanism has been added as a mitigation measure in Section 2.7.

Table B-5. Air Force Response to Comments, Cont'd

Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
	protected species in Florida, breeds in nest boxes on Blackwater. As with the Florida bog frog, we recommend including a buffer around known kestrel breeding sites in any and all maps where restricted training activities are delineated. Page 5-50, Table 5-38: Some information in the table is not accurate. We provide an account of protected species found on Blackwater on the last page of this letter. Page 6-43, Table 6-37: Frosted flatwoods salamander larvae were recorded in TA-3 in 1984 and 1985; we recommend changing the status to "potential to occur." Gopher tortoises are present in TA-3, TA-7, and TA-10. There is a bald eagle nest in TA-10.	
A_004-R3	Recreational Use The EIS states that conflicts with hunters would not occur because training activities would be restricted in the daytime during hunting season. However, there are considerable nighttime hunting opportunities available on both Blackwater and Tate's Hell WMAs, including special seasons and fishing and frogging, which are allowed 24 hours a day, year round. For this reason, the potential exists for interactions between recreational users and Air Force personnel conducting missions at night. Also, please be aware that there is an extensive hunting season on both WMAs; in the case of Blackwater, nearly the entire year is established as a hunting season in Florida Administrative Code. Instead of using the general term "hunting season" in the document, we recommend either naming the specific hunting season in which no daytime activities would occur, or listing the dates. FWC can provide assistance regarding hunting season dates and area specific regulations. We also recommend using a system similar to the Public Access Map (P.A.M) at Eglin to notify users of training activities. The following are additional comments related to recreational use, organized by page and line number. Page 2-32, lines 23-25: We encourage coordination with FWC regarding hunting and fishing regulations as well as licenses and permits required for hunting, trapping, and fishing related activities. Page 5-64, lines 10-11: BRSF also includes Yellow River WMA; TA-9 is located in this WMA. Page 6-59, lines 3-5: Hunting is not listed as a recreational opportunity on Tate's Hell in this paragraph nor in Table 6-48. Hunting is one of the most important recreational activities on the WMA. Additionally, Tate's Hell is approximately 202,000 acres, not 2,000 acres as stated. Page 6-60, line 7: Hunt camps on Tate's Hell extends from a week before Thanksgiving through a week after the end of the general gun season (mid-February).	The Air Force recognizes the recreational importance of both Blackwater and Tate's Hell State Forests to the local citizenry. In response to public comments and with greater awareness of the recreational uses of the forests that are pursued, the Air Force has structured a "reduced-scale" sub-alternative for training that will restrict the frequency, geographic scope and intensity of training activities to make them more compatible with recreational uses, such as hunting. This alternative reduces the amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale alternative can be found in Section 2.4 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections. In addition to reducing the frequency and geographic scope of training activities proposed in these alternatives, the Air Force has also made corrections in the appropriate sections of the Final EIS, as requested.

Table B-5. Air Force Response to Comments, Cont'd

Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
	The word "transient" may not be applicable. Some of the campgrounds also have hosts that live there for extended periods.	
A_004-R4	Emitter Sites We request more information about the proposed sites, including GPS coordinates and the total impact footprint, due to the following concerns and questions expressed by FWC staff. It is difficult to determine from the map (page 2-6, figure 2-5) the exact locations of the proposed emitter sites, but FWC-1 appears to be located in an area that is designated as a priority for habitat restoration according to the Box-R WMA Management Plan. We planted longleaf pine seedlings in this area as part of the restoration process. While the landscape is currently open, the site likely will not meet the "line of site" requirement as the pines mature. FWC-2 appears to be in an agricultural field that is actively managed. The EIS states that the emitter sites would be fenced to prevent unauthorized personnel entry within 400 feet of the JTE systems. We request clarification on how the sites will be fenced (materials, height, etc.). Will the fences be permanent, or set up only during training activities? Will the perimeter be fenced or just roads that access the site?	The Air Force appreciates the FWC's concerns regarding proposed emitter sites. Additional discussion has been added to Chapter 2 to discuss the total footprint impacted by emitter sites and to add discussion of what establishment of emitter sites will entail. FWC sites are mobile - these mobile sites would be day-use only and unauthorized access would be controlled by on-site AF personnel. Other FFS sites are either fenced or not fenced. The AF would place fences in these areas as permitted by the FFS. If fences are not approved the sites would be used as mobile sites. Temporary sites would be only those that are fenced. The AF would coordinate with the FWC regarding approved use of emitter sites, which may result in new or additional locations in the future, such as roadsides or other open areas; use of roadsides may require road closure and additional NEPA may be required. Additional clarification has been added to FEIS Section 2.3.1., as well as a requirement added to Section 2.5 of the FEIS for coordination with the FWC for appropriate emitter site siting and use.
A_004-R5	Emitter Sites . . . If only roads or human access points are fenced, what are the potential impacts on wildlife that wander within 400 feet of the JTE system? Page 3-69, line 8 states that exposure to potentially harmful levels of electromagnetic radiation (EMR) is highly unlikely given that wildlife are not likely to continuously remain within the hazard distance. This applies to larger mammals and perhaps some birds but may not be true for animals with small home ranges, such as small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.	Section 3.8.2, General Emitter Activity, explains that emitter sites would be placed on improved and semi-improved areas, thus avoiding impacts to sensitive species and habitats. Potential intermittent and random exposure of small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians to EMR would not result in a significant adverse impact. Information on smaller mammals has been added to the Final EIS in Section 3.8.2.
A_004-R6	Emitter Sites . . . It is not clear from the EIS how the use of emitter sites will affect management activities on Box-R such as prescribed burning, discing and planting, and roller chopping. Additionally, it is not clear how the emitter sites will affect recreational users, such as hunters. If JTE emitters are used, FWC-1 needs to be greater than 400 feet from the hunter check station, Tilton Rd (county road), and US-98. FWC-2 needs to be greater than 400 feet from the residence, office/pole barn complex, and access road (Huckleberry Lane). Although Box-R is not considered a populated area, the residence is occupied year round. We recommend the use of only	Use of emitter sites is not intended to interfere with management activities; the Air Force would coordinate with the FWC to ensure compatible use. Use of the JTE will be restricted in Box-R. These corrections have been made to Sections 4.4, 4.10, 4.11, and Sections 2.7.

Table B-5. Air Force Response to Comments, Cont'd

Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
	KTM and MCM emitters on Box-R due to the large buffer requirement of the JTE emitters resulting in potential conflicts with management activities and recreational users, as well as safety concerns.	
A_013-R1	Upon reading the online information set and attending the Milton public meeting , I was concerned that Blackwater River State Park was not designated as a Populated Area (residents and volunteers live on-site) nor a Recreation Area in figure E-4 BRSF Tactical Areas. When I talked to a representative, they pointed out that all such areas would be protected by a perimeter up to 2200 feet. Also, due to the lack of the request for shape files from our agency, several roads that are within the state park's boundary are identified as being within FFS land, those include the identified Vehicle Stream/Wetland Crossing inside our northern boundary and within 500 feet of our residential area in Figure E-4 BRSF Tactical Areas - TA8. The other is approximately 800 feet of what is known as Johnson Float Road. Both roads may appear on old shape files for FFS as within their boundary but are not identified as such by FDEP after transfer of these lands for management by FDEP. They thus fall within an inhabited recreational area. Deaton Bridge Road is a FFS right-of-way that bisects BRSP and provides campers and day use visitors with egress/ingress to this park. Boat Ramp Road, within the park, bisects an RCW cluster (J19). This will need to be delineated on your maps so that operations do not impact this cluster.	Figure E-4 only shows the tactical areas as defined by the Air Force. As discussed in Section 2.3.2, these tactical areas correspond to Florida Forest Service (FFS) recreational areas. Forest-specific GIS data used in the EIS were acquired from the FFS directly and FWC and by using online sources from various state agencies, including the FDEP. Please note that GIS data from FDEP is available online (http://www.dep.state.fl.us/gis/datadir.htm) without requiring an official request from the FDEP. Viewing Map ES-4 at the scale presented does not provide a detailed view of each recreational/tactical area. Additionally, Figure ES-4 is not a comprehensive map showing all details of BRSF (such as endangered species locations). Figures located within Appendix A of the Final EIS provide greater detail at much smaller scale, by which you can more accurately determine how your property corresponds to the proposed areas of use.
A_013-R2	Table ES-22 defines Restricted as 1500 feet around pitcher plant bogs and rare plants, but those located in many areas of Blackwater River State Park (BRSP) are not delineated due to the source of your shape files. Only the southeast quadrant of the park lacks pitcher plants and other associated near the park's boundary and within that zone are gopher tortoises and their commensal species.	The Air Force will work with the FWC and other organizations to maintain awareness of the latest data and avoid impacts, when possible. Forest-specific GIS data used in the EIS was acquired from the FFS directly, FWC, and by using online sources from various state agencies, including the FDEP. (Please note that GIS data from FDEP is available online (http://www.dep.state.fl.us/gis/datadir.htm) without requiring an official request from the FDEP). As discussed in Section 2.5 of the EIS, the Air Force will conduct sensitive species surveys of action areas prior to training implementation to verify presence/absence of sensitive species and update baseline and avoidance area information accordingly. Viewing any of the maps in the Executive Summary at the scale presented does not provide a detailed view of each recreational/tactical area. The Executive Summary figures are

Table B-5. Air Force Response to Comments, Cont'd

Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
		not comprehensive maps showing all details of BRSF (such as endangered species locations). Figures located within Appendix A of the Final EIS provide greater detail at much smaller scale, by which you can more accurately determine what resources are present in each area, provided that information is available. Pitcher plant bogs for BRSF are identified in Figures 5-31 through 5-40. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
A_013-R3	How will access along Deaton Bridge Road, Indian Ford Road, Bob Pitts Road, J20 or Boat Ramp Road (all roads used by our visitors or to access the park) be designated for operations? Will campers still be able to access the park year round from all of the above paved roads? How will OHO or OFVO impact or potentially impact park visitors using FFS roads? Can you identify whether the roads listed will be used for particular operations? How will integrated trails within the park that continue onto FFS lands have trails protected when maneuvers are using Natural Resource Procurement? Will it be necessary for park staff to advise visitors intending to hike on integrated trails that trap/snares may be present? Will it be necessary for park staff to advise hikers that they may encounter seemingly armed troops on foot or other military activities may be present or will hiking trails be listed as inhabited recreational sites and thus buffered from troop activities?	Based on input from the DEIS public/agency review process, FWALS activity (with the exception of Blackwater Airfield) has been removed from the Proposed Action. However, with respect to other training activities it is unknown at this time exactly what roads would be closed or restricted. Only small segments of roadways may experience these closures for a temporary duration. These would be determined in coordination with the Florida Forest Service (FFS) as part of the permit/lease agreement; citizens would be notified of any potential closures prior to their occurrence. Campers and other recreationalists would still be able to access the forest. Impacts to recreational users from training activities are discussed in Sections 3.10, 5.10, and 6.10; there may be annoyance or disruption of recreational uses on occasion. Natural resource consumption would not occur on designated trails; therefore, there should be no interaction between hikers and any sort of snares or traps (which, incidentally, would not be dangerous to humans). Recreational users would be notified of the presence of training activities (location and duration). Hiking trails and other recreational sites would be buffered

Table B-5. Air Force Response to Comments, Cont'd

Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
		from activities; while troops may cross a trail, they would not use it as normal hikers and recreationalists use it. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of training activity and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
A_013-R4	In conclusion, noise is the number one complaint from park visitors and the majority of complaintants point to the proximity of BRSP to Harold OLF and the training patterns which place helicopters at near tree height above the Blackwater River or above Deaton Bridge Road. Under 5.2.3 Airspace Impact Summary it states that aircraft enroute typically operate at or above 500 feet AGL. That does not appear to be the current operation criteria for helicopters enroute to or from Harold OLF. When we deliver interpretive programs at our pavilions along the river within the park we must wait for aircraft to leave the immediate area before we can continue a program. Is there a voluntary noise exposure limit for Whiting Field and its OLF, and if so, are aircraft currently flying in line with those restrictions? I and other staff have observed numerous flights overy many years within state park bounds that are less than 200 feet AGL. Pg 3-19 of the EIS states that flights 2200 feet laterally would produce 55 db and that approach/departures flights around known noise sensitive areas would exceed those distances to avoid excessive annoyance. Please note our campground as a noise sensitive area per the EIS.	The Blackwater River State Park was incorrectly identified in the Draft EIS as being a non-noise-sensitive land parcel (see DEIS Figure 5-19). Because the state park includes a campground and concentrated recreational activity, it has been re-characterized as a "known noise sensitive location," and maps in the EIS have been revised accordingly. As stated in Section 2.7 of the EIS, known noise-sensitive locations (i.e., the state park) would not be overflown by aircraft involved in GRASI training at altitudes of less than 500 feet above ground level (AGL), and no landing zones would be designated with 2,200 feet from known noise-sensitive locations. Section 5.3.2 of the DEIS states that "Aircraft en route typically operate at or above 500 feet AGL unless operating within existing SUA." The Blackwater River State Park is located beneath the existing special use airspace (SUA) unit Eglin Military Operations Area (MOA) A East as well as Alert Area 292 (see DEIS Figure 5-21). Eglin MOA A, which is used primarily in conjunction with the Eglin Test and Training Range, has a designated floor altitude of 1,000 feet AGL under normal operating conditions, but the floor can be lowered to 200 feet AGL if a "notice to airmen" is published. Alert Area 292 is used primarily by Navy aircraft and is designated as having floor altitude at the surface. Existing airspace management (e.g., SUA structure) and the exiting noise environment are

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		discussed in Sections 5.2 and 5.3 of the DEIS, respectively.
A_016-R1	The current management plans for the Blackwater River State Forest (BRSF) and Tate's Hell State Forest do not authorize the proposed military training actions outlined in the Draft EIS. ...While the Division of State Lands has delegated authority from the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (BOT) for the approval of ARC-recommended land management plan amendments, it should be noted that if such an amendment was deemed to be of heightened public concern, it would require an agenda item to be presented directly to the BOT for final approval.	The Florida Forest Service (FFS) will review the activities in the EIS proposed by the AF. Based on the EIS, public hearings and other input they have received, the FFS will make determinations on whether or not to allow training and which types of training in BRSF and THSF. For those activities deemed acceptable to implement in the State Forests, the FFS would propose updates to their management plans and, as discussed during the public hearings, provide the public an opportunity to comment and provide input. The FFS would follow the proper protocol for implementing the Proposed Action.
A_016-R2	Although there are restrictions associated with each proposed activity, staff requests that further details regarding general proposals to "avoid protected wildlife and plants" be included in the EIS.	EIS Section 2.5 discusses buffers that would be established around known protected species and habitats and the preparation of a mitigation plan for minimizing impacts to protected species. As described in Table 2-24, the buffers would exclude all or some types of military activity either year-round or during certain seasons. As stated in Section 2.5, the Air Force will prepare a mitigation plan that identifies Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations to be implemented, responsible parties for mitigation implementation and compliance evaluation, and monitoring mechanisms for evaluation of mitigation effectiveness. Figures 5-1 through Figure 5-10 provide graphical representations of the protection levels for ground operations at BRSF as a whole and for each individual tactical area. Figures 5-11 through Figure 5-20 provide similar information for noise-generating activities at BRSF. Figures 6-1 through Figure 6-11 provide graphical representation of the protection levels for ground operations at THSF as a whole and for each individual tactical area. Figures 6-12 through Figure 6-22 provide similar information for noise-generating activities at THSF. Each figure identifies protection levels around identified recreational sites. Tables 2-24 and 2-25 identify the restrictions associated with each protection level. Recreational sites identified with buffers would be avoided, or activities would be limited, per the requirements identified in the tables. As discussed in Section 2.5, per General Operational Constraint 3(b) the Air Force would coordinate with the FFS to identify time and area constraints for training activities (e.g.,

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		avoidance of specific hunting seasons and associated areas) and incorporate these constraints and avoidance areas into unit training plans. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
A_016-R3	Although there are restrictions associated with each proposed activity, staff requests that further details regarding general proposals to "avoid inhabited recreational sites" all be included in the EIS.	Please see response to Comment A_016-R2.
A_016-R4	The DEP requests additional detailed information to address its potential concerns below: - The anticipated length of time the GRASI Landscape Initiative program will be in operation or program expiration date.	At this point in time there is no defined end-date for thetraining uses that are ultimately approved by the FFS and State of Florida. Training activities would be projected to occur until such time as adequate range capacity became available on Eglin AFB to support the necessary training requirements. Ultimately, the FFS would specify the length of time that training activities would be permitted. The plans to support and manage these activities will need to be reviewed every few years and approved, if they are determined to still be compatible with existing land uses.
A_016-R5	The DEP requests additional detailed information to address its potential concerns below: - The restrictions on public use within the state forests when civilian users are displaced and/or concentrated in circumscribed areas or at limited times.	Only small portions of the forest, such as forest management units, would be used in accordance with applicable Florida Forest Service (FFS) management plans, per EIS Section 2.3.2. The goal is to conduct training activities in a compatible manner with existing forest uses and to not preclude use of identified recreational areas. Ultimately, the FFS would determine through use permits/lease agreements the location, duration, and frequency of training activities permitted in the forests. Based on input received during the public/agency DEIS review process, the FWALS activity (with the exception of Blackwater Airfield) has been remvoed from the

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Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
		Proposed Action. Only small segments of roadways may experience closures for a temporary duration during other training activities. These would be determined in coordination with the FFS as part of the permit/lease agreement; citizens would be notified of any potential closures prior to their occurrence. Campers and other recreationalists would still be able to access the forest. Impacts to recreational users from training activities is discussed in Sections 3.10, 5.10, and 6.10--there may be annoyance or disruption of recreational uses on occasion. Training activities would not occur on designated trails; therefore, there should be no interaction with hikers. Recreational users would be notified of the presence of training activities (location and duration). Hiking trails and other recreational sites would be buffered from activities. While troops may cross a trail, they would not use it in the same manner as normal hikers and recreationalists use it. Additionally, the Air Force has developed a "reduced scale" subalternative, which reduces the scope of training activities to a few specific locations and smaller-scale activities to further minimize potential conflicts with recreational users.
A_016-R6	The DEP requests additional detailed information to address its potential concerns below: - Collection and removal of waste and unexploded expendables and pyrotechnic devices, which may be capable of causing injury if they later detonate from handling, brushfires or accidental kicking or crushing by recreational users.	As stated in Section 2.5, Operational Constraint 6(a), the Air Force would police training areas to ensure that no trash, ammunition boxes, wire, or other debris has been left in the area. The Air Force will work with the FFS to establish procedures for policing and clearing residue from training sites at regular intervals - this has been added as a mitigation to Section 2.7 of the Final EIS. Air Force personnel would adhere to Eglin Plan 32-5 Hazardous Waste Management Plan and Eglin Plan 32-9 Hazardous Material Management Plan during training activities for recycling, hazardous materials management, and proper disposal of wastes. Additionally, the Air Force has added a "reduced-scale" subalternative to the EIS to address public concerns raised about munitions residue. The sub-alternative, which is the Air Force's preferred alternative, will limit the use of munitions and expendables to just 2 locations in BRSF. Munitions use (blanks, training aids, devices and simulators) and activities with the potential to leave munitions residue would be limited to the 2 hardened camp areas in BRSF (Short Term Offender

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		Program (STOP) Camp and Santa Rosa Youth Academy (SRYA). The frequency of use would be limited to no more than 60 days annually. These areas would be utilized for up to eight (8) 5-day training exercises with no more than 10,000 rounds per day expended. No firing or munitions generating activities would be conducted in THSF.
A_016-R7	The DEP requests additional detailed information to address its potential concerns below: - The mitigation of potential bank erosion, stream siltation and alteration of stormwater sheet flow in the Vehicle Stream and Wetland Crossings (VSWC) as detailed in the operation plan for maneuvers in the forests.	Only FFS-approved vehicle water crossings would be utilized, and any required mitigations to address erosion issues and siltation would be developed in coordination with the FFS based on the specific situation. As stated in Section 2.7 of the Final EIS under "Water Resources," roads, trails, and stream/wetland crossings would be inspected before and after each training mission to identify maintenance issues that could cause problems if not repaired. Training activities would be shifted or redirected if conditions of roads and stream and wetland crossings require repair or other measures to prevent erosion from impacting surface waters and wetlands. The Florida Forest Service would be notified of any identified issues. The Operational Plan is currently a draft document being developed between the Air Force and the Florida Forest Service (FFS). The Operational Plan will be completed once a decision has been made regarding implementation of the Proposed Action and the FFS makes its determination regarding location, frequency, and duration of training activities that would be allowed in each forest. The Operational Plan would include requirements of the Mitigation Plan, also a document that would be completed once a decision has been made. Currently, available information is presented in Sections 2.5 and 2.7 of the EIS, which identify requirements for use and monitoring for all training components. To clarify, the Proposed Action does not propose off-road vehicle use - all military vehicles (HMMWVs primarily and supply trucks) would be limited to existing roads, trails and hardened stream crossings. Cross-country maneuver of vehicles off-trail would not occur. This limitation of training activities should help to limit impacts to water quality, streambanks and any resultant sedimentation. The activity entitled "Cross Country Vehicle Use" has been changed to "Roadway Vehicle Use" in the Final EIS to more accurately describe the

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Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
		proposed activity.
A_016-R8	The DEP requests additional detailed information to address its potential concerns below: - The potential alteration of the natural behavior of wildlife species and their sustainability in active areas due to noise from low-flying aircraft. Page H-6 of the appendices reports aircraft noise impacts as high as 150 dB, above the noise made by a nightclub or an oxyacetylene torch. This would also cause disturbance to recreational users.	EIS Appendix EIS, page H-6 discusses, among other things, the effect of noise onset rates up to 150 dB per second. Section H.1.2, in which the reference to 150 dB is located, discusses noise metrics in general rather than the impacts of the Proposed Action specifically. The text on page H-6 does not in any way imply that the Proposed Action would expose wildlife or recreational users to noise levels of 150 dB. Noise levels generated by proposed aircraft operations are discussed in Sections 3.3, 5.3, and 6.3 of the DEIS. Potential impacts of noise generated by the Proposed Action are discussed in Sections 3.3, 5.3, and 6.3 as well as sections dealing specifically with biological resources (Sections 3.8, 5.8, and 6.8).
A_016-R9	It is unclear how the military or the state land managing agency would monitor adverse impacts and report them to the DEP Division of State Lands. Notwithstanding the Memoranda of Agreement signed by the agencies listed above, portions of the proposed activities may not be compatible with the purposes for which the State of Florida has acquired its conservation lands. For additional information and assistance, please contact Ms. Marianne Gengenbach, Environmental Administrator of the DEP Office of Environmental Services, at [REDACTED PERSONAL INFORMATION].	As indicated in Section 2.5, per General Operational Constraint 1(a), the Air Force would develop a Mitigation Plan outlining all mitigation and monitoring requirements once the decision has been made whether to implement the Proposed Action. This Mitigation Plan would be developed in coordination with the Florida Forest Service (FFS) and identify any associated reporting requirements. As further discussed in the EIS under in General Operational Constraints 2 and 3, monitoring programs and reporting mechanisms would be required, the details of which would depend on the scope of activities actually approved by the FFS as part of the lease/permit process should the Proposed Action move forward.
A_016-R11	The Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) Aviation and Spaceports Office staff requests that the U.S. Air Force and State of Florida consider the following regulatory requirements, which apply to the aircraft landing activities and construction of any airport facilities proposed in Draft EIS Section 2.3.2.1 Helicopter Landing Zones/Drop Zones and Section 2.3.2.2 Fixed-Wing Aircraft Landing Sites: - The GRASI Landscape Initiative proposals described in the Draft EIS meet the definition of "airport" in § 330.27(2), Florida Statutes (F.S.), "an area of land or water used for, or intended to be used for, landing and takeoff of aircraft, including appurtenant areas, buildings, facilities, or rights-of-way necessary to facilitate such use or intended use." Due to the duration and number of operations, the proposals do not meet the definition of "temporary airport" in § 330.27(7), F.S., "any airport that will be used for a period of less than	Thank you for your input. With the exception of fixed wing landing activity at Blackwater Airstrip FWALS activity has been removed from the Proposed Action throughout the document. The Air Force will take the interests protected by the statute identified in the comment into consideration. Requested changes in the name of Munson Airfield have also been made throughout the document.

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	30 days with no more than 10 operations per day." - Airport site approval will be required from the FDOT under § 330.30(1)(a), F.S., "the owner or lessee of any proposed airport shall, prior to site acquisition or construction or establishment of the proposed airport, obtain approval of the airport site from the department." Site approval will be granted if the proposal satisfies the following criteria: - - Adequate area has been allocated for the airport. - - The proposed airport will conform to all registration requirements and will also comply with all applicable local regulations or zoning requirements. - - Airports, local governments and property owners affected by the proposal have all been notified and their submitted comments have been given adequate consideration. - - Safe aircraft traffic patterns can be established at the proposed airport with all existing airports and also all approved future airport sites in the vicinity of the proposed airport. - The proposals will require registration under § 330.30(2)(a), F.S., "the owner or lessee of any airport in the state shall have either a public airport license or private airport registration prior to the operation of aircraft to or from the facility." - Please also note that the facility identified as Munson Airfield and Munson Airstrip in the Draft EIS is actually named Blackwater Airfield. Blackwater Airfield is a private-use facility and not a public-use facility as indicated in the EIS. For further information, please contact Ms. Alice Lammert, FDOT Private Airport and Finance Manager, at [REDACTED PERSONAL INFORMATION].	
A_017-R1	In March 2014, Eglin AFB environmental staff informed the SHPO of its intention to enter in to a Programmatic Agreement (PA) to address effects to historic properties under Section 106. We provided comments on the PA proposal, and on the General Operational Constraints in Section 2.5 of the Draft EIS in May 2014 (enclosure). In regard to the April 2014 Draft EIS, it remains the opinion of the SHPO that GRASI operations have the potential to adversely impact recorded and unrecorded cultural resources. The draft notes that previous archaeological surveys conducted in the state forests may not be sufficient for the purposes of NEPA scoping or the identification of historic properties under Section 106, NHPA, and our office agrees that further identification and avoidance/minimization efforts are needed to avoid adverse effects/impacts to historic/cultural resources.	Thank you for your comment. The Air Force has coordinated with the SHPO on the development of the Programmatic Agreement to support the Proposed Action. The signed Programmatic Agreement is provided in Appendix C of this Final EIS. The Programmatic Agreement stipulates the actions that Eglin AFB will take to ensure the protection of cultural resources in conjunction with the implementation of training activities. The Air Force will continue to work with the SHPO in the future to address cultural resources concerns related to the project to avoid adverse effects where possible.

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A_020-R1	A lot of what has been said from the military that these talks started back in 2008, and if Franklin County and its residents had been contacted back in 2008 on how we felt then, we could have told the people then, and y'all would have saved a lot of time, and a lot of money, and a lot of people's time, and a lot of money.	As discussed in Section 1.2 of the EIS, the overall GRASI began in 2008 as a result of BRAC planning, with the GRASI Landscape Initiative (GLI) planning beginning in 2012. This EIS focuses on the Landscape Initiative, which is one of twelve strategies/components of the overall GRASI.
A_020-R2	I would ask the Air Force to work with the Florida Forest Service, and get Blackwater because that's what y'all really need, and I would just leave Tate's Hell to ourselves because I sure do hate to see anything messed up, because once you mess it up, you can't get it back.	The Air Force appreciates your input as part of the NEPA process. It should be noted that the Air Force has proposed a reduced-scale subalternative that decreases the frequency, intensity, and geographic scope of training activities to be more compatible with the landscape. The Air Force will continue to work with the FFS and public to identify compatible training activities.
A_022-R1	"No Comment" [sent] from the NPS to the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance.	The Air Force appreciates your input as part of the NEPA process.
I_003-R1	I am totally against the thought of the USAF training to take place on Stop Camp road area. I accepted orders and moved into Florida because when I was attending school at NASP I enjoyed the fishing on the peers by NASP port ops and since 9-11 the area has been fenced off due to Security reasons, we as US citizens lost our freedom to fish freely and are put behind fences. Now the USAF is wanting to take over the very spot I have hunted on since 2003! I enjoy the hunting and safety of being in the stop camp area as it is very productive and SAFE. I am a disabled vet who cannot venture for long hauls and the USAF is taking away a piece of public land that I value as being sacred. I have taken my grandkids in there for years and we enjoy the memories and time shared together in that very area. Thanks again for taking away my FREEDOM to hunt as a retired US Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer! I stood the watch to hunt freely in the free country which I defended and now my fellow service is punching me in the eye! This is 100 percent unsatisfactory!	The Air Force appreciates your concerns regarding use of the STOP Camp. Air Force utilization of the STOP Camp area will be subject to approval by the Florida Forest Service through a permitting/leasing process, which will dictate the time and duration of use. To mitigate any potential safety concerns associated with Air Force training at the STOP Camp there may be a safety buffer implemented, similar to what was in place when the STOP Camp was previously occupied. On Eglin AFB, the Air Force does have a program to support disabled hunters. More information is available at Jackson Guard at 850-882-4165.
I_003-R2	I say our roads and traffic is already over populated we don't need more so take the future influx and send it elsewhere!	As discussed in Section 3.13.3 of the EIS, small convoys (5"10 vehicles) may be used to transport troops to/from the training sites; this would not be expected to result in any transportation issues.
I_004-R1	I read the Landscape Initiative Environmental Impact Statement and became quite concerned about the radar emitter part of the training exercises. I looked for the sites but couldn't find the information. We have been told on the news media that we should not get dental x-rays unless it's an emergency because a small dose of dental ray can produce a brain	The radar emitter locations are discussed in Section 2.3.1 of the EIS and shown graphically in Figures 2-3, 2-4, and 2-5. Analysis of potential impacts from radar emitter use is discussed in Sections 3.4.2 and 4.4 of the EIS; as discussed in the analysis, there is little potential for adverse impacts associated with emitter use, with three

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	tumor. I sure don't want radar emitters in our area.	locations having potential safety impacts to on-site Florida Forest Service administrative personnel from the largest of the radar emitters. Mitigations have been identified in the EIS that would eliminate this potential. No other impacts to the general public have been identified.
I_004-R2	Please consider having the exercises placed in one of the huge national forests in the northwestern part of the U.S. where there are large areas without homes etc. The troops could also practice "deployment" exercises in getting there.	The Air Force will continue to evaluate other options for training locations when they are identified and enough information is available to determine compatibility for training activities. The purpose of this EIS is to evaluate the feasibility of GRASI partner lands for possible use in training activities. This does not in any way foreclose the use of other locations being evaluated in the future. With regard to the use of national forests in the northwestern US, these lands do not meet the purpose and need of GRASI as they are too far away to be effectively utilized to support military training in the Gulf region. Section 2.2.1 of the FEIS discusses the fact that locations outside of the 100 to 150 nautical mile geographic range from Eglin AFB/Hurlburt Field would not effectively support the military's training and testing mission.
I_009-R3	I have at times been confused by what seem to be contradictory, certainly inconsistent data, given in the reports and appendices. For example: the mileage on the maps of fixed wing air strips, drawn to scale, shows each at 2,000 feet. The minimum land strip requirement of the C-17 is 3,000 feet and that's with a really nimble pilot. Trainees?	Table 2-5 of the EIS lists the potential aircraft anticipated to be used as part of Light Aviation Proficiency Training (LAPT) that would utilize the landing strips (Fixed Wing Aircraft Landing Sites [FWALS]). The C-17 aircraft are not anticipated to be utilized; however, the C-17 may be utilized for airdrops (see EIS Table 2-8).
I_009-R4	What forest roads are being intersected and therefore will be blocked off when landing strips are being used?	Table 2-5 of the EIS lists the potential aircraft anticipated to be used as part of training activities. With the exception of fixed wing aircraft landings at Blackwater Airfield at BRSF, Light Aviation Proficiency Training (LAPT) and Fixed Wing Aircraft Landing Sites (FWALS) have been removed from the Proposed Action. The C-17 aircraft are not anticipated to be utilized for aircraft landings; however, the C-17 may be utilized for airdrops (see FEIS Table 2-8).
I_009-R5	The report notes only tolerance levels for adults, not children and pregnant moms-to-be -- they are not even included as a protected species.	Impact thresholds identified in the EIS are associated with the public in general and are, where possible, based on established regulatory agency criteria as discussed in the various sections of the EIS. Where specific thresholds have not been established, sound scientific principles were utilized to determine potential impacts. Numerous protections and buffers have been established (as

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		identified in EIS Sections 2.5 and 2.7) to minimize, or preclude altogether, any adverse impacts to the general public, which includes adults and children.
I_009-R6	There are aspects of the report which are irrelevant. A good example is the issue of noise. I did read that section and tried to understand decibels, frequency and intensity. And I downloaded additional information from neutral sources on sound and noise to try to fully understand the case being made. After having spent two days wracking my brain, feeling somehow that the issue was not being addressed, it occurred to me that you are not using the threshold of sounds in a wilderness where there is no encroachment of motorized noise, whether vehicular, aircraft, or home appliances, but only the sounds of a natural ecosystem. One can measure the decibels, and the frequency may be calculated and the intensity may be calculatable, but the quantitative results cannot reflect the ambiance of a natural system. The sound, for instance, of spring peepers at night, does not disrupt sleep; waking at camp to the very loud and incessant chirping of the tiny wren cannot be compared to the din of a helicopter overhead. I have experience both, the latter while camping on the Blackwater River in Blackwater River State Forest. Decibels, frequency and intensity using the natural world as base line would show a totally different temp of sounds. Yet, even the loud hoots of barred owls in conversation, is not noise -- these are the night sounds of the forest and, for those who understand it, it can actually lull you to sleep. The decibels of a honey-bee-covered Ogeche Tupelo tree in the spring may rank as equivalent to a dishwasher. The timbre and rising and falling of volune of bees buzzing make it compatible with the total outdoor experience; the sound of a dishwasher would be jarring. No amount of measured decibels of aircraft noise in the many tables in this section can make a convincing case if your assumptions are faulty -- noise is unwanted sound and any motorized sound, whether once every 3rd day for an hour, or the const put-put-put of expendables (and the buffer zones are not sufficiently wide sound-free zones) is not welcome to someone who has gone into the forest to recreate. The noise buffer zones are token -- noise will still be disruptive. Noise generated from air operations are only protected within a narrow range -- a spare .67 miles for no overflight below 500 feet, not enough buffer to quell the cries of a frightened child.	The commenter is correct that an EIS document cannot fully convey the experience of either a natural soundscape or of military training. The EIS does, however, acknowledge that military training noise could be disruptive to users of the state forest and quantifies the intensity of the disruption to the extent practicable. Noise impacts are discussed in terms of noise intensity, duration, and frequency of occurrence. As discussed in Sections 3.3.1, 5.3.2, and 6.3.2, calculations of long-term, time-averaged noise levels were carried out using conservative (i.e., "high-end") estimates of the frequency of noise events. Ambient sound levels in the state forests are discussed in Sections 3.3.3, 5.3.1, and 6.3.1. As is acknowledged in the EIS, adoption of buffer distances would reduce the likelihood and intensity of noise disruptions but would not eliminate them completely.

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I_009-R9	And somebody, in all that attempt to quantify the sensory experience, forgot smell. Tell me about the smell of petroleum fumes. Tell me it doesn't overcome the sweet, demure fragrance of a native pinxter azalea which covers some of the creeks in spring. Tell me about the swamp roses and how their fragrance envelops their areas of the swamps, the swamp titi, the blackberries (except for the food it would be for foraging troop). Tell me about the smell of green leaves and plants after a rainfall. Tell me about the smell of expendable, of smoke grenades, of jet fuel borne on the wind by the swift rotors of waiting helicopters. How do you mitigate smell?	The Air Force recognizes the commenter's concerns regarding unsatisfactory olfactory perception, often described as odor; however, it should be noted that odor can be subjectively defined as any unwanted fragrance or aroma. The Air Force recognizes that there may be some odors percieved as unpleasant that occur in conjunction with training activities. Given the subjective nature of olfactory perception, however, very little can be done to mitigate adverse impacts perceived by individuals. Given the short duration and localized nature of any odors generated by proposed activities, the Air Force does not believe any mitigations are necessary.
I_009-R10	The native plants noted above, all but of that ecosystem, are not protected. Neither does the report note the endemic Cow Creek Spider lily, which grows only in a small area in the wetlands of Franklin, Liberty and Wakulla county. This is not protected. The green fly orchid, the only tree orchid in north Florida. Not protected.	Thank you for your comment. The report focuses on those species with a federal or state protection status. Representative non-status plants and wildlife are generally described. To keep apprised of status changes, the Air Force would coordinate annually with the FFS, USFWS and FWC and update maps with known locations of protected species so they may be avoided.
I_009-R11	The report mentions stream health and notes the mercury pollution of Crooked river. Do you know the cause? Unexploded ordnance from WWII when that area of Tate's Hell was a mortar testing ground. Mitigation? From the report's own tables, consumption of fish in Crooked River is not recommended.	The exact cause of mercury pollution within the Crooked River is unknown. However, it is not within the purview of this action to mitigate existing contamination or previous actions not within the scope of the proposed GLI.
I_009-R12	The GRASI EIS on troop handling of its own waste -- no mention of a 200 foot zone from water. In Tate's Hell the primitive camp sites are on higher ground. Are these going to be where troops defecate? If you have soldiers traveling in the forest, who gets to carry the disposable john pack? Tate's Hell State Forest follows a pack it in, pack it out policy. The report doesn't mention depth of cat hole. Deeper than 6 inches I hope. In the wetlands, everything goes into the creeks and then to East Bay and then to the Apalachicola or down the eastern creeks to Ochlockonee Bay. More bacterial pollution is more than we want for the oyster industry. Cholera, anyone? Pack it in, pack it out is not practiced on the Eglin Reservation. A canoe club twice yearly holds a cleanup at the Eglin AFB river and creek landings. The trash they pick up is substantial, not pretty, nor smell pretty. Somewhere the report called for troops to self police. Are they really serious about that? How real a scenario is that if you are trying to simulate a real situation? And the statement "we will police" the pickup of	As the EIS currently states, units would use chemical latrines for human waste disposal whenever possible during field training missions. These toilets are self-contained in that they have a holding tank with chemical additives to aid in decomposition of the waste and for odor control. The contents would be pumped out as required for disposal in a conventional sanitary waste water system. When chemical latrines are not available, a cat-hole latrine or saddle trench latrine would be used in accordance with service command directives. These must be constructed to prevent the contamination of food and water. They would be located at least 100 feet from any unit groundwater source. For further protection, latrines would not be dug to the groundwater level or in places where pit contents may drain into the water source. Members of the military will be instructed to avoid recreational areas and stay at least 200ft from streams, lakes and surface waters when going to the bathroom.

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	expendables, over 3/4 million a year. What does "we will police" mean.	Finally, please see Comment Response A_016-R6 regarding expendables.
I_011-R2	The EIS identifies multiple airstrip options in both Blackwater River State Forest and Tate's Hell State Forest. 8FD3 far exceeds the necessary parameters needed to meet the intended USAF realistic training of operators; it being very long and very wide.	Although 8FD3 exceeds the requirements, the airstrip is still a good training tool for "unimproved" landing strip training activities. Therefore, this location is still being considering for training activities. However, as stated in the EIS, training activities would be coordinated with the Florida Forest Service to ensure compatibility with other users.
I_011-R3	The noise signatures of USAF aircraft using 8FD3 would negatively impact the existing Krul Campgrounds #1 and #2 located adjacent to the airfield.	The EIS acknowledges that noise events, including those at 8FD3, would generate noise that could be disruptive and annoying. As stated in Section 5.3.2.1, U.S. Air Force aircraft would arrive from the north to the airstrip and depart to the north to minimize noise impacts to the Krul campgrounds.
I_012-R6	The prudent thing to do an any situation though is to pick up the phone and speak with the ranger that cares for the land and the people at Krul Lake/8FD3 every day. This is the current protocol for the use of 8FD3, that I am sure you are already aware of. The ranger will be happy to let you know when there is nobody there and it is safe to do your thing. This way nobody ends up in the news after an accident that happened during an exercise on top of a public campground. I expect nothing but the best from my USAF!	As discussed in Section 2.5, General Operational Constraint 3(b) of the EIS, the Air Force would schedule use of permitted areas with the Florida Forest Service to ensure there are no conflicts with previously scheduled users or recreational activities.
I_014-R1	Eglin. Largest land owner in Northwest Florida. Why do you want more and more?	There is no intent to acquire more land--the Proposed Action is to use the state forests through a permit/lease agreement with the Florida Forest Service. As discussed in Section 1.4 of the EIS, the Proposed Action is needed because there is a projected regional shortfall of military training and testing land and airspace in the GRASI region. The demand for the land range and use of the restricted area over the Eglin Range creates scheduling conflicts for nonhazardous training. Obtaining the necessary permits to use new areas for nonhazardous training and placing training emitters in remote locations would create flexibility, improving training outcomes through better scheduling and reducing the competing demands on the restricted area. Eglin AFB's primary mission is test and evaluation, and training activities sometimes have a lower priority. From time to time, training units are unable to obtain the necessary time on the range or in the restricted area to complete their requirements. As a result, the Air Force needs additional flexibility in

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		the GRASI region to accommodate the increasing levels of testing and training activity required by the current mission. More specifically, additional flexibility for training activities outside Eglin AFB would allow test and training units to accomplish their missions when time on the range or in the restricted area is not available. As a result, the Air Force needs additional land areas in the GRASI region to accommodate the increasing levels of testing and training activity required by the current mission.
I_014-R2	You must realize that opening the door will lead to more and more intrusion into public/private land issues. With the amount of area that Eglin has, surely this mission can be included into the present format. Where is the EPA when they should be doing their job?	The 96TW manages the Eglin range to optimally schedule training and test activities. When testing activities for new aircraft and weapons systems occur, hundreds of thousands of acres of Eglin's range must be closed for other training uses. Eglin AFB balances these training and testing mission requirements utilizing a robust prioritization and scheduling process. This process allows Eglin to meet the demands for those activities the range has the capacity to support. It is when the requested activities exceed the ranges capabilities and capacity that additional training space must be made available in order to meet those demands for compatible non-hazardous mission activities. As stated in Chapter 1 of the EIS, the Proposed Action is designed to provide an outlet for training only when the existing range space cannot accommodate training needs. Additional information regarding the need for additional capacity has been added to Section 1.4 of the Final EIS. The EPA is aware of and has commented on the Draft EIS. The Air Force has made additional adjustments to Section 1.5 of the Final EIS to further clarify the decision making process with regard to the Proposed Action and alternatives.
I_017-R1	Comments concerning Emitter Site establishment on BRSF; What duration of time is equipment most likely to be installed at an Emitter Site? What actions are taken by Air Force personnel towards the forest user that comes upon the Emitter Site in operation? . . . Will transportation of Emitter equipment be upon established forest roads? Will Emitter Site operations restrict or close forest roads in or near site location? When in operation; what is the operational noise levels in decibels (db)? Will information be provided in brochures concerning Emitter use in forest for visitors to forest who are from outside local area? Like from the local Forest Service office.	Section 2.3.1 of the Final EIS states that emitter sites may be in use for a single day (mobile use) or for several days (possibly 3 to 4 days for temporary use). The emitter sites would be fenced; therefore, the public would not be able to access an emitter site (or the safety area) and no action would need to be taken. Emitters would be transported on established roadways. Emitter operations would not require closure of any roadways. The noise associated with emitter use is discussed in Section 3.3.2 of the EIS. There is no proposed emitter use in the state forests (per EIS Section 2.3.2).

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I_017-R2	Comments concerning Emitter Site establishment on BRSF; . . .Hazardous radiation effects to personnel and or electrical/electronic equipment emitted from site (in feet if possible)?	Section 3.4.2 of the EIS provides safety hazard distances for emitters, in feet, and discusses potential impacts from electromagnetic radiation exposure. Section 4.4.2 addresses potential site-specific safety impacts from emitter sites, and Section 4.4.4 identifies mitigations that would be implemented to avoid any potential adverse impacts.
I_018-R1	What actions are military personnel to take when encounters with forest users occur? In a situation where military personnel are working in a forest area that is also being used by the public; which party would have priority as to forest use? BRSF maintains miles of hiking trail, what distance if any are military sites located from designated hiking trails? Trail question is important due to fact trails are used by many individuals hiking alone. Would military unit identify themselves to relieve tension in a situation where a hiker is encountered? What will be the buffer zone for operations involving paint ball devices from roadways, campsites and hiking trails? BRSF forest roads are mostly one tracks (one vehicle width), if forest user approached military vehicles on road, will military give way to forest user?	As stated in EIS Section 2.5 Operational Constraint 4(c) all personnel would be briefed on environmental restrictions and safety procedures prior to training activities. The intent/objective of most of the training activities outside use of roadways or helicopter landing zones (HLZs) within the forest is to remain unseen/unnoticed, as these are mostly special forces troops. Training activities within the forest outside of established roadways or HLZs would typically avoid designated trails and always avoid recreational sites. Training would mainly occur in small forest management units in order to minimize interference with other users. Additional language to Section 2.5, Operations Constraint 3(i) has been added providing examples of how the Air Force would coordinate with the FFS to make the public and recreators aware of when and where training activities would occur prior to the activity. Personnel would avoid contact with the public to the extent possible. However, should there be an encounter military personnel would identify themselves and then suspend training activities and move away from the area, yielding to the public user. On roadways and vehicle trails military personnel would yield to the public. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.4 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area

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		are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections. This reduced-scale subalternative will reduce potential encounters with the public during training activities.
I_019-R1	What is the buffer, in feet, for military operations in BRSF that occur near privately owned lands that share property lines with or are surrounded by state forest?	There are several different buffers, depending on the training activity and potential impact. All buffers are described in Final EIS Tables 2-24 and 2-25 and shown graphically in Final EIS Figures 5-1 through 5-20.
I_020-R1	Something to consider to improve public relation with forest users is possible utilization of Air Force Red Horse Squadrons to train on BRSF at selected times. The direct result of the squadron's training would benefit the forest users through completed projects like forest road grading.	RED HORSE training activities are outside the scope of the GLI Proposed Action and therefore not addressed in this EIS. In the event that RED HORSE training opportunities are identified they would be evaluated and implemented in accordance with applicable regulations.
I_021-R1	Hello and thank you for allowing for comments and concerns from the folks that live in and ride in the area. I would like to request that you expand your restricted area. There are a lot of us that have used the trails in the Blackwater River State Forest for many, many years. Please consider no use of expendables or hovering aircraft in TA-5, or horse trail portions of TA-6." We have to say something to get our voices heard. Thank you for your time.	In response to public input, activity buffers would be established around known horse trails and stable areas and have been included in Section 2.5 of the FEIS. Furthermore, to assist in deconflicting recreational and military use, the Air Force has generated a reduced-scale training subalternative that decreases the frequency, intensity, and geographic scope of training activities to be more compatible with the landscape. The use of paintballs and smoke grenades has been restricted to the STOP Camp and the SRYA facilities. By restricting the use of expendable munitions to these sites and by placing buffers around recreational horse trails to exclude training activities as part of a reduced-scale training subalternative, the Air Force has sought to minimize any conflicts in land use and safety risks. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections. It should be noted that recreational horseback riding is allowed on the Eglin Range, where military training occurs daily. Eglin AFB personnel have no documented instances of training operations scaring or spooking horses. The Air Force has made additional adjustments to Section 1.5 of the Final EIS to further clarify the decision making process with regard to the Proposed Action and alternatives.
I_022-R2	We will be kept awake at night with noise from aircraft. Our pets and livestock will be frightened.	The Proposed Action includes restrictions on flying that would limit noise impacts on known noise-sensitive locations, such as land

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		parcels with at least one residence. As stated in EIS Section 2.7, noise-sensitive locations would be overflown at not less than 500 feet above ground level (AGL) by aircraft involved in GLI training, and HLZ/DZs would not be established within 2,200 feet of these locations. However, as noted in Section 5.3.2.1, operations noise, whether it is generated by direct overflight or training at a distance, could be disruptive of activities, including sleeping. Potential impacts to animals are discussed in Section 3.8.3 of the Draft EIS. Aircraft training would occur over a very large area, and any given location would be expected to be overflown relatively infrequently.
I_022-R3	We will have unsightly emitter towers. Our property value will decline. We, nor anyone else, will want to live in what is now considered a very desirable area.	As discussed in Section 2.3.1 of the EIS, the proposed emitters are mobile and relatively small (hauled by truck and trailer); no towers would be installed. Utilization would be temporary--most emitters would be utilized at a few of the 12 proposed sites at any one time and only for a short duration (a few days at most), after which the emitters would be removed and returned to Eglin AFB. Due to the temporary nature of the emitters, the Air Force does not anticipate any impacts to adjacent property values.
I_025-R1	In August 2013, nearly 21,000 acres of conservation land was "acquired" to buffer Eglin's east boundary from future development, in part, due to an award from the Department of Defense 2013 Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program Challenge. The land purchase, approved by Governor Rick Scott and the Florida Cabinet Aug. 20, marks the LARGEST LAND ACQUISITION EFFORT IN THE HISTORY of the DOD's REPI Program. If they just acquired this " why can't they train with the forces there.	Department of Defense review of the REPI easement provisions indicates that this 21,000 acres of conservation land cannot be used for training activities.
I_028-R1	C'mon guys, you don't already have enough acreage?	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_031-R1	Blackwater State Forest provides a protected habitat for wildlife and a valuable recreational resource for the citizens of Northwest Florida. I do not want to see helicopters hovering, smoke bombs exploding nor paintball warfare in this normally quiet and pristine environment. I use the forest for cycling, hiking, kayaking, camping and other outdoor activities that these proposed training activities will interfere with as we'll has harming the flora and fauna of the forest. You need to improve the scheduling of training activities at Eglin A F B and stay out of our state forests.	In response to public input, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and

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		recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections. With regard to the comment about scheduling, please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_034-R1	I am appalled that you want to use Blackwater River State Forest for military training! First of all, Eglin already controls a huge amount of land in north Florida. Better management of what you have should be adequate. Make what you already own work.	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_034-R2	Secondly, the forest is for public use and for wildlife, not military games. It should not be closed for military activity. Ordinary people have little enough space today to interact with nature.	As discussed in Section 3.10.3 of the EIS, no recreational sites would be closed. While the quality of the recreational experience may be somewhat diminished by noise impacts, this would not preclude recreational use or cause general incompatibility, and impacts would be short term. Additionally, conflicts with hunters would not occur because training activities would be restricted in the daytime during hunting season. Overall, there would be some small-scale, temporary public access restrictions to specific training locations while training occurs. In response to input during the public/agency DEIS review process the FWALS activity (with the exception of Blackwater Airfield) has been removed from the Proposed Action. However, some temporary road segment closures would result during Blackout Driving (BD). However, this would not negatively impact overall land use because this would only occur on small segments of roadway and would be short term in nature; access would resume once training activities have ceased. These segment closures would not affect access to all parts of the forests because there are sufficient roadways available to go around the closed segments. Access to HLZ/DZ locations would also be temporarily restricted while training activities occur; however, there would only be a few active HLZs/DZs at any given time, and use would be infrequent. Any closures would be of small areas or road segments that make up a minute percentage of the entire forested area.
I_034-R3	Thirdly, there is no way in this world that the noise and activity you propose won't impact the environment and wildlife. Any "study" that says otherwise	Thank you for your comment. The conclusion of the EIS with regard to noise and activity was "no significant adverse impact" to the

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	is a blatant lie and misdirection skewed toward the outcome the military wants. Vehicles, paintballs, digging, loud noises are all disruptive to the wildlife. Filling back in a hole and covering it with grass to make it look like you weren't there doesn't change the fact that you negatively impacted the land and animals. DO NOT TAKE THE FOREST!!!!!	environment and wildlife, but we do agree that impacts would occur. The EIS describes the anticipated impacts in terms of intensity and duration and recommends mitigations for those that would be of medium to high intensity with an adverse outcome.
I_037-R1	As retired Air Force members, both my wife and I understand the need for diverse and realistic training. However, contrary to what is being advertised, the training projected for Blackwater River State Forest can be accomplished elsewhere. There are several locations throughout the US where this training currently and historically takes place by the Air Force and all other services. These locations are specifically set aside for military training--much like the BRSF is set aside for public use. Training in the BRSF seems to violate the purpose of setting aside areas to be used for the public. ... Again, as a retired AFSOC member, I understand the need for training. But this infringement on civilian usage of THEIR land is simply not needed, nor is it right. We are taking advantage of the local population's generous support to our military and it is as unfair as it is unnecessary. I foresee a backlash in the future that could have and should have been avoided.	Thank you for your comment. The Air Force is sensitive to the fact that BRSF and THSF are used by many residents and non-residents alike for recreational purposes. As discussed in Sections 1.2 through 1.4 of the EIS, the purpose of the Proposed Action is to develop auxiliary training capacity for nonhazardous training activities within the GRASI region for users of Eglin AFB, FL. The GRASI EIS is a process whereby different locations are being evaluated for their capacity to support training. The Air Force is continuing to evaluate other locations to support its non-hazardous training requirements. Due to the nature of recreational use of the State Forests locations, the Air Force has structured a "reduced-scale" training sub-alternative that is more compatible with recreational use and will limit conflicts with recreational users. This subalternative reduces the geographic scope of actions, limits locations for munitions producing activities, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and will not allow cross-country maneuvers. Thank you for your service and your input.
I_037-R2	Training in the BRSF seems to violate the purpose of setting aside areas to be used for the public. And in this case, I believe it also creates a safety issue. BRSF has equestrian camping, facilities, and several miles of horse trails that are used for pleasure riders as well as local, state, and regional events that have horses and riders scattered throughout the forest. It is a wonderful public service and one that draws people from all over the Southeastern US several times per year. But to place those riders in situations where the sounds, vehicles, and activities of military training take place puts those riders at risk. I realize the DoD expects to place some areas off-limits to protect people such as these riders (which itself is an impingement), but I don't believe it is so easy to completely mark off areas of forest, even assuming everyone traveled only by trail. Also, smoke and sound are not so easily contained by a few signs or flagging tape. And I know aircraft will not be limited to those areas. The first time a rider is	Please see Comment Response I_021-R1.

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	injured because his or her horse was frightened by a low flying aircraft traveling to or from one of the training sites will, at the very least, create extremely bad press for the Air Force and Forest Service. Placing the entire forest off-limits during these events goes against what has been stated to this point about only causing minimal disruption.	
I_039-R1	As a resident of Franklin County and a concerned citizen, I am offended and appalled that the Air Force has stated that their intended use of Tate's Hell State Forest is not expected to result in any significant adverse cumulative impacts. Considering just one of the sections of the EIS would make it obvious that the tranquility of the state forest environment would be significantly adversely impacted for all users except the military. ES.4.1.2.3 Use of Expendables (UoEX) involves use of various training munitions and pyrotechnics, including simulated munitions (consisting of plastic pellets or paintballs, and smoke grenades during training activities. At Tate's Hell State Forest, noise-generating expendables could be used anywhere. 5.56-millimeter blank - 576,000 Est. Max Quantity Per Year - Estimated Average per Event ~10,000 7.62-millimeter blank - 196,200 " " ~8,000 Ground Burst Simulators - 5,172 " " ~2 to 5 M-18 smoke grenades - 4,038 " " ~2 to 5 Paintballs/plastic pellets - 50,000 " " ~5,000 It would seem obvious to anyone considering the nature of such munitions and pyrotechnics, that it would not be possible to clean up the fragments and residue left on the ground, vegetation, and water.	Please see Comment Response A_016-R6
I_040-R1	The EIS does not address the impacts of the recreational facilities. Most specifically Coldwater Horse camping facilities and horse trails. We, the citizens of NWFL, have spent decades supporting BSF and building the Coldwater Horse facilities. Horse camping and riding trails require absolute tranquility to lower the risk of the horse and more importantly the rider. Any military activity within sight or sound of any horse & rider may cause horse to spook, unseat the rider, and cause serious injury and/or death of the rider. Blackwater State forest, including Coldwater Horse facility, in the only sancuary available to NWFL citizens. I vote for the NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE! I am 6th generation floridan born and raised here in Pensacola. My father is retired military. My career included contract work for DOD for over 20 years. I live across the street from the DOD Navy helicoter touch & go air strip in Pace fL. As a NWFL Resident I can speak for our community. To live in NWFL means we support our military. It is	Please see Comment Response I_021-R1.

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	who we are! But we draw the line at invading our recreational areas that are set aside for our public use. Blackwater State forest is our ONLY sancuary available in the NWFL area. BSF is our Only Resource available to enjoy the outdoors. BSF is currently an untouched Resource that allows the public to enjoy "Our Florida". A precious resource that is the only one of it's kind. BSF belongs to "US", the citizens and generations of florida. As a member of the NWFL horse community we have worked for decades to ensure the beauty and tranquility of our BSF including the Coldwater Recreational facilities, horse stables, campi grounds, and horse trails. 100% tranquility is necessary for the SAFETY of horseback riders. I vote and demand that the military does NOT invade our precious forest. VOTE NO ACTION Alternative!	
I_041-R1	I would like the military to keep on the Base (Eglin) I hunt & fish in Blackwater and we have a hard enough time keeping the deer herd calm where we hunt without military manuveres going on in the middle of our hunting area. We share the woods with many people already hikers, bird watchers, bird hunters. Many of the people who hunted Eglin in years past have already moved down to Blackwater to hunt. This addition will Be too Much Pressure on the deer herd	Training operations can cause short term white-tailed deer behavior changes in localized areas. However, training level increases on Eglin have neither resulted in a reduced deer population nor caused variation in dates and duration of deer breeding activity. Eglin's deer management program has been successful in maintaining sustainable harvest levels compatibly with the military training mission and slight annual increases in hunting permit sales. To assist in deconflicting recreational and military use, the Air Force has generated a reduced-scale training subalternative that will limit the scope of training activities and the geographic extent to which they occur. This subalternative reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_046-R1	Blackwater State forest is for the Public to enjoy we hunt, camp, fish, it's a place to teach your children the values of land. it's not a place to bring your kids to see area's closed to military only, and truck load's of Soiders. if they	Thank you for your comment. The Air Force is sensitive to the fact that BRSF and THSF are used by many residents and non-residents alike for recreational purposes. As discussed in Sections 1.2 through

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	need more land they should close Eglin Air force base to hunting all together. and leave blackwater, and any other state forest alone. if we let this happen this will be the begginning of the end of our State forest as we know it. besides Eglin has 400,000+ Acres Stay on it	1.4 of the EIS, the purpose of the Proposed Action is to develop auxiliary training capacity for nonhazardous training activities within the GRASI region for users of Eglin AFB, FL. Reducing hunting activities at Eglin AFB would not suffice to meet the shortfalls in training and testing land to support regional training needs. The GRASI EIS is a process whereby different locations are being evaluated for their capacity to support training. The Air Force is continuing to evaluate other locations to support its non-hazardous training requirements. Due to the nature of recreational use of the State Forests locations, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections. This is now the Air Forces "Preferred Alternative" as identified in the Final EIS. Thank you for your service and your input.
I_047-R1	Please stay away from Coldwater and Blackwater forest areas. Horses and military training manuevers will be a recipe for injuries, loss of nature, noise pollution, and loss of an amazing recreation area needed for overworked and over stressed, tax paying people to utilize for what it was designed to do " relax and enjoy peace and quiet and Nature.	Please see Comment Response I_021-R1.
I_048-R2	DEIS states that radiation (EMR) emitters with large safety hazard distances will be used. Use will be restricted in close proximity to populated areas. If exposure to human is unsafe, then how unsafe is it for wildlife including endangered species? What are biological effects from radiation (EMR) exposure to Wildlife " e.g. reproductive effects, shortened life span.	Emitters would not be placed near protected species. There would be minimal risk to wildlife, given the lack of preferential habitat (emitter sites are improved or semi-improved) at emitter sites and transient nature of wildlife movement. Additional information on EMR exposure to wildlife has been added to Final EIS Section 3.8.2.
I_048-R3	Why are vehicle maintenance activities conducted in the forest rather than on-base. These activities generate used oil/ antifreeze, solvents & paints which must be stored & could cause contamints	No vehicle maintenance activities within the state forests are proposed as part of the Proposed Action. EIS Section 2.5, General Operational Constraint 4(g), specifically requires all vehicle

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		maintenance and fueling to be conducted at Eglin AFB or Hurlburt Field prior to deployment for training. However, emergency field maintenance within the state forests may be required if there is a mechanical issue with a vehicle. In such cases, EIS Section 2.5, General Operational Constraints 5(h) and 5(i), would apply to minimize any potential soil or water contamination. Such minimization procedures include use of drip pans and absorbents to capture any oils or other hazardous materials.
I_049-R1	CURRENTLY, BLACKWATER AIRFIELD (8FD3) HAS BEEN OPENED TO LIMITED USE BY LOCAL RECREATIONAL PILOTS THROUGH AN AGREEMENT WITH THE FFS. WILL USAF USAGE OF 8FD3 SHUT OUT GA PILOTS? WILL THE AIRFORCE CREATE AN EXPANSION OF THE RESTRICTED AIRSPACE TO COVER BWSF? EGLIN'S ALREADY EXTENSIVE AND EXPANSIVE RESTRICTED FOOTPRINT IS A HASSLE AND ANNOYANCE TO LOCAL PILOTS. ANY FURTHER EXPANSION WOULD BE UNWELCOME. WILL AIRSPACE USAGE BY ANNOUNCED THROUGH NOTAM? WILL INCREASED TRAFFIC CONFLICT WITH EXISTING NAVY TRAINING OUT OF NSE & NDZ? NAVY AIRCRAFT ALREADY OPERATE IN BUSY AND CONGESTED AIRSPACE SURROUNDING WHITING FIELD.	Please note that due to input received during the public/agency DEIS review process the Air Force has removed the FWALS activity (with the exception of Blackwater Airfield) from the Proposed Action. As stated in Section 2.5, the NOTAM process would be used to notify other aviators of upcoming use of Blackwater Airfield. As stated in Section 5.2.2, the Proposed Action does not involve any creation of or modification to special use airspace (e.g., restricted areas). So long as Visual Meteorological Conditions are present, Air Force aircraft should be able to operate safely at 8FD3 concurrent with general aviation operations using see-and-avoid measures. Training being conducted within restricted area airspace at Eglin Range is hazardous, involving firing of missiles and other activities that would be extremely dangerous to nonparticipating aircraft. The proposed aircraft training is classified as nonhazardous and does not require separation from nonparticipating air traffic. Ongoing Navy air traffic in the area has been considered. Air Force aircraft would use see-and-avoid measures at all times, including times when operating in the Navy Alert Area 292 and areas near Navy installations.
I_054-R2	MY PASTIMES ARE HORSEBACK RIDING AND CAMPING, AND I USE THE BLACKWATER RIVER STATE FOREST ON A VERY REGULAR BASIS. THE AIR FORCE PROPOSAL COULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON MY USE OF THE STATES RESOURCES, AS IT WOULD FOR NUMEROUS PEOPLE I KNOW WITH THE SAME PASTIMES. WHEN YOU FIGURE IN THE GROUPS OF HUNTERS, HIKERS, KAYAKERS & CANOE ENTHUSIASTS, CAMPING FAMILIES, CITIZENS THAT LIVE IN AND AROUND THE FOREST, THERE IS A MAJOR IMPACT TO A LARGE NUMBER OF THE POPULATION OF THE AREA THAT USE THIS FOREST. AND THIS DOESN'T EVEN TAKE INTO	The Air Force recognizes the potential for adverse impacts to recreational users from some aspects of proposed training - these impacts are identified in Chapters 3, 5, and 6. However, implementation of the Operation Constraints identified in Section 2.5 and Mitigations identified in Section 2.7 would serve to minimize the potential for these impacts. Please note that only small portions of the forest would be used in accordance with applicable Florida Forest Service (FFS) management plans, per EIS Section 2.3.2. The goal is to conduct training activities in a compatible manner with existing forest uses and to not preclude use of identified recreational

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	ACCOUNT THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS THAT WILL OCCUR TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE WILDLIFE, SOME THREATENED OR ENDANGERED, THAT LIVE IN AND AROUND THE BLACKWATER RIVER STATE FOREST.	areas or conflict with recreational uses. Ultimately, the FFS would determine through use permits/lease agreements the location, duration, and frequency of training activities permitted in the forests. Additionally, please see Comment Response A_016-R2 regarding buffers around sensitive species. The Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections. The Air Force has made additional adjustments to Section 1.5 of the Final EIS to further clarify the decision making process with regard to the Proposed Action and alternatives.
I_054-R4	I ALSO DO NOT THINK THAT THE JUSTIFICATION OF SCHEDULING CONFLICTS WITH ITS CURRENT PROPERTY IS SOMETHING THAT CANNOT BE RECTIFIED WITH A LITTLE EFFORT AND THE USE OF THE STATE FOREST IS A MATTER OF CONVENIENCE FOR THE AIR FORCE. I STRONGLY REQUEST THAT YOU TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO RECTIFY THE SCHEDULING CONFLICTS WITHIN THE CURRENT EGLIN PROPERTY, AND DO WHAT EVER IS NECESSARY TO TAKE NO ACTION ON THE CURRENT PROPOSAL THAT WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE ENVIRONMENT, WILDLIFE AND ECOSYSTEMS OF THE BLACKWATER RIVER STATE FOREST, AND THAT WOULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT THE LIVES OF THE CITIZENS OF THE AREA!	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_059-R1	Blackwater State Forest is a vital bird habitat, and all species of birds found in this forest should be considered. Any training will disrupt birds, whether they are stopping over during migration or building and maintaing a nest. This forest should be protected for its inhabitants as well as all of the	Additional discussion regarding impacts to migratory birds has been added to Sections 3.8, 5.8, and 6.8. In addition, please see response to Comment I-054-R2

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	people who bike, hike, swim, and camp in this area.	
I_062-R1	Use of the 90,000 acres of privately held land located primarily in Calhoun County for these exercises is a preferred alternative to use of the ecologically sensitive Tate's land. These Calhoun, and adjacent counties, lands have been used since 1999 for Special Operations Training.	As stated in Section 1.3 of the DEIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to utilize state lands for nonhazardous training activities in order to provide additional capacity on Eglin AFB for hazardous testing and training. Section 1.3 has been clarified to identify that the purpose of the Proposed Action is to meet short-term needs. While the proposed area does not meet the existing purpose and need for the Proposed Action in the short term, this area may meet future needs and will be evaluated to determine if the area has capacity to meet long-term training needs.
I_064-R1	THERE IS THOUSANDS OF SQUARE MILES OF COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, INVESTMENT LAND IN NORTH WEST FLORIDA. MUCH OF IT OWNED BY PAPER AND LOGGING COMPANIES. MUCH OF THIS LAND IS LEASED TO HUNTING CLUBS. WHEN THE HUNTING CLUB LEASES ARE UP, WHY DOES THE AIR FORCE, THEN LEASE THESE LANDS FOR THE AIR FORCE'S OPERATIONS. I AM SURE THAT A PAPER COMPANY OR OTHER TYPE OF COMMERCIAL LAND OWNER WERE OFFERED A LITTLE MORE MONEY, THAN A HUNTING CLUB WOULD PAY THAT WOULD BE GOOD BUSINESS PRACTICE TO INCREASE THEIR INCOME, WHILE STILL GROWING TREES FOR LUMBER AND PAPER PRODUCTION. THE AIR FORCE PROBABLY HAVE TO SHARE ROAD MAINTENCE WITH THE LAND OWNER. TREES TAKE DECADES TO GROW, BEFORE THEY CAN BE CUT, SO THE AIR FORCE WOULD HAVE LONG PERIODS TO RESPONSABLY USE THE LAND. IT SEEMS LIKE A WIN WIN SOLUTION FOR EVERY ONE INVOLVED. THE AIR FORCE COULA COULD CONDUCT THEIR OPERATIONS. THE LAND OWNER COULD HAVE MORE INCOME THAN HE OTHERWISE HAVE. THE PEOPLE OF NORTHWEST FLORIDA CAN HAVE THEIR STATE FOREST THAT THEY CAN RECREATE IN. THE ENVIORMENT CAN CONTINUE TO EVOLVE AND ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES OF BIRDS, ANIMALS, & PLANTS WOULD BE PROTECTED. THE FEW HUNTERS FROM THE HUNTING CLUBS ON THAT COMMERCIAL AND CAN THEN GO AND HUNT IN BLACKWATER STATE FOREST, AS IT WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO THEM, V LIKE ALL THE OTHER GROUPS INTERESTED IN THIS ISSUE. MY FATHER AND I BOTH WERE IN THE MILITARY SO	As part of the GRASI process, the Air Force will continue to identify and evaluate viable alternatives to support training. With respect to privately owned timber areas, the purpose of the Proposed Action discussed in Section 1.3 of the EIS is to develop partnerships with existing land-holding agencies, not to lease lands from private entities. These privately owned lands are often not suitable for training due to a lack of variation of terrain and a lack of ability to access large portions of it. As part of the GRASI GLI initiative, the Air Force will continue to look for viable alternatives to partner with agencies to meet regional military needs. Your input is appreciated.

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	WE ARE PRO MILITARY, BUT NOT IN BLACKWATER STATE FOREST, WHICH WAS ORIGINALLY SETUP TO KEEP SOME OF N.W. FLORIDA FROM BEING BUILT UP AND OVERUSED BY "PROGRESS" AND FOR THE COMMON MAN AND WOMAN TO BE ABLE TO GO TO IN THE OUT DOORS AND AWAY FROM URBINIZATION, THAT IS CITY LIFE. THERE ARE NOT MANY PLACES, A PERSON CAN GO FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES; ESPECIALLY IN THE HILLS, UPLAND AREAS, AWAY FROM THE COASTAL AREAS OF N.W. FLORIDA. ALSO TOURISTS COME FROM FAR AWAY TO BIRD WATCH, HIKE THE TRAILS AND SEE THE LAKES	
I_065-R1	1. Executive Summary, Figure ES-1 (page 2) and Figure 1-1 (page A-1). Delete the "Case for Change" and "Vision of Success" boxes on these figures. They contain self-serving statements promoting approval of the initiative through the development of a strategic plan for "this national treasure" that improves "economic prosperity of the region," results in a Northwest Florida region that is "prosperous," and strengthens "relationships among civilian and military interests." These biased statements have no place in an EIS, which is required by the National Environmental Policy Act to include an objective analysis of a proposal. In addition, the "Vision of Success" box states that the initiative "will" (rather than "would") be carried out. This implies that the decision on the draft initiative has already been made by the U.S. Air Force. This is in conflict with the National Environmental Policy Act, which requires analysis of a proposed Federal action before a decision is made. 2. Executive Summary, section ES.3 Decision to Be Made (page 5). Please identify the person (by title and location) who is authorized to make the decision on whether the U.S. Air Force will proceed to apply for permits with the State of Florida to carry out the proposed action. 3. Acronyms and Abbreviations (pages xvi through xxi). These five pages list 235 acronyms and abbreviations used throughout the draft EIS. The use of so many acronyms and abbreviations makes the document virtually unreadable and incomprehensible. This overuse of acronyms and abbreviations causes the EIS to not be in compliance with the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ's) regulation at 40 CFR 1502.8, winch requires the EIS to be written in plain language so that it can be readily understood. To be in compliance with CEQ's regulation, reduce the number of acronyms and abbreviations used.	Please note that these comments are addressing an Executive Summary, which provides only a summary of the information in the entire EIS. Comment 1: These statements support the purpose and need for the overall GRASI action--the GRASI Landscape Initiative (GLI), which this EIS addresses, supports the overall GRASI. No decision has been made regarding the GLI proposal. Comment 2: The decision will be made by the Air Force Deputy Assistant Secretary for Installations (SAF/IEI). Comment 3: Without use of acronyms, the document would be much longer, which would not be in keeping with CEQ requirements of EIS page length. The Air Force feels that the current use of acronyms is appropriate. No change has been made in this regard. Comment 4: A neutral effect is not defined by an impact that is offset by a beneficial impact. It is simply an effect that does not result in either an adverse or beneficial result. A more complete description of the level of impacts is provided in the actual EIS, beginning with Section 3.1. The Air Force feels that the presentation of impact descriptions is adequate and accurate; therefore, no change has been made in this regard. Comment 5: NEPA requires identification of unknown risks; therefore, this statement meets the NEPA requirement. No change has been made in this regard. Comment 6: Please refer to Section 3.1 for a more comprehensive discussion of impact levels and associated descriptions than what is provided in the Executive Summary. Again, the Air Force feels that

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	Consider restricting the use of an acronym or abbreviation to those instances when a term is used more than 20 times. 4. Executive Summary, section ES.5 (pages 22 through 25). The title "Alternative Impact Analysis Summary" does not accurately describe the contents of this section. This section summarizes the impacts of the proposed action, but it does not address impacts of alternatives to the proposed action. Accordingly, the title of this section should be revised to read "Proposed Action Impact Analysis Summary." The paragraph defining "Neutral or No Effect" (page 24, lines 11 through 15) has several problems. * Presumably, a neutral effect would occur when adverse impacts are offset equally by beneficial impacts. If this is so, explain this. If this is not so, explain what constitutes a neutral effect. * The paragraph states that low intensity impacts are "imperceptible." If impacts are truly imperceptible, the U.S. Air Force would never be able to predict that they would occur or document that they occurred. "Imperceptible" effects are not impacts. Low intensity impacts are perceptible. * Low intensity impacts in fact have effects. Equating low intensity impacts with "no effect" is plainly wrong. * Low intensity impacts are a subcategory of insignificant impacts and should be described in the "Insignificant" paragraph (the "Insignificant" bullet starting on page 23, line 38 and ending on page 24, line 10). * The paragraph states that "Resources experiencing neutral or no effects are identified as 'green' in Table ES-24." Replace "neutral or no" with "low intensity, adverse." The discussion of yellow-colored impacts (page 23, line 27) will have to be modified to describe insignificant impacts that are greater than the green-colored impacts. * Mitigation measures have been incorporated into the proposal. Following section ES.7 Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations states that these proposed measures result in the avoidance of impacts or minimization of impacts. With respect to the minimization of impacts, section ES.7 states that in most cases impacts to resources would be minimized such that impact significance levels would be reduced. Thus these impacts would occur, but at a low intensity (i.e., they do not have no effect). 5. Executive Summary, section ES.5 (page 24, lines 31 through 35). This section states that "There are no unknown risks or impacts that may be considered controversial in nature associated with emitter site use or training activities (such actions have been extensively analyzed in this EIS and other Air Force documents as referenced in this EIS), and the	the presentation of impact descriptions is adequate and accurate and, therefore, no change has been made in this regard.

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	Proposed Action is not precedent setting because the DoD utilizes public lands throughout the United States for both emitter sites and military training" (underlining for emphasis added). In the context that it's used, the phrase "unknown risks or impacts" makes no sense, and "unknown" should be deleted. Also, "may be" should be deleted and replace with "are." Consider revising the sentence to read "There are no risks or impacts associated with emitter site use or training activities (such actions have been extensively analyzed in this EIS and other Air Force documents as referenced in this EIS) that are considered controversial in nature. ". 6. Section ES.7, Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations (page 26). This section states that "in most cases impacts would be minimized such that impact significance levels would be reduced from "adverse" (yellow) to "neutral" or "no effect" (green) in Table ES-24." See my comments on Table ES-24 under section ES.5 (a bullet within my comment number 4). Green-colored impacts are low intensity, insignificant, adverse impacts, and yellow-colored impacts arc higher-than-low-intensity, insignificant, adverse impacts.	
I_065-R2	7. Chapter 2, Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives. The draft EIS Force analyzes the environmental consequences of only one alternative to the action proposed by the U.S. Air Force (described in section 2.3). This alternative action is no action (described in section 2.4), which .the CEQ regulation at 40 CFR 1502.14(d) requires to be analyzed. For various reasons, the draft EIS dismisses several other alternatives that it considers unreasonable (section 2.2.4). CEQ's regulation at 40 CFR 1502.14(a) requires the Federal agency preparing the EIS to rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives. Analyzing only the required no action as an alternative to the proposed action is not a rigorous exploration and objective evaluation of all reasonable alternatives. As discussed in CEQ's answer to question No. 2a of the Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ's National Environmental Policy Act Regulations, "[r]easonable alternatives include those that are practical or feasible from the technical and economic standpoint and using common sense, rather than simply desirable from the standpoint of the applicant." The EIS must analyze the following additional, reasonable alternatives. * As analyzed in the draft EIS, the proposed action consists of two components (section 2.1, page 2-1): establishment and use of emitter	The Air Force will continue to identify and evaluate viable alternatives to support training in accordance with the GRASI GLI process that is defined in Section 1.2. At the time of publication of the Draft EIS, no additional partner organizations had yet agreed to support the Air Force or military training. The Air Force has and continues to investigate other potential partnerships to develop more alternatives to meet regional training needs. In response to public comments, the Air Force has included the evaluation of a subalternative to implement "reduced-scale" training and make training more compatible with the recreational uses of BRSF and THSF. The subalternative reduces the frequency, intensity and geographic scope of proposed training activities, and limits use of expendable munitions, cross-country vehicle and ground maneuvering activities. In response to the issue of alternatives structure, the Air Force has evaluated the impacts of BRSF and THSF separately, so that a decision-maker can review the impacts of training at each proposed location and determine whether or not to pursue training. The same training activities are not being proposed at each location, however, and the locations do not meet the same training requirements. The

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	training sites on Gulf Regional Air Space Initiative partner lands (hereinafter referred to as component A) and applying to the Florida Forest Service and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to be a permitted user of the northwest Florida state forests for nonhazardous training activities (component B). To broaden the range of alternatives and to give the Air Force decisionmaker the flexibility to pursue one but not both of the components (as required by 40 CFR 1505.1(e)), the EIS must include not only the proposal for pursing both components A and B (as analyzed in the draft EIS) but also the alternative for pursuing component A but not component B and the alternative for pursuing component B but not component A. * Section 2.2.4 (bullet E, page 2-4) states that the U.S. Air Force considered analyzing the impacts of using each state forest individually for training exercises rather than the proposed use of both forests. It states that it rejected this consideration because "one forest alone would not support the purpose and need of the Proposed Action." The all-ornone rationale (the proposed action or no action (no training activities off Eglin Air Force Base)) is faulty, because training on one forest certainly alleviates some of the problems with scheduling and conducting testing activities on the base. To broaden the range of alternatives and to give the Air Force decisionmaker the flexibility to pursue training on either of the forests (as required by 40 CFR 1505.1 (e)), the EIS must include not only the proposal for pursuing training on both forests (as analyzed in the draft EIS) but also an alternative for each forest individually. * Section 2.2.4 does not indicate that the Eglin Air Force Base tried to use other military bases for training exercises. Figure 2-2 (page 2-3) shows that Tyndall Air Force Base, Fort Rucker, and Fort Benning are within 150 nautical flight miles from Eglin Air Force Base, which is one of the selection criteria for training sites. The EIS must consider these military bases as alternative sites for training activities and analyze their suitability using the selection criteria discussed in section 2.2.1. Bureaucratic impediments (e.g., the possibility of the U.S. Army not wanting to accommodate the U.S. Air Force, a sister agency within the Department of Defense, in using the army bases) are not valid reasons for not rigorously exploring this as a reasonable alternative. The CEQ regulation at 40 CFR 1502.14(c) requires reasonable alternatives not within the jurisdiction of the lead agency to be analyzed. In applying this regulation to the Gulf Regional Airspace	Air Force does not believe that each site should be evaluated as a separate alternative as both sites are required to meet the Purpose and Need of providing additional regional training capacity. The same is true of the evaluting emitter sites separately from training alternatives. Ultimately however, because the Air Force has evaluated environmental impacts to the state forests, training activities, and emitter sites discreetly, Air Force decision-makers can understand the different impacts, mitigation requirements, and public concerns to support future decisions for implementing these different components of the Proposed Action. The Air Force may then elect to only implement certain components of the Proposed Action in certain locations, pending Florida Forest Service approval. The Air Force has made additional adjustments to Section 1.5 of the Final EIS to further clarify the decision making process with regard to the Proposed Action and alternatives.

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	Strategic Initiative, the EIS must consider as possible reasonable alternatives the use of U.S. Army military bases not under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Air Force but under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense. 8. Figure 2-2 (page A-4). Figure 2-2 shows rings extending 100 nautical flight miles (NM) from Hurlburt Field, 120 NM from Hurlburt Field, 120 NM from Eglin Air Force Base, and 150 NM from Eglin Air Force Base. According to section 2.2.1 (page 2-1), one of the selection criteria for conducting nonhazardous operations off the Eglin Range is training sites must be located within a 1-hour flight time (150 NM) from Eglin Air Force Base/Hurlburt Field to allow for day-trip training missions. Of the four nautical flight mile rings shown on Figure 2-2, only the 150 NM ring is pertinent to the selection of training sites. To alleviate the confusion that the other three rings cause, they should be eliminated from Figure 2-2. 9. Section 2.3.2, term of permit or lease for proposed activities. The description of the proposed action does not state what permit or lease period the U.S. Air Force will seek. With respect to the emitter-sites component of the proposal, the draft EIS only states that "Emitter training sites identified would utilize FFS and FWC lands via leasing agreements" (page 2-6, line 1). With respect to the training-activities-on-State-forest component of the proposal, the draft EIS only states that a Landscape Implementation Team and a Gulf Landscape Initiative Liaison would coordinate with the Florida Forest Service to develop leases and agreements (page 2-9, line 6). Statements are made that "The significance of impacts was determined by evaluating the context, intensity, and duration of the action" (page 22, lines 27 and 28; page 2-36, lines 25 through 27). Impacts do need to be assessed taking into consideration the duration of the action, but the draft EIS does not do this because it does not assess the effects of the proposed project over the total number of years that the permit or lease would run. Effects of a single use of an emitter station or a single training exercise might not be significant, but the cumulative effects of multiple emitter station exercises or multiple training exercises over the entire life of the permit or lease could be significant. (See below my related comments on cumulative impacts.) In order to adequately assess the environmental impacts of the proposed action, the U.S. Air Force must state the term of the permit or lease that it will seek and analyze the impacts for this time period. If the length of the permit or	

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	lease term is uncertain, then the U.S. Force for the purpose of impact analysis must pick a reasonable term for the permit or lease (e.g., 10 years) and analyze the impacts that would occur during this time period.	
I_065-R3	10. Section 3.3.3, Noise, General Training Activity Impact Assessment. The draft EIS states the following. "USEPA has stated 44 dB and 51 dB as typical DNL noise levels at a farm area and a low-density residential area, respectively (USEPA, 1974). Based on noise levels measured in similar settings, ambient noise levels (i.e., while military training is not under way) at the forests are assumed to be 45 dB DNL" (page 3-16, lines 10 through 13). The analysis of noise impacts has advanced appreciably in the 40 years since the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency published its document in 1974. The draft EIS needs to cite a recent authoritative source. The draft EIS underestimates baseline levels for noise at Tate's Hell State Forest. Rather than relying on and applying a general noise baseline guideline to the forest, the U.S. Air Force should collect baseline data at the forest and surrounding areas. Baseline noise levels in the forest are more like a wilderness area than a farm or low-density residential area. If for good reason the U.S. Air Force declines to collect actual baseline noise data, the EIS should assume a baseline noise level for the forest that like a wilderness area (i.e., lower than a farm or low-density residential area). The draft EIS further states the following. "Social surveys suggest that at noise levels below 45 dB day-night average sound level for subsonic noise (DNLmr), less than 1 percent of the affected population can be expected to become highly annoyed, while at 65 dB DNLmr, about 7 percent of the population can be expected to become highly annoyed by the noise." (page 3-16, lines 14 through 17). Provide a reference for the "social surveys." Recreational users of the forest (hikers, hunters, kayakers, etc.) come to the forest to get away from the maddening crowd. They are more sensitive to unnatural noise than the noise levels cited in the draft EIS. 11. Table 3-14 and section 6.3.3, noise impacts. In the draft EIS: Table 3-14 states that "Noise [from aircraft operations] may be annoying to transient users [of the state forests] and permanent residents" (page 3-22). Noise Impact Summary section 6.3.3 states that "Noise associated with aircraft operations and munitions use would result in annoyance to some recreational users and residences" (page 6-13, lines 24 and 25). In the jargon of the EIS, transient users and recreation users of	Noise levels in the state forests are highly variable depending on specific land uses ongoing nearby (e.g., logging, vehicle traffic) and the sounds made by the natural environment. Text has been added to Sections 3.3, 5.3, and 6.3 of the Final EIS stating measured ambient noise levels in a wilderness area and specifically acknowledging that some portions of the state forests are very quiet most of the time. A more detailed discussion of the relationship between DNLmr and the percentage of affected people expected to become highly annoyed can be found in Appendix H, Section H.1.2.4. As discussed in the same section, the reaction of individuals to noise is difficult to predict. The EIS makes use of the DNLmr noise metric as one method of estimating noise levels that are more or less likely to be considered acceptable by residents and users of the forests. Individual overflight noise levels are also provided along with estimates of the frequency of noise event occurrence. The transmission of noise depends on a number of environmental factors specific to a time and place. For those training events that would take place over water (i.e., over water hoist [OHO]) open water noise impedance values (how quickly noise dissipates as it travels across the surface) were used in calculation of noise levels. Potential impacts to recreational users of the forest land and water bodies are discussed in Section 3.10 of the Draft EIS. As noted in Section 6.3.2, areas outside the state forest would occasionally experience aircraft and surface vehicle noise at levels listed in Table 3-9 and Table 3-13 generated by vehicles en route to training in the state forest. Routing to and from the state forest would be variable, such that one location would not be expected to be overflown regularly. There are no plans at this time to use the municipal airport as part of training scenarios on a regular basis. Increased activity and noise would, for the most part, take place in remote portions of the forest. As noted in Section 3.3.3 of the Draft EIS, GLI training would be conducted in preparation for covert missions where the chances of survival and success are maximized by avoiding detection. Aircrews would attempt to avoid

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	the state forests, permanent residents, and residences are "noise receptors." Other noise receptors are recreationists that launch their boats out of Carrabelle just south of the forest and fish in Apalachicola Bay. Sound travels over water farther than it does over land (page 3-19, lines 39 and 40), and offshore sport fishermen would hear aircraft and other noise emanating from exercises at Tate's Hell State Forest. The EIS needs to consider these fishermen as being within the region of influence for the noise analysis. The EIS also needs to analyze the impacts of noise to persons along the path of aircraft flying to Tate's Hell State Forest (including persons in Franklin County not only adjacent to the forest (e.g., Carrabelle) but also Apalachicola, the county seat, to the west of the forest). They are likewise within the region of influence with respect to noise. Apalachicola has the only municipal airport in Franklin County, and aircraft activity and noise is currently very low. Increased activity and noise will be an irritant to county residents and nonresident tourists, who have come to the "Forgotten Coast" for peace and quiet.	overflight of populated areas both out of a desire to be a good neighbor and as part of realistic mission training. Section 3.2 identifies the aero-mapping process for establishing flight approach and departure pathways for HLZ, DZ, and airstrip use which serve to minimize noise impacts to noise receptors.
I_065-R4	12. Section 3.11, Socioeconomics/Environmental Justice. The draft EIS states that "Within the context of this EIS, 'socioeconomic resources' refers to the populations, economic activity, recreation, and tourism associated with the surrounding areas proposed for use" (underlining for emphasis added, page 3-88, lines 6 and 7). This statement needs to be revised to indicate that the socioeconomic resources are those not only in the area of proposed use but also in surrounding areas. 13. Section 3.11.1.1, Regulatory Drivers for Socioeconomics/Environmental Justice. This section states that "There is no applicable regulatory setting for socioeconomics" (page 3-89, line 1). This statement is incorrect. Section 102(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 requires the preparation of an EIS when there is a proposal for a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the "human environment." As defined in the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1508.14: " 'Human environment' " shall be interpreted comprehensively to include the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with that environment. (See the definition of "effects" (Sec. 1508.8).) This means that economic or social effects are not intended by themselves to require preparation of an environmental impact statement. When an environmental impact statement	Comment 12: The statement in Section 3.11 of the Final EIS has been revised to clarify that socioeconomic resources include those within the area for proposed use as well as the surrounding area. Comment 13: Section 3.11.1.1 of the Final EIS has been revised to include description of 40 Code of Federal Regulations 1508.8 and 1508.14. Comment 14-17: Additional text to discuss the potential impacts to the economic value of the forests including human health, ecotourism, and property valuation has been added to Final EIS Sections 3.11, 5.11, 6.11, and 7.11.

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	is prepared and economic or social and natural or physical environmental effects are interrelated, then the environmental impact statement will discuss all of these effects on the human environment." (Underlining for emphasis added.) Because the U.S. Air Force has decided to prepare an EIS for the proposed project, and because the socioeconomic and natural and physical environmental effects of the proposed project are interrelated, the socioeconomic impacts of the proposed project must be analyzed in the EIS. Section 102(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act and the definition of "human environment" in the Council on Environmental Quality regulations at 40 CFR 1508.14 are the "regulatory drivers" for the socioeconomic impacts analysis. 14. Section 3.11.3, General Training Impact Assessment. The draft EIS states the following. "A concern was expressed during the scoping comment period that housing values would be negatively impacted by noise associated with military training activities in the forest. There are many factors that influence the market value of a home including location, square footage, amenities, year built, and surrounding environmental conditions such as noise and safety. However, based on Sections 3.3 (Noise) and 3.4 (Safety), the training activities would avoid noise sensitive locations such as residences, schools, etc., therefore no significant impacts to housing values would be anticipated as a result of the proposed action" (page 3-92, lines 1 through 7). (Underlining for emphasis added.) Occupants of houses adjacent to Tate's Hell State Forest would be subjected to noise over long periods of time, and values of houses would certainly be negatively impacted under the maximum-use scenario. (See my comment number 15.) Under this scenario, living next to Tate's Hell State Forest would be like living next to an airport. Houses next to airports have lower values. The draft EIS skirts the issue of noise impacts to housing values by stating that assessment of effects of the proposed project on housing values is complicated and that housing values would not be significantly impacted. The EIS needs to definitively state that under the maximum-use scenario the proposed project would negatively affect the value of houses adjacent to the forest. If the U.S. Air Force concludes that these devaluations would be insignificant, it must in the interest of full disclosure state the basis for this conclusion. 15. Section 6.11, Socioeconomics/Environmental Justice. The draft EIS states that the region of influence for the socioeconomic impact analysis of the proposed	

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	action taking place on Tate's Hell State Forest is Liberty County and Franklin County, Florida (page 6-61, lines 12 and 13). The City of Carrabelle, which is one of only two incorporated towns in Franklin County, is adjacent to Tate's Hell State Forest. Its economy, and the economy of Franklin County, is reliant on tourism in a large way, but the draft EIS fails in the affected environment section to document the economic impact of tourism, and in the environmental consequences section fails to analyze the adverse impacts of the proposed project (e.g., noise from aircraft operation) to the local economies of the city and county. (Table 6-52 states the summary socioeconomics impacts conclusion for each of the tactical areas within the forest but doesn't address areas outside the forest in the region of influence.) Also the draft EIS is flawed in that it considers the socioeconomic impacts of single events (e.g., the type, context, intensity, and duration of a single training exercise conducted within Tate's Hell State Forest) rather than the cumulative socioeconomic impacts of many events over the duration of the lease or permit and over the duration of a renewed lease or permit. (See my comments below on Chapter 7, Cumulative Impacts.) Many tourists are drawn to Franklin County and the "Forgotten Coast" because of its remote, quiet environment. Tourists from such places as Tallahassee and Atlanta seek an escape from the noise, congestion, and pollution of the cities. Frequent exposure of these tourists to noise would cause these persons to vacation elsewhere. The EIS needs to assess the adverse, cumulative impacts to the local economies of the City of Carrabelle and Franklin County that result from tourists staying away from the area due to the military's activities. The draft EIS uses a "maximum-use scenario" as a basis for evaluating impacts. "...this EIS analysis evaluates impacts based on a "maximum-use scenario" that has been developed for each training activity. Evaluation of this scenario ensures that impact characterizations are conservative and do not underrepresent potential impacts should there be an occasion where maximum potential use would occur. Additionally, each maximum-use scenario is applied and analyzed for each forest in the event that one forest is unavailable for a certain type of training due to scheduling issues or other factors; this ensures that each forest is similarly treated in terms of potential impact" (page 2-10, line 24 through 31). For proposed training activities in the two state forests and on the air base (i.e., the proposed	

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	training activities in each forest under the maximum-use scenario), the draft EIS indicates the following levels of activities. * Light aviation proficiency training: 5 times/day, 232 days/year, 2 hours duration, day and night (table 2-5, page 2-15). * Low-level helicopter insertions/extractions: 2 times/month, 2 hours duration, day and night (table 2-6, page 2-15). * Airdrops (insertion and/or resupply of personnel via release of troops or equipment over land-based drop zones or over water): 4 times/clay, 232 days/year, 24 hours duration (table 2-8, page 2-17). Under the maximum-use scenario for the above activities, the EIS must analyze the cumulative impacts of noise on the local economies of Carrabelle and Franklin County over the term of the permit or lease (my comment number 9) and the reasonably foreseeable extension of the permit or lease (my comment number 15). If the term of the permit or lease can reasonably be expected to be 10 years and the permit or lease can reasonably be expected to be extended for another 10 years, the cumulative impacts of noise from the above activities on the socioeconomic region of influence, including Carrabelle and Franklin County, must be assessed over the 10- and 20-year periods. For instance, aviation airdrops over a 10-year period in Tate's Hell State Forest would occur 9,280 times (4 times/day X 232 days/year X 10 years = 9,280 separate airdrop incidents). Airdrops in the forest over a 20-year period would occur 18,560 times. The cumulative adverse impacts of this noise (in combination with the noise caused by light aviation proficiency training, low-level helicopter insertions and extractions, and by all other proposed project activities in the forest) on tourism and the economies of Carrabelle and Franklin County must be analyzed.	
I_065-R5	1[6]. Chapter 7, Cumulative Impacts. In the introduction to the Cumulative Impacts section (page 7-1, lines 2 through 5), the EIS quotes the first sentence of the CEQ regulation at 40 CFR 1508.7 definition of"[c]umulative impact." Owing to the importance of this definition to the understanding of what "cumulative impacts" are and what the EIS must do to analyze them, quote the CEQ definition in its entirety (i.e., additionally quote the second (last) sentence of the CEQ definition). As set forth at 40 CFR 1508.7, " 'Cumulative impact' is the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions.	Regarding the lease agreement, please see Comment Response A_016-R4. A discussion of regional cumulative impacts has been added to the Final EIS (Section 7.5).

Table B-5. Air Force Response to Comments, Cont'd

Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
	Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time." (Underlining of second sentence added for emphasis.) For the following reasons, the EIS cumulative impact analysis is flawed and inadequate. * The proposal does not indicate the length of time for which the U.S. Air Force would seek a permit or lease. Without a designation of this time period, an assessment of cumulative impacts over the permit or lease period is not made. The lack of a cumulative impact analysis over the entire term of the permit or lease is not in compliance with the cumulative impact analysis requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. (See my comment number 9.) * The CEQ regulation definition of"[c]umulative impact" requires that the cumulative impacts of "reasonably foreseeable future actions" be analyzed. Extensions of the permit or lease that the U.S. Air Force would obtain from the State of Florida are reasonably foreseeable future actions. Thus the draft EIS must analyze not only the cumulative impacts that would occur over the life of the permit or lease but also the impacts that would accrue during permit or lease extension periods. For example, if the original permit or lease term is 10 years and it is reasonable to expect that the U.S. Air Force would conform to the terms of the initial permit or lease and that the permit or lease would be extended for another 10 years, the draft EIS must analyze the cumulative impacts over a 20-year period. (See my comment number 9.) * Draft EIS section 7.2, Cumulative Impact Assessment Methodology, states that "Cumulative analysis therefore focuses on the potential for cumulative impacts associated with the Proposed Action and each state forest region, as well as northwest Florida as a whole" (page 7-3, lines 28 through 30). Contrary to this statement, the draft EIS does not do this. Section 7.3 separately analyzes the cumulative impacts of the proposed action on the Blackwater River State Forest. Section 7.4 separately analyzes the cumulative impacts of the proposed action on the Tate's Hell State Forest. No section separately analyzes the cumulative impacts that would occur at Eglin Air Force Base. The EIS must analyze the combined, cumulative effect to each resource that would occur from carrying out the proposed action on Blackwater River State Forest, Tate's Hell State Forest, and Eglin Air Force Base. For instance, the EIS must analyze the combined, cumulative impacts to the gopher tortoise, a state-protected species, (and black bear, indigo snake, bald eagle, etc.) that	

Table B-5. Air Force Response to Comments, Cont'd

Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
	would occur as the result of disturbances on the two state forests and the Air Force base. Another example is that the EIS must assess the cumulative, hydrologic impacts that would occur regionally in Northwest Florida as the result of activities on all three areas.	
I_067-R1	Eglin Air Force Base has a number of acres which are restricted due to hazardous materials. Could this land be cleaned up to increase the amount of acreage available for training?	The issue associated with use of Eglin AFB is not lack of land availability due to hazardous material restrictions; it is due to the increasing number of missions within a finite space. Clean-up of sites on Eglin AFB is not a solution that would provide adequate training lands in a timely fashion to meet the GRASI GLI training needs.
I_067-R2	Concerning the emitters, will they be as noisy as a home generator?	As discussed in EIS Section 3.3.2, all of the emitter site locations except site FWC-2 have access to electrical utilities. Emitters connected to electrical utilities would not make use of a generator and would create minimal noise while in operation. The generator used to supply power at FWC-2 would be an industry-standard diesel generator enclosed in housing with vertical exhaust pipe.
I_067-R3	How will your landing affect compaction of the soil, erosion and undestroyed plants and wildlife?	Section 3.6.3 of the EIS describes potential impacts to soils and erosion associated with aircraft landings. Soil compaction or rutting could occur at the aircraft wheel or strut ground contact points. The extent of soil damage from compaction or rutting would increase under wet soil conditions, particularly in areas with hydric soils where seasonal high water tables are near the surface. The infrequent occurrences and distribution of aircraft landing events at various forest locations would minimize repeated impacts at site-specific contact points.
I_067-R4	In your EIS you mentioned working with hunters but not the occasional hikers, birders, horseback riders, kayakers, wanderers and people living in the forest. How will you conduct your missions, especially dropping up to 200 personnel and their supplies while hovering at tree top level onto water bodies and roadways without affecting residents and visitors?	As discussed in the EIS, some interactions with other park users can be expected. However, training activities would avoid use of established recreational sites, and activity buffers have been established around adjacent residences and recreational sites (see Section 2.5 of the EIS), thus minimizing potential impacts. As part of the use permit/lease agreement, the Air Force would work with the Florida Forest Service to identify training locations suitable for use to minimize interactions with park users and residences and would adjust training locations should they prove to be incompatible. In addition, the Air Force has proposed a reduced-scale subalternative that decreases the frequency, intensity, and geographic scope of

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		training activities to be more compatible with the landscape. As a part of this reduced scale subalternative the AF does not intend to drop 200 personnel as part of its exercises. The AF does intend to restrict Static Line personnel drops to BW12 (quarterly). Other identified HLZs support equipment/CDS drop (daily at specific sites) and HALO (quarterly).
I_067-R5	How often will [emitters] be fueled? What about fumes and radiation?	Emitters would be tied into the electrical utilities on-site, if available. If power from the local utility is not available, small diesel-fueled generators would be used to power the emitter. Because of their size, these small generators would produce only minor exhaust emissions, with no adverse impacts generated. Adverse impacts are also not expected from emitter radiation. All emitters would be placed in accordance with established safety hazard distances to avoid populated areas (habitable buildings, recreation sites, etc.) and comply with the OSHA radiation limits. The emitter sites would also be fenced or have other security measures in place to prevent unauthorized personnel from entering the safety hazard areas.
I_067-R6	How will the emitters affect civil aviation, business and residential, electronic transmission, emergency transmissions and radio communication systems?	The emitters are of the type and frequency that there would be no interference with civil aviation, business and residential activities, electronic transmission, emergency transmissions, or radio communication systems. These emitters are currently used at other locations throughout northwest Florida and have not resulted in any issues or impacts.
I_067-R7	O[r] will [emitters] affect bats and migrating birds, marine turtles, whales and falcons relying on their own electronic directional homing capabilities?	Emitters would not affect the navigation of bats, birds, or other species. The signals would not be strong enough or of a type of quality to have this type of effect.
I_067-R8	It is stated that cleared forests will be utilized for helicopter landing and drop off. How long do you see these areas being left unplanted?	The length of time depends on the Florida Forest Service (FFS) management activities and each forest's respective planting schedule. Once the FFS determines that a cleared area is no longer suitable/compatible for use as an HLZ. use would be suspended and a new location would be identified by the FFS for use (within the parameters set by EIS Section 2.5 and the respective forest management plan).
I_067-R9	The Forest Service does not have long-range plans to continue clear cutting the forest but will selectively thin. What will the military do about landing sites when clear cutting ends?	The Air Force would use only those sites approved by the Florida Forest Service (FFS). Should there come a time where there are no available cleared areas to use for HLZs/DZs, the Air Force and the

Table B-5. Air Force Response to Comments, Cont'd

Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
		FFS would address the potential for other alternatives or discontinue the training practice. Any new alternatives identified in the future would be addressed through the NEPA process as appropriate.
I_067-R10	Roads and stream beds were not constructed to handle the additional Humvee and 2.5 ton trucks traffic. How will these highly erodible areas be maintained? Will the need for maintenance be monitored?	To clarify, the Proposed Action restricts off-road vehicle use - this has been clarified in the FEIS. Roads would be maintained by the Florida Forest Service in accordance with respective forest management plans. As indicated in Section 2.5 of the EIS, roads and water crossings would be monitored for maintenance issues and addressed accordingly, and only FFS-approved water crossings would be utilized. As stated in Section 2.7 of the Final EIS under "Water Resources," roads, trails, and stream/wetland crossings would be inspected before and after each training mission to identify maintenance issues that could cause problems if not repaired. Training activities would be shifted or redirected if conditions of roads and stream and wetland crossings require repair or other measures to prevent erosion from impacting surface waters and wetlands. The Florida Forest Service would be notified of any identified issues. Additionally, the Air Force has developed a reduced-scale subalternative that would further limit training activities and training locations, thus minimizing potential impacts to the public and natural resources. A description of the new subalternative is provided in Section 2.3, while analyses of the subalternative are provided throughout Chapters 3, 5, and 6. This is now the Air Forces "Preferred Alternative" as identified in the Final EIS. This subalternative reduces the geographic scope of actions, limits locations for munitions producing activities, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and will not allow cross-country vehicle maneuvers.
I_067-R11	Wildlife fleeing the noise of war games may become entrapped in your concertina wire. Will these animals be rescued? How will they be cared for? Can you use a simulation of concertina wire?	The Air Force agrees that emplacement of concertina wire is not a compatible use of BRSF or THSF therefore use of concertina wire has been removed from the Proposed Action.
I_067-R12	During the 56 days per year of survival training if personnel eat three meals per day, there will 3306 meals consumed. Will personnel have time to cook deer and hog or will they be consuming smaller residents of the forest? Will monitors issue - ensure that endangered animals and species of concern are not consumed?	Units would not have time to hunt or kill large game. Units would likely consume small game and vegetation. Units would be briefed and directed what species are not to be consumed as discussed in Section 2.5 of the EIS.
I_067-R13	[During the 56 days per year of survival training if personnel eat three	Please see Comment Response I_009-R12.

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	meals per day, there will 3306 meals consumed.] How will the human waste created as a result of all these meals, approximately 1120 pounds per year, be captured or will they be left to erode into the watershed?	
I_068-R1	Eglin Air Force Base is huge. It should be able to accommodate Air Force maneuvers or operations. Currently there are no hostile armies likely to land on our shores and invade our country, therefore, I do not see why the Air Force needs to use Blackwater River State Forest.	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_069-R1	I can't understand why it is [Eglin AFB] can't be used...They have no right to come into the state and take state property that belongs to us....There's people in there every day. They're going to run them out. That's exactly what they're going to do.	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_070-R1	I see no reason the Air Force can't reschedule and fit it in without taking public lands that we use and enjoy.	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_071-R1	One of the groups that go in there is horseback riding. There's many horses that go in there and what this will do to the horses will scare them, spook them. People will get hurt. And there are many children that ride these horses in there. Okay? They will get hurt by a horse. When it rears up or it runs or something, they could get killed.	Please see Comment Response I_037-R2
I_073-R1	Eglin, it should be big enough with all the training that needs to be done, and you don't need to come in and take the forest away from us. . . My understanding is that the number of personnel in all the military is going to be decreasing in the next few years. Why do we need more sites for training?	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_073-R2	I'd like to know how long our government officials knew that this was in the making. I never heard anything about it until the last couple of days. Did our government officials know about this and keep it from us?	As stated in Section 1.2 of the EIS, the overall GRASI program began in 2008. The GRASI Landscape Initiative (GLI), which this EIS addresses, is a component of the overall GRASI program. The GLI planning phase began in 2012.
I_073-R3	You said something about off-road vehicles and said there wouldn't be any off-road vehicles and then yet in the brochure it had something about off-road vehicles, so you're not telling us the truth. Helo sites, I can't believe that any of the helos that you have that are going to be landing out there are going to be able to do it in something where you don't have to cut down at least 50 or 60 trees.	There would be no off-road vehicle use. As stated in EIS Section 2.5, General Operational Constraint 5(w), all vehicles, including ATVs, must remain on established roads at all times. Additionally, as stated in EIS Section 2.3.2.1, the Air Force would utilize sites already cleared by the Florida Forest Service as part of normal forestry/silvicultural management activities. No sites would be cleared specifically for landing sites.
I_073-R4	I have helos, and some of the large helos that come right over my house at treetop level, right over my pasture. My horses run from them every day. I	Thank you for your comment. The Air Force recognizes that training activities will have some disturbance impacts. In response to public

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	can't believe that it's going to be any -- it's not going to be any worse than that when you all increase the number of helicopters there.	concerns, the Air Force is considering a new subalternative that would reduce the proposed frequency, intensity, and geographic scope of proposed training activities to reduce disturbance and noise impacts experienced by residents, horses and wildlife. This subalternative reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_075-R1	White tail deer have already become seasonably nocturnal and have changed their breeding cycle by months because of human contact.	Troop movements at night would not affect deer. Units would not be pursuing or hunting deer; any contact between deer and units would be by chance and short-term in nature.
I_075-R2	The military claims they need more land. I am in disbelief. They already have 464,000 acres of reservation encompassing four counties. This land has been given solely to the military. Seventy-five percent of this land, 324,000 acres, are restricted and trespassing if prohibited and punishable by federal law.	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_076-R1	One of the impacts that I think that the public is having a problem they're having with this EIS is that it provide no alternatives. This is where it is fatally flawed. The whole purpose of NEPA is to inform the decision maker of the reasonable alternatives for the proposed action. We've already heard that the proposed action is simply whether we do it or not. That is insufficient under NEPA. It's insufficient under the process and it's going to fail. The process through the range of alternatives is guided by the Council on Environmental Quality. You have the whole process is laid out, the whole first question is addressing the range of alternatives. The alternatives that CEQ looks to talked about an unlimited number of alternatives. They even then say well maybe you would narrow it down to a couple of hundred. You have provided no alternatives. This is a fatally flawed document and it is going to fail. Your purpose and need states that,	The Air Force has added a subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions, limits locations for munitions producing activities, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and will not allow cross-country vehicle maneuvers. The Air Force will continue to evaluate other options for training locations when they are identified and enough information is available to make analysis possible. The purpose of this EIS is to evaluate the feasibility of the Tate's Hell and Blackwater State Forests for possible use in training activities. This does not in any way foreclose the use of other locations, including the range at Eglin AFB. Given the information currently available, these state forests may be appropriate sites for some military training. The Air Force will continue to evaluate other options for potential training locations.

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	in your analysis is that whether you are going to implement the proposed action. The proposed action then talks about the use of both Blackwater and the Hell's Tate Forest (sic). Then you say that the Hell's Tate Forest may have been eliminated because of criteria. The criteria you established was one and a half hours from Eglin. Military training occurs throughout the world. There is no reason to narrow the criteria to one and a half hours. If you were to simply try to find a more narrow definition of alternatives, you couldn't do a better job than what you've done with your criteria. You have eliminated the possibility of doing what NEPA asks you to do, provide the citizens with a process by which we can evaluate alternatives to what you are trying to do.	
I_076-R2	You say you are trying to make the regional shortfall of military training and testing in the area. You state that the demand for the range and the use of the restricted area over Eglin creates scheduling problems. Others have addressed that. John Veasey was absolutely right, get a better scheduler. Figure it out. There's 600 and some 40 square miles of land in Eglin alone. You have plenty of room throughout this process. This whole idea is designed for flexibility and mission creep.	There is only so much space and time available to accommodate training activities, given that Eglin AFB's primary mission is testing and evaluation of weapon systems. A new scheduler would not solve the issue of finite resources being overtaxed by increasing mission needs at Eglin AFB.
I_077-R1	I heard in your presentation in your own propaganda presentation this evening that radar will need improved roadways so there you go. We start off with improving roadways. You're already invading the forest. It will need tree cutting or topping. Invading the forest. You're changing it. You are changing it right away.	The Proposed Action would not involve improving roadways for use of emitters. Sites can only be used that already have improved roadways. As stated in EIS Section 2.3.1, only two proposed emitter sites may require tree topping or clearing, which would be conducted only by permission of, and in coordination with, the Florida Forest Service.
I_078-R1	On table 46 you say that four out of the twelve emitter sites are in forest lands or wetlands. I just wanted to make a recommendation that those, at least those four sites are removed from the final copy statements.	Table 4-6 identifies the predominate land use designation of the administrative location proposed for emitter use. The actual placement of emitters would not occur in wetlands or within the forest.
I_078-R2	In Table five-four your air space impact summary says that there's going to be increased air traffic, primarily at low altitudes over Blackwater State Forest and in your presentation this evening it stated that the GRASI objective was to have high altitude military airspace so there was a conflict there that could be clarified in the final.	The Gulf Regional Air Space Initiative (GRASI) identified several actions that would maximize the utility of regional airspace. The GRASI Landscape Initiative (GLI) proposes to reduce airspace congestion in existing special use airspace units by relocating certain nonhazardous training activities to areas outside of special use airspace. The GLI is one of several actions being taken to improve regional airspace functionality. Other elements of the overall GRASI program involve high-altitude airspace.

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I_078-R3	The draft also didn't account for who might hold you all accountable for what you say you're going to do. I know as a public citizen, I don't have access to equipment that let's me know if your airplanes are flying at a certain altitude or not so I would just -- I would wonder who would hold you accountable to those things.	As discussed in EIS Section 2.5, the Air Force would establish, through coordination with the Florida Forest Service (FFS), a submittal, response, and resolution process for local residents to submit complaints or other compliance issues to Eglin AFB. This can be accomplished through Eglin's Public Affairs Office. Additionally, any issues related to environmental compliance with the FFS would be documented and resolved upon notice of any compliance issues.
I_078-R4	Also, how would you avoid threatened plants and animals in the dark?	Areas with known threatened and endangered plants and animals have been mapped and buffer areas established around these locations. As discussed in Section 2.5 of the EIS, the Air Force would work with the Florida Forest Service and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to survey training areas to identify protected species so that the Air Force could incorporate these areas into buffers and protected areas.
I_079-R2	you said you will use biodegradable paint balls. Well, biodegradable refers to how readily something decomposes into the environment, however, it really has nothing to do with whether or not it isn't toxic. Now, do we have any long-term proof that this will not be a problem to any of our animals or going into the soil or to the water, especially to all of us who live out there, and we all have wells.	No adverse impacts from the use of paintballs are anticipated. A typical biodegradable paintball contains gelatin, glycerol, sorbitol, polyethylene glycol, and food-grade dyes. The compounds are edible, fit for human consumption, and metabolized by most aquatic and terrestrial organisms. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_079-R3	Also, you're going to be using aircraft. What are you going to do when these aircraft are actually taking out some of these endangered birds, the birds we're trying to protect?...what happens when you take out an eagle or some of these woodpeckers and they have a nest of babies that are now going to starve or be taken by predators because their mom's not going to	The military has a history of implementing compatible training activities and stewardship of endangered species such as the red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW). Eglin AFB, along with several other military bases in the southeast, has a fully recovered population of RCWs demonstrating military training and sensitive species recovery

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	return?	can be compatible. The Air Force has identified a mitigation as described in EIS Section 2.7 to conduct sensitive species (including eagles) surveys at action areas at least every 3 years to establish baseline information, and will update activity buffers as necessary in order to minimize potential adverse impacts. Military and civilian aircraft already operate throughout the entire Florida panhandle area, and there is no evidence to suggest that woodpeckers or eagles are at particular risk.
I_079-R4	This is going to really interfere a lot with the equine population.	Please see Comment Response I_037-R2
I_080-R1	We have helicopters flying over our rooftops, C 130s flying over. I've seen what it does to the deer with fawns in my front yard. It scares them. The deer are completely out of their cycle of having their young. They're abandoning their young in my front yard. Too many things are happening.	Military activities proposed in this EIS may lead to temporary disturbance of white-tailed deer populations. Disturbances would be temporary and localized in nature.
I_080-R2	My biggest concern is the planes. What is going to happen if they have an emergency? I've already had one helicopter land in the field just north of my house. They had an emergency. Had it not been for me having my house phone they could not have made contact to have somebody come out with a trailer and a truck to pick up their bird. It could have been my house. I'm right there. Not even 50 yards from my house it went down. I don't want to lose my house.	As the EIS states, of the 42 fatal overland aircraft mishaps in northwest Florida (extending from Tallahassee to Pensacola) over the last 15 years, none involved military aircraft. To minimize the potential for any aircraft mishaps during training, Eglin AFB would issue a nonmilitary air traffic advisory to all aircraft transiting the area being used by the military. Eglin AFB would continue to implement its Mid-Air Collision Avoidance (MACA) Program. This program is designed to help increase military pilot awareness of the training airspace and activities. Implementation of established procedures would ensure that the potential for mishaps involving military aircraft continues to be extremely low. In case of an in-flight emergency, military pilots are trained take all appropriate emergency measures, including avoiding populated areas, if at all possible.
I_082-R1	Who's going to clean all this up, spent cartridges and paint-ball waste from 230 plus days of use, and who will fix the roads and the trails?	Please see Comment Response A_016-R6 regarding expendable use. Repair of roadways would be conducted by the Florida Forest Service, which would be funded through the lease/permit fee and other Air Force mitigation funding mechanisms.
I_083-R1	....the EMF transmissions, electrical magnetic waves, probably been no wildlife studies on exactly how much they will affect the wildlife, how much they will affect the hunters and people enjoying at what distance. You know, it's a problem. It's a growing problem, tumors all of that sort of thing, people moving away from cell phone towers.	Please see Comment Response I_048-R2 regarding impacts to wildlife.

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I_084-R1	Eglin is 37 times as large as Blackwater but yet the Air Force needs more space? They talk about needing non-hazardous -- are they going to do non-hazardous training? Well, non-hazardous training requires las -- less land space or land mass for the training than the hazardous training does, so they've got plenty of mass, plenty of land to do their non, so called non-hazardous training.	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_085-R1	they talked about some of the survival training might require that they eat small animals, which includes quails, rabbits, squirrels I'm assuming. And again, we've watched the animals go down in all of these areas. When I was growing up, when I -- when we came out of my house to go anywhere, we always saw animals cross the road. You always did and now it's very seldom I see anything cross the road, so I am very concerned about the impact.	Thank you for your comment. It is possible that over time, wildlife could have adapted to the presence of the road and are avoiding it, as it presents certain inherent hazards such as increased visibility to predators and human and vehicle contact. Please note that the Air Force has added the evaluation of a subalternative to the FEIS. As part of the subalternative, natural resource consumption training activities would not occur.
I_085-R2	the proposal said they would not be in, in the daytime during hunting season, but you're going to have the hunters in, which they belong there and then four hours later you're going to have the other helicopters, planes, whatever coming in, so you've got constant noise. [has that been taken into consideration?] And I don't know when the study was done, if they took into -- if they counted how much Air Force is already over the forest every day, and we're talking six to seven hours sometimes.	The study took into account ongoing aircraft operations, which include operations by the Air Force and other Services over the state forest. The additional proposed aircraft operations would occur over a very wide area, such that overflights of any given location would be relatively infrequent.
I_086-R1	I could not find anything about the duration of the agreement for use before it's re-visited or re-evaluated, or who would be in charge of seeing that things were carried out the way they were supposed to be. So, you know, I'd like a little bit -- is it going to be forever once that paper's signed? Is it forever? Another thing I found interesting, the amphibious operations, there aren't that many river -- there's one river but it's all recreation. There are a couple of little lakes but they're also recreation so I'm just curious about how the military will operate their amphibious maneuvers.	At this point in time there is no defined end-date for whatever training use is ultimately approved by the FFS and State of Florida. Training activities would be projected to occur until such time as adequate range capacity became available on Eglin AFB to support the necessary training requirements. Ultimately, the FFS would specify the length of time that training activities would be permitted. The plans to support and manage these activities will need to be reviewed every few years and approved, if they are determined to still be compatible with existing land uses.
I_086-R2	And the business of having to check the schedule in order to be able to use the forest. It's just not acceptable to have it restricted for the public at "any" time.	It is not the intention of the Proposed Action to require users to check any sort of schedule, and only small portions of the forest would be used by the Air Force at any one time. Recreational users would be notified of any locations closed due to training activities (e.g., specific roadways).
I_087-R1	This is a very non-transparent action and it is not right. This land is land that was bought with Florida Forever funds. That's how they got Tate's	The decision on implementation of the Proposed Action lies with the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Once the Record of Decision is

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	Hell. We have a sunshine law... Mike Spaits says that the Pentagon has the final decision. Pentagon, what happened to the Acquisite -- Acquisition and Restoration Council?	signed, the Florida Forest Service (FFS) would then determine to what extent the decision made can be implemented. Ultimately, the final decision regarding frequency, intensity, and duration of training activities allowed in the state forest would rest with the FFS.
I_087-R2	I say that the military should stay on the land they already polluted. Clean it up. But there are a lot of other solutions that they could take. They could take the closed bases and put this training there. What's wrong with that? Then there are individual land owners. I have a letter here from an individual land owner who would like to rent his land to the Air Force, but they don't want to rent anything. They want to take it for free from us. So he says, We have a thousand or more acres in north Walton County that could be suitable for the described activities, and this has low military air activity over it all the time. When this GRASI proposal was first announced in the Daily News, the article indicated that privately owned land was also being considered. More than a year ago I contacted the OPR of Eglin about possibly using our land. My offer was summarily disregarded.	Please see Comment Response I_004-R2 regarding use of other land areas. The purpose of the GRASI GLI initiative is to develop partnerships with other land-holding agencies and not to lease private lands as discussed in Section 1.3 of the EIS. Thank you for your comment.
I_087-R3	what will 50 survival troops eat on the way up the river [?]	Unless specifically involved in Natural Resource Consumption activities as described in EIS Section 2.3.2.18 (occurring up to eight times per year at any one forest and involving procurement of natural food sources, such as small game and rodents utilizing survival techniques such as trapping/snaring and eating of vegetation), troops would eat supplied foods such as MREs. Additionally, please note that the Air Force has added the evaluation of a subalternative to the FEIS. As part of the subalternative, natural resource consumption training activities would not occur.
I_088-R1	I've watched the real estate in this area decrease by 30 to 40 percent, and my concern is for the homeowners in the area since their homes are their largest asset...if for any reason they decided to vacate the area because of the activity and the noise, will they be able to get even what they owe on their property or will it push certain homeowners into bankruptcy?	As stated in Section 3.11.3 there are many factors that influence the market value of a home including location, square footage, amenities, year built, and surrounding environmental conditions such as noise and safety. However, based on Sections 3.3 (Noise) and 3.4 (Safety), the training activities would avoid noise sensitive locations such as residences, schools, etc., therefore no significant impacts to housing values would be anticipated as a result of the proposed action. Additional text to discuss the potential impacts to the economic value of the forests including human health, ecotourism, and property valuation has been added to Final EIS Sections 3.11, 5.11, 6.11, and 7.11.

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I_089-R1	...the Draft Environmental Impact Statement states that radiation emitters, ...with large safety hazard distances will be used...if exposure to humans is unsafe, what's it doing to the wildlife in that area? You know, biologically, what is it doing to their reproductive activities? How is it affecting all species, including the endangered species, that are being affected by this radiation?	Please see Comment Response I_048-R2.
I_089-R2	why are vehicle maintenance activities conducted in the forest rather than on base? It says in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement that during the time that they're out there they're going to be actually doing maintenance activities on their vehicles and collecting waste, hazardous waste like solvents, paints, oils, et cetera, and those are going to be stored in containers, and there's the potential for release and contamination of the forest.	As stated in Section 2.5, General Operational Constraint 4(g), all maintenance activities would be conducted at Eglin AFB or Hurlburt Field prior to field activities. It is acknowledged that sometimes equipment breaks down in the field, resulting in the need for quick field maintenance. Consequently, EIS Section 3.12.3 identifies potential impacts associated with these possibilities, as well as requirements for vehicles to have spill containment equipment and training. EIS Section 2.5, General Operational Constraints 5(h) and 5(l) identify requirements for handling spills should they occur.
I_089-R3	But it is a protected area. It's for the use of the Florida residents... I worked out at Eglin. It's gigantic. They've got places to train our guys. I've seen all the camps. I've seen ranger camps. I've seen all of them. I don't know why they need our forests.	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_090-R1	We have a list of species in Florida that needs to be protected. It's not mentioned in this document.	Please refer to EIS Section 5.8.1.3, "Protected Species Known or Potentially Occurring in BRSF," for state and federal species that have endangered, threatened, or special status in accordance with state and federal law. A comprehensive list in also included in Appendix C. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has reviewed and commented on the EIS and the Proposed Action. The Air Force will continued to coordinate with the FWC throughout GLI implementation to minimize sensitive species impacts.
I_091-R1	The military is pushing through taking over much of our Blackwater and Tate's Hell State Forests for military operations. This will greatly restrict the common citizens ability to use and enjoy hunting, fishing, hiking, paddling and camping. They have been wheedling out these plans for years on the down low in an effort to keep us from knowing what they will do and to avoid public opposition.	As discussed in EIS Section 1.3, the overall GRASI initiative began on 2008, and the supporting GRASI Landscape Initiative (GLI), which this EIS addresses, was begun in 2012. The Proposed Action is to utilize small portions of each forest (e.g., Florida Forest Service [FFS] management units) via lease agreements and use permits in a manner that is compatible with current forest uses and state forest management plans (stated in Section 2.3.2). The Florida Forest Service would ultimately decide, via lease agreements and use

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		permits, the frequency and duration of Air Force training activities in the forests. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_093-R1	I just would like to ask why would we even want to consider this plan? Is there something I missed that would benefit us, that would benefit the forest? What would the Air Force bring that would have a positive impact on this local community or on the forest service? There were many, many negative things which we all know there would be environmental impacts, but there were nothing that would seem to be of any benefit to the forest or the population in this area. There were even mentions of if additional road work needed to be taken care of that would be the responsibility of the forest. It's like oh, no, we won't mess with your forest. We're not going to do your roads the wrong way or whatever. But it's like so what is it bringing? It's placing an additional burden many ways, just not on the environment but the people who try and do the work. It's going to decrease resources in terms of funding. People coming from out of state and they come, and you're closed because there's military? Do we (inaudible)? I'd be hesitant. I wouldn't want to plan ahead and come here and find out I couldn't use the resources that were here. I pay my little two dollars if I want to go into the park. I don't use much of the park. I don't spend that much time there. I put my little two dollars. That benefits the park somehow I would think. If groups come in, they pay for the use, and they're not there. They better not be messing with the environment. Commercial groups can even come in, but there are rules and regulations and it benefits the park in some ways even though there are more people in the forest, not park. So I just don't see why anyone would even say oh, yes, we want this. It seems like a all	Ultimately the northwest Florida community benefits considerably in regional economic terms from the presence of the DoD and it's partners. From a localized perspective, it is anticipated that there would be slight benefits to local businesses from the presence of troops utilizing local service-related businesses (e.g., gas stations, restaurants); however, these benefits would not be anticipated to be significant. Only small portions of the forests (e.g., management units, road segments) would be used at any one time during training activities (e.g., an HLZ or road segment in use), and any area closures would not preclude the use of the rest of the forest--no FFS-designated recreational sites or trails would be restricted or closed. The public would be made aware of any closures in advance of training activities.

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	around negative. They may be small impacts. They may add up. It will impact me. I'm not going to want to be in there. And, you know, I feel like I pay my share. I'm not going to go cause any damage. I wouldn't want to, and it seems to me that the Air Force should be bringing something that would benefit the forest and citizens around here, not just negative impacts.	
I_094-R1	I'm like this man right here. I pay to use the national forest not a park. I deer hunt. I use dogs to deer hunt. These radio telemetry towers that y'all want to use in Blackwater National Forest are going to affect us as a user group because we are being forced, or supposedly being forced this coming up year by the State of Florida to use a telemetry or a GPS tracking device on every dog that is turned loose in the national forest. Do you know what these GPS's run off of? They run off of VHF bands, the same thing that the military uses. So we are going to be affected whenever y'all are using these, so if we can't get our dogs up in time before they get on somebody else's property, private property we're going to get ticketed for it, not the government. Okay? We already have enough problems getting around people who've moved up in that forest that don't know what's going on up there anyway. We don't need anybody else up there, and that's all I got to say.	Per EIS Section 2.3.1 and corresponding Figure 2-4, the closest proposed emitter site to Blackwater River State Forest is more than 5 miles way from the forest boundary (proposed site FFS-1). Emitter use would not interfere with GPS tracking devices.
I_095-R1	I am against the use of these protected public lands for military training. The military use is not compatible with recreational uses and the protection of sensitive plant and wildlife species.	Per EIS Section 2.3.2, training would be conducted in accordance with Florida Forest Service (FFS) management plans. The FFS would ultimately decide, through the lease agreement/use permit process, the scope of training allowed (including frequency and duration) to ensure compatibility with existing use.
I_096-R1	I have a question. Why can't we hear everybody in all the entirety of what they have to say instead of herding us in and herding us out the door like cattle, like we're some number, because we're not military? We're not numbers. We're not military. We're people.	All public comments submitted throughout the process will be made available to the public and the decision maker prior to any decision made.
I_098-R1	This is a blatant attempt to circumvent DoD Instruction 4165.71, "Real Property Acquisition," January 6, 2005. It also allows the Air Force to ignore DoD policies regarding the management of training lands. There are multiple endangered species living within the confines of BWSF. The use of lands within BWSF by the Air Force will absolutely have a major effect on those species. Proposed landing strips will put military aircraft in the air at extremely low altitude over populated residential areas adjacent to and	There is no planned acquisition of land. As stated throughout the EIS, the Air Force plans to use the forest through a permit or lease agreement with the Florida Forest Service (FFS). The FFS would dictate through the use agreement the location, duration, and frequency of training activities in accordance with FFS Forest Management Plans. Only small portions of the forest would be used at any one time, and proposed activities would be planned to

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	within the boundaries BWSF. Air Force use of BWSF lands will also deny Florida residents use of the lands their tax dollars pay to maintain. The damage alone to roadways within the BWSF area by modern military vehicles will deny citizens access to the very lands that they pay for. Not to mention the costs of eventually repairing those roads which will fall squarely on the citizens of Florida. Recent land acquisitions from International Paper by the state south of US Hwy 90 under the guise of recreational use were made in order to connect BWSF to Eglin AFB. This makes it clear that this backdoor deal has been in the works for much longer than the Air Force or the state of Florida have told the public. This fact alone proves that the public is being lied to by both Air Force officials and state officials. By all outward appearances, this is an obvious vehicle for the Air Force to ignore DoD policies and for the state to get their hands on large amounts of Federal funds. I am by no means an environmentalist, but I am intimately familiar with DoD regulation involving the procedures for acquiring land for use as ranges and training lands. None of the normal procedures or requirements have been followed with this deal. It's time for the individuals involved to come clean.	minimize any access restrictions. No designated recreational sites would be restricted; the lease/permit money paid to the FFS would be utilized to pay for road use and maintenance. The current airspace over BRSF, as described in Section 5.2.1.1 of the EIS, allows for flights as low as 200 feet; the GLI would not change this. However, as described in Section 3.3.4 of the EIS, there are several mitigations that would be implemented to lessen noise impacts from GLI-related training activities. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have both reviewed the EIS, and the Air Force conducted an Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation with the USFWS. Neither agency identified any significant impacts associated with training activities, given the many General Operational Constraints and Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations identified in Sections 2.5 and 2.7, respectively, of the EIS.
I_100-R1	It is clearly not true that military training and testing is constrained by shortage of land and airspace in Northwest Florida... Eglin AFB occupies over 640 square miles. If that is not sufficient to meet the purpose and need for the proposed action, the purpose and need should be revisited.	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_101-R1	I am a certified Master Naturalist (UFL) by the University of Florida and a frequent kayaker on the rivers and creeks in Blackwater River and Tate's Hell State Forests. Over the past three years, my wife and I have thoroughly studied the plants on one of the Tate's Hell creeks and are maintaining a blog entitled "A Paddler's Guide to the Flowering Plants on Womack Creek." I know how fragile the environment is in both of these forests. The proposed activities noted in the GRASI EIS will have devastating effects on these environments and the threatened, endangered and endemic plant and animal species that inhabit them. For example, landing of fixed winged airplanes, helicopter fly overs and drops, up to 72 personnel in each forest for 232 days each year, over 3/4 tons of expendables (paint balls, plastics, smoke grenade waste) deposited in the forests annually, and creek crossings. The statement alleges that these activities will have little, if any, impact and that mitigation will be conducted	The EIS specifically addresses your concerns in Sections 3.8, 5.8, and 6.8, and Appendix H, Noise Impacts on Wildlife provides more information. Eglin Air Force Base, which supports similar actions but on a larger scale, is widely recognized for its wildlife diversity and quality of habitats. The Air Force has reviewed public input as part of the EIS process and has developed a reduced-scale training subalternative as the preferred project alternative. This subalternative reduces the frequency, scope and intensity of training at THSF and would eliminate the use of expendable munitions within THSF. The sections previously identified has been updated in the FEIS to include impacts associated with the reduced-scale subalternative.

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	in those instances where damage is done. The statement tries to dismiss the potential impacts by saying birds can just move their nests to another area, gopher tortoise burrows can be moved to safer areas, and if a fire is started accidentally, it is probably a good thing since fire is good for forests. This cavalier dismissal of environmental impacts displays total ignorance of how the integrity of ecosystems is maintained and provides perfect evidence of the lack of respect for the restoration and conservation purposes for which these forests were established. Rather than comment further on the specific provisions of this statement, I will highlight critical issues that are missing or not adequately developed: ... 2. The statement does not provide any information on the impact of noise on animal behavior, reproduction or communication. It implies that the only concern related to noise is what can be tolerated by humans.	
I_101-R2	1. The statement does not include baseline date on water and ambient air quality so that the impact of proposed activities can be properly monitored and changes noted over time. 3. The statement does not provide information on the amount of time required for mitigation practices to repair damaged soil, water quality, or plant and animal life. Mitigation rarely works and takes years to accomplish if it is successful. 4. The statement does not describe an independent monitoring procedure, including the funding for this, that will insure the public that there is no environmental impact from the proposed activities. 5. The statement does not provide a mechanism for immediately halting training activities at the point a violation of the provisions of the plan with respect to environmental protection is detected. 6. The statement does not specify who will be responsible for paying for any mitigation that might be required, nor does it establish any penalties for failure to comply with the provisions of the plan related to the environment. 8. The statement does not commit the USAF to funding all cleanup and other detrimental effects resulting from the proposed training activities. No budget for mitigation is included. 9. The statement does not indicate how long the USAF intends to abuse these forests with these training activities. 10. Finally, the statement does not provide the legal basis for allowing the USAF to violate the purpose of the Florida Forever Act which funded the creation of these forests for restoration and conservation purposes.	Comment 1: Baseline information for each resource is provided, as applicable in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 of the EIS. Specifically, air quality baseline information is provided in Sections 4.5, 5.5, and 6.5, and water quality baseline information is provided in Sections 4.7.1, 5.7.1, and 6.7.1. Comment 3: Mitigation practices do not all involve repair or damaged resources; in most cases, mitigations involve avoidance of impacts all together. Each case of recovery is dependent on many factors, such as the scope of the impact and climatological factors, which make time-scale projections of recovery difficult to predict. As an example, a reseeded area may recover in less than a year or over several years depending on weather factors. Consequently, predicting the length of time for recovery of a particular resource would be purely speculative. Therefore, as stated in EIS Section 2.5, the Air Force, in coordination with the Florida Forest Service (FFS) would implement a monitoring program to assess damage, gauge effectiveness of implemented mitigations, and make adjustments accordingly. Comment 4: Section 2.5 of the EIS identifies a coordinated monitoring program with the FFS, the details of which would be finalized during the lease agreement/permitting process. Comment 5: EIS Section 2.5 specifically identifies the requirements associated with suspension of training activities under certain

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		conditions. Comment 6: EIS Section 2.5 indicates that the Air Force would fund any required mitigations. Any penalties would be determined by the FFS as part of the lease agreement/use permit and are currently undefined. Comment 8: Funding for mitigations would be determined as the need for specific mitigations are identified; these funds need to be programmed each fiscal year once the requirements are identified. Comment 9: the term of the lease and permit would be determined by the FFS; permits would likely initially be on an annual or 2-year basis as the program is established to determine what activities can occur in compatibility with existing uses. Comment 10: The legal basis to use the forests will be based on a permit or lease agreement as provided by the FFS, much the same as any other user. Ultimately, the decision to allow use of the forest and associated frequency and duration would fall to the FFS, which may ultimately decide not to allow the activities proposed or only a small subset of activities.
I_101-R3	7. The statement does not include a financial impact component that identifies potential costs to the state, local communities and land owners adjacent to the forests related to buffering themselves from the commotion created by the proposed training activities.	There is no anticipated cost to private citizens or local communities from training activities. The Air Force would pay a lease/permit fee to the Florida Forest Service (FFS), which would likely be used to cover maintenance costs for Air Force use of the forests.
I_103-R1	First and foremost it is a State Park and not a military base. Using it as a base will cause the park in its entirety or certain areas of the park to be closed for civilian use during the military exercise period. Civilians, both local and tourist, should not lose the rights to the use of the park for recreational activities. Some hiking clubs and equestrian clubs come from as far away as Michigan to enjoy the open forests of the park. These other users of the park will have their free time available to the park limited if the military is doing exercises. No one wants to lose their freedom of use just because the only time they have available for vacation conflicts with the time the military has scheduled an exercise.	Please see Comment Response I_054-R2.
I_103-R2	Inability to schedule on Eglin AFB was given as the reason why the military needed to expand its base of operations. If they can't schedule well at Eglin then how would you not expect to see even greater scheduling conflicts when civilian hiking and riding clubs from different states are involved?	Please see Comment Response I_054-R2.

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I_103-R3	The environmental impact study must evaluate all endangered species per the State listed list and not just the limited Federal list	The EIS text and figures have been updated to incorporate additional species and habitat occurrence information and FWC spatial data for the reticulated salamander, bog frog, bald eagle, kestrel, and pine snake on BRSF. The potential occurrence of the pine snake at THSF will be added.
I_103-R4	Lastly, hovering helicopters and low flying jets will be harmful to nesting birds. Having a 500-foot rule is ridiculous. Do you not know that a jet going within 500' of a nesting woodpecker will destroy that nest? You would not want a screaming F22 or F35 coming within 500 feet of you and the birds certainly don't either. They will not be able to find suitable nesting sites and will die off.	Nesting populations of protected bird species at Eglin AFB, where military activities occur at a much greater level, have been stable to increasing for many years. Management actions developed at Eglin AFB that are designed to protect sensitive species and wildlife are proven to be effective and would be implemented for GRASI, as discussed in Section 2.5 of the EIS. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_103-R5	Lastly, the criteria picked for travel time is totally bogus. What army only has to go 1-½ hours to get to a skirmish? By using that criterion other military bases in south Mississippi and Alabama are automatically eliminated. The proposal should be evaluating options but by using this bogus criteria there are no options. The study is flawed and must be redone to provide alternatives.	Time for training is a precious commodity for military units who are at home station. The criteria was developed to ensure units can get to locations and proceed with training without needing to spend one or multiple days in transit to and from training locations.
I_104-R1	You already have plenty of land at your disposal.	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_105-R1	...please not do this in Blackwater or Tate's Hell. There is more than enough space on Eglin for their needs. I understand that there are many units using Eglin but maybe instead of taking over a state park and further alienating the public they should work on a unit deconfliction plan, maybe some sort of "shared ground" plan sorta like a "shared air" plan.	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_110-R2	Also,most horses are threatened by the presence of low flying aircraft and	Please see Comment Response I_021-R1.

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	this could be a potentially very dangerous problem for horseback riders.	
I_112-R1	Eglin is a huge area, why would you need more room for your training?	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_113-R1	I do not see the reason for this training in a State Forest Area....The Government has closed valuable Military Bases through out the United States and now they want to take a public recreation area away from us.	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_117-R1	As a property owner I am concerned that the noise will impact our peaceful life there and will affect our property values. The training proposed is for 232 days per year and as much as 4 times daily. The noise level from the helicopter's is already deafening.	The numbers of days per year and events per day stated in the EIS are conservative estimates of actual overall operational frequency. Noise levels generated by aircraft involved in GLI training would be similar to certain aircraft operating in the area currently (e.g., rotorcraft) and substantially less than jet aircraft operating currently in the area (see EIS Table 5-6 and 6-5). Additionally, the Air Force has evaluated a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_118-R1	Amphibious crossings may also conflict with recreational canoe, and kayak paddlers.	As stated in EIS Section 2.3.2.17, Amphibious Operations would only occur about 10 times per year at any one forest. Given this frequency of activity, the Air Force does not anticipate significant interaction or associated impacts from this activity. Amphibious operations would avoid to the extent practicable interactions or interference with other recreational users, similar to how these activities are currently conducted on Eglin AFB. Additionally, the Air Force has included the evaluation of a subalternative in the FEIS that does not include amphibious operations to limit potential public impacts.
I_118-R2	Another issue of concern is that of Stream and Wetland Crossing. Due to the fragile nature of BSF streams, particularly with regard to stream beds, vegetation, and stream embankments, such activity can cause permanent	Please see Comment Response I_067-R10.

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	stream bed, and bank erosion. If such activity is allowed, military vehicles should only cross streams on established bridges	
I_118-R3	The next issue of concern relates to Overwater Hoist Operations. These activities would likely be conducted in BSF fishing lakes which are located near campgrounds. These lakes are utilized by fishermen who are required to restrict their boat motors to electric only. OHO activities in the lakes adjacent to campgrounds could be expected to adversely impact fisherman, campers, and water fowl . The impact would be from noise, and possibly other factors associated with operation of the aircraft, and hoist equipment.	Noise generated by Overwater Hoist Operations (OHO) would potentially be annoying and disruptive to fishermen, boaters, and campers (see EIS Section 5.3.2.1) and could be disruptive to waterfowl and other wildlife (see Section 5.8.2). This type of training would take place only about once per month in one of the bodies of water within the state forest, and the specific training location would be selected to avoid fishermen and boaters (see Table 2-21).
I_119-R1	Please do not allow the military to expand training into the state forests when Eglin AFB already has vast tracts of land for this purpose. The draft EIS did not consider cleaning up tracts of land already contaminated on Eglin AFB and using those areas for training instead of placing environmentally fragile eco-systems in our state forests at risk of new contamination. Clean up the damaged tracts inside Eglin to use before making a grab for our state forest lands... Eglin's explanation of need to expand for scheduling convenience seems like a poor reason to place our state forests at risk of environmental damage and destroy the tranquility of the state forests we treasure as civilians.	Land availability due to contamination is not a limiting factor for the need. The need is associated with a finite amount of land available to conduct the primary mission of Eglin AFB, which is testing and evaluation of weapon systems. Hazardous test and evaluation activities on Eglin AFB create large safety hazard areas where troops cannot train during these activities. As discussed in Section 1.4 of the EIS, the Proposed Action is needed because there is a projected regional shortfall of military training and testing land and airspace in the GRASI region. The demand for the land range and use of restricted areas over the Eglin Range creates scheduling conflicts for nonhazardous training. Obtaining the necessary permits to use new areas for nonhazardous training and placing training emitters in remote locations would create flexibility, improving training outcomes through better scheduling and reducing the competing demands on restricted areas. Eglin AFB's primary mission is test and evaluation, and training activities sometimes have a lower priority. From time to time, training units are unable to obtain the necessary time on the range or in restricted areas to complete their requirements. As a result, the Air Force needs additional flexibility in the GRASI region to accommodate the increasing levels of testing and training activity required by the current mission. More specifically, additional flexibility for training activities outside Eglin AFB would allow test and training units to accomplish their missions when time on the range or in restricted areas is not available. Thus, the Air Force needs additional land areas in the GRASI region to accommodate the increasing levels of testing and training activity required by the current mission.

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I_120-R1	As a resident of Franklin County and a concerned citizen, I dispute statements by the Eglin/Air Force that their intended use of Tate's Hell State Forest and Blackwater River State Forest is not expected to result in any significant adverse impacts... ES.4.1.2.3 Use of Expendables (UoEX) involves use of various training munitions and pyrotechnics, including simulated munitions (consisting of plastic pellets or paintballs, and smoke grenades during training activities. At Tate's Hell State Forest, noise-generating expendables could be used ANYWHERE. 5.56-millimeter blank - 576,000 Est. Max Quantity Per Year - Estimated Average per Event ~10,000 7.62-millimeter blank - 196,200 " " ~ 8,000 Ground Burst Simulators - 5,172 " " ~2 to 5 M-18 smoke grenades - 4,038 " " ~2 to 5 Paintballs/plastic pellets - 50,000 " " ~5,000 It would seem obvious to anyone considering the nature of such munitions and pyrotechnics, that it would NOT be possible to clean up the fragments and residue left on the ground, vegetation, and water/wetlands... The draft EIS does not adequately describe what measures will be used to remove small fragments and fine particulate residue that result from the use of training munitions and pyrotechnics which would be a source of unnatural litter and potential toxins on soil, vegetation, and water/wetlands, nor does the draft EIS address the adverse effects of the debris and residue or the toxic components thereof.	The Air Force has developed a reduced-scale subalternative that restricts expendable use to only the two hardened camp sites on BRSF, and no expendables at THSF. Even so, during training, all appropriate steps would be taken to minimize potential impacts from debris/residue. For example, all solid waste generated would be collected and disposed. All metallic debris (e.g., brass cases) from training operations would be collected and recycled and, therefore, not disposed of as solid waste. The following would also be prohibited as part of training: throwing smokes, flares, or simulators directly into a water body; abandoning, dumping, burying, or otherwise concealing munitions, pyrotechnics, or residue, including packing materials, and releasing chemicals or metals (including brass) into streams, wetlands, or water bodies. The Eglin AFB Interstitial Area Final Programmatic Environmental Assessment (U.S. Air Force, 1998c) analyzed the environmental impact of increasing yearly ground troop movement in interstitial spaces from 55,800 troops per year (1997) to 167,500, equal to a 200 percent increase. No adverse environmental impacts associated with chemical releases or solid/hazardous waste were determined from the 200 percent increase in ground troops regarding debris and the use of blanks, smokes, and flares during ground troop training activities in Eglin AFB training areas. The Eglin AFB Interstitial Area Final Range Environmental Assessment, Revision 1 (U.S. Air Force, 2009), documented chemical releases from the munitions of the same quantity and types as are associated with the current Proposed Action. The estimated annual quantity of chemicals generated from proposed training activities would be: antimony, 5 lbs.; barium, 5 lbs., chromium, 8 lbs.; hydrochloric acid, 79 lbs., and lead, 8 lbs. This chemical load would be distributed over all training areas. Therefore, the overall concentration of any chemical at any given location would be minute. Consequently, no significant adverse impacts are associated with the release of chemicals.
I_120-R2	I also have concerns about section 2.3.2.14 Emplacement of Obstacles EoO which involves placement of concertina wire along unpaved roads. Even if the area is manned, I am concerned about forest animals being placed at risk of injury by the concertina wire during their normal foraging	Based on input received during the public/agency DEIS review process, the Air Force has removed the use of concertina wire from the Proposed Action.

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	activities and movement across their native habitat, especially if animals run scared when panicked by sudden loud military training noises. The adverse effects of having concertina wire in place for any length of time and the potential for injury to animals attempting to cross the concertina wire blocked habitat has not been adequately addressed in the draft EIS.	
I_120-R3	I have additional concern about section 2.3.2.18 Natural Resource Consumption Table 2-10 NRC Details. Why would paintballs/plastic pellets, M18 smoke grenades, and 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62mm blanks, GBSs have any role in procurement of natural food sources such as small game, rodents, and vegetation while utilizing survival techniques such as trapping/snaring?	There would be no expendable use under Natural Resource Consumption. This has been corrected in the Final EIS.
I_121-R1	How could the military ever consider taking away the peace and tranquility of not only our homes but the home to so many wildlife that lives in the forest?	Please see Comment Response I_004-R2.
I_121-R2	...if Eglin didn't have enough property for training would be one thing but Eglin has thousands more than the Blackwater Forest has and they have Hurlburt , Tindall, Whiting Field, and the NAS Base. There is more than enough military property in the area for all bases to have more than enough training and if more space were needed I think the military should consider using some of the bases that have been closed or what about using some of the recreational property ya'll have opened to the public.	Please see Comment Response I_004-R2.
I_121-R3	...can you tell me who is going to pick up the 576,000 5.56 millimeter blank rounds (every single round and remember your operations will be done mostly at night)? And who is going to pick up the 196,200 blank rounds? And who is going to pick up the 4,038 smoke grenades?	Please see Comment Response A_016-R6.
I_121-R4	...what kind of impact will [the 5,172 ground burst simulators] have on the environment?	Use of ground burst simulators is discussed throughout the EIS in each resource section. Use of ground burst simulators would mainly result in effects on the environment from noise and waste materials on soils and in water resources. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise,

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		disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_121-R5	...are you going to tell us that none [of the 50,000 paintballs/plastic pellets] will get on the trees and greenery in the forest, who is going to wash it off all the trees? ....are [you] going to wait for the rain to come and hope it washes away all the paint on the trees and all the greenery and hope the plastic remains will be absorbed into the soil sooner or later.	Please see Comment Response A_016-R6.
I_121-R6	Who is going to prevent our wildlife from getting caught in your concertina wire?	Based on input received during the public/agency DEIS review process, the Air Force has removed the use of concertina wire from the Proposed Action.
I_121-R7	...you are going to destroy this beautiful forest and scare off the wildlife with all of your pyrotechnics, smoke grenades and your hundreds of thousands of blank's and paintballs, not to mention the thousands of added airplanes and helicopters flying above our heads...	Thank you for your comment. Eglin AFB supports a much higher level of this type of activity while sustaining exceptional and diverse habitats and numerous wildlife and protected species. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_122-R1	Roads in and around Blackwater have been closed for quiet some time due to over erosion of the soil and its adverse effects on the environment and waterways. Because of this it is damaging to the ecosystem if any type of vehicle maneuvers were to be performed in the area, I honestly cannot believe it is even being considered.	Please see Comment Response I_067-R10.
I_122-R2	Combat simulations could endanger certain species in the area and although a restriction is put on how close interactions with such species	We agree that complete and total safety of all species cannot be guaranteed. Some individuals would likely be affected. However,

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	would be there is no way to guarantee the complete and total safety of these animal species.	endangerment of populations would not occur. Additionally, there are certain protected species, such as red-cockaded woodpeckers and flatwood salamanders, for which habitats are well known. These species would be completely avoided and protected from harm.
I_122-R3	this one move could essentially reek havoc on surrounding towns causing a severe drop in tourism. People come from around the world to visit these forests and this initiative would rob them as well as the locals of the right to enjoy its natural beauty. This may be a small forest in comparison to most but it is loved by so many there is absolutely no reason to disturb it. No one can justify destroying an ecosystem, a community and its tourism profits, or a civilians right for the sake of combat simulate paintball training or aquatic maneuvers.	Certain ground and air maneuver training activities have been identified as resulting in potentially adverse socioeconomics impacts to the public. These impacts have been identified as adverse but not significant due to the assessment that these impacts are typically recoverable over the short-to-medium term with mitigations required to minimize the level of impact or potential for impact. In the event that a visitor does have an undesirable experience due to the Proposed Action, there would be potential for that visitor to not return to the area. If negative experiences associated with the Proposed Action become frequent and shared by an increasing number of visitors, the FFS and, potentially, local businesses could experience a loss of revenue from a decrease in the number of first time and repeat visitors. To minimize the impacts to recreational users and adjacent landowners, the Air Force would implement constraints identified in EIS Section 2.5 and avoidance of noise-sensitive areas. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_123-R1	My comments pertain to portions of BRSF TA-5, and BRSF TA-6. You may refer to Figure 2-6 BRSF Tactical Areas, or Figure 5-42 Land Use Types at BRSF. There are Forest uses needing protection for which you have not given consideration, in a large portion of BRSF TA-5 (the connected large area west of Juniper Creek), and a small portion of BRSF TA-6 (the small	Please see Comment Response I_021-R1.

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	area west of Juniper Creek. These are the areas of the horse trails and Dog Field Trial Area. The horse trail routes and Field Trial Area can be viewed in Figure 5-42 Land Use Types at BRSF. The route of the horse trails should have the same Noise Protection Level (Figures 5-16 and 5-17), and Ground Operations Protection Level (Figures 5-6 and 5-7), as the Coldwater Recreation Area Campground. The protections given to the campground should extend into the Forest for the lengths of all the horse trails and the Field Trial Area. Noise: Horses and dogs have sensitive hearing, and the areas they traverse should be considered "noise-sensitive areas". In addition, children are likely to be riding on horses at any given time, or accompanying the Field Trial dogs during competitions and training days. The above mentioned areas within BRSF TA-5 and BRSF TA-6 should have noise constraints of "Not approved for Overflight below 500 feet AGL", and "Not Approved for HLZ/DZ". (Figures 5-16 and 5-17).	
I_123-R2	There is a safety risk associated with helicopter overflight, which could cause a horse to spook, and has potential for injury to the rider, who could be a child	Please see Comment Response I_021-R1.
I_123-R3	Wildfires caused during the Proposed Action, which are not scheduled controlled burns, could trap horse riders and Field Trial dogs and other event participants.	Eglin AFB has strict procedures in place to avoid training-related fires. Before a mission begins, units must obtain the daily fire danger ratings, which may restrict the use of munitions depending on the fire rating condition. The fire danger rating is specific to each forest and units will obtain these ratings from each respective state owned forest before conducting training operations. Adherence to these restrictions is mandatory. Units must also appoint a fire marshal on a daily basis (eligible personnel must have a minimum rank of a noncommissioned officer or equivalent rank) while in the field to ensure all personnel have been trained concerning the safe use of incendiary devices and to supervise the immediate suppression of fires. These wildfire mitigations will be implemented on state owned leased land as part of the proposed action. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize

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		impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_123-R4	(Figure 5-42) Areas within TA-5 (the large area west of Juniper Creek), and TA-6 (the small portion west of Juniper Creek) are primarily used for horseback riding and dog Field Trials. HLZ/DZ and any Proposed Actions using paintballs and smoke grenades are not appropriate, or compatible, in these areas.	Please see Comment Response I_021-R1.
I_123-R5	Socioeconomics/Environmental Justice: The quality of a visitor's experience could be adversely impacted by the Proposed Action in BRSF TA-5 and BRSF TA-6, in the areas of the horse trails and dog Field Trial Area. Families who have an adverse experience will choose to NOT return to the Forest, causing an adverse economic impact on FFS revenue. Children participate in horse activities on the horse trails, and in activities within the dog Field Trial Area, and could experience an adverse impact from the Proposed Action.	Please see Comment Response I_021-R1.
I_124-R1	If the GRASI proposal is determined to proceed, I suggest a compromise where the military activity is only allowed for 6 months of the year. This would make it possible for visitors to plan ahead to visit and stay for some weeks and know there would be no military activity during their visit. In this way the GRASI proposal would not deter as many tourists and visitors from coming and enjoying the sanctity of the State Forest.	Please see Comment Response I_004-R2.
I_125-R1	There are Forest uses needing protection for which you have not given consideration, in a large portion of BRSF TA-5 (the connected large area west of Juniper Creek), and a small portion of BRSF TA-6 (the small area west of Juniper Creek). These are the areas of the horse trails and Dog Field Trial Area. The horse trail routes and Field Trial Area are shown in Figure 5-42 Land Use Types at BRSF. The route of the horse trails should have the same Noise Protection Level (Figures 5-16 and 5-17), and Ground Operations Protection Level (Figures 5-6 and 5-7), as the Coldwater Recreation Area Campground. The protections given to the campground should extend into the Forest for the lengths of all the horse trails and the Field Trial Area. Horses and dogs have sensitive hearing,	Please see Comment Response I_021-R1.

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	and the areas they traverse should be considered "noise-sensitive areas". Children are likely to be riding on horses at any given time, or accompanying the Field Trial dogs during competitons and training days. The above mentioned areas should have noise constraints.	
I_125-R2	Helicopter overflight can cause a horse to spook, and has potential for injury to the rider, who could be a child.	Helicopter overflights and horseback riding occur in conjunction on Eglin Air Force Base. There are no reports to suggest aircraft overflights result in horse-riding incidents or would startle horses more than other factors. Units on the ground would operate so that they would go unnoticed and avoid other human contact. As a proactive measure, the Air Force established activity buffer areas around stables and trails. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_125-R3	If a visitor has an undesirable experience due to the Proposed Action, they will not return to the Forest, causing a loss of revenue for the Florida Forest Service.	Please see Comment Response I_122-R3.
I_127-R1	The forests were designated for a number of public recreational uses (as well as other compatible uses). Military exercises is NOT a compatible use and would diminish and compromise the value of these public lands.	The goal of the Proposed Action is to conduct these training activities in a manner that is compatible with the use of the forest, as well as the respective Florida Forest Service (FFS) forest management plans, as stated in Section 2.5 of the EIS. The FFS would determine and, ultimately, decide the scope, frequency, duration, and location of training activities through the use permit/leasing process. Should any training activities prove to be incompatible, the FFS would make appropriate adjustments to the permit/lease agreement. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft

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		operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_128-R1	I do not believe that the draft EIS complies with the requirement stated in section 1502.14 of CEQ regulation 1502 on EIS preparation as stated below. "...agencies shall: (a) Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives, and for alternatives which were eliminated from detailed study, briefly discuss the reasons for their having been eliminated. (b) Devote substantial treatment to each alternative considered in detail including the proposed action so that reviewers may evaluate their comparative merits." The GRASI program proposes two disparate actions--(1) develop an electronic airspace in the central Gulf region, and (2) provide for on-ground training of special forces personnel. First, these two actions do not seem to be intimately interrelated and a reasonable alternative could be to implement one (emitters) but not the other (on-ground training). Why is this not considered and discussed? Second, no other alternatives besides the use of state conservation lands for special forces training are considered and discussed, despite the presence of significant private acreage within the travel times described as limiting in the EIS. Third, the environmental impact of special forces training on the natural resources of these state conservation lands is described as insignificant without any discussion of baseline population studies of any species, nor is there any commitment to pre-training surveys or follow-on monitoring to actually validate that very unscientific conclusion. I therefore conclude that the draft EIS on GRASI has failed to meet the federal requirement to "explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives" and is therefore flawed in its lack of compliance with both the spirit and the letter of the NEPA and its implementing regulations. The draft EIS must be withdrawn and substantially revised to include the reasonable	Please see Comment Response I_004-R2 regarding alternatives. EIS Chapters 4, 5, and 6 provide baseline information for each resource, as is applicable. Additionally, in Section 2.5, General Operational Constraints 2(c), 2(d), 3(l), and 3(m) specifically identify the requirements for pre- and post-mission surveys of affected environments and periodic updates of the baseline conditions.

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	alternatives suggested above as well as a discussion of other possible actions such as biological surveys, and resubmitted for public comment before being further processed within the chain of command of USAF and forwarded to the Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force for Installations and Environment for approval.	
I_130-R1	These written comments are intended to supplement the verbal comments I made at the June 3, 2014, public hearing in Carrabelle. At that hearing I respectfully requested that a public meeting be advertised and conducted in Wakulla County so that potentially affected Wakulla County residents will be informed of the GRASI proposal and will have a timely opportunity to provide comments for consideration. Because no such public meeting was or has since been advertised in Wakulla County's local newspaper for Wakulla County residents, I am now reiterating that request and am also asking that the time period for submitting comments be extended for a reasonable time period after a public meeting is conducted in Wakulla County. Again, I live directly across the Ochlockonee River from Tate's Hell State Forest, less than 4/10 mile from the nearest forest road and about 6/10 mile from the Womack Creek Recreational area. There are over three miles of Wakulla County residents such as myself living along the river across from THSF/TA-3, who are very much potentially affected by this proposal, who were not given proper notice or opportunity for input. I would not have known about the proposal or hearings in other counties had I not happened across an article in the Tallahassee Democrat, a Leon County newspaper. Many of my neighbors do not read newspapers from other counties and do not even know about this proposal, so it is imperative that Wakulla County residents be notified in the Wakulla News (or by mail) and a meeting conducted in Wakulla County (Sopchoppy or Crawfordville), followed by a reasonable comment period.	The Air Force conducted public involvement by implementing the requirements of 40 CFR, Part 1506.6, which states that Agencies shall: (b) Provide public notice of NEPA-related hearings, public meetings, and the availability of environmental documents so as to inform those persons and agencies who may be interested or affected. It further states that we should advertise in "papers of general circulation." Wakulla County has no daily newspaper that is published inside of the county. Therefore, we purchased advertising space in the Tallahassee Democrat, the daily newspaper that services Wakulla County, in an effort to reach all the potentially interested persons within the Democrat's readership. Two hearings for Tate's Hell Forest area were held in Carrabelle and Apalachicola, the two most centrally located and easily reached locations by all the surrounding potentially impacted populations.
I_130-R2	While I appreciate efforts to provide noise buffers for residential areas, I request that further studies be conducted and protections expanded to ensure the proposed noise protection levels are sufficient to ensure quiet enjoyment of our homes at all times. Noise travels much differently across the river than it does through the forest, and residents are there at all times--even when the hunters and recreational users are not. As such, additional restrictions proposed for inhabited recreational areas and for night operations during hunting season should be provided year-round and	Restrictions on flying were designed with the goal of avoiding time-averaged noise levels in excess of 55 dB DNL at known noise-sensitive locations, such as residential parcels. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has indicated that minimal impacts to human health and welfare would occur at levels below 55 dB DNL. While the proposed restrictions on flying would not entirely avoid disruptions due to noise, disruptions would be reduced in intensity and frequency of occurrence at residences and other noise-sensitive

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	at all times near residential areas. In addition, the more restrictive noise protection level proposed for Carrabelle should be applied to all residential areas.	locations. Restricting operations to night hours only during hunting season is ideal for hunters, because it avoids disruption of the hunt. However, expansion of this restriction to the entire year would not necessarily be desirable for many residents because it would increase nighttime noise. No particular noise protection levels have been established for Carrabelle.
I_131-R1	I have some concerns to the Use of my Home State area's which were initiallly meant for public use . These training exercises , I am almost certain would restrict areas that were intended to be free to use for the open Public. I feel this is an Infringement on Florida Citizens rights to Use these "State Parks " as seemn fit and intended.	Please see Comment Response I_054-R2.
I_131-R2	I have some other concerns about the wildlife impact of certain proposed uses . One Major Example is the Document describes the use of Smoke Grenandes . But does not describe if the use of CS Gas Grenades will or will not be . I know the use of the said Devices are considered non harmful , but the residue left (even if temporary) Could impact an area where some wildlife could be utilizing . I know as training for some forces NBC is of great concern and one way to do this is expose troops to CS gas and don NBC protective Equipment . Residue would be left over from such training and could cause a disruption in normal behavior Patterns for any Wildlife within an Affected area .	No CS gas grenades are proposed for use.
I_131-R3	I'd also like to add that Eglin AFB and the Naval Base already have Large Areas in which to " Train " . So I am curious as to why would our State Park needs to be invaded and Utilized as well . I believe and I'm sure many other Citizens would see this as a Land Grab and it will not be welcomed . In closing , I believe the Areas already being used by the US Armed Forces of NorthWest Florida Region are more then satisfactory for any current or future Exercises . Leave Our State Parks as they are " For the Citizens Only " .	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_132-R1	There are plenty of other places the military can train and play Army. . . Go somewhere else to do your bidding. Leave the people who have lived here in quietude, and those who have come here to find this dwindling resource, alone.	Please see Comment Response I_004-R2.
I_133-R1	I registered my concerns on the GRASI website during the scoping process as well as attended the meeting in Milton to voice my concerns publicly. So many others, both connected to BRSF and THSF, also have done so. We,	Section 1.6.1 of the EIS describes the public scoping process, the issues identified during the process, and where in the EIS those issues are addressed. NEPA implementing regulations do not require

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	in good faith, volunteered our time and incurred personal expenses to study the proposal, attend meetings, write letters, make phone calls, send emails, all in an effort to get up to speed on this proposal so that we could present our concerns and help to educate the members of the GRASI panel about the sensitive ecological nature of these forests and the recreational and emotional benefits they provide to the surrounding communities. Unlike the members of the military and the state forest employees, who get paid to attend meetings, study the data, publish documents and have their expenses reimbursed, ours are not. We have acted in good faith, making these sacrifices because the forests are that important to us (and to the flora and fauna that live there). So you may imagine my surprise when I opened the EIS document and found no indication that our voices were heard or our concerns taken in to consideration. In fact, the activity levels in the EIS proposal are much higher than I anticipated, considering all that has been presented to the military by our local concerned citizens. This is disheartening. I am not sure my voice will be heard this time around either but I will at least respond in good faith and register some my concerns again.	responses to individual scoping comments. However, all scoping comments received were provided in Appendix B of the EIS and input considered as part Draft EIS development. All public comments associated with the Draft EIS have been included in the Final EIS as well, and those substantive comments submitted have been responded to.

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I_133-R2	My primary concern is noise pollution. From the official GRASI EIS website, the chart on Use of Expendables shows a proposed allowable use of 800,000 (rounded) shots per year! How can 800,000 rounds of ammunition be discharged in the forest and not impact the wildlife and the people? I fear it will drive both away. Will one stop the sound of gunfire and explosives at the edge of a hardened campsite? . .And if 800,000 rounds each year were not enough, we have the additional noise of airdrops and landings. Per the Airdrop Details Per Event chart in this EIS proposal, there can be up to 928 air drops per year with up to 4 aircraft involved. 928 x 4 = 3,712 aircraft events in the area over the course of a single year! This, in addition to the Whiting Field helicopters that are already in BRSF. I recognize this is a maximum amount but this proposal is totally unrealistic. There are people living in the forest scattered throughout. . .And on the ground, the request in the OPVO Details Per Event chart is for up to 50 trips by Humvees each week for a total of 2,600 trips per year!	The number of training events, blank rounds fired, etc., stated in the EIS are conservative estimates. The Air Force chose to use conservative estimates to ensure that it does not inadvertently understate actual number of events and resulting impacts to users and residents of the state forests. As is acknowledged in EIS Sections 3.3, 5.3, and 6.3, noise generated by proposed training would potentially be disruptive to wildlife and people. However, the proposed training events would take place throughout a very large area such that noise experienced at any particular location would be relatively infrequent. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_133-R3	Will one adequately clean up 800,000 rounds year over year? What will be the cumulative effects?	Please see Comment Response A_016-R6.
I_133-R4	I feel there is a misconception about those of us who use the forest regularly and I will reiterate what I explained earlier in the scoping process. We, the recreational users of the forest, do NOT stay solely within the boundaries of Krul, Bear, Hurricane and Karick Lake recreation areas. There seems to be a presumption among the GRASI panel that these are the only areas where a concern for recreational users is to be made. We are in the woods, the creeks, the dirt roads and the trails throughout the forest. And on the ground, the request in the OPVO Details Per Event chart is for up to 50 trips by Humvees each week for a total of 2,600 trips per year! Again, I find it remarkable that so many people went to such lengths to educate the military on the nature of the forest to have a request so high. How can it not have an impact on others who are traversing the forest, riding bicycles on forest roads, birdwatching, etc?	As discussed in the EIS, some interactions with other park users can be expected. However, training activities would avoid use of established recreational sites, and activity buffers have been established around adjacent residences and recreational sites (see Section 2.5 of the EIS), thus minimizing the potential impacts. There would be no off-road vehicle use, and the goal of training activities within the forest proper is to avoid detection--troops would avoid interactions with the public as much as possible. Only small portions of the forest would be used in accordance with applicable Florida Forest Service (FFS) management plans, per EIS Section 2.3.2. The goal is to conduct training activities in a compatible manner with existing forest uses and to not preclude use of identified recreational areas or uses. Ultimately, the FFS would determine through use

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		permits/lease agreements the location, duration, and frequency of training activities permitted in the forests. As part of the use permit/lease agreement, the Air Force would work with the FFS to identify training locations suitable for use to minimize interactions with park users and residences and would adjust training locations should they prove to be incompatible. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_133-R5	I am not a hunter but it seems to me that the pressures of hunting during the day followed by explosives, aircraft and vehicles during the night (restrictions suggested during hunting season) will drive these game animals (and non-game animals) out of the forest permanently. Too much stress and they will not be able to sustain themselves or reproduce. The hunters and people like me, nature watchers, will be impacted due to this decline in animal population.	Thank you for your comment. For years similar scenarios have characterized the military and recreational usage at Eglin AFB, which has one of the best managed wildlife and protected species programs in the nation and some of the highest quality habitat in this region. Evidence does not support the notion there would be a decline in animal populations at BRSF or THSF from the proposed action. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.

Table B-5. Air Force Response to Comments, Cont'd

Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
I_133-R6	We seek solitude and nature. This is where one finds peace and can enjoy sighting birds, other wildlife and pretty blooming wildflowers. This is where one finds nature in tact. We go there to listen to the sounds of frogs, crickets, birds, and the wind in the trees. We take photos of pitcher plants and other flowering plants. Having this number of aircraft flying over, some hovering at tree level and some landing, will absolutely have a detrimental effect on the quality of life for all concerned: the residents, the recreational users and the wildlife. It simply goes against common sense to state otherwise...Our quality of life and quality of experience will be diminished.	Impacts to recreational users and adjacent landowners would be minimized through implementation of General Operational Constraints identified in EIS Section 2.5 and avoidance of noise-sensitive areas. While noise impacts can be minimized, the Air Force recognizes that noise cannot be completely avoided due to the transient nature of training activities and recreational users and the varying perception of annoyance among members of the public. While the impacts associated with training are considered adverse due to the potential decrease in the quality of the recreational experience by these impacts, they would not preclude recreational use or cause general incompatibility, and impacts would be short term. The Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_133-R7	2,600 humvee trips on the roads plus 3,712 air drops plus 800,000 rounds of ammunition --- in just one year. Then again the following year and then the next. What will be the cumulative effect? No one can reasonably state that these activities, especially in the quantities listed above, will have little to no impact on the quality of life for the residents, visitors and wildlife of the forest.	Cumulative impacts are discussed in Chapter 8 of the EIS. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.

Table B-5. Air Force Response to Comments, Cont'd

Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
I_134-R1	There is concern that if any level of military training is allowed at this time, this would only be the beginning of a gradual increase that would be to the detriment of citizen users. This statement from the report lends credence to that concern, (Section 2-4, page 70): "The training capacity of each state forest individually. . .still does not fully meet the training requirements as part of the GRASI planning process. . .does not resolve the anticipated future capacity issues." Will the military take action in the future to subsume even more of BRFS for its use, reducing access by the public?... Day-to-day training implies that for at least 60 - 65% of the year, somewhere in the forest, there will be troop movements, helicopters, large wheeled vehicles, bivouacking activities, airplanes, and war games " all of which will contribute to other forms of pollution or degradation including air pollution and ground degradation, especially trampling of sensitive environmental species. Sharing the forest with small numbers of Special Ops troops is one thing. Regularly having 72 troops, on a "day-to-day" basis doing cross-country maneuvers and having large trucks or helicopters delivering bivouacking resources to support those troops, is a different kind of assault on the experience of recreational users who may find themselves encountering any of these on the roads or in the forest. I urge those completing this final EIS to recommend significantly scaling back the number of days and the number of military operations of each type which involve noise-generating and pollution-generating equipment and/or personnel.	There is no plan to utilize FFS lands for incompatible activities if Air Force lands are available. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_134-R2	The report identifies noise pollution as an "annoyance." I identify it as an "assault." Above all things, the forest offers solitude and serenity and the ability to hear the songs of nature. I am personally offended by the number of helicopters currently being allowed to use the airspace. To increase it to levels implied in the USAF documents, would be nothing but an all-out assault on the senses. The idea of listening to helicopters hovering for up to a half-hour to do drops/pick-ups is unacceptable. So I, for one, am offended by the EIS use of the word, "annoy." Much too cavalier an attitude in a report of this substance.	The experience of noise is subjective. By definition, noise is unwanted sound, but the degree to which it is unwanted varies from person to person. The term "annoy" is broad because the range of reactions of individual people to noise is broad. The scoping and public comment portions of the Environmental Impact Analysis Process allow the action proponent and decision-makers to understand the feelings of individuals about the Proposed Action.
I_134-R3	In Section 3-73 (page 185) is this statement, "However, animal species would likely habituate to aircraft presence over time, given the ongoing tempo of day-to-day training." Why should animal species be subjected to this when they are in their native setting? I would postulate that we will see	Thank you for your comment. Animals react and adapt to a number of natural and anthropogenic disturbances every day. For years similar actions have occurred at Eglin AFB, which has a number of protected species, high diversity, and some of the highest quality

Table B-5. Air Force Response to Comments, Cont'd

Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
	diminishing of diversity of species if these actions are allowed to go forward.	habitat in the region. Evidence does not support the notion there would be a decline in animal populations or decreased diversity of species at BRSF or THSF from the Proposed Action.
I_135-R1	Military training exercises such as low-level aircraft operations and the possibility of encountering military activities such as ground maneuvers or closed areas will diminish the outdoor experience by the public considerably.	Please see Comment Response I_054-R2.
I_135-R2	These same disturbances will also affect wildlife although such effects will be very difficult to quantitate. Of particular concern are possible effects on the Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) colonies. In Table 2-24, it states that there will be a 200' buffer around RCW cavity trees for ground operations. However, in Section 2-32 O), it states that activities within 200' of identified RCW trees will not exceed 2 hours and Section 2-25 states that there is an air operations buffer of 500' around RCW trees. If troops are within the buffer zone, I feel that they should get out of it as soon as practical...Also, there is at least one eagle nest in BRSF. Check with the local Florida FWC detachment at BRSF for the location(s) and correct the information in Table 2-24.	Thank you for your comment. While the impact of a specific effector on RCWs cannot be quantified, the health and reproduction of the population can be monitored. As with colonies at Eglin AFB, the practice of establishing buffers has proved to be effective, as populations have been stable or increasing for many years, even as military activity has increased. The FWC has agreed to provide updated information with regard to species locations at BRSF. Figures in Chapter 5 in the Final EIS depict the location of the eagle nest at BRSF and Section 5.8 has been updated accordingly. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_135-R3	The dirt and gravel roads in BRSF are very erodible and several of them are currently almost impassable except be truck or 4-wheel drive vehicles. If military vehicles further degrade such roads or stream crossings, some of the forest will become inaccessible to people without 4-wheel drive.	Please see Comment Response I_067-R10.
I_135-R4	In Table 2.21, a restriction on watercraft usage is "No power boats in Bear Lake (BRSF)" I believe that only electric motors are allowed in BRSF lakes and the language should be changed in table 2.21 to reflect that. Will aircraft perform low-level simulated strafing or bombing runs on the emitter sites? If so, it should be addressed in the EIS.	The restriction for boats on Bear Lake was provided by the Florida Forest Service. There would be no low-level simulated strafing or bombing runs on the emitter sites.

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Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
I_136-R1	Why can't the training be done at Eglin, Whiting or NAS and not in BRSF?	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_138-R1	I reviewed the GRASI Landscape Initiative. I immediately had a "Huh?" moment when reading the "Why Is The Proposed Action Needed?" panel. The stated reason, as I read it, is that there is conflict when attempting to schedule non-hazardous operations because, naturally, hazardous ops take priority and trump all others. So this proposal is to create other dedicated non-hazardous (for now) zones in order to maintain readiness of our forces. My comment is this: There will always be a hierarchy and priority list for operations; even hazardous activities have to be scheduled amongst themselves. Someone in charge is not assigning the proper priority to these non-hazardous training operations. The answer cannot be to just create new training areas, expand boundaries, or to disregard/dissolve land-use agreements. The stock response is that both hazardous and non-hazardous activities need to happen concurrently. However, I know that this has been the way we've been training all these years--just the proposed scope will increase. And that may be the real issue. One thing I was taught about bureaucracy and organizations is that they inherently have their self-interest and justification first and foremost in mind	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_142-R1	The grasi report addresses the harm of radiation to humans but does not address the effects on wildlife. ... Another concern is the procurement of natural food (PNF). There is a concern that many endangered species are in both forest and there would be very little interest in trying to avoid them being trapped or gathered for food.	With regard to EMR exposure to wildlife please see Comment Response I_048-R2. In addition to avoidance of known protected species habitats and nest locations, units would be trained to identify and avoid protected species that transit through the forests as described in EIS Section 2.3.2.18. As per EIS Section 2.5 Operation Constraint 5(l), the Air Force would comply with hunting, trapping and fishing regulations as identified by the FFS. Survival training is a critical component of military training. It involves foraging and training personnel on critical survival skills (which includes teaching how to prepare traps and snares). It does not involve substantial consumption of natural resources and the likelihood of successful snaring or trapping is traditionally minimal - therefore the likelihood of impacting a sensitive species is very low. The Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use

Table B-5. Air Force Response to Comments, Cont'd

Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
		outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_142-R2	Your report states that maneuvers would be restricted in sensitive areas but you don't address that to cross country maneuvers and night time maneuvers CCDM and BD and VSWC. . . . . Your report does not give any other alternative for Eglin's need for more space due to scheduling.	The restrictions apply to all maneuvers (see EIS Section 2.5). Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.regarding alternatives.
I_143-R1	Not only will the noise from planes, helicopters, and vehicles destroy the serenity of the forest for visitors, it will be unsettling for the animals and make it difficult for them to communicate...Survival training will deplete the forest of animals that have been attracted to this restored environment and affect the food supply for the animals living there. The military has pledged to avoid only those animals that are federally listed, with no consideration for animals of concern in Florida.	Noise would not be continuous. Survival training has been occurring on Eglin AFB for many years and has not had a detrimental impact on wildlife populations. The Air Force does consider potential impacts to species of concern as discussed in Sections 3.8, 5.8, and 6.8 of the Final EIS.
I_143-R2	The soil in the forest is highly erodible. The park service's stream crossings were not developed for the heavy traffic of Humvees and 2.5 ton trucks. This traffic will affect the water quality and the organisms that depend on that quality.	Please see Comment Response I_067-R10.
I_143-R3	Suggested alternatives would be cleaning up hazardous areas on Eglin Air Force Base and leasing or purchasing unrestored land.	Please see Comment Response I_004-R2.
I_145-R1	Currently Tactical Map ES-5 shows three proposed FWALS for T.H.S.F. in TA-2, TA-6, and TA-8. I am familar with those dirt roadways that are proposed in support of aircraft operations, such as CV-22 landing zones. According to the two reference documents that I have attached to these comments, I do not think the proposed areas can be utilized within the restriction parameters listed in Tables ES-2 and ES-1. I have attached as reference an article from Air Force Civil Engineer, Vol. 21, No.3, 2013 regarding improvement of unimproved landing area on Melrose Air Force Range, N.M. to provide suitability for repeated take-offs and landings of CV-22 Osprey aircraft. The article indicates that to meet training requirements, the landing area must be a minimum 240-foot diameter	Based on input during the public/agency DEIS review process, with the exception of use of Blackwater Airfield FWALS activity has been remvoed from the Proposed Action.

Table B-5. Air Force Response to Comments, Cont'd

Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
	circle. I question whether that criteria can be met at the locations proposed for FWALS in Tate's Hell State Forest, without additional clearing, or disturbance of wetlands or floodplains as stated in Tables ES-2 and ES-1.	
I_145-R2	In addition, I note that the tables state, "no new impervious surfaces". I would like the Air Force to define impervious as it relates to the construction materials/methods allowed in LZ/DZs as well as FWALS. Specifically, will the Air Force or Florida Forest Service be employing the use of aggregates or synthetic fluid soil treatments to stablize these areas against structural and heat damage on roads from CV-22 exhaust and downwash as described in detail in the Air Force Civil Engineer article about the MAFR landing pad construction? I am concerned that these construction methods and landings/takeoff/hover operations will result in significant adverse and irreversible impacts to the hydrology, water, and soil quality to the immediate area, and cumulatively, to the water table, leaving sterile zones that will persist for decades and be nearly impossible to mitigate.	Impervious surface, within the context of this EIS, means a surface that is impervious to water penetration (e.g., concrete, metal). Pervious surfaces, such as dirt or gravel, allow for water percolation and reduce potential for stormwater sheet flow. There is no proposal to construct a landing pad; landing areas would be as described in Sections 2.3.2.1 and 2.3.2.1. No aggregates or synthetic fluid soil treatments are proposed for use. As discussed in EIS Section 2.5, all activity areas would be monitored, and any issues identified resolved through coordination with the Florida Forest Service. Impacts to hydrology, water, and soils are discussed in the appropriate EIS sections.
I_145-R3	That information has led me to ask the Air Force to address my second Environmental Impact Statement concern: the potential hazards created by the heat and petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL) from aircraft engines. Please refer to my second attached reference document, dated April 2, 2014, from the Department of the Air Force, Air Fore Civil Engineer Center on Tyndall Air Force Base Florida. This is an Engineering Technical letter (ETL) providing guidance to Air Force and Naval engineers on surface treatments to alleviate damage to portland cement concrete caused by extreme exhaust heat and POVs from CV-22 landing, take-off, and hover operations. According to the letter, at times, the concrete can become so hot that the water inside becomes vaporized, causing scaling of the concrete. While the roads in Tate's Hell are not concrete, they do contain some of the same chemical compounds found in concrete, such as calcium carbonate, but in a more permeable form.	There would be negligible potential hazards created by petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POLs) from aircraft engines. As discussed in EIS Section 2.5, any leaks of petroleum from the aircraft would be immediately repaired and any petroleum that reaches the ground would be mitigated, which may include the removal and replacement of any petroleum-containing soils. CV-22 operations would be conducted only on areas deemed suitable for such operations. This would include avoidance of roads or other surfaces that would be damaged by the engine exhaust. Finally, to avoid potential wildfires, CV-22 operations may be restricted on days with high fire danger.
I_145-R4	Such intense aircraft exhaust heat poses a serious fire risk in times of drought. Even though Tate's Hell is mostly wetlands, the open, grassy and weedy areas along roadsides are often the first to dry out. On other public lands, such as St. Vincent NWR, wildfires have been known to start from just the contact of high, dry, roadside grass with the hot underside of truck chassis. For that reason, I am very concerned about the compatibility of	As discussed in EIS Section 2.5, aircraft operations would be conducted only on areas deemed suitable for such operations. This would include avoidance of roads or other surfaces that would be damaged by the engine exhaust. As per Section 2.5 Operational Constraint 2(d), the Air Force would develop a methodology for conducting inspections of action areas to identify the extent of

Table B-5. Air Force Response to Comments, Cont'd

Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
	military aircraft and ground training operations with the sylvaculture and management missions of these state Forests.	environmental impact to training areas and adjustment of constraints and mitigations as necessary. To avoid potential wildfires, CV-22 operations would be restricted on days with high fire danger. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_145-R5	For example, when others are under a "no fire or fireworks" red flag condition, would these high-risk operations and manuevers with pyrotechnics continue, and under what provisions?	The Air Force would be held to the same standards, as described in EIS Section 2.5, per General Operational Constraint 5(vv).
I_145-R6	Likewise, I am concerned that the present road surfaces in Tate's Hell will not provide an effective barrier to retard the migration of POVs into the water table during rainfall events, while the extreme heat from the engine exhaust will likely hasten the process. As such, CV-22 operations in T.H.S.F. would seem to pose an unacceptable risk of significant adverse and irreversible impacts to the hydrology, water, and soil quality to the immediate area the entire basin which drains to Apalachicola Bay. The costs to mitigate those impacts would likely be high both in economic terms, and in terms of further damage to the ecosystem.	As discussed in EIS Section 3.12.3, there is little potential for spills or leaks, and as identified in Section 2.5, no maintenance activities would occur within the forests. Any potential spill would likely result from an equipment malfunction and may consist of small, localized fluid leaks that would be contained per Section 2.5.
I_146-R2	NOISE... Noise is specifically addressed in sections 3.3, 4.3, 5.3, 6.3, and Appendix H of the EIS. It is also commented on in various other sections in relation to effects on specific receptors. The discussion in Appendix H is particularly good as relates to general overview and definitions. Unfortunately nowhere in the EIS is the uniqueness of the forest environment addressed. This environment is exceedingly quiet and what sound is present; e.g., wind, insects, birdcalls, etc.; is generally considered pleasant and/or soothing to humans and animals. The intrusiveness of foreign sounds, i.e., noise, is very great and noise criteria should reflect this. The EIS fails in this regard.	Additional text has been added to Final EIS Sections 3.3, 5.3, and 6.3 discussing current noise levels in the state forests. Because ambient noise levels in the forest are low, lower noise thresholds were used in this EIS than would be applied for an analysis of an action in a more densely populated area (see Section 3.3.3 of the Draft EIS).

Table B-5. Air Force Response to Comments, Cont'd

Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
I_146-R3	NOISE... Aircraft... Table 3-9 gives the sound exposure level (SEL) at ground level for various aircraft. These are assumed to be single event SEL, therefore multiple aircraft would have 6dB to 12 dB higher levels depending on the number of aircraft. In addition as stated in Appendix H.1.2.5, these levels should have an "onset adjustment" of up to 11 dB added to them. The onset adjustment would be higher for low flying aircraft (below 1000 ft.) and less for aircraft at higher elevations such as 10,000 ft. Combining these adjustments the values in Table 3-9 are 11 dB to 23 dB too low. The higher values should be used to perform the impact on the receptors in the forest.	EIS Table 3-9 lists SEL values for individual aircraft directly overflying a listener. Direct overflight is relatively rare (most overflights are offset from the listener laterally), and the vast majority of overflights would generate lower noise levels that those listed in Table 3-9. Many of the GLI training missions would be conducted with a single aircraft. When two aircraft fly together as during formation flight, noise energy is doubled, which equates to an increase in overall individual overflight noise level of 3 dB (see Appendix H, Section H.1.1). In most cases, aircraft fly such that the noise of two aircraft flying together on a low-level route do not reach maximum level at exactly the same. As a result, the additive noise level of two overflights is generally less than 3 dB greater than the level generated by a single aircraft. Formations including overflight of more than two aircraft together result in longer-duration noise events, with the duration depending on the specific sequencing of the aircraft. Text has been added to Section 3.3 of the Final EIS to describe the noise generated by multiple aircraft flying together. Low-altitude training would not typically involve more than two aircraft flying together. Even at top speeds, the rotorcraft and propeller-driven aircraft that would be used in GLI training are not particularly fast relative to fighter and high-speed bomber aircraft. Application of the onset-rate penalty to aircraft listed in Table 3-9 does not change the whole number SEL decibel values listed (i.e., onset rate-adjusted SEL [SELr] and unadjusted SEL are the same when rounded to nearest whole number).
I_146-R4	NOISE: Aircraft: Not only are the adjusted SEL higher than was previously used, the criteria for noise levels in the forest are overstated. The references used to determine allowable Day-Night Levels (DNL or Ldn) are for urban or suburban areas where there are continuous sound sources present. The forest is even quieter than a rural setting as there are few highways, few farms or ranches and no concentrated housing. There are very few vehicles, no air conditioner units, no emergency vehicles, and no or few businesses. The criteria for the forest area should be 5 dB to 10 dB quieter than the suburban area and at least 5 dB quieter than a rural area. This means that all criteria lines as shown in Figures 5-21 through 5-24 for the Blackwater River State Forest (BRSF) should use a DNL criterion of 45 dB, rather than 55 dB. The noise impact analysis represented by Figures 6-	Text has been added to Final EIS Sections 3.3, 5.3, and 6.3 stating measured ambient noise levels in a wilderness area and specifically acknowledging that some portions of the state forests are very quiet most of the time. The criteria noise levels selected for application to known noise sensitive locations (55 dB DNL) is, in fact, 10 decibels lower than the threshold noise level typically applied in standard suburban or urban areas (i.e., 65 dB DNL). Landing sites in Tate's Hell State Forest (THSF) would be exposed to a similar pattern of noise levels to those landing sites proposed for Blackwater River State Forest (BRSF) (depicted in EIS Figures 5-21 through 5-24). THSF differs from BRSF, in that THSF includes fewer private inholding land parcels. Landing sites in BRSF were determined to be

Table B-5. Air Force Response to Comments, Cont'd

Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
	12 through 6-22 should be redone using the higher SEL and lower criteria to determine THSF noise protection levels. A similar analysis to that for BWSF should be done for the Tate's Hell State Forest (THSF) fixed wing landing sites. In addition there should be a standard or typical contour or "footprint" for helicopter landing zones (LZ) and drop zones (DZ) for both areas. This would allow the determination of the acceptability of an LZ/DZ site selection.	distant enough from any known noise-sensitive locations that a categorical statement could be made that no known noise-sensitive locations would be affected at or above 55 dB DNL. However, please note that, based on input received during the public/agency DEIS review process, with the exception of use of Blackwater Airfield, FWALS activity has been removed from the Proposed Action. The tactical flight profiles and frequency of occurrence of Landing Zone (LZ) and Drop Zone (DZ) training would be nominally the same at designated training locations in THSF as in BRSF. Therefore, the same 2,200-foot lateral offset from known noise-sensitive locations was applied to LZ/DZs in both forests in determining acceptability of an LZ/DZ site selection.
I_146-R5	The effects of noise on the forest and the use of the forest have not been adequately addressed... The expectations of people visiting the forest are for a serene, quiet and clean environment. The intrusion of noise as either flyovers, or military training and vehicles is much higher than in rural or suburban areas. Military activities will disrupt at least some civilian activities and traditional uses of the forest, whether it is hunting, fishing, bird watching, hiking, etc.	The potential for military training noise to disrupt activities ongoing in the forest is acknowledged in EIS sections 5.3 and 6.3. State forest user and resident expectations with regard to low noise levels in state forests were a few of the many considerations when selecting noise level goals for known noise-sensitive locations used in this EIS. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_146-R6	The effects of noise on the forest and the use of the forest have not been adequately addressed... These interruptions will be exaggerated but will lead to fewer people using the forest, reduced property values, and bad publicity. Individuals exposed to excessive noise levels will be very annoyed and have negative reactions such as avoiding future trips to the forest, protests, contacting news media, contact of local, state and national political office holders and legal action.	Mitigations described in the noise sections (EIS Sections 3.3, 4.3, and 5.3), safety sections (Sections 3.4, 4.4, and 5.4), and the land use sections (Sections 3.10, 4.10, and 5.10) would be implemented to minimize, to the extent possible, the potential safety, noise, and land use impacts that could subsequently have an effect on tourism and recreation. Sections 5.11 and 6.11 of the Final EIS discuss the potential impacts to home values and the concerns expressed by several home owners in the region of influence.

Table B-5. Air Force Response to Comments, Cont'd

Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
I_146-R7	The effects of noise on the forest and the use of the forest have not been adequately addressed... No definitive studies have been made but anecdotal evidence indicates the high noise levels can and will damage local wildlife, scare off targets of hunting, and frighten birds, bears, and other creatures. There have been no positive civilian effects identified with having training in the forest and only minor military scheduling benefits.	Appendix H provides more detail on the effects of noise on wildlife. Noise levels would not be sufficient enough to harm wildlife, though some individuals may startle depending on the proximity of the activity and presence of people/vehicles.
I_146-R8	NOISE: Expendables (Bombs and Blanks): . As pointed out in Table 3-12 the noise level of 5.56 mm blanks is still 87 dB (pk) at 525 feet. While Army Regulation 200-1 recommends this sound level for land use purposes, this is not a land use issue but a noise avoidance issue so is excessive for the forest environment. A criteria that is more consistent with the background sound for the forest would be 65 dB(pk) or 55 dB CDNL. This would modify Table 3-12 as shown below. Note that the distance for 5.56-mm blanks and ground burst simulator is over a mile while for the 7.62-mm blanks is over 9 miles. Using these criteria will require updating numerous maps in Section 5 and 6 and other protection areas.	Table 3-12 represents the distance at which sound is reduced to below 15dB. No changes to Table 3-12 are necessary. As noted in EIS Sections 5.3.1 and 6.3.1, both BRSF and THSF are used currently for hunting and are, therefore, exposed to the sound of live-round gunfire during at least some portions of the year. As noted in Section 3.3.3, blank rounds used in GLI training are quieter than live rounds. Lateral offset from known noise-sensitive locations for munitions use during training would reduce noise levels to below noise level thresholds recommended in Army Regulation (AR) 200-1. The recommendations in AR 200-1 are for application to land uses near established munitions training ranges with regularly occurring munitions noise. In THSF, proposed GLI training would be distributed throughout a large area such that any one location would experience munition noise relatively infrequently (see EIS Section 6.3.2.2). In BRSF, noise-generating expendables would be used at two specified locations. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_146-R9	AIR QUALITY: The methodology of the EIS on air pollution grossly underestimates the effects of the Proposed Action on the forest and the	The Air Force disagrees with the commenter's assertion that air pollution is grossly underestimated. The significance methodology

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	users of the forest. Comparing total annual emissions in tons per year reduces the actual impact to insignificance. A more proper method would be to compare short-term pollution levels in parts per million (ppm) to allowable exposure limits. As an example, what is the possibility that a visitor to the forest, either hiking or canoeing will cross the path of the smoke? The EIS should determine the dissipation time of any emissions from smoke bomb and other ordinance to determine exposure time to plants, animals and humans. Regardless of the dissipation time some residue will occur. The EIS should determine both the amount and constituents of the residue from these devices and the likelihood that the residue would go into the environment. The EIS needs to be revised to include these items.	utilized in the EIS has been used in numerous NEPA documents and has undergone stringent review. In fact, the EIS utilizes a more stringent significance level than is typically utilized, as indicated in EIS Section 3.5.1. Most NEPA documents would utilize the USEPA-Mobile (Alabama)-Pensacola-Panama City (Florida)-Southern Mississippi Interstate Air Quality Control Region designated Air Quality Control Region, which encompasses the following counties in Alabama, Florida, and Mississippi: Baldwin County, Escambia County, Mobile County in Alabama; Bay County, Calhoun County, Escambia County, Gulf County, Holmes County, Jackson County, Okaloosa County, Santa Rosa County, Walton County, Washington in Florida; Adams County, Amite County, Clairborne County, Clarke County, Copiah County, Covington County, Forrest County, Franklin County, George County, Greene County, Hancock County, Harrison County, Hinds County, Jackson County, Jasper County, Jefferson County, Jefferson Davis County, Jones County, Lamar County, Lauderdale County, Lawrence County, Lincoln County, Madison County, Marion County, Newton County, Pearl River County, Perry County, Pike County, Rankin County, Scott County, Simpson County, Smith County, Stone County, Walthall County, Warren County, Wayne County, Wilkinson County in Mississippi. However, the GRASI EIS utilized only those counties being affected. The commenter indicates that short-term concentrations should be compared to allowable exposure limits. This assertion assumes that there are short-term allowable exposure limits for human activities in the forest. This assumption is inaccurate, since exposure limits are typically associated with industrial environments and not the forest ecosystem. The National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) are the limits established for the United States as a whole. Based on the current level of emissions and the projected levels associated with the GRASI activities, it is not anticipated that the NAAQS would be exceeded. The EIS recognizes the concern of the commenter regarding residues. On Page 3-72 the EIS states: "Expendables can also produce chemical residue that could potentially impact wildlife through direct contact, ingestion, inhalation, or bioconcentration. The most likely opportunity for such exposure would be immediately after

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		the smoke has been dispelled. However, wildlife would most likely leave the area during training exercises, thereby reducing the likelihood of direct exposure. The potential for ingestion or inhalation of particles in sufficient amounts to cause harm is also low, due to wind-driven distribution of smoke particles."
I_146-R10	Paint balls are planned for use in both forests. Not all of the paint balls will hit their target. Where and how is the contamination of the "misses" taken into account? Are sections of the forest going to be painted and how long will this eyesore last? What kind and amount of contaminate will the paint balls introduce? Is it harmful to plants, animals or humans?	Paint balls are predominantly composed of polyethylene glycol, gelatin, glycerol, sorbitol, food-grade color, and water. The compounds are edible, fit for human consumption, and metabolized by most aquatic and terrestrial organisms. The ingredients are soluble in water and would not leave permanent markings on trees or other structures. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_146-R11	A major concern is that the intrusion of the military into the state forests with noise, pollution, and activity will deter people from going to and using the forest. A reduction of use will cause a reduction of jobs in this area that is so strongly dependent on tourism. Even without the Proposed Action, there are instances of eco-tourists being delayed or denied the use of the forest due to military actions. Add to this the effects of noise annoyance and gunfire, especially at night, and property values will be depressed as old residents move out and new owners are reluctant to buy. The only option that does the least harm to the forest, the community and the tourists is the NO ACTION option.	Mitigations described in the noise sections (EIS Sections 3.3, 4.3, and 5.3), safety sections (Sections 3.4, 4.4, and 5.4), and the land use sections (Sections 3.10, 4.10, and 5.10) would be implemented to minimize, to the extent possible, the potential safety, noise, and land use impacts that could subsequently have an effect on socioeconomics resources. Sections 5.11 and 6.11 of the Final EIS discuss the potential impacts to home values and the concerns expressed by several home owners in the region of influence. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations,

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		emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_147-R1	One of my main concerns is the lack of an Alternative Action (GLI EIS Executive Summary ES 4.3 pg 22) and the reason offered for the proposed utilization of public lands for military training. Eglin AFB consists of approximately 463,000 acres. Why not utilize the existing space which is designated for military use? Why not close some of the existing open areas and utilize those areas on Eglin AFB for the non-hazardous training missions.	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_147-R2	Why are the limiting factors for training activities limited to an 1.5 hour drive or an 1 hour flight time from Eglin AFB (GLI EIS 2.2.3 pg 2-2). The Gulf coast has a number of military bases. Kessler AFB, NAS Gulfport, Camp Shelby, NAS Pensacola, NAS Whiting Field, Eglin AFB, Hurlburt AFB, Tyndall AFB and MacDill AFB. The Gulf coast is connect through railroad lines and Interstate. Why not utilize the facilities already designated for military use prior to utilizing public lands? I do not think the loss of time for travel (GLI EIS 2.2.4 D. pg 2-4) is a reasonable justification for the use of public lands for military training.	Time for training activities is a critical consideration for operational unit training; time spent in transit to/from training areas reduces the amount of time available to train and rehearse mission-essential tasks. Therefore, the loss of time for travel is an important consideration for military trainers, and a reasonable justification for the identification of suitable lands for training to maximize training efficiency.
I_147-R3	Which consulting firm(s) provided input and drafted the Environmental Impact Statement?	Leidos, Inc. (formerly Science Applications International Corporation) prepared the EIS. The list of preparers is provided in Chapter 11 of the EIS, while the disclosure statement for a contractor-prepared EIS as required by NEPA is provided in Appendix G.
I_147-R4	GLI EIS Executive Summary (ES) 4.1.2.1 (pg 10)...Most existing cleared areas are associated with Silviculture Activities. The Blackwater River State Forest 10 Year Management Plan (BRSF10YMP), Section VI, Subsection B.2 Silviculture Operations (pg 43) states "Stands of off-site species with merchantable volume will be scheduled for harvest, followed by a subsequent reforestation with the appropriate tree species." My concern associated with this activity is the areas designated as HLZ/DZ will not successfully regenerate or reforest as stated in the BRSF10YMP with constant ground disturbance.	Approval of use for HLZs/DZs would be made by the Florida Forest Service (FFS). As these sites regenerate, the FFS would evaluate them and determine if and when use of an HLZ/DZ is no longer appropriate.
I_147-R5	The Blackwater River State Forest 10 year Management Plan	The Proposed Action would not preclude use of the forest. Only

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	(BRSF10YMP), Section II, Subsection E.5 (pg 20) states that the Memorandum of Understanding entered into by FDACS and the USAF "is constructed in such a manner as to preclude interference with public use and access, limit any resource damage, and preclude any impacts to areas containing threatened or endangered species." GLI EIS Executive Summary (ES) 4.1.2.1 through 4.1.2.21 (pgs 10-20) outlines a variety of activities which all have a range of duration and frequencies. These activities will require areas of the Blackwater River State Forest to be closed to the public. This a direct conflict with the BRSF10YMP Section II, Subsection E.5 (pg 20).	small areas of the forest (e.g., forest management units or minor logging roads) may be temporarily closed during training events. These represent only a small percentage of the entire forest(s) and would not preclude user access or use of the forest as a whole. Sites proposed for use would mainly be those not typically utilized by the public for recreational purposes (e.g., cleared timber stands, STOP Camp).
I_147-R6	GLI EIS Executive Summary (ES) 4.1.2.13 (pg 16) states the restrictions for blackout driving will only occur on closed/designated roads. It also states "Roads used for this activity would be temporarily closed". Roads that are designated as closed in the Blackwater River State Forest are closed because of erosion issues or because of sensitive habitat. Driving on closed roads may cause erosion issues which will be direct conflict with the Blackwater River State Forest 10 year Management Plan (BRSF10YMP), Section IV, Subsection A.2 (pg 22).	Roadways to be utilized would be only those approved for use by the Florida Forest Service. Any approved roads would need to be closed during the training event to ensure public safety as a result of the training activity. Roads previously closed by the FFS due to erosion issues would not be utilized for training activities. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that eliminates blackout driving in the state forests. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_147-R7	GLI EIS Executive Summary (ES) 4.1.2.13 (pg 16)...In addition, temporarily closing roads would be in direct conflict with the BRSF10YMP Section II, Subsection E.5 (pg 20), which states the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) entered into by FDACS and the USAF "is constructed in such a manner as to preclude interference with public use and access."	Only small segments of roadways may experience these closures for a temporary duration. These would be determined in coordination with the Florida Forest Service (FFS) as part of the permit/lease agreement. Citizens would be notified of any potential closures prior to their occurrence. Overall, there would be some small-scale, temporary public access restrictions to specific training locations while training occurs. Some temporary road segment closures would result during Blackout Driving (BD). However, this would not negatively impact overall land use, because these activities would only occur on small segments of roadway and would be short term in nature. Access would resume once training activities cease. These segment closures would not affect access to parts of the forests because there are sufficient roadways available to go around the closed segments. Access to HLZ/DZ locations would also be temporarily restricted during training activities. However, there would only be a few active HLZs/DZs at any given time, and use would be

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		infrequent. Any closures would be of small areas or road segments that make up a minute percentage of the entire forested area. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_147-R8	The Blackwater River State Forest 10 year Management Plan (BRSF10YMP), Section IV, Subsection C.2 (pg 25) takes in to consideration State Listed species when managing for wildlife species. The plan specifically states "Specialized management techniques will be used, as necessary, to protect or increase imperiled and other protected species, as applicable for both plants and animals." GLI EIS Executive Summary (ES) 4.1.2.14 (pg 16) states concertina wire and barb wire will be placed for a frequency of 10 times per year for a duration of the length of the exercise. This type of obstacle poses a direct threat to wildlife with the potential of impacted species listed in the BRSF10YMP.	Concertina wire has been removed as a component of the Proposed Action. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_147-R9	GLI EIS Executive Summary (ES) 4.1.2.15 and 4.1.2.16 (pg 17) states "There may be slight surface ground disturbance (within 6 inches of ground surface) from placement of tent stakes and pickets. How will this ground disturbance occur? Will heavy equipment/machinery be used to level the ground? Is so, is this taken into consideration when concluding the Air Force has not identified any significant beneficial or adverse impacts associated with training activities or emitter use (GLI EIS Executive Summary ES 5 pg 24)? Who will pre-assess the designated sites? I would recommend utilizing and coordinating with the experts from State Agencies	Placement of stakes and pickets would occur either through use of a mallet (pounding the stake into the ground) or via shovel. There would be no use of heavy equipment associated with this activity. Site assessments would be conducted by qualified Air Force and Florida Forest Service personnel. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp

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	for the expertise in the local flora and fauna.	sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_147-R10	GLI EIS Executive Summary (ES) 4.1.2.17 (pg 18) describes the use of amphibious vessels on the waterways. Which specific waterways will these activities occur on? How and where will these vessels be fueled/refueled?	Amphibious operations may occur on any waterway within the parks as approved by the Florida Forest Service and within the confines of the General Operational Constraints identified in Section 2.5 of the EIS. As stated in Section 2.5, all vehicles and equipment would be fueled on Eglin AFB or Hurlburt Field prior to training activities. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that does not include amphibious operations. The implementation of the subalternative is the Air Force's preferred alternative. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_147-R11	In addition, one of the Restrictions is to avoid public boaters. How can this be accomplished when most of the navigable streams are utilized by canoers, kayakers and tubers?	As stated in EIS Section 2.3.2.17, amphibious operations would only occur up to 10 times per year, minimizing the number of potential instances of recreational user encounters. Training activities would occur only on waterways approved by the Florida Forest Service (FFS) and would adhere to the General Operational Constraints identified in Section 2.5 of the EIS. Amphibious activities would avoid those waterways used extensively for recreational purposes (e.g., Coldwater Creek) and would mostly utilize larger bodies of water given the size requirements for the amphibious watercraft. Should recreational users and military trainees be present on the same body of water, training activities would not impede canoers, kayakers, or tubers. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that does not include amphibious operations.Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_147-R12	GLIEIS Executive Summary (ES) 4.1.2.17 (pg 18) also states the	Shoreline erosion is discussed in Sections 3.6, 3.7, 5.6, 5.7, 6.6, and

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	amphibious vessels will have outboard motors ranging from 35 hp to 200 hp. Normal use of the waterways in the State Forest consist of canoers, kayakers and tubers, which do not utilize gas motors or produce noise. In addition, outboards create wake which is a huge factor in shoreline/bank erosion. Has this been taken into consideration when determining no adverse impacts will occur (GLI EIS Section 5.8.3 pg 5-59)?	6.7 of the EIS. Motorized watercraft would only be used in waterways approved by the Florida Forest Service and within the requirements of the General Operational Constraints identified within Section 2.5 of the EIS. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that does not include amphibious operations.Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_147-R13	GLI EIS Executive Summary 4.1.2.18 (pg 18) describes Opposing Force Vehicles Operations with up to 10 vehicles and a frequency of up to 5 times per week. Will the designated roads be closed to the public? This would be a direct conflict with the Blackwater River State Forest 10 year Management Plan (BRSF10YMP), Section II, Subsection E.5 (pg 20), which states the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) entered into by FDACS and the USAF "is constructed in such a manner as to preclude interference with public use and access."	There would be no road closures associated with Opposing Forces Vehicle Operations. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_147-R14	Table ES-22 (pg 21) discusses various buffers associated with various protection levels. Who will be delineating these buffers and how will they be marked? I would recommend utilizing local professional staff whom are familiar with the local flora and fauna. Would it not beneficial to ground mark these buffers in addition to maps and GPS points?	As discussed in Section 2.5 of the EIS, the buffers would be delineated using physical survey data and geographic information systems to map the buffers and provide that information to training units so that they can avoid these areas on their training maps. Some sensitive locations may not be marked in the field, because that would then identify sensitive species locations for members of the general public, who may then disturb these sites.
I_147-R15	GLI EIS Section 1.2 (pg 1-3) states "This GLI EIS, therefore, evaluates the environmental impacts of the Proposed Action that is ready for decision on FFS, FWC, FDEP, or NWFWMD lands that meet the military's GRASI training needs". Will the comments from the State Agencies be incorporated into the Final EIS?	Yes--all comments and associated Air Force responses received are provided in Appendix B of the Final EIS. Changes to the Final EIS have been made as appropriate based on the scope of the comments received.
I_147-R16	GLI EIS Section 1.4 (pg 1-4) states "The demand for the land range and use of RA over the Eglin Range Complex creates scheduling conflicts for	Please see comment response I_014-R2.

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	nonhazardous training." Why not close some of the existing open areas and utilize those areas on Eglin AFB for the non-hazardous training missions. Isn't utilizing the existing space which is designated for military use a better option than using public lands?	
I_147-R17	GLI EIS Section 2.3.2 (pg 2-9) states "As part of the Proposed Action, Eglin AFB would establish a Landscape Implementation Team (L.I.T.) and a GLI Liaison". Who will be chosen for the LIT and what will their professional requirements be? Again, I would recommend utilizing and coordinating with the experts from State Agencies for the expertise in the local flora and fauna.	As stated in Section 2.5 of the EIS, the L.I.T. would consist of appropriate Eglin AFB organizations, similar to the current team or professionals that manage the Eglin Reservation; these professionals consist of biologists, engineers and planners. The exact composition of the L.I.T. is yet to be determined and would be established once a decision regarding implementation of the proposed action has been made. The L.I.T. would coordinate with regulatory agencies and the Florida Forest Service to implement the requirements of the GLI.
I_147-R18	GLI EIS Section 2.3.2.1 (pg 2-11) states "While there may be a need for gravel surfaces for vehicle parking, no land development or other improvements would be required by the Air Force." Gravel is a semi-impervious substance which will most likely require a Stormwater Permit from the State.	There are no land-disturbance activities proposed as part of the GLI that would require a stormwater permit. Even so, as stated in Section 2.5 of the EIS, the Air Force would coordinate with the Florida Forest Service to develop forest-specific guidance on environmental restrictions and compliance requirements, to include permits, mitigations, and General Operational Constraints identified in the EIS and associated consultations.
I_147-R19	GLI EIS Section 2.3.2.9 (pg 2-18) discusses the use of hardened surfaces for Forward Air Refueling Point/Hot Gas Operations. Who will be responsible for monitoring the fueling activities, a civilian or a soldier? It would be beneficial to have civilian monitors.	As discussed in Section 2.3 of the FEIS, Forward Air Refueling / Hot Gas operations has been removed as a training activity that would be execution as part of the Proposed Action. Therefore, no impacts would occur from this activity.
I_147-R20	GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 1 (pg 2-28) General Operational Constraints states prior to implementation of the Proposed Action, the Air Force will develop a mitigation plan identifying Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations to be implemented, responsible parties for mitigation implementation and compliance evaluation, and monitoring mechanisms for evaluation of mitigation effectiveness. What type of staff will develop this mitigation plan and what is the mitigation plan approval process? Shouldn't the mitigation plan be developed prior to the Final Environmental Impact Statement?	The mitigation plan cannot be developed until the decision is made on what training activities would be proposed to the FFS, because the mitigation plan is specific to the scope of the action to be implemented. A mitigation plan would be developed by Air Force personnel familiar with the training activities and mitigative requirements and would be coordinated with the FFS. The mitigation plan would then be made available to the public by request no later than 90 days after the Record of Decision is signed. The mitigation plan will be updated to reflect FFS-approved specific site locations and training activities, and the results of cultural and biological surveys.
I_147-R21	GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 3.e (pg 2-30) General Operational Constraints states	As stated in EIS Section 2.5, under General Operational Constraint

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	unit commanders and training personnel will be provided with both a visual and written presentation of restrictions annual briefings, additional site specific environmental briefings (i.e., BRSF and THSF), and/or through the Eglin AFB Center Scheduling Enterprise (CSE). Shouldn't these briefings occur prior to EVERY training mission conducted? At a minimum, quarterly or bi-annual briefings should be required. If not, how can Eglin AFB ensure the soldiers participating in the training understands the restrictions?	4, prior to training all personnel must review the GLI Protection Level maps prior to mission initiation and incorporate restricted areas into field maps as necessary, particularly for those areas not marked in the field (i.e., RCW buffers and other sensitive species). Units would acquire RCW buffer locations from Eglin AFB and either load these into the GPS devices or add to field maps. Additionally, all units would be briefed regarding constraints and training restrictions prior to field deployment.
I_147-R22	GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 3.l (pg 2-30) states Eglin AFB will coordinate with the FFS to periodically review and update the affected environment condition of each Proposed Action location and update as necessary the operational constraints and/or mitigations identified in this EIS, as well as any of the GLI Protection Level maps if required. How often is "periodically" going to occur?	As stated in EIS Section 2.5, there would be multiple instances of baseline surveys (either annually, prior to training, or during other time frames). This information would be provided to the Florida Forest Service and updates would be made to the constraints and/or mitigations as appropriate. This would be an ongoing process; the word "periodically" is meant to convey "as necessary," given that it is unknown exactly how often these updates would need to occur.
I_147-R23	GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 3.m (pg 2-30) states Eglin AFB will monitor conditions of high-use training areas, including the hardened camp sites, HLZs/DZ, and FWALS to ensure areas are not overused (e.g., show signs of degradation or adverse impact) and do not expand beyond established boundaries. How often will these sites be monitored?	The exact frequency of monitoring is yet unknown and would be identified in the GLI mitigation plan once a decision on the Proposed Action is made. As stated throughout EIS Section 2.5, all sites would be inspected before and after use to ensure there are no damages to the sites, and any identified issues would be reported to the Florida Forest Service and the Landscape Implementation Team.
I_147-R24	GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 3.p (pg 2-30) states in addition to close examination of the area around proposed new training locations for protected/sensitive species, survey the areas surrounding existing training areas every two years to ensure that no new noise-sensitive land uses have been established. What does close examination constitute? Who will conduct the close examination? Every two years is not an adequate time frame. Quarterly or bi-annually would be more acceptable.	Examination constitutes ground surveys for sensitive species and habitat by professional biologists qualified to conduct these surveys. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission have concurred on this operational constraint.
I_147-R25	GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 5.m (pg 2-32) During Training states "Do not use sensitive vegetation (e.g., protected species) as part of natural resource consumption. Confer with GRASI Liaison and Eglin Natural Resources Section to identify protected vegetation." Will the Liaison be on site? Will they soldiers be required to confer prior to the training missions?	The GLI Liaison will not be on-site during training activities. The liaison is an administrator who coordinates between the Air Force and the Florida Forest Service. As stated in EIS Section 2.5, trainees would be required to become familiarized with all environmental restrictions, which includes avoidance of sensitive plant and animal species.
I_147-R26	GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 5.r (pg 2-33) During Training Dismounting Maneuver Avoid concentrated troop movements on steep slopes and in wetlands. What is concentrated troop movements?	Concentrated troop movements involve multiple use of the same site by several user groups or by groups larger than those identified in the EIS. This has been clarified in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS.

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I_147-R27	GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 5.s (pg 2-33) During Training Dismounting Maneuver Do not step on, fill, or in any way cause a gopher tortoise burrow to collapse. Will there be anyone in the field with the soldiers ensuring gopher tortoise burrows will not be damaged? If so, whom? It would be beneficial to have a civilian monitoring activities.	This is standard practice on Eglin AFB and has proven effective in minimizing impacts to the gopher tortoise. The team leader would be responsible for implementing restrictions in the field. There would be no civilian monitors participating in training activities, although there may occasionally be Florida Forest Service personnel present to observe training activities.
I_147-R28	GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 5.t (pg 2-33) During Training Land Disturbance Digging is only approved in these areas through coordination with the GLI Liaison and Eglin AFB prior to field activities. How will the digging be implemented? What type of heavy equipment, if any, will be used?	As stated in the various training activity descriptions, land disturbance would involve placing spikes or stakes in the ground using shovels. There would be no heavy equipment utilized for ground disturbance in the state forests. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_147-R29	GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 5.x, y and z (pg 2-33) During Training Wheeled Vehicles Will there be anyone in the field with the soldiers ensuring prohibited areas will be avoided, eroded areas, gullies and restoration will be avoided and disposal/discharge of hazardous materials will not occur on the ground or in the water? If so, whom? It would be beneficial to have a civilian monitoring activities.	The team leader would be responsible for implementing restrictions in the field, as is standard practice on Eglin AFB. This has proven to be effective in ensuring compliance with training restrictions. There would be no civilian monitors participating in training activities, although there may occasionally be Florida Forest Service personnel present to observe training activities.
I_147-R30	GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 5.dd (pg 2-33) Bivouacking Minimize water consumption from rivers and streams. What needs would constitute water consumption from rivers and streams and how much will be needed.	The exact amount needed would depend on several factors and cannot be quantified. Water needed would likely consist of a few gallons at a time. Diverting large amounts of water for any purpose has not been proposed.
I_147-R31	GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 5.jj through bbb (pgs 2-34, 2-35) Expendable Use Will there be anyone in the field with the soldiers the proposed action and alternatives will be met? If so, whom? It would be beneficial to have a civilian monitoring activities.	The team leader would be responsible for implementing restrictions in the field, as is standard practice on Eglin AFB. This has proven effective in ensuring compliance with training restrictions. There would be no civilian monitors participating in training activities,

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Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
		although there may occasionally be Florida Forest Service personnel present to observe training activities.
I_147-R32	GLI EIS Section 2.3.5 6.a (pg 2-36) After Training Police training areas to ensure that no trash, ammunition boxes, wire, or other debris has been left in the area and all excavations are filled. Take to appropriate landfill or recycling points. Who will be responsible for policing the training areas? It would be beneficial to have a civilian monitoring activities.	The team leader would be responsible for implementing restrictions in the field, as is standard practice on Eglin AFB. This has proven effective in ensuring compliance with training restrictions. There would be no civilian monitors participating in training activities, although there may occasionally be Florida Forest Service personnel present to observe training activities. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_147-R33	GLI EIS Section 2.6 (pg 2-38) Alternative Impact Analysis Summary states these impacts would be insignificant based on the context, intensity, and duration of the identified impacts as described throughout Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6. I would argue that the secondary impacts would be significant based on the amount and duration of use over a long period of time. Secondary impacts should be considered and mitigated for.	Both direct and indirect impacts have been addressed in the EIS. The Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations identified in EIS Section 2.7, in concert with the General Operational Constraints identified in EIS Section 2.5, would serve to minimize impacts over both the short and long term.
I_147-R34	GLI EIS Section 2.6 (pg 2-41) Water Resources states there are unavoidable direct adverse impacts to wetlands and floodplains from incidental surface disturbances (ISDs) associated with ground movement (e.g., troops walking through wetlands) and amphibious operations (e.g., boats landing along the shoreline). Impacts to wetlands and surface waters may require an Environmental Resources Permit per Part IV of Chapter 373, Florida Statutes.	Environmental resources permits apply to activities that involve the alteration of surface water flows, including new activities in uplands that generate stormwater runoff from upland construction, as well as dredging and filling in wetlands and other surface waters. None of the activities proposed meet these criteria.
I_147-R35	GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-42) Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigation states the Air Force would post signs collocated with existing Forest Service signage and in Forest Service stations notifying forest users of the potential for encountering training in the forest. When will these signs be	The signs would be posted prior to training activities for specific locations and, in some instances, may be collocated with permanent Florida Forest Service signs. Notifications may also consist of newspaper ads and online notifications.

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Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
	placed in relation to the mission? Is this the only notification system for the public proposed?	
I_147-R36	GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-44) Earth Resources states "Construct and maintain an FWALS drainage system that collects and discharges stormwater runoff in a non-erosive manner." This may require a state permit for stormwater authorization per Part IV of Chapter 373, Florida Statutes.	The intent is to ensure that existing drainage patterns are not altered in any way that results in the need for permitting. However, if a permit is required it would be acquired.
I_147-R38	GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-44) Earth Resources states "Avoid clear zone maintenance during wet soil conditions. All soils are highly sensitive to mechanical compaction or rutting damage when wet." What constitutes wet soil conditions?	Wet soil is classified as soil with its pore space, including air space, filled with water. This is soupy or muddy in appearance.
I_147-R39	GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-44) Earth Resources states "Depending on extent of damage, soil structure amendments could be made with hand tools or motorized tillage equipment. Areas may also need to be reseeded to native species to reduce bare ground and encourage the establishment of soil protecting ground cover." Will the reseeding to native species be monitored for success? Reseeding does not constitute mitigation if the reseeding is not successful.	As discussed in EIS Section 2.5, General Operational Constraint 1 requires development of a mitigation plan identifying Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations to be implemented, responsible parties for mitigation implementation and compliance evaluation, and monitoring mechanisms for evaluation of mitigation effectiveness. Monitoring of all mitigations, including activities such as reseeding, is conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the mitigation - adjustments are made should the monitoring show that the mitigation is ineffective. In the case of reseeding, seeding would occur until the grass takes hold; this may be over a period of several months, or years.
I_147-R40	GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-44) Earth Resources states "Maintain at least a 100-foot exclusion buffer around sensitive steephead slopes and closed depression subsidence areas to prevent accelerated soil erosion of slopes and wet soil rutting." Where does the buffer start in relation to the steephead? The top of the slope?	The buffer would begin at the boundary of the steephead slope.
I_147-R41	GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-45) Earth Resources states "To the degree possible, avoid the repetitive use of the same hardened egress and ingress locations within the same year for amphibious operations." What constitutes repetitive use? Three landings, twelve landings? Is encouraging multiple egress and ingress locations increasing the potential for multiple sites to be disturbed?	Repetitive use means that the same sight should not be used if it shows signs of degradation. Rotating ingress/egress locations provides an opportunity for sites to recover from any damage they may experience; similar to rotating crops.
I_147-R42	GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-45) Earth Resources states "For sites where vegetation damage could result in loss of plant cover, reseed with native species to encourage the reestablishment of vegetative cover." Will the	As discussed in EIS Section 2.5, General Operational Constraint 1 requires development of a mitigation plan identifying Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations to be implemented, responsible parties

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Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
	reseeding to native species be monitored for success? Reseeding does not constitute mitigation if the reseeding is not successful.	for mitigation implementation and compliance evaluation, and monitoring mechanisms for evaluation of mitigation effectiveness. Monitoring of all mitigations, including activities such as reseeding, is conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the mitigation - adjustments are made should the monitoring show that the mitigation is ineffective. In the case of reseeding, seeding would occur until the grass takes hold. this may be over a period of several months, or years.
I_147-R43	GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-45) Water Resources states "Use only FFS-approved, designated vehicle water crossings in "Good" or "Fair" condition". What constitutes "Good" or "Fair". Impacts to wetlands and surface waters may require an Environmental Resources Permit per Part IV of Chapter 373, Florida Statutes.	"Good" or "Fair" are Florida Forest Service designators describing the structural integrity of the water crossing and whether there are potential erosion issues. Environmental resources permits apply to activities that involve the alteration of surface water flows, including new activities in uplands that generate stormwater runoff from upland construction, as well as dredging and filling in wetlands and other surface waters. None of the activities proposed meet these criteria. Please see Comment Response I_067-R10 for further information regarding roads and water crossings
I_147-R44	GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-45) Water Resources states "If off-road vehicle use is required for any reason the respective FFS Management Office would need to be consulted prior to occurrence". This is in direct conflict with GLI EIS Section 2.3.2.11, Section 2.3.2.20 and Table 2-24 which states vehicles are restricted to forest/established roads.	The referenced statement is not contradictory. Under the Proposed Action, all vehicles would remain on established/designated roadways. If there is ever any need to go off-road (such as in an emergency), the Air Force would be required to coordinate with the Florida Forest Service to receive approval. The restriction calls for no off-road vehicle use. Language in Sectoin 2.3 has been added to further clarify that there will be no "off-road" vehicle use as part of the Proposed Action.
I_147-R45	GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-45) Water Resources states "To minimize localized damage potential from foraging and dismounted troop movements, the size of troop units will be kept to small manageable numbers. Troop use would be rotated within and among TAs to prevent concentration of activities in particular locations." What constitutes "small manageable numbers? What would be the rotation schedule?	Small manageable numbers means keeping to singular training events, so that multiple training events (e.g., two amphibious operations) do not occur in the same place at the same time. Rotation schedules would be established through coordination with the Florida Forest Service (FFS) as part of the permit/lease agreement. The frequency and duration of use for certain areas would be determined by the FFS and would be evaluated on a regular basis, as described in EIS Section 2.5, to determine the need to increase/decrease training site rotations. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft

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		operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_147-R46	GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-45) Water Resources states "Roads, trails, and stream/wetland crossings would be inspected before and after each training mission to identify maintenance issues that could cause problems if not repaired. Training activities would be shifted or redirected if conditions of roads and stream and wetland crossings require repair or other measures to prevent erosion from impacting surface waters and wetlands." Who will be responsible for these inspections? It would be beneficial to have a civilian monitoring activities.	The team leader would be responsible for implementing restrictions in the field, as is standard practice on Eglin AFB. This has proven effective in ensuring compliance with training restrictions. There would be no civilian monitors participating in training activities, although there may occasionally be Florida Forest Service personnel present to observe training activities.
I_147-R47	GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-45) Biological Resources states "Develop and implement a process that will notify Eglin Natural Resources of the dates and locations of upcoming training events to support spot surveys/inspections for compliance." Does Eglin Natural Resources have enough staff to meet this requirement? If not, is their funding to increase staffing?	The L.I.T. would coordinate with the FFS to determine the training activities that would be permitted on forest lands and the appropriate frequency of monitoring. The Air Force would support monitoring requirements as appropriate in conjunction with support provided by the FFS for approved activities in accordance with final agreements.
I_147-R48	GLI EIS Section 2.7 (pg 2-45) Biological Resources states "Survey proposed new training locations (including fixed wing aircraft landing sites and HLZs) for protected/sensitive species, and survey existing training areas at least every 3 years to identify any new sensitive species that have moved into the area." Every 3 years is not adequate. Surveys should be, at a minimum, completed annually.	The surveys may occur annually, semiannually, or every two years. As stated, the requirement is "at least" every three years, which means that the longest period between surveys can only be three years. The exact frequency of surveys would be determined by the factors identified in EIS Sections 2.5 and 2.7.
I_147-R49	GLI EIS Section 3.3.4 (pg 3-23) Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations states "Aircraft would not operate below 500 feet AGL except while engaged in approaches to, departures from, or training at designated HLZ/DZ, OHO locations, or FWALS." 500 feet AGL is not an acceptable flight level. This will subject property owners and recreational visitors to excessive noise levels. The noise and reverberation has the potential of	As acknowledged in EIS Sections 3.3, 5.3, and 6.3, aircraft flying at 500 feet above ground level would generate noise that could be disruptive or annoying to people below. Noise levels generated by several aircraft types that would be used frequently during GLI training are listed in Tables 5-6 and 6-5. These tables also list noise levels generated by aircraft operating currently above the state

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	damaging foundations of houses within the flight pattern.	forests. In general, the rotorcraft and propeller-driven aircraft proposed to be used as part of GLI training are quieter than jet aircraft currently training in the area while operating at equivalent altitudes. Potential for subsonic aircraft noise to affect structures is discussed in Appendix H, Section H.2.10. As stated in Section H.2.10, "While certain frequencies (such as 30 Hz for window breakage) may be of more concern than other frequencies, conservatively, only sounds lasting more than one second above a sound level of 130 dB are potentially damaging to structural components." Aircraft involved in GLI training would not generate noise levels expected to have any potential to damage structures. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.

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I_147-R50	GLI EIS Section 3.11.2 (pg 3-92) Economic Activity states "based on Sections 3.3 (Noise) and 3.4 (Safety), the training activities would avoid noise sensitive locations such as residences, schools, etc., therefore no significant impacts to housing values would be anticipated as a result of the proposed action." As a home owner in the direct flight line and relatively close to FWALS DNL-TA-9, I strongly disagree with that statement. Having large military aircraft fly over on a regular basis will not only lower the value of my house, it will make it more difficult to sell. Any professional realtor or appraiser would concur.	Additional text to discuss the potential impacts to the economic value of the forests including human health, ecotourism, and property valuation has been added to Final EIS Sections 3.11, 5.11, 6.11, and 7.11. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_147-R52	GLI EIS Section 5.6.2.1 (pg 5-33) Land Disturbance states "As discussed in Section 3.6.3, HLZs/DZs, point impacts, consumption, and incidental land disturbance would have no adverse impact on soils. Impacts to BRSF earth resource identified in Section 5.6.1 would generally be the same as those described in Section 3.6." This is in direct conflict with GLI EIS 5.6.1.2 (pg 5-28) which states "Approximately 112,755 acres (55 percent) of the BRSF is composed of highly erodible soils. Generally, BRSF soils are considered very susceptible to soil erosion due to the dominance of sandy soil textures and extensive areas of moderately to steeply sloped topography." If over one half of the Blackwater River State Forest has highly erodible soils, it would be very difficult not to have adverse impacts on soils.	As stated in EIS Section 3.6, the scope of activities proposed in conjunction with the required General Operational Constraints identified in EIS Section 2.5, would limit the potential adverse impacts to erodible soils. Impacts to soils would be minimized through limited vehicular movement to only established roadways and trails. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to soils. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_147-R53	GLI EIS Section 5.6.2.2 (pg 5-34) Ground Disturbance states "ground movement has the potential for causing soil erosion; however, this potential is considered negligible given general operating procedures identified in Section 2.5 and the Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations identified in Section 3.6.4." This is in direct conflict with GLI EIS 5.6.1.2 (pg 5-28) which states "Approximately 112,755 acres (55 percent) of the BRSF is	See response to comment I_147-R52

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	composed of highly erodible soils. Generally, BRSF soils are considered very susceptible to soil erosion due to the dominance of sandy soil textures and extensive areas of moderately to steeply sloped topography." If over one half of the Blackwater River State Forest has highly erodible soils, it would be very difficult not to have adverse impacts on soils.	
I_147-R54	Looking at table 5-38 on page 5-50, it appears there is a bald eagle's nest on Hurricane Lake in TA-3 not accounted for.	Figure 5-34 and Table 5-38 of the EIS have been updated to reflect the location of the eagle nest at BRSF. To stay current, the FWC has agreed to annually provide updated information with regard to species locations at BRSF.
I_147-R55	GLI EIS Section 5.8.3 (pg 5-59) states "based on these factors the Air Force has identified insignificant adverse impacts to the natural environment." GLI EIS Section 5.8.1 Vegetation (pg 5-46) states "In combination with the Conecuh National Forest, BRSF is home of the largest contiguous longleaf pine/wiregrass ecosystem in the world and contains some of the richest plant and animal diversity. GLI EIS Section 5.8.1.4 Sensitive Habitat (pg 5-51) states "Longleaf pine communities provide habitats for many plants and animals, including many classified as endangered, threatened, or species of special concern (SSC)." This ecosystem is susceptible to impacts created from long term ground disturbance which will cause the succession of the natural community.	Thank you for your comment. GLI impacts would not be of an intensity or duration to causechanges in patterns of community succession, as were those observed from past actions that were more intense and directly destructive in nature, such as logging and land clearing. There would be temporary and comparatively minor ground disturbance from the Proposed Action but no long-term habitat alteration on a community scale. Sensitive habitats would be avoided. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_147-R56	GLI EIS Section 5.10.3 (pg 5-66) Land Use Impact Summary states "Minor, short-term small-scale closures of areas (HLZs/DZs, road segments) during training activities would not preclude use of the forest and access would be allowed once training activities have ceased. This is in direct conflict with the Blackwater River State Forest 10 year Management Plan (BRSF10YMP), Section II, Subsection E.5 (pg 20), which states that the Memorandum of Understanding entered into by FDACS and the USAF "is constructed in such a manner as to preclude interference with public use	Only small portions of the forest would be used in accordance with applicable Florida Forest Service (FFS) management plans, per EIS Section 2.3.2. The goal is to conduct training activities in a compatible manner with existing forest uses and to not preclude use of identified recreational areas. Ultimately, the FFS would determine, through use permits/lease agreements, the location, duration, and frequency of training activities permitted in the forests. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative

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	and access, limit any resource damage, and preclude any impacts to areas containing threatened or endangered species."	that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_147-R57	GLI EIS Section 7.3.1 (pg 5-66) BRSF Regional Past/Present/Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions states "Multi-use strategies to utilize and conserve state forest resources include: * Support state forest management objectives and sustain efficient sources of revenue through the implementation of sustainable forest management practices. * Provide resource-based outdoor recreational opportunities for multiple interests. * Restore and manage healthy forests and native ecosystems and ensure the viability of listed plants and animals. * Protect archaeological, historical, cultural, and paleontological resources. ... The proposed training missions are in direct conflict with the first four management practices.	The implementation of EIS Section 2.5, General Operational Constraints, and EIS Section 2.7, Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations, provides support for the identified objectives. The proposed activities would be conducted in coordination with the Florida Forest Service to ensure activities are conducted in a manner compatible with applicable forest management plan requirements. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_147-R58	I would hope Eglin AFB will coordinate with State Agencies to help develop monitoring and mitigation and to ensure all proposed mitigation is adhered too.	The Air Force would coordinate with the Florida Forest Service and all other applicable regulatory agencies prior to and during implementation of the Proposed Action. As per EIS Section 2.5, the mitigation plan would also include monitoring requirements to gauge the effectiveness of mitigations; mitigations would be adjusted as necessary to ensure effectiveness.

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I_152-R1	The Need portion states the proposed action is needed because there is a projected regional shortfall of military training and testing land and airspace in the GRASI region and scheduling conflicts are created for nonhazardous training. A true analysis of this statement shows there is no shortage of testing land if military training is not trying to utilize the same land. Airspace needs are not even addressed in this EIS. As such, the only shortfall is in military training space and that is not even a primary mission of Eglin AFB!	As discussed on EIS Section 1.2, the GRASI Landscape Initiative is a component of the overall GRASI program. Additional information depicting the projection of future military capacity limitations has been added to Section 1.4 of the EIS. This EIS only addresses the nonhazardous ground training requirements of the GRASI program. Airspace and any potential hazardous training activities would be addressed in future NEPA documentation as applicable.
I_152-R2	The proposed action does not support the primary mission of Eglin AFB. If land training of troops has become such a significant part of the Eglin AFB mission, the official mission should be changed in order to give land training on base lands higher priority. Otherwise, the use of public lands for military purposes has not been adequately justified.	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
I_152-R3	Emitter Sites - Numerous alternative emitter sites should be considered as part of the EIS; the current analysis was much too limited. With scheduling to avoid conflicts with primary usage, sites are available throughout the various counties that could easily meet the site and training requirements. Sites such as Navy OLFs, public airports, large parking lots (especially those associated with vacant stores/shopping centers), churches, schools, playgrounds, and a host of others could be utilized.	As discussed in EIS Section 2.2.3, over 70 sites were evaluated and narrowed down to the 12 presented in the EIS based on the identified siting criteria. These sites were selected due to their lack of proximity to populated areas to alleviate any perceived safety concerns.
I_152-R4	Action Alternatives - There are numerous alternatives to the proposed action that should be considered. A range of alternatives is usually required to insure that the best decision is reached. With a mere two alternatives, the proposed action and no action, one can hardly expect an adequate evaluation and decision-making process! Possible alternatives include: o As the main mission of Eglin Air Force Base is testing and evaluation, the ground training mission could be relocated to another military installation with adequate land areas available. o Military activities within the state forests could be reduced in number and frequency to be more compatible with traditional forest uses. o Military use of the state forests could be limited to 'off season' periods to reduce conflict with seasonal forest users. This could also avoid impacts to nesting wildlife. Timing military use to lessen impacts to both humans and wildlife would help to incorporate some reasonableness into the proposed action.	Please see Comment Response I_004-R2.

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I_152-R5	The impact analyses of the identified key resources are flawed due to consideration of the General Operational Restraints. The listed General Operational Restraints are far too numerous to be practical as a field tool. They are entirely unworkable for field level military operations. The expertise and knowledge required to implement these Restraints would not be possessed by the field troops, enlisted or officers. Do we really expect a special operations soldier to identify a RCW cavity or gopher tortoise burrow? Some natural resource professionals still have problems with those identifications. In addition, the Restraints are much too cumbersome to expect implementation in the field on training day. One of the identified criteria for training sites was proximity to Eglin AFB in an effort to maximize time. Implementation of the Restraints could realistically take days. The Restraints are entirely unrealistic for troop use and should therefore not be considered in impact analysis. However, the General Operational Restraints are an excellent start on natural resource protection. Unfortunately, implementation would require trained natural resource professionals. Additionally, the Restraints should be implemented prior to any field actions on a seasonal basis. This would require additional staffing for either the Forest Service or Eglin's Natural Resource Office. Neither could undertake this program with existing staff. The FS has identified insufficient staffing in their 10-Year Plan and Jackson Guard has barely enough staff for Eglin proper. The addition of 190,000+ acres is just not achievable.	The Air Force agrees that site-specific cultural and biological surveys would be required prior to initial use of training areas as discussed in the EIS. Please note that, as discussed in EIS Section 2.5, these General Operational Constraints are standard procedures for training on Eglin AFB and are implemented daily. The majority of these constraints are part of Eglin AFB Instruction 13-212 (Range Planning and Operations), which is referenced in Section 2.5 and provided as supporting documentation on the GRASI EIS website. The Air Force would support monitoring requirements as appropriate in conjunction with support provided by the FFS for approved activities in accordance with final agreements.
I_152-R6	Some of the mitigations identified in the General Operational Restraints are inadequate to provide meaningful protection such as noise mitigation for aircraft and landing zones. The mitigations and stated distances are not adequate to protect regular forest users or wildlife beyond the campgrounds and known threatened and endangered species nesting sites.	As discussed in EIS Section 2.5, all the activities under the Proposed Action currently occur on the Eglin Range and have been evaluated under the documents mentioned in Section 2.5. The General Operational Constraints identified in EIS Section 2.5 are proven to minimize impacts to both natural resources and human safety. While persons in the forest off-trail may encounter troops, this would not be common given the relatively small areas (forest management units) that would be approved for training activities by the Florida Forest Service. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations,

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		emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_152-R7	All site surveys identified as part of the mitigations should be conducted by natural resource professionals. To avoid conflict or bias, 3rd party experts could be utilized.	All site surveys would be conducted by persons qualified to perform the applicable surveys.
I_152-R9	Impacts to forest ecosystems and visitors have both been grossly understated. No natural resources other than T&E species have been considered.	The following sections of the EIS discuss impacts to natural resources: Sections 3.5 (Air Quality), 3.6 (Earth Resources), 3.7 (Water Resources), and 3.8 (Biological Resources). Resources not considered "natural resources" are also addressed in various sections throughout the EIS.
I_152-R10	On the human side, only campground users, hunters, and adjacent residents have been looked at. That is not nearly adequate given these lands were purchased with funds specifically for public use and recreation and natural resource protection. These issues must be considered and the legalities of using state lands researched before the EIS can be considered final.	Recreational use in general (to include all types) is addressed in EIS Sections 3.10, 4.10, 5.10, and 6.10. The only legal requirement for use of the forests is the requirement to obtain a permit or lease agreement from the Florida Forest Service, as with any other user. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_152-R11	Another example is cultural resources. With more than 90% of BRSF lands either inadequately surveyed for cultural sites or having no surveys, it is entirely impossible to mitigate potential impacts through use of the General Operational Restraints. Again, it takes a very experienced eye to recognize a potential cultural resource, not something possessed by field soldiers.	As stated in EIS Section 2.5, cultural resource surveys would be conducted prior to those training activities that have the potential to adversely affect cultural resources in coordination with the Florida Forest Service, and there are several General Operational Constraints identified for protection of cultural resources that have

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	This potential impact cannot be dismissed so easily and adequate field surveys should be completed before any military use.	worked well at Eglin AFB for years. The Air Force has developed a Programmatic Agreement with the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, as provided in Appendix C of the Final EIS to further avoid adverse impacts, or mitigate as necessary, to cultural resources.
I_152-R12	For example, the potential for wildfire was partially mitigated by the fact that both Eglin and the FS use fire as a management tool. That's true but fire is only used when a very narrow set of conditions are met and adequate wildland fire personnel are present. Wildfire is a potential impact of many of the proposed activities and should not be downplayed.	Wildfire potential has not been downplayed - it is addressed in detail in Section 3.4 of the EIS.
I_155-R1	I would encourage the Air Force to consider the noise impact that's going to be created. I was in Tate's Hell recently, close to Mr. Latour when a V-22 came by, everything else that I had been hearing stopped immediately. All other wildlife were stunned by what was going on, and it was probably a good 30 minutes before it started again, before you could hear any other animal in the forest after one V-22 came by.	Noise is discussed in EIS Sections 3.3, 4.3, 5.3, and 6.3, while impacts to wildlife from noise are discussed in EIS Sections 3.8, 4.8, 5.8, and 6.8. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_156-R1	Before I do a detail look at noise aspects though, I would like to point out some areas that concern me about the ESI. While I see that the Air Force is planning on using commercial mufflers on their vehicles, nowhere do they mention the use of spark arrestors or tailpipe shields to reduce the chance of fire caused by these hot components. The US Forest Service has long required their use in the national forest. Such devices are usually more important for off-road vehicles, and I think I speak for the community when I say we do not want any accidents and uncontrolled fires in our forest.	Off road vehicle use is not part of the proposed action. All vehicle use (including ATV/UTVs) will be limited to established forest roads. The use of spark arrestors or tailpipe shields are not necessary, but would be implemented if the FFS deems it necessary. The USFS generally does not require spark arrestors and tailpipe shields for vehicles that stay primarily on established roadways.

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Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
I_156-R2	the air pollution sections used units of tons per year for the entire county for comparison. This seems egregious as one prescribed burn will swamp out any other source of pollution. It would seem more appropriate to use Part Per Million or PPM as a measure of a localized air pollution presence due to smoke bombs and other devices. Also, I wonder about the inhalation of dust, smoke, and the amount of residue that might remain after the use of smoke bombs.	The commenter indicates that a concentration level would be a more appropriate way to communicate the level of emissions being produced by military activities and especially those using visibility obscurants. The Air Force assumes that this assertion is recommending a comparison to short-term allowable exposure limits for human activities that might occur in the forest. This assumption would not be practical, since exposure limits are typically associated with industrial environments and not the forest ecosystem. As stated in the EIS, page 3-34, National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) are the limits established for the United States. Based on the current level of emissions and the projected levels associated with the GRASI activities, it is not anticipated that the NAAQS would be exceeded. The EIS recognizes the concern of the commenter regarding the inhalation of smoke. On Page 3-72 the EIS states: "Expendables can also produce chemical residue that could potentially impact wildlife through direct contact, ingestion, inhalation, or bioconcentration. The most likely opportunity for such exposure would be immediately after the smoke has been dispelled. However, wildlife would most likely leave the area during training exercises, thereby reducing the likelihood of direct exposure. The potential for ingestion or inhalation of particles in sufficient amounts to cause harm is also low, due to wind-driven distribution of smoke particles."
I_156-R3	I'm puzzled about the methodology and analyses of the noise impact. First, I'm somewhat dismayed that the day-night level, the DNL, in the report or called capital L. subscript D. N. in the noise-control literature, was used to categorized the noise emissions for the different activities, especially munitions and aircraft noise. The DNL is a reasonable good measure of the intrusion of steady noise into a community from sources such as air conditioning or an industrial plant or something like that, but it's more appropriate if the intruding noise is not too much greater than the background or ambient levels. It's generally a long term or continuous average with nighttime levels receiving a 10 decibel penalty. This is very inappropriate for impulse or sharp duration noise such as gunfire, bombs, and low flying aircraft. It's also somewhat questionable being used for vehicular noise with only a small number of vehicles.	Individual overflight noise levels are described in the EIS in addition to time-averaged noise metrics like DNL/Ldnmr. An expected frequency of occurrence is also provided for the different types of training events. The DNL metric accounts for intensity, frequency, duration, and time-of-day of noise and is, therefore, useful as an overall indicator of noise level. Although it does not tell "the whole story," the DNL noise metric is useful as an indicator of areas in which the intensity and frequency of occurrence of noise would be more likely to be considered unacceptable. A combination of descriptive methods are necessary to best communicate the intensity, frequency, and duration of noise.

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Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
I_156-R4	The results of using the DNL as a criteria will lead to underestimating the impact of the proposed area -- activities in the area. I understand the forest is very quiet. The assumption of 35 dBA at night, 45 daytime is a good one but is somewhat misleading. ...the results of the EIS are that in most cases the proposed use is inappropriate for the area and will cause damage to the area and annoyance to the community,...	Individual overflight noise levels are described in the EIS in addition to time-averaged noise metrics like DNL/Ldnmr. An expected frequency of occurrence is also provided for the different types of training events. The DNL metric accounts for intensity, frequency, duration, and time-of-day of noise and is, therefore, useful as an overall indicator of noise level. Although it does not tell "the whole story," the DNL noise metric is useful as an indicator of areas in which the intensity and frequency of occurrence of noise would be more likely to be considered unacceptable. A combination of descriptive methods are necessary to best communicate the intensity, frequency, and duration of noise.
I_156-R6	...you see this chart? ... it says that the dot indicates an interaction between the training activity and the forest, and then it colors green everywhere even the ones that don't have a dot. Now it seems to me that those should be blank, white perhaps, so that you really get an indication between the interactions which are adverse and are not. So what would happen at that point, then most of this chart which is now green would no longer be green. It would be white with a lot of yellow, and I think it would give a better indication of the adverse impacts overall that would be caused to the forest.	The green color in the charts with no "dot" are meant to show that there is no impact to that resource because there is no interaction between the activity and the resource. The amount of yellow would stay the same regardless. No change has been made in this regard.
I_158-R1	I live on the Ochlockonee River. I live on the Wakulla side of the Ochlockonee River. . We were not noticed in Wakulla County of any of these issues. We were not given a workshop notice. The only way I knew about this was by reading it in the Tallahassee -- Tallahassee because I happen to work in Tallahassee. . I don't believe most of these residents even know about this proposal because we were not noticed. I would respectfully request that a workshop be noticed and held in Wakulla County because it affects much of Wakulla County. We're just across the river.	The Air Force conducted public involvement by implementing the requirements of 40 CFR, Part 1506.6, which states that Agencies shall: (b) Provide public notice of NEPA-related hearings, public meetings, and the availability of environmental documents so as to inform those persons and agencies who may be interested or affected. It further states that we should advertise in "papers of general circulation." Wakulla County has no daily newspaper that is published inside of the county. Therefore, advertising space was purchased in the Tallahassee Democrat, the daily newspaper that services Wakulla County, in an effort to reach all the potentially interested persons within the Democrat's readership. Two hearings for Tate's Hell Forest area were held in Carrabelle and Apalachicola, the two most centrally located and easily reached locations by all the surrounding potentially impacted populations.

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I_158-R2	We, homeowners, we're there all night long, not just during hunting hours, . , for example, . I pulled up the property appraiser's website to find out how many residences I have within a 1,000 feet of me. Just within a 1,000 feet I have 47, and that doesn't include the whole three-mile stretch. So I believe the impact to the homeowner should be considered more, more closely. When looking at the materials, I see that there are restrictions for various activities, and that some activities are designed to -- are limited restrictions to avoid impacts to private landowners. However, those restrictions -- there are many other restrictions that do not even address the private landowners. There are other restrictions throughout that are provided for inhabited recreational areas, but what happens if the recreational areas that are directly across the river from my home, what happens when they're not inhabited? Okay. I don't want helicopters coming over the river right outside my house, okay. I like to sleep with my windows open at night.	The buffers are for all recreational sites, not only those inhabited. In addition, landowners adjacent to the forests have activity buffers, as discussed in EIS Section 2.5. The buffer language has been clarified to indicate "all identified recreational sites" as opposed to "inhabited recreational sites." Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_158-R3	I actually have a medical condition where I have a sensitivity to chemicals, odors, and gases, and I stay at the river because I don't want to be in that, that climate. I don't want to smell any -- you know, smell any type of -- I don't want any air quality issues. I don't want to hear anything. I don't want to see anything.	The Air Force recognizes the commenter's concerns regarding unsatisfactory olfactory perception, which is often described as odor. Without more details from the commenter, the Air Force cannot speak directly to a specific issue. Based on the data presented in the EIS, air quality would be impacted but not at significant levels as compared with the significance levels defined in the EIS.
I_158-R4	I also noticed that there are restrictions that are just before two hours before sunrise. I'm saying that wrong. It starts -- well, you know, what I mean, for the hunters. I can't say that right now, and I would like those restrictions to be applied at least in the residential areas around the clock, not just during, you know, the nighttime hours when the hunters can't be there.	The time restrictions mentioned in the comment are to minimize troop-hunter interactions and the impact to hunting activities. The restriction actually allows activity during the nighttime hours within hunting seasons, as opposed to daytime. As discussed in EIS Section 2.5, activity buffers for noise have been established around all residences adjacent to the park boundary, and these are in effect at all times.
I_161-R1	...-- will the military use in the state forest be permanent? How long do you plan on being there? There was really nothing -- nothing addressed to how long you will be there,... . I was just wondering if you had plans to turn State Hell -- Tate's Hell into an air force base...	At this point in time there is no defined end-date for whatever training use is ultimately approved by the FFS and State of Florida. Training activities would be projected to occur, until such time as adequate range capacity became available on Eglin AFB to support the necessary training requirements. Ultimately, the FFS would permit training activities for an explicit length of time. The plans to support

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Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
		and manage these activities will need to be reviewed every few years and approved, if they are determined to still be compatible with existing land uses.
I_161-R2	...what is your exit strategy? There's absolutely no room for an exit strategy that I could find,	Any exit strategy would be developed through coordination with the Florida Forest Service to ensure that identified compliance issues have been adequately addressed once the permit/lease agreement expires.
I_163-R2	. I have a vacant lot there. I plan to build. I'm getting taxed on a vacant lot. .... One of the few bright spots is the development at that corridor. For property tax purposes they have a base. Right now it's getting taxed as an empty lot because I'm not going to build a house on it if we're having helicopters flying over with no notice or very short notice. So the County is going to be hurting because that land is not going to be developed,...	Sections 5.11 and 6.11 of the Final EIS discuss the potential impacts to home values and the concerns expressed by several home owners in the region of influence.
I_163-R3	I'm all for having this gentleman [references Mr. McCormack] over there volunteering his property, or looking at the millions of acres that St. Joe or whoever has, and now the Utah company has out there	Please see Comment Response I_087-R2.
I_165-R2	Use of expendables, in Section ES.4.1.2.3, in parenthesis (UoEX) involves use of various training munitions and pyrotechnics, including simulated munitions consisting of plastic pellets or paintballs and smoke grenades during training activities. ...It says that Tate's Hell State Forest, as unlike in Blackwater River, noise-generating expendables could be used anywhere, and I'm quoting from your EIS. And you give all of these, what they are, 5.56-millimeter blanks, 576,000 estimated max quantity per year. Estimated average per event 10,000. 7.62 millimeter blanks, 196,200, approximately 8,000. Ground burst simulators -- it's all in your breakdown of how many there would be, and how many times per year, two to five times per year. It would seem obvious to anyone considering the nature of such munitions and pyrotechnics that it would not be possible to clean up the fragments and residue left on the ground, vegetation, and water. Tate's Hell is a wetland, a swamp. This is not acceptable, and is not compatible with the citizens' stated desire for preservation of the environmentally fragile ecosystem of Tate's Hell State Forest, and the tranquil environment needed for enjoyment by civilian users.	Metallic debris (e.g., brass cases) from training operations would be collected and recycled to the extent possible and, therefore, not disposed of as solid waste. The following would also be prohibited as part of training: throwing smokes, flares, or simulators directly into a water body; abandoning, dumping, burying, or otherwise concealing munitions, pyrotechnics, or residue, including packing materials; and releasing chemicals or metals (including brass) into streams, wetlands, or water bodies. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.

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I_165-R4	I ask that Eglin find other places to conduct their expansion of military training, and leave Tate's Hell State Forest out of any consideration for such use.	Please see Comment Response I_004-R2.
I_167-R1	[Draft EIS Section 1.4 states:] "Emitter sites create realistic threat scenarios for pilots and more realistic training scenarios by simulating an integrated air defense system (IADS),which helps with identifying and countering enemy missile or artillery threats from land or sea." The inadequacy of current defense systems for enemy threats from land or sea would be cause for concern, if there were data to support such an evaluation. But this initiative provides no training at all against air strikes, which, given the proliferation of nuclear and long-range missile systems, seems much more likely. Any specific threat potential to the Gulf Coast requiring the density of training emitters described in this initiative has not been described.	There is no specific threat to the Gulf Coast. The emitter systems are for training only, as described in EIS Section 2.3.1.
I_167-R2	[Draft EIS Section 2.3.2.6 Temporary Combat Support Areas, states:]"... [Up to 50 personnel] May arrive at location via various aircraft or land vehicles." Overland military training support routes have not been identified. Passage of a convoy of cargo trucks, Humvees, armored personnel carriers, jeeps, etc., through populated areas, particularly at night, would unnecessarily alarm civilians... [Draft EIS Section 2.3.2.10 Cross-Country Dismounted Movements, states:]"... CCDM may occur on or off roads or on unimproved trails. ... Up to 72 [personnel] ... Avoid inhabited recreational sites." It is almost impossible to avoid civilian activities in the State Forests, and not all of them occur at recreational sites. Does this training objective reserve the option to use vacant recreational sites? With or without a FFS dated permit? What is the outcome of trainees who encounter a hunter, stargazer, or birdwatcher who carries binoculars and a spotting scope? Would they assume that this civilian is a threat to their security? * Even though statements like "Live rounds are not authorized." appear throughout this document, the potential for civilian death or injury due to a frightened or startled trainee has not been addressed. * If a the civilian is held under arrest until their presence in the State Forest is vindicated, under whose authority would the arrest be made: military, Florida State Police, or FFS? These questions also apply to Sections 2.3.2.4, 2.3.2.5, 2.3.2.6, 2.3.2.7, 2.3.2.8, 2.3.2.16, and 2.3.2.20.	As stated in EIS Section 2.3.2, the Air Force may utilize any public roads or forest roads approved by the Florida Forest Service (FFS) for access to the state forests. With the exception of the hardened camp sites identified in Section 2.3.2.21, no identified recreational sites would be utilized by the Air Force; this has been clarified in the Chapter 2 of Final EIS. One of the main objectives of this training is to go undetected; Air Force personnel would avoid interactions with other forest users to the extent practicable. Should there be an encounter, Air Force personnel would move on and try to avoid further disturbance to the user. Air Force personnel would not carry live rounds, and no citizens would be arrested for any reason by Air Force personnel.

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Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
I_167-R3	[Draft EIS Section 2.3.2.9 Forward Air Refueling Point/Hot Gas Operations, states:]"...This activity will likely only occur at local airports in the vicinity of the forest." Saint George Island, Apalachicola Regional, and Wakulla County Airports are very close to THSF. Even though a refueling accident would probably not impact the forest, it would certainly threaten soil and water ecosystems and the fishing and oyster harvests. There is no provision for fuel spill containment in this document.	EIS Section 2.5, General Operational Constraints 5(h) and 5(i), would apply to minimize any potential soil or water contamination from spills. Such minimization procedures include use of drip pans and absorbents to capture any oils or other hazardous materials.
I_167-R4	Adding additional aircraft flight paths to a region that is on the road to becoming too congested makes absolutely no sense. If the intent of this initiative is to force commercial carriers to relocate to protect military traffic from potential collisions, the economic impact to the area has not yet been evaluated.	As discussed in EIS Section 3.2, existing, approved airspace would be used under current airspace management protocols. There is no intent to force commercial carriers to relocate.
I_167-R5	One solution to the problem of competing demands at Eglin Air Force Base would be the consolidation of advanced weapons system testing with test ranges in Nevada, California, and Utah. Another potential solution, particularly if the need for training under sub-tropical woodland conditions is a priority for an as yet undisclosed offensive, is the consolidation of training activities with Air Force ranges in Mississippi, Louisiana, Japan, and other Florida sites. If neither of these solutions is viable, due to command compartmentalization, perhaps Pentagon efficiency and communication experts could be consulted. . . . Does the Pentagon anticipate invasion from Canada? If so, emitter-supported training missions might be better served in colder and drier locations. Separation of emitter site proposals from troop training activities would define strategic intent in line with protection of Gulf Coast air space from an as yet speculative land or sea invader. Emitters described in this document do not appear to be dependent upon efficient use of Eglin Air Force Base; and site permits could be issued by the communities in which they would be located, some of which would not impact fragile ecosystems. This would allow the Air Force to build and maintain emitter sites on an incremental basis.	Please see Comment Response I_004-R2.
I_167-R6	Section 2.3.2.2 Fixed Wing Aircraft Landing Sites: Site construction projects that have the potential for changing existing water flow patterns from aircraft damage to the roadways can affect other agencies as well. FFS coordination is necessary, but input from water flow experts, habitat restoration agencies, and concerned members of the public would minimize any unintended consequences to both recreational and	With the exception of use of Blackwater Airfield, the Air Force has removed FWALS activity from the Proposed Action. As discussed in EIS Section 2.3.2, training activities are not mutually exclusive. So yes, airdrops may be conducted to support other training activities. All training activities would be conducted in coordination with, and by approval of, the Florida Forest Service (FFS). Recreational users

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Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
	commercial fishing. How would the Air Force protect civilians who could be working in the clearings or traveling on the roadways concurrent with the training mission? Sirens? Flares? . the additional environmental impact of any warning noise and/ or lights is not evaluated. This question also applies to Section 2.3.2.1. [Draft EIS Section 2.3.2.7 Airdrops, states:] "Up to 4 total aircraft ... Up to 72 [personnel] ... Land drops: approximately 15 cubic foot container of water (~300 pounds); containerized delivery system (~500 pounds). " There is no process described to clearing the area of humans or non-protected species of animals prior to the drop. If personnel are dropped before equipment, perhaps the platoon's communication could minimize any adverse impact. However, dropping containerized cargo or water from 500 - 1,000 feet AGL, particularly at night, would certainly kill any backcountry camper or herd of deer in the drop zone. There is no provision in this document for handling the accidental injury I death of animals or humans as a result of airdrops. Does mission planning include packing out the cargo/water? Or are airdrops intended only for the establishment of other training operations, e.g., a temporary support combat area?	would be notified, either by the FFS or by the Air Force, of training activities within the forest. Areas not approved by the FFS (e.g., areas where FFS personnel or others are working or recreating) would not be used. Safety associated with training activities, including airdrops, is described in EIS Section 3.4.3. As discussed in EIS Section 2.5, all items used during training would be removed upon completion of the exercise.
I_167-R7	[Draft EIS Section 2.3.2.4 Light Aviation Proficiency Training, states:] "Aircraft would fly from the surface to approximately 3,000 feet above ground level (AGL) 90 percent of the time and up to 10,000 feet AGL the remaining 10 percent of the time based on training requirements." There is no explanation for the use of paintballs/ plastic pellets, or smoke grenades in this aspect of training. Indeed, it is hard to imagine how their use could improve or accelerate the skill level of pilots. This question also applies to Sections 2.3.2.18 and 2.3.2.19. [Draft EIS Section 2.3.2.13 Blackout Driving, states:]"...Roads used for this activity would be temporarily closed (likely in concert with emplacement of obstacles) to the public to prevent safety mishaps." Where would road closures be placed? If road closures are established at the State Forest boundary, how far in advance of the training mission would the public be notified? If road closures are established at the edge of a buffer zone for the training activity, how would the Air Force ensure a safe turnaround area for the civilian vehicle? How would collisions with deer be avoided in blackout conditions? [Draft EIS Section 2.3.2.14 Emplacement of Obstacles, states:]"... emplacement of concertina wire along unpaved roads and Hardened Camp Sites ..." What	Use of expendables may occur under any training scenario to simulate combat (e.g., ambush, landing in a hostile environment). The overall quantity of potential expendables used is described in EIS Section 2.3.2.3. Until it is determined what roads would be used for training, the extent of the road closures is unknown. Please note that FWALS activity has been removed from the Proposed Action. While it is unknown at this time exactly what roads would be closed or restricted, only small segments of roadways may experience these closures for a temporary duration. These would be determined in coordination with the Florida Forest Service (FFS) as part of the permit/lease agreement. Citizens would be notified of any potential closures prior to their occurrence in sufficient time to plan accordingly. Campers and other recreationalists would still be able to access the forest. Use of concertina wire has also been removed from the Proposed Action as is discussed in Section 2.3 of the EIS. As stated in EIS, the Air Force is not permitted to use live rounds in either forest under the GLI. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic

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	provisions would the Air Force make for the care and rehabilitation of any animals inadvertently injured by razor wire? Does the Air Force have working agreements in place with veterinarians in the vicinity of BWSF and THSF? [Draft EIS Section 2.5 GENERAL OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS, states:]"...Expendable Use. At BRSF, use of noise-generating expendables is restricted to the hardened camp sites. Live rounds are not authorized. At THSF, use of noise-generating expendables is restricted to those areas shown on the GLI Protection Level maps. Live rounds are not authorized." Are live rounds to be completely forbidden in the State Forests?	scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_167-R8	[Draft EIS Section 2.5 GENERAL OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS, states:]"... Limited Use-1 (LU-1) ... Not Approved: use of smokes, flares, or simulators; off-road vehicle use - all vehicles must remain on established roads; land development and point land disturbance outside of previously disturbed roadbeds and road shoulders. LZ/DZ use except on approved FFS sites .... No refueling of vehicles or aircraft allowed. Limited Use-2 (LU-2) ... Not Approved: off-road vehicle use - all vehicles must remain on established roads." Who is responsible for informing civilians about prohibited activities in limited use areas? Should a concerned civilian report observed deviations to the FFS? A draft Mitigation Plan and feasible Landscape Implementation Team (L.I.T.) should be available for public review on accountability, not only to the FFS. [Draft EIS Section 2.5 GENERAL OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS, states:]"...Identify and implement funding/reimbursement mechanisms to pay for leases/agreements and surveys (i.e., pre/post surveys for damage to sensitive species/habitats)." This is an honest acknowledgement by the Air Force that damage to State Forest ecosystems is a valid concern. However, in addition to financial appropriations for any surveys or restoration projects, a stop-order should be issued for further training activities in the State Forests until the reason for the damage is ascertained and training plans are amended to prevent a recurrence of the damage. The FFS, local environmental groups, and university experts should verify the validity of pre/post surveys, remediation plans, and restoration implementation; and funds will need to be allocated for validation. [Draft EIS Section 2.5 GENERAL OPERATIONAL	Area use restrictions do not apply to members of the public, only Air Force personnel. All restrictions are described in EIS Section 2.5. A mitigation plan and operational plan would be made available to the public at the completion of the NEPA process. Discovery of any cultural resources would be handled as described in EIS Section 3.9, per processes identified by the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, as well as the Programmatic Agreement provided in Appendix C of the Final EIS. As stated in EIS Section 2.5, no taking of sensitive species is permitted. Typical chemicals associated with training expendables are described in the documents referenced in EIS Section 2.3.2. Each unit would be responsible for policing their own expendables. Training areas would be monitored as described in Section 2.5. There is no provision for cleaning trees or areas with paintball splashes. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area

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	CONSTRAINTS, states:]"...Establish a process for notification of locally affected residents prior to training operations." Local residents are not the only civilians who need to be notified prior to training activities. Tourists, some of whom travel from foreign countries, visit BWSF and THSF to study or enjoy unique ecosystems, not to be subject to the sounds, smells, and disruption to wildlife caused by military activity. Professional people who work in BWSF and THSF also need warning, especially scientific researchers, fishing guides, tour boat operators, and eco tourism specialists, as the financial consequences of interruptions would be extreme. [Draft EIS Section 2.5 GENERAL OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS, states:]"...During Training. In the event of unexpected discovery of cultural resources, cease activity in the immediate vicinity; notify the GLI Liaison and Eglin AFB. Leave any artifacts visible on the ground in place; notify the GLI Liaison and Eglin AFB." Notification should also include FFS and Florida Historical Society. If artifacts found in THSF appear to be of native origin, local leaders of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Florida should inspect the site to determine whether they should be returned to Miccosukee, Muscogee, or other Seminole survivors. If such artifacts are found in BRSF, Choctaw leaders should be contacted before artifact removal. [Draft EIS Section 2.5 GENERAL OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS, states:]"... If an indigo snake, gopher tortoise, or black bear is sighted, allow the animal to leave the area undisturbed; notify the GLI Liaison and Eglin AFB." The GLI Liaison appears to be a member of the Air Force and may not be knowledgeable about animal behavior. Generally, "educated" black bears know that humans carry food and will persist, sometimes destructively, in efforts to find it. Experienced FFS personnel should brief all trainees on safe methods to discourage bears. Under no circumstances should the Air Force authorize trainees to injure or kill a black bear in lieu of surrendering his food supply. [Draft EIS Section 2.5 GENERAL OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS, states:]"...Do not release chemicals or metals into streams, wetlands, or water bodies. Do not release toxic aerosols within 300 feet of streams, wetlands, or water bodies." Does Eglin AFB provide a list of authorized toxic substances to training units? It needs to be made public so that environmental groups and clean water monitoring agencies can be prepared for spill abatement. [Draft EIS Section 2.5 GENERAL OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS,	are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.

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	states:]"...After Training. Police training areas to ensure that no trash, ammunition boxes, wire, or other debris has been left in the area and all excavations are filled. Take to appropriate landfill or recycling points." Policing cleanup following training activities needs to be fully defined. Monitoring the relative cleanliness of training sites may prove to be problematic for Cross-Country Dismounted Movements, Bivouacking/Assembly Areas, Natural Resource Consumption, Opposing Forces Vehicle Operations and any other activities where troops are engaged physically. Would individual trainees be held accountable for their trash, such as cigarette butts, candy wrappers, condoms, and food waste? Who would certify that an area is "clean", the FFS, tourist guides, or environmental groups? Would a heuristic definition include the removal of paintball splashes from trees, vegetation, and soil? Certainly no nature lover wants to visit a place where wildflowers, especially orchids, are fouled with neon-colored dyes, even if the half-life of biodegradation is only a week.	
I_167-R9	[Draft EIS Section 2.5 GENERAL OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS, states:]"...In addition to close examination of the area around proposed new training locations for protected/sensitive species, survey the areas surrounding existing training areas every two years to ensure that no new noise-sensitive land uses have been established." Why is there a requirement for redefinition of land use, seemingly in perpetuity? Section 1-2 states that increased airspace availability is necessary until 2017. Is the need for additional land use going to be any different? How? [Draft EIS Section 3.3.1.2 Assessment Method, states:]"..... training locations that are ideal for training initially become less desirable over time due to vegetation growth and other factors, and so new training locations would occasionally be required. In addition to close examination of the areas around proposed new training locations, the areas surrounding existing training areas would be surveyed every two years to ensure that no new noise-sensitive land uses have been established. " Isn't it more likely that the reason that initial training sites become less desirable over time is NOT that the vegetation has been restored, but that it has been damaged to the point that it no longer provides a "natural" setting for training activities? To restate the comment for Section 2.5, why would a requirement for redefinition of land use, seemingly in perpetuity, transpire unless the habituation of troop	There is no requirement for redefinition of land use. This constraint is used to determine whether there have been new land uses (e.g., residential areas or new recreational sites) established near training sites. If there are incompatible land uses, then training areas would be re-evaluated. As stated in Sections 1.2 and 1.3 of the EIS, the proposed use of the state forests is a beginning measure to address an immediate need. The Air Force will continue to evaluate options in the future. Training locations may be unusable because forest management activities by the Florida Forest Service (FFS) may require that training be discontinued in certain areas. An example is a cleared area that is planted with longleaf pine. The location may be suitable for use for a short period as an HLZ or DZ; once vegetation reaches a certain height the location, is no longer suitable for an HLZ or DZ. Again, there is no provision for reclassification of land use associated with the GLI. Potential users under GLI are described in EIS Section 2.3.2. Training would occur in the forests as long as the FFS allows it via permit or lease agreement.

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	activity created the need for more troop activity? [Draft EIS Section 2.5 GENERAL OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS, states:]"...Before Training. Prior to any training activities, Unit personnel must be cognizant of environmental restrictions by: ... Coordinate with Eglin AFB to schedule an in-briefing on environmental restrictions for Commanders, student trainers, and operational unit personnel prior to first time training at the emitter sites, BRSF and THSF; then at least annually thereafter." Which other service entities are to be scheduled for training in this area -- Air Force Commands other than those at Eglin AFB? Army, Navy Marine Corps, Coast Guard? Respective National Guard Units? As questioned above, is this initiative intended to become a permanent, ever-increasing encroachment upon BWSF and THSF ecosystems?	
I_167-R10	[Draft EIS Section 2.5 GENERAL OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS, states:]"...Use chemical latrines for human waste disposal whenever possible during field training missions and only in areas approved by the FFS. When chemical latrines are not available, a cat-hole latrine or saddle trench latrine can be used in accordance with service command directives." Wouldn't compost latrines be more environmentally friendly for hardened campsites? [Draft EIS Section 2.5 GENERAL OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS, states:]"...Portable generators must be approved by the GLI Liaison, Eglin AFB and FFS, and used in accordance with each respective policy, including containment measures and spill kits." Sound carries in the woods. All portable generators should be equipped with sound baffles, and times of use should be limited. [Draft EIS Section 2.5 GENERAL OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS, states:]"...Amphibious Operations. No power motors are allowed in Bear Lake (BRSF)." What kinds of power motors will be authorized for use in other areas, e.g., Crooked River, Trout Creek? To protect river and creek spawning areas, trolling motors should be the only motorization permitted in season?	The Air Force will consider use of compost latrines as appropriate. With regard to generators, the Air Force would use standard equipment.The goal when employing generators, however is to minimize noise and detection footprints. As such, the Air Force would use generators in the forests temporarily, only when necessary, and as approved by the FFS. The types of boat motors used would be comparable to current civilian boat motors used on forest waterways. Motorized boats would be utilized in water bodies approved for such use by the Florida Forest Service (FFS;) this information has been added to Section 2.5 of the EIS.
I_167-R11	[Draft EIS Section 3.4.1.2 Assessment Method, states:]"... [Safety Attribute Intensity - High] Substantive change in the safety environment that results in elimination of existing unavoidable high-level safety risks (such as loss of life or property) or introduction of new unavoidable, high-level safety risks. Examples include closure of a hazardous test and/or training area or introduction of a new hazardous test and/or training area. " No hazardous tests or training have been described in this initiative. If the Air Force	As stated in EIS Section 1.3, the purpose of the proposed GLI is to conduct nonhazardous training, which involves use of training munitions (e.g., non-explosive), aircraft, and personnel ground activities. No hazardous testing or training is proposed.

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	anticipates that the State Forests will be used for new hazardous tests and/or training areas, a process of communication of these additional activities should require full disclosure to affected residents, commercial interests, State Forest patrons, and environmental groups.	
I_167-R12	[Draft EIS Section 2.3.2.5 Low-Level Helicopter Insertions/Extractions, states:]"... involve flying helicopters near treetop level and above to an HLZ/DZ and inserting or extracting [up to 50] personnel. En route to HLZs/DZs, helicopters would fly at 100 to 500 AGL ..." For those areas of THSF adjacent to the Apalachicola National Forest, the impact of low-level flying on National Forest ecosystems, wildlife, and human inhabitants has not been evaluated.	Appendix H, Section H.2.8 of the EIS provides additional information on effects of noise on wildlife. Noise levels would not be sufficient enough to harm wildlife, though some individuals may startle depending on the proximity of the activity and presence of people/vehicles. Birds and wildlife on Eglin AFB have been exposed to military noise and disturbance for several years. Populations there are stable or increasing. References to Appendix H have been added to the Final EIS Sections 5.8.2.2, 5.8.2.3, 6.8.2.2, and 6.8.2.3. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_167-R13	[Draft EIS Section 3.3.3 General Training Activity Impact Assessment, states:]"...Munitions Use. Approximately 8,000 blank 7.62-millimeter (mm) (M240) and 10,000 5.56-mm (M4) rounds would be fired per training event. In total, 576,000 blank 5.56-mm rounds and 196,200 blank 7.62-mm rounds would be fired annually. Approximately two to five ground-burst simulators would be used during each training event, for a total of 5,172 ground burst simulators used annually." The effect of noise generated by munitions detonation, compared with aircraft annoyance, should include assessment of the much longer duration and the unpredictability of bursts. Habituation (getting "used to") the sound of gunfire is not a desirable attribute to State Forest use. As commented on the use of low-flying aircraft, the effect of noise pollution on birds, mammals, crustaceans, fish,	The numbers of expendables (e.g., blank rounds, ground burst simulators) proposed to be used per year is a theoretical maximum. As discussed in EIS Section 2.3.2.3, exact quantities of expendables to be used per training event are unavailable. Analyzing a maximum-use scenario ensures that the Air Force does not underestimate impacts to residents and users of the state forests. It is worth noting that blank rounds fired during GLI training are quieter than firing of live ammunition, which currently occurs in the state forests during hunting season. Restricting the use of noise-generating expendables to 4,000 feet from known noise-sensitive locations in THSF and notification of residents near the two approved munitions-use locations in BRSF would reduce potential noise impacts to humans.

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	and desirable insects is probably quite relevant.	Noise impacts of proposed GLI training on biological resources (e.g., birds and mammals) are discussed in EIS Sections 5.8 and 6.8. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_167-R14	The unintended consequences of this initiative point to greatly diminished prosperity for a number of civilians, including: * Oystermen, whose efforts to rebuild their resources following drought conditions would be inhibited by upstream military activity with prospective water pollution * Sports fishermen, particularly stream- and river-fishermen, due to noise pollution * Eco-tourism enterprises, which are just beginning to gain traction following extensive restoration efforts by the Florida Forest Service and environmental groups * Homeowners, due to property value decline and quality-of-life attenuation * Hikers, campers, birdwatchers, kayakers, canoeists, star gazers, etc., who are grateful for the woods, clear water, fresh air, darkness, and silence * University-sponsored researchers who rely on controlled environmental conditions for their studies * Worm grunters and other fishing-worm harvesting people The economic impact from loss of tourism to the State Forests and surrounding areas that are subject to overflights of low-altitude aircraft has not been evaluated. . [Draft EIS Section 3.11.3 General Training Activity Impact Assessment, states:]"...Recreation and Tourism. Some recreational users, such as hikers, may be annoyed by noise from aircraft operations." Most birdwatchers, photographers, writers, and researchers hike the State Forests to view wildlife. The Blackwater River and its major tributaries, Juniper Creek, Coldwater Creek, and Sweetwater Creek, are well-traveled by kayaks and canoes, some of them as part of ecotourism caravans. In THSF waterways are well traveled by sports fishermen and nature lovers	Certain ground and air maneuver training activities have been identified as resulting in potentially adverse socioeconomics impacts to the public. These impacts have been identified as adverse but not significant due to the assessment that these impacts are typically recoverable over the short-to-medium term with mitigations required to minimize the level of impact or potential for impact. In the event that a visitor does have an undesirable experience due to the Proposed Action, there would be potential for that visitor to not return to the area. If negative experiences associated with the Proposed Action become frequent and shared by an increasing number of visitors, the FFS and, potentially, local businesses could experience a loss of revenue from a decrease in the number of first time and repeat visitors. To minimize the impacts to recreational users and adjacent landowners, the Air Force would implement constraints identified in EIS Section 2.5 and avoidance of noise-sensitive areas. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire

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	alike. If wildlife flees from the noise of aircraft or troop movement, or becomes silent to evade a perceived enemy, there is no reason to hike or paddle there. The economic impact to Franklin and Liberty Counties would be quite substantial when hikers and boaters go elsewhere.	issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_167-R15	[Draft EIS Section 2.6 ALTERNATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS SUMMARY, states:]"...Training Activities. Airspace Management. Impacts to ongoing operations would be expected to be minor as the proposed GLI training would not require blocking off a volume of airspace to be used exclusively by Air Force aircraft. Other operations would be able to continue to transit the area while GLI training is under way. Impacts would last for the entire life of the action, as air traffic tempo over the state forests would remain slightly elevated for as long as GLI training continues to occur." If there would be no dedicated airspace blocking civilian aircraft flyovers and, presumably, no warnings posted at local civilian airports, would the safety of the training flights be compromised? The safety of pilots, as well as trainees, has not been addressed at all in this initiative.	As stated in EIS Sections 5.2.2 and 6.2.2, aircraft conducting GLI training would operate in compliance with all federal aviation regulations for operations outside of special use airspace. No new special use airspace or modification of existing special use airspace would be created as part of the Proposed Action. Sections 5.2.2 and 6.2.2 note that implementation of the Proposed Action would increase aircraft activity in the airspace above BRSF and THSF. Any increase in air traffic increases the importance of all pilots using "see and avoid" measures to maintain safe distances from other aircraft. As long as all aircraft comply with FAA regulations and practice effective "see and avoid" measures, flight safety should be maintained.
I_167-R16	The likelihood of piping plover in-flight kill by helicopter maneuvers within Tate's Hell State Forest (THSF) has not been evaluated. No plan for helicopter avoidance of the airspace above plover critical habitat or forage areas has been defined. In-flight kill of other protected bird species within Blackwater River State Forest (BRSF) or THSF, by any aircraft, has not been evaluated. . . . [Draft EIS Section 2.3.2.14 Emplacement of Obstacles, states:]"... The Great Florida Birding Trail passes through BRSF, and many birds can be found such as mourning dove, myrtle warbler, red-tailed hawk, red-headed woodpecker (Melanerpes erythrocephalus), and the Carolina wren." The Great Florida Birding Trail also passes through Tate's Hell State Forest Deep Creek Tract is in TA-8. Aircraft flight paths would also affect nearby segments of the Trail, including: * Tate's Hell State Forest: High Bluff Coastal Hiking Trail * Apalachicola River Wildlife and Environmental Area o Cash Bayou o Sand Beach Tower o Bloody Bluff Tract * Apalachicola National Forest: o Fort Gadsden Historic Site (currently closed) o Wright Lake o County Road 22 Pond o Post Office Bay, Forest Road 123 Northeast * Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserve: Garden of Eden Trail All concerns about noise impact on nesting and foraging habitats and bird kill due to collision with low-altitude aircraft apply to these areas.	Information on the Great Florida Birding Trail in THSF has been added to EIS Section 6.8.2. Military and civilian aircraft already operate throughout the entire panhandle, though there is no evidence to suggest that piping plovers, woodpeckers, or other bird species are at particular risk at THSF. Raptors, because they share similar airspace with civilian and military aircraft, are involved in a higher percentage of bird strikes nationwide. The military manages the potential for bird-aircraft collisions through established Bird-Aircraft Strike Hazard programs that evaluate hazardous conditions, foster awareness, and minimize strikes during certain conditions. EIS Appendix H, Section H.2.8 provides additional information on potential noise impacts on birds and wildlife.

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I_167-R17	[Draft EIS Section 2.5 GENERAL OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS, states:]"...Activities within 200 feet of identified RCW trees will not exceed two hours. " If a buffer zone of 200 feet is established, why would activity of any duration disturb the nesting habitat of a red-cockaded woodpecker?	The buffer zone allows some low-impact activities to occur but restricts them to a maximum time limit. This approach has proven effective in protecting red-cockaded woodpeckers at Eglin AFB and at Army bases in the south while not unnecessarily limiting military training.
I_167-R18	[Draft EIS Section 3.3.2 General Emitter Activity Impact Assessment, states:]"... Site FWC-2 ... Generator noise would be localized, low intensity, and brief. While it may be audible when ambient noise levels are low, the Air Force does not expect the noise to be disruptive at any noise-sensitive locations. " Site FWC-2 is located in the Apalachicola River wetlands, although the initiative map definition is insufficient to tell whether it is adjacent to Huckleberry Creek, Pine Log Creek, or in Box-R WMA. The FWC bird list described 50 species known to breed in the Box-R WMA. These include the protected bald eagle and red-headed woodpecker. Also nesting in the area are the rarely sighted yellow-crowned night heron, broad-winged hawk, pileated woodpecker, eastern screech owl, great horned owl, barred owl, wild turkey, hooded warbler, Bachman's sparrow, and blue grosbeak. Any assumption that generator noise would not discourage the nest establishment of these desirable birds this close to the Great Florida Birding Trail is unproven. . [Draft EIS Section 3.3.3 General Training Activity Impact Assessment, states:]"...Low-altitude flight minimizes the chances of detection. Lower-altitude flights are louder for people directly overflown, but noise levels drop off relatively rapidly with lateral distance from the aircraft. " . the effect of noise pollution on birds, mammals, crustaceans, fish, desirable insects such as butterflies, moths, and dragonflies, etc. has very little scientific data to support any assertions of irrelevance. Moreover, the effect of repeated low-level aircraft noise on ongoing scientific studies that require controlled environments is not addressed at all.	EIS Appendix H, Section H.2.8, provides additional information on effects of noise on wildlife. Cross-references to Appendix H have been added to Final EIS Sections 5.8.2.2, 5.8.2.3, 6.8.2.2, and 6.8.2.3. It should be noted that birds and wildlife on Eglin AFB have been exposed to military noise and disturbance for several years. Nesting populations of protected bird species at Eglin AFB, where military activities occur at a much greater level, have been stable to increasing for many years. Management actions developed at Eglin AFB that are designed to protect sensitive species and wildlife are proven to be effective and would be implemented at THSF and BRSF as discussed in EIS Sections 2.5 and 2.7. With regard to insects, there are some studies addressing the impacts of urban anthropogenic noise on certain insect species but none that focus on intermittent disturbance from low-level flights, and there is no indication in the literature that such types of noise would present a concern.
I_167-R19	[Sections 3.8.3 and 3.12.3:] There is no evaluation of the impact paintball and smoke grenade components would have on wildlife. For instance, the typical medium for paintball dyes (and artificial smoke) is propylene glycol, a hygroscopic synthetic chemical. It is often assumed to be completely harmless, but degradation in soil causes excessive bacterial growth, called bioclogging, which interferes with water filtration. Given the quantities of expendables projected for each event, the impact of bioclogging would	Smoke grenade components have been analyzed in Eglin Air Force Interstitial Area Environmental Assessment, which is referenced in Table 3-33 of the EIS. Smoke grenade dyes would not persist in the environment and would not affect wildlife. The amounts of propylene glycol residue released at any one point in time and in any one location would not be sufficient to trigger more than extremely localized bacterial growth or clogging of soil. Paintballs and dyes

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	extend well beyond the immediate training area. Expendables containing propylene glycol would de-oxygenate water in the area, affecting fish and crayfish habitats. In addition, propylene glycol is known to be toxic to domestic animals, causing blood diseases in cats and various forms of toxicosis in dogs. There is no data for toxicity in wild animals. Therefore, the use of paintballs and smoke grenades would, in effect, become a series of uncontrolled experiments on the effects of ingestion, dermal absorption, and inhalation by wild animals, some of which are protected species.	would be widely dispersed and in small amounts. Constituents would be subject to degradation before achieving concentrations sufficient to overload aquatic or soil systems. Studies of propylene glycol used in aircraft de-icing, an application in which much greater quantities are used did observe bioclogging in soils, but experimental amounts ranged from 0.8 up to 220 pounds per cubic meter. By comparison, paintballs generally weight about an ounce, not all of which is propylene glycol. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_167-R20	Avoiding the nesting areas of piping plover is a reasonable training objective. However, food sources, such as worms and insects, may occur beyond the buffer zone intended to protect the birds from disturbance. . Where wildfires are more likely, whether from incendiaries, aircraft, ground vehicles, fuel stores, or careless smoking behavior, additional precautions need to be established for piping plover foraging areas. The Audubon Society states on its website that research shows that even a small drop in the number of birds that survive the winter can threaten the recovery of the species. Therefore, training activities must incorporate a zero tolerance policy for loss of life of the piping plover due to military presence. It may be preferable for training activities to be prohibited altogether within a kilometer of foraging shorelines.	The piping plover has been addressed in the Final EIS, Sections 3.8, 5.8, and 6.8. All activities would be conducted in accordance with the terms and conditions as required by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation, provided in Appendix C of the EIS and summarized in Sections 2.5 and 2.7 of the EIS. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area

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		are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_167-R21	The migration pathway of the monarch butterfly (Danaus plexippus) to Mexico follows the Apalachicola River and its major tributaries. The fall migration (October and November) is a major tourist attraction in the THSF area; and some areas are subject to monarch overwintering, due to increased winter temperatures, which also attracts tourists. Monarchs are known to remain in the southern areas of THSF during January and February. Spring migration in March, while not as spectacular, also draws tourists. The economic value of the disruption of monarch migration from noise and air turbulence has not been evaluated by this initiative	Noise and air turbulence are not expected to affect monarch butterfly migration. Scientists have identified the primary threat to monarch butterfly existence as elimination of milkweed plant habitat through the use of the herbicide Roundup. Other major threats are deforestation and extreme weather. Therefore, the impact of the Proposed Action on the monarch butterfly migration and associated economic value was not evaluated, because the Proposed Action does not involve elimination of plants, deforestation, or extreme weather.
I_169-R2	It would seem obvious to anyone considering the nature of such munitions and pyrotechnics [simulated munitions, plastic pellets, paintballs, smoke grenades], that it would not be possible to clean up the fragments and residue left on the ground, vegetation, and over the wetlands. This is not acceptable and not compatible with the citizens' stated desire for preservation of the environmentally fragile ecosystems of State's Hell -- Tate's Hell State Forest, and the tranquil environment needed for enjoyment by civilian users.	Thank you for your comment. Units would be required to pick up expended items. Residues from blanks and smoke grenades would not remain indefinitely in the environment but undergo photo- and bio- degradation and chemical decomposition over a period of weeks to months. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_169-R3	The draft EIS does not adequately describe what measures will be used to remove small fragments and fine particulate residue that result from the use of training munitions and pyrotechnics, which would be a source of unnatural litter and potential toxins on soil vegetation and water wetlands. Nor does the draft EIS address the adverse effects of the debris and residue or the toxic components thereof.	Metallic debris (e.g., brass cases) from training operations would be collected and recycled to the extent possible and, therefore, not disposed of as solid waste. The following would also be prohibited as part of training: throwing smokes, flares, or simulators directly into a water body; abandoning, dumping, burying, or otherwise concealing munitions, pyrotechnics, or residue, including packing materials; and releasing chemicals or metals (including brass) into streams, wetlands, or water bodies. In the case of paint balls, these are predominantly composed of polyethylene glycol, gelatin, glycerol, sorbitol, food-grade color and water. The compounds are

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		biodegradable, edible, fit for human consumption and metabolized by most aquatic and terrestric organisms. Additionally, the ingredients are soluble in water and would not leave permanent markings on trees or other structures. The Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_169-R4	I also have concerns about Section 2.3.2.14, Emplacement of Obstacles, EoO, which involves placement of concertina wire along unpaved roads. Even if the area is manned, I am concerned about forest animals being placed at risk of injury by the concertina wire during their normal forging activities and moving across their native habitat. The adverse effects of heavy concertina wire in place for any length of time is a potential for injury to animals attempting to cross the concertina wire blocked habitat has not been adequately addressed in the draft EIS. There's also the potential for spooking these animals and causing them to dash in ways that might not be anticipated by the personnel manning those concertina wire blockades.	Based on public input, use of concertina wire has been removed from the Proposed Action.
I_169-R5	I have additional concerns about Section 2.3.2.18, Natural Resource Consumption, Table 2-10, NRC Details. Why would paintballs or plastic pellets and the smoke grenades and 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs have any role in procurement of natural food -- food sources such as small game, rodents, and vegetation while utilizing survival techniques such as tracking and snaring.	The use of expendables for this activity was identified in error. This has been corrected in the Final EIS.
I_169-R6	The emission describes in the -- description in the draft Environmental Impact Statement appear to be overreaching the scope or the activities outlined. The adverse effects on the environment and soil vegetation and water wetlands is from small fragment debris and residue associated with	Identified use of expendables for natural resource consumption an error. This has been adjusted in the Final EIS. Potential impacts from use of expendables during other training events has been addressed throughout various resource area discussions in the EIS.

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	these training missions and pyrotechnics while utilizing survival techniques, such as trapping and snaring is not identified in the draft EIS, nor is there any explanation of why they would have any role in the natural resource consumption and survival training.	
I_170-R1	Cleanup has already been mentioned, but my concern is the debris that tends to get left behind a group of 18 to 25 year olds. You've got candy wrappers, cigarette butts, and prophylactics. In addition to the paintball media, which is generally polyethylene glycol. The MSDS for polyethylene glycol says that it is toxic to certain animals, specifically dogs, but it certainly has never been tested on bears or other mammals. It also is presumed to be biodegradable. That's also annotated on the MSDS as not really biodegradable in sandy soil. So the Air Force needs to do some serious investigation on what media is used in the paintballs.	Each paintball contains a very small quantity of liquid, approximately 0.09 ounces. This includes not only polyethylene glycol but other biodegradable/edible ingredients, like glycerol and sorbitol. Once the paintball strikes a target, this liquid is splattered and quickly dries. It may be assumed that a small number of paintballs may not rupture upon impact. The shell of the paintball contains gelatin and would tend to degrade quickly upon exposure to the elements. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_170-R2	My second concern is interaction by the trainees with the wildlife. It says in the EIS that if a black bear is cited, they will allow the animal to leave the area undisturbed. Now, I've been camping for almost 55 years. I have never seen a black bear leave a human interaction without checking out if they have any food, which gets us back to the paintball business. If they think that's a load of M&Ms, they are going to ingest it and become very ill. This ain't nothing if they decide that somebody has food and they want it. So there's something that needs to be done about whether or not the animal is going to be -- is going to hang around for awhile, and how is that going to be handled by the training personnel.	Thank you for your comment. Either the units would leave the area or allow the bear to leave. Either way, units would not feed bears or other wildlife. Paintball residues would not be toxic to aquatic or terrestrial wildlife because they would not be present in amounts or concentrations to cause an adverse effect. Animals would not have opportunity to ingest unexpended paintballs in amounts that would cause illness.
I_170-R3	My final concern is humans. As personnel security, we have some issues in Florida apparently called stand your ground, and we have a lot of people that come in and out of the state forest who are kind of rowdy. The worm	The military understands that during training, units may encounter hunters and other civilian personnel in the field. The military understands that these nonmilitary personnel have a right to enjoy

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	grunters, I'm speaking thereof, and some of the fishing people, and, of course, the hunters. Now, a bunch of trainees dropping out of, in a landing zone might be considered to be a threat, and if they're not armed, some of our residents may be, and there could be problems with that. Turning it around on the other side, my world view, you know, I'm just one old bat who is in her 70's and likes to wonder around in the woods, but I carry binoculars, a camera, and scope. I wonder if somebody would consider me a threat to the national security, and shoot me, or arrest me, and that does concern me.	the forest. Military units are highly trained, including on how to respectfully interact with the public and to avoid any confrontational scenarios.
I_171-R1	I'm speaking on behalf of the oystermen. We put millions of dollars of shells out there now to try to get this bay back going again. One spill will kill this bay. We do not need no planes, no nothing up there right now. Five or ten years down the road it may be fine, but right now we can't afford nothing. We're struggling as it is...	EIS Section 2.5, General Operational Constraints 5(h) and 5(i), would apply to minimize any potential soil or water contamination from spills. Such minimization procedures include use of drip pans and absorbents to capture any oils or other hazardous materials.
I_171-R2	...you've got the bald eagles in Tate's Hell. What's -- whose going to protect them? I can take you up there right now, and show you 50 bald eagles' nests. You know, they are supposed to be on the endangered species list. How are you going to protect the endangered species with an airplane flying over top of them? ...How are you going to protect the bald eagles with an airplane flying over top of it? You're not. You're going to kill the little ones.	Thank you for your comment. The bald eagle is not on the endangered list but is protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Sections 5.8 and 6.8 of the Final EIS have been updated with known bald eagle nest locations provided by the Fish and Wildlife Commission. As presented in EIS Section 2.5, during nesting season aircraft would observe a 1000-foot buffer around bald eagle nest locations.
I_173-R2	I moved here 21 years ago from Georgia because of everything that's been described here of the peace and solitude. That's why the tourists come here, and is becoming the most important economic factor of this whole county is the tourism. If you look at the Gulf Coast from here west for the next 200+ miles, all the way over to Gulf Shores, there's four and a half million tourists come in there. If they had helicopters chop, chopping over two hundred fifty something days a year "...I'm alarmed.	Temporary annoyance to transient recreational users from noise during training activities is unavoidable. Impacts to other recreational users and adjacent landowners would be minimized through implementation of General Operational Constraints identified in EIS Section 2.5 and avoidance of noise-sensitive areas. While noise impacts can be minimized, the Air Force recognizes that noise cannot be completely avoided due to the transient nature of training activities and recreational users and the varying perception of annoyance among members of the public. While the impacts associated with training are adverse because the quality of the recreational experience may be somewhat diminished by these impacts, this would not preclude recreational use or cause general incompatibility, and impacts would be short term. Therefore, the Air Force does not consider the impacts to be significant based on the context and intensity of identified impacts, and substantive impacts to

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		the local economies are not anticipated. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_173-R3	That's the first time I've heard that [helicopters chop, chopping over two hundred fifty something days a year] identified. I'm very alarmed. What is the flight pattern of access to Tate's Hell area?	The number of days identified for GLI aircraft training is a conservative estimate of number of days training would actually occur. This number of days was selected to ensure that the Air Force does not understate potential impacts to the residents and users of the state forests and surrounding areas. As stated in EIS Section 5.2.3 and 6.3.2, aircraft en route to training areas in Tate's Hell and Blackwater River State Forests would follow variable routing. Aircraft would typically operate at or above 500 feet above ground level unless operating within existing special use airspace. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
I_173-R4	If ...[the the flight pattern of access to Tate's Hell area] anywhere over my house, and over anybody else's home it will destroy, detour, and reduce dramatically the economic values of your real estate. So I can only assure	Additional text to discuss the potential impacts to the economic value of the forests including human health, ecotourism, and property valuation has been added to Final EIS Sections 3.11, 5.11, 6.11, and

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	you that my personal circumstances relies substantially on the value that I have in my real estate and my home, and if I wanted to put that on the market tomorrow, and they said, hey, you're going to have to listen to those helicopters 230 days a year because it's too far from Eglin, so there's no-wheel access vehicles there, totally aviation, that's significant.	7.11. Note that the Draft EIS identifies in Section 2.5 that known noise-sensitive receptors (including land parcels with at least one residence) would not be overflown at less than 500 feet above ground level (AGL) as part of the Proposed Action. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations identify 500 feet AGL as the nationwide avoidance distance from houses and groups of people. As discussed in EIS Section 3.2, GLI training would not necessarily involve "flight patterns." That term is more appropriate near an airfield where aircraft maneuver along a semidefined path over and over as part of approaches to the airfield. There is potential for confusion for those people that live near existing airports with actual patterns. Several other commenters noted concern regarding existing Navy helicopter operations that occur (according to comments) at very low altitudes. The proposed GLI activities addressed in the EIS would have no effect on the intensity of those operations.
I_174-R1	There are Forest uses needing protection for which you have not given consideration, in a large portion of BRSF TA-5 (the connected large area west of Juniper Creek), and a small portion of BRSF TA-6 (the small area west of Juniper Creek). These are the areas of the horse trails and Dog Field Trial Area. The horse trail routes and Field Trial Area are shown in Figure 5-42 Land Use Types at BRSF. The route of the horse trails should have the same Noise Protection Level (Figures 5-16 and 5-17), and Ground Operations Protection Level (Figures 5-6 and 5-7), as the Coldwater Recreation Area Campground. The protections given to the campground should extend into the Forest for the lengths of all the horse trails and the Field Trial Area. Horses and dogs have sensitive hearing, and the areas they traverse should be considered "noise-sensitive areas". Children are likely to be riding on horses at any given time, or accompanying the Field Trial dogs during competitons and training days. The above mentioned areas should have noise constraints. Helicopter overflight can cause a horse to spook, and has potential for injury to the rider, who could be a child. Proposed Actions using paintballs and smoke grenades are not compatible with the uses of these areas.	Pease see Comment Response I_021-R1.
I_174-R2	If a visitor has an undesirable experience due to the Proposed Action, they will not return to the Forest, causing a loss of revenue for the Florida Forest	As discussed in the EIS, some interactions with other park users can be expected. However, training activities would avoid use of

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	Service.	established recreational sites, and activity buffers have been established around adjacent residences and recreational sites (see Section 2.5 of the EIS), thus minimizing the potential impacts. There would be no off-road vehicle use, and the goal of training activities within the forest proper would be to avoid detection. Troops would avoid interactions with the public as much as possible. Only small portions of the forest would be used in accordance with applicable Florida Forest Service (FFS) management plans, per EIS Section 2.3.2. The goal is to conduct training activities in a compatible manner with existing forest uses and to not preclude use of identified recreational areas or uses. Ultimately, the FFS would determine through use permits/lease agreements the location, duration, and frequency of training activities permitted in the forests. As part of the use permit/lease agreement, the Air Force would work with the FFS to identify training locations suitable for use to minimize interactions with park users and residences and would adjust training locations should they prove to be incompatible.
O_002-R1	I support the military reviewing the reasonable alternative site as presented by Bruce McCormack, President, Gulf Unmanned Systems Center, at the public hearing in Carrabelle, Florida on 6/3/2014. The site consists of approximately 90,000 acres of privately held land located primarily in Calhoun and adjacent counties which has been used since 1999 for Special Operations Training. The original EIS was approved in 2002 and reapproved in 2011 for military operations. While these military exercised would be located outside of Franklin County (primarily in Calhoun County) the property and project would be managed by our office in Carrabelle primarily by employees from Carrabelle and Franklin County. Mr. McCormack can be contacted at 850.720.1500 or at our office in Carrabelle, Florida at 206 Highway 98 in Carrabelle, Florida 32322.	Please see Comment Response I_087-R2.
O_003-R5	The Florida Green Guide Association strongly suggests that ground and air maneuvering military training exercises would negatively impact our nature-based businesses. We recommend the "No Action Alternative." Thank you for your consideration of our opinion.	Certain ground and air maneuver training activities have been identified as resulting in potentially adverse socioeconomics impacts to the public. These impacts have been identified as adverse but not significant due to the assessment that these impacts are typically recoverable over the short-to-medium term with mitigations required to minimize the level of impact or potential for impact. In the event that a visitor does have an undesirable experience due to the Proposed Action, there would be potential for that visitor to not return

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		to the area. If negative experiences associated with the Proposed Action become frequent and shared by an increasing number of visitors, the FFS and, potentially, local businesses could experience a loss of revenue from a decrease in the number of first time and repeat visitors. To minimize the impacts to recreational users and adjacent landowners, the Air Force would implement constraints identified in EIS Section 2.5 and avoidance of noise-sensitive areas. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_006-R1	The EIS p. 10, lines 15-16 states "At BRSF, one existing airfield would be utilized (Munson Airfield, currently designated for public use with no restrictions)..." This is incorrect on several levels and reflects a lack of understanding about how the airfield is currently used. My comment is intended to offer a broader perspective on the Airfield's community, aviation and Forest Service uses, and to recommend an alternative approach. The misnamed "Munson Airfield" is actually Blackwater Airfield, federally registered as 8FD3 and noted on the appropriate NOAA published aviation sectional. Referring to it as "public" is misleading and incomplete. It occupies land managed by the Florida Forest Service but access to the Blackwater Airfield is in fact managed via a specific procedure developed by the BRSF District Manager. This procedure provides for approved public access throughout the year (subject to other BRFS uses of the Airfield) provided an existing, published procedure is used. One source for that procedure can be found here: http://theraf.org/content/blackwater-airfield-safety-briefing	Description of Blackwater Airfield has been updated in Section 2.3.2.2 and Section 5.2.1 of the Final EIS.
O_006-R2	There are other uses of the Airfield throughout the year that an EIS really	Coordination with the FFS on use of Blackwater Airfield (8FD3) has

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	should have identified. A very large annual community event is held on the Airfield each year, attended by thousands of participants & vendors. Various FFS aviation-related uses are made of the Airfield during each year, from land use monitoring to fire-suppression flights. In addition, the field is used for heavy equipment training of employees on occasion, given its easy access from the highway and adjacency to the district office and vehicle compound. Given the above facts, here are the main points I request be considered: -- Recreational aviation use of Blackwater Airfield (8FD3) is now a norm and use of the Airfield by USAF and other agencies will intrude on this use. This recreational aviation use includes camping adjacent to parked aircraft, which certainly makes USAF proposed uses of the Airfield in conflict with its occasional recreational use. -- Other airfields at both BRSF and THSF have been identified in the EIS. These airfields are not further identified in the EIS but, from consulting both the FDOT AD chart and the NOAA aviation sectional, none of these other airstrips appear to offer public access. In addition, the EIS states that two dirt roadways in BRSF will be used as temporary airstrips, in addition to the charted (but not identified) airfields. -- Given the above, use of Blackwater Airfield 8FD3 for military operations should be eliminated or at the least minimized, since the other airfields (and likely, the dirt roadways) offer a lower level of conflict with recreational users. -- Finally, given the incomplete and also inaccurate understanding of Blackwater Airfield's current status, I respectfully request that its use be placed at the 'bottom of any list' when individual exercises are planned. Speaking strictly from an aviation perspective, Blackwater Airfield is a very unusual 'turf runway': It is almost 6,000 ft. in length, very wide, extremely smooth by turf airstrip standards, and not - at all - representative of the 'make do' airstrips, roadways and clearings that operators need to use out in the tactical areas of developing countries. Using Blackwater Airfield 8FD3 is a relatively 'high conflict' choice re: public use while being a 'low relevancy' use re: military ops training. Its use might seem logical after a cursory review but, as shown above, is a poor choice when public and FFS use is considered.	been clarified in General Operational Constraint 3(b) to include avoidance of previously scheduled recreational events. In addition, approach and departure lanes for Blackwater Airfield have been restricted to the northern end of the runway to avoid impacts to the camp site south of the airfield, as indicated in Section 5.3 of the EIS. Please note that in response to public input use of the other locations for FWALS activity has been removed from the proposed action.
O_007-R2	Within section 'ES.4.1.2.2 Fixed-Wing Aircraft Landing Sites', Munson Airfield is identified as one of six sites that may be utilized for up to two hours of takeoff and landing training for as many as 232 days annually, as described in 'Table ES-4. LAPT Details per Event'. Within the 'Restrictions'	As discussed in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, proposed FWALS activities have been removed from consideration as part of the Proposed Action. The Munson Airfield classification has been corrected within the Final EIS. The Air Force does not intend to

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	column of Table ES-4, and throughout the document, there are repeated references to hunting which suggest this is a recognized recreational use of the BRSF that the Air Force is willing to accommodate via limited nighttime operations. Hunting is not the only existing recreational use of the BRSF. The Krul Recreation Area consists of both day and night use activities including picnicking, hiking, swimming, and camping is located within 100 yards of the airfield. These recreational facilities are enjoyed by outdoor enthusiasts who travel to the site by automobile as well as General Aviation aircraft. Munson Airfield is classified as a public use airport with no restrictions. This information is incorrect. Munson Airfield (FAA Identifier 8FD3) is a private use airstrip manged by the Forestry Division of the Florida Department of Agriculture. Provisional use of this airstrip by the General Aviation community has only recently been established through the cooperative work of the Recreational Aviation Foundation and the Florida Forest Service. In summary, the Proposed Action's use of Munson Airfield for Light Aviation Proficiency Training (LAPT) operations is incompatible with this area's current use and user population. We respectfully request that the Air Force remove Munson Airfield from the list of FWALS or limit the use of Munson Airfield to non-LAPT missions only.	impinge on current recreational use of the airfield. The Florida Forest Service would determine the extent of use for the Air Force (i.e., frequency and duration of use) as part of the permit/lease agreement process.
O_008-R2	We operate a geotourism business that would be adversely affected by GRASI. The economy of this and adjoining counties would be adversely affected. People come to this area to escape metropolitan area crowding and pollution, if only as a short respite. Area businesses, including lodging venues, restaurants, fueling stations, convenience stores and specialty shops would all suffer, since it would not take long for the word to get around that condition in this recreational area were not what was expected. The geotourism industry would be devestated.	Certain ground and air maneuver training activities have been identified as resulting in potentially adverse socioeconomics impacts to the public. These impacts have been identified as adverse but not significant due to the assessment that these impacts are typically recoverable over the short-to-medium term with mitigations required to minimize the level of impact or potential for impact. In the event that a visitor does have an undesirable experience due to the Proposed Action, there would be potential for that visitor to not return to the area. If negative experiences associated with the Proposed Action become frequent and shared by an increasing number of visitors, the FFS and, potentially, local businesses could experience a loss of revenue from a decrease in the number of first time and repeat visitors. To minimize the impacts to recreational users and adjacent landowners, the Air Force would implement constraints identified in EIS Section 2.5 and avoidance of noise-sensitive areas. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and

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		amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_009-R1	Tonight I'm going to represent the Bream Fisherman's Association, the Francis M. Weston Audubon Society, and the Native Plant Society. . . In February, March, and April of 2014 throughout this process the public, myself included, have requested . . . that the state agency, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, which has an office embedded within the Florida Forest Service at Blackwater River State Forest be officially included to comment . . . since they are on the ground and having sufficient knowledge of the forest. By inviting the Fish and Wildlife Service, which is a federal agency, to address the previous comments in the EIS the Air Force did not consider the public significant issues. Tonight when Mr. Spaits was speaking, he brought out that within the Blackwater River State Forest summary that all biological impacts were from FWS federal and not FWC. Further, on page B 273 of the document the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissions only brought up in the affect to lease their lands for emitter sites. The threatened endangered species list with the federal have a few species with an umbrella component to protect species beneath them, the Florida State has a number of species. The issue that I have is that we are the federal government. You are the Air Force, and we have a state forest. We would like to have -- be more conservative and have all the organisms and plants considered.	Thank you for your comments. For the EIS, we attempted to collect and present known locations of protected species in order to develop mitigative measures to ensure they are avoided. FWC has offered to provide additional locations of and data on state-protected species, which has been incorporated into Sections 5.8 and 6.8 of the Final EIS.
O_009-R2	What does the public get from this arrangement? What does the forest receive for the service it is providing to the military? I would like to suggest the following. I suggest that the military set aside funding, perhaps one million a year, for a technical support school that would imply and teach best management practices for mitigation on the use of the forest. This school would allow an education that combines coastal plain soils, which	Local service-related businesses may see a small increase in sales due to the presence of trainees (e.g., use of local restaurants and/or gas stations). The Florida Forest Service would receive permit/lease fees from the Air Force (amount has not yet been determined). Per General Operational Constraints identified in Section 2.5 of the EIS, every effort would be made to educate users of sensitive

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	we know are highly erodible, with the geography that we have here, climate, topography and (inaudible). The forest, both of them, have a list several pages long of the areas that need restoration.	environments in each forest.
O_009-R3	Would the public have a built-in off ramp if this relationship between the state and the federal government doesn't work?	The Florida Forest Service (FFS) would make the final determination as to the location, duration, and frequency of training activities in the state forests via issuance of permits and lease agreements. At any time the FFS may choose to not renew the permit or lease.
O_010-R1	I'm here representing the Western Gate Chapter of the Florida Trail Association . . .First, although most individual trail sections in the forest are recognized by name in this document, for example wire grass in section TA3, neither the Blackwater River Trail in the Hutton tract, TA8, nor the Yellow River Ravines Trail in TA9 and its extension, which is currently under development, have been included. This entire system of contiguous trails is collectively known as the Florida National Scenic Trail and Side Trail. 8 Now, Western Gate Chapter proposes that the FNST, which is Florida National Scenic Trail, and side trail system, including the Yellow River Ravine's additional proposed routing in Blackwater River State Forest be officially recognized in its entirety as a contiguous trail known as the FNST side trail. Second, be designated as a protected recreational site, be provided a protected corridor with one quarter mile buffer zones on each side restricting designated by impact activities from occurring within those buffer zones. Such restricted activities would include helicopter landing drop zones, low level helicopter insertions, extractions, cross country vehicle movement, blackout driving and placement of obstacles and bivouacking assembly areas.	The constraints identified in Tables 2-24 and 2-25 have also been applied to the Florida National Scenic Trail. More information in this regard can be found in Section 5.10. The Air Force has developed a reduced-scale training subalternative that is designed to reduce public recreational conflicts and impacts to trail systems from both a ground disturbance and noise perspective. The subalternative is currently the Air Force's preferred alternative. Details can be found in Section 2.3 of the EIS.
O_010-R2	Second issue, scheduling and access for the public. During military training exercises the document indicates that portions of the forest may be closed to the public. It was not clear whether there will be any advance notice of such closures. Since Western Gate Chapter plans activities four months in advance, we ask that you avoid unnecessary conflicts scheduling between Eglin and Blackwater State Forest be done on at least a quarterly basis, made available to the public to assure that user groups are normally able to avoid scheduling conflicts.	Activities would be scheduled by the Air Force in coordination with the Florida Forest Service (FFS) to avoid impacts to recreational users as part of the use permit/lease agreement. Other than the hardened camp sites, no area closures are proposed; this has been clarified in the Final EIS. Notifications would be made prior to training activities. As an example, signs would be posted prior to training activities for specific locations and, in some instances, may be collocated with permanent Florida Forest Service signs. Notifications may also consist of newspaper ads and online notifications.
O_010-R3	We are concerned about the use of concertina wire in the forest at all as a barrier.	The Air Force has removed concertina wire from the Proposed Action. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale

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		training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_010-R4	Monitoring and assessment . . . the EIS indicates numerous assessments take place, and we recognize that and applaud it. We request that a preliminary assessment be built into the agreement, perhaps after the first two or three years to evaluate whether the actual adverse impact on the forest and its use is greater, equal to or lesser than was projected in the EIS and ask that our chapters . . . that user groups be given an opportunity to be involved in providing comments for assessment.	The Mitigation Plan, Operational Plan, and use permit/lease agreement with the Florida Forest Service (FFS) developed at the end of this process would identify exactly what surveys would occur and when. At this stage, the EIS indicates in Section 2.5 that pre- and post-mission surveys would be conducted and mitigations would be evaluated for effectiveness and updated accordingly. The Air Force will explore opportunities for public involvement in subsequent assessments of conditions if and when the FFS approves training activities.
O_011-R1	It was learned several years ago that there had never been a year-round bird survey done in Blackwater River State Forest so our chapter decided to survey the birds to determine what birds were using this newly 30 year planted longleaf forest. Over a three and a half year period from 19 -- 2009 to 2012 we took weekly trips into the forest and counted the birds that we saw there. And what did we find? . . . We found 181 species of birds using this forest during the year, 23 birds of special concern appear on the US Fish and Wildlife Service list. Fifty-two species live there all year, 34 migrate in the forest into the summer. So there are 86 species that use this forest as a nesting ground; 111 species come there and spend the winter. That means that they've found a safe place to go in the wintertime. The Bob White quail, the wild turkey, the Bachman sparrow. These are ground nesters that will be greatly impacted by the troops that work off roads. There is no down season in this forest when there are no bird species there. They're always there. We always will impact them. We found 31 species of birds that use that unique greenway. It's a migratory path to their	Thank you for your comments. The Sherman fox squirrel is listed as a state species of special concern and has no federal status. Protected species, including state-listed threatened, endangered, and species of special concern Including the Sherman's fox squirrel), are listed in EIS Table 5-38, Section 5.8.1.3. The FWC has offered to provide location information on kestrel breeding sites at BRSF. A buffer would be created around kestrel locations and avoided by military activities. Figures in Section 3.8 and Final EIS Section 3.8 have been updated to reflect the occurrence of the subspecies of the southeastern American kestrel at BRSF, as well as any location information that FWC provides on this species and its habitats. Many of the migratory bird species occurring in the state forests occur on the Eglin Range and the training activities, while similar, occur at a higher level than that proposed in the EIS without substantial adverse impacts to populations. Additional discussion regarding impacts to migratory birds has been added to Sections 3.8,

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	breeding grounds in the north. Seven species of the woodpeckers are there in large numbers because they started leaving snacks, and they've come back, and of course they stand still, so they can get shot or whatever. The forest -- the Sherman Fox Birds -- squirrel is seen notably in the forest. It's on the Florida threatened list. And the ESI only looked at federal threatened list, not the state list. There are many species concerned -- concerning the forest. We're greatly concerned about all these species and the impacts that these noise and the troop activities on the ground and the air will cause them -- and also possibly being consumed by these troops who are having to hunt for their food. This lovely forest is very young. We've just begun to see if -- the creatures coming back into it. For example, early in our study, in our survey we found a pair of nesting subspecies of the American Krestel. They're listed as threatened on the Florida list. This species has lost 80 percent of its population in the last 70 years, and it traditionally nests in the cavities in the older long leaf forest and when those disappeared from the southeastern forests, these birds disappeared also. It was not -- this bird has not been documated -- documented in northwest Florida in over 30 years. The first year of our study we found a nesting pair. In the -- in the -- the FWC's reporting we put up 11 boxes. Now there are five nesting -- we've got nesting pairs there	5.8, and 6.8. With regard to consumption, survival training is a critical component of military training. It involves foraging and training personnel on critical survival skills (which includes teaching how to prepare traps and snares). It does not involve substantial consumption of natural resources and the likelihood of successful snaring or trapping is traditionally minimal - therefore the likelihood of impacting a sensitive species is very low.
O_012-R1	I work for the Long Leaf Alliance, an organization that's working to -- working with the public and private landowners to restore and manage the long leaf forests for our area and across the south. . . I urge that the public and user groups continue to work with the military to find agreement. I also request that if the military use is approved at Blackwater River State Forest that a citizen's review panel be established to review and follow such use and make recommendations to the Florida Forest Service and the Department of Defense similar to what the Black -- to the Florida Forest Service currently has with the Blackwater liaison panel. This will help to ensure the concerns of both the public and the military continue to be addressed and communication stays open throughout the process. I want to particularly address the description of proposed action alternatives general operational constraints 3(k). It says "[e]stablish a submittal, response, and resolution process for local residents to submit complaints and other compliance issues to Eglin." I would request that, that be added to the -- to include user groups and be formulated in a way that it's more	The Air Force appreciates your suggestion and will explore opportunities for public involvement in subsequent assessments of conditions if and when the FFS approves training activities.

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	like a citizen's review panel.	
O_013-R1	[W]hat other memorandums of agreement have the Air Force made with any other Florida state, municipal, or other public agencies regarding use of lands for military training? . . . Apparently you have not considered the many properties already owned by the military machine. The airspace, ground training issues are not a Florida problem. They're not a state problem or the public's problem. Congress created this situation, and you should go back to them for help. The airspace is controlled by Eglin approach control and the FAA Regional Control Centers in Jacksonville and New Orleans. We see no facts to support the initiative, just your say-so. Where is the documentation? Where are the scheduling conflicts you claim? I know there's a scheduling office to control unit functions that occur on the Eglin Air Force Base range. It sounds like the Air Force and Army don't want to follow their own procedures to use the range. Planning high priority missions makes the ground training difficult, and I understand that, but it is still not the responsibility of the forest service or the State of Florida. Where are the letters that claim your training cannot be accomplished as requested? Where are the letters that show you tried to schedule the ground training? Where are the letters that disapprove each request?. by virtue of your own briefings, Power Point presentations and discussions held in these town hall meetings clearly indicate space is already available without invading our forests. So what if the other -- so what if the other choices are not ideal?	The AF has memorandums of agreement with Northwest Florida Water Management District (NWFLWMD), the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC), and Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS). Please see Comment Response I_014-R2 regarding discussion of the need for training space outside Eglin AFB.
O_013-R2	The Air Force is a federal government identity pushing this initiative. However, you say the Army Special Forces will be using the forest under this initiative too or is the Army initiative requesting the same thing?	As stated in EIS Section 2.3.2, the main groups conducting training in the two state forests would consist of multiple units organized under the AFSOC located at Hurlburt Field and the 7 SFG(A) located at Eglin AFB. Other groups may also utilize the BRSF and THSF intermittently as needed.
O_013-R3	An independent group agency should be the evaluation team to assess possible damages along with photographic evidence to support any claims. Likewise the general public should be able to make claims too, which is mentioned in Section 4.6. Any meetings that require mitigation or monitoring oversight should have public representation. Most civilians do not realize the military has a staff judge ... office, or inspector general's office. This is where all complaints both military and civilian are taken.	The Florida Forest Service (FFS) and the Air Force would conduct periodic evaluations of training sites and activities to identify any potential issues and implement or change mitigations and operational constraints to resolve identified issues. Additionally, EIS Section 2.5 indicates that a process would be developed to allow the public to submit complaints or identify issues. Any claims for possible damages must be evaluated in accordance applicable Air Force regulations and procedures. Specific concerns can always be

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		addressed to the Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office.
O_013-R4	Section 4.7 cooperative law enforcement. The Air Force will pursue a memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement authorities regarding the use of Air Force security police to protect Air Force property and control access, yes access, with respect to Florida service lands covered by this operational plan. The public shall not be hindered from using the forests they claim. So why do we have to have the control then? They might use force to remove them if they're there? Section 5.1 reservations of Florida service and third-party rights, no mention of specifics. What does exercise reasonable access restrictions for the minimum period necessary mean? . . .An example of this is that until the military clears the area or exits from the forest, which it's not clearly spelled out, does that mean troops will trespass private lands to exit, especially if there's an emergency.	The Operations Plan referenced in your comment is currently a draft document in development between Eglin AFB and the Florida Forest Service (FFS). No changes to the document are planned until after the EIS is complete, the Record of Decision (ROD) has been signed, and the FFS has concluded their review/comment process, as there may be changes required to the document as a result of those processes.
O_013-R6	Signage, refers to the restricted areas. Well on Eglin restricted areas means no public access ever. When will the public know of such areas, what advance notices will be made and how is that notification is to be accomplished?	Additional language to Section 2.5, Operations Constraint 3(i) has been added providing examples of how the Air Force would coordinate with the FFS to make the public and recreators aware of when and where training activities would occur prior to the activity. Such examples include signage at trailheads, campgrounds, parking lots and other existing public notification locations within the forest.
O_015-R1	Recognition and Protection of Blackwater River State Forest trails and trail users: * Although individual trail sections are recognized by name in this document (Wiregrass in TA-3, Jackson in TA-4 and TA-6, Juniper Creek in TA-8), there is no recognition of the entirety of the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) sidetrail which extends northward from Holt FL through the Forest to the Florida/Alabama line and southward to the Yellow River where it connects to the FNST, extending east and west. I recommend that the FNST Sidetrail and Yellow River component of the FNST in Blackwater River State Forest be: - officially recognized in its entirety as a contiguous trail, - that its length be designated as a protected recreational site, and - that it be provided a buffer zone extending one-quarter mile on each side of its length, restricting designated high-impact activities to be excluded from activity within that buffer zone. * Such activities to include Helicopter Landing/Drop Zones, Low-Level Helicopter Insertions/Extractions, Cross-Country Vehicle Movement, Blackout Driving, Emplacement of Obstacles and Bivouacking /Assembly Areas.	Please see Comment Response O_010-R1

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O_016-R1	One of the most important elements in the restoration of the longleaf/wiregrass ecosystem as currently in progress at Blackwater River State Forest is prescribed burns. "The longleaf ecosystem was a driving force behind the formation of Gulf Coast Plain Ecosystem Partnership," says Vernon Compton, director of GCPEP,"for all of its rare and listed species, its clear need for more burning, its potential restoration, and the necessity for education aimed at reviving historical enthusiasm for the piney woods." To improve habitat management, there iis a constant need for scheduled fire in Blackwater to keep to the 2 to 3 year cycle required to restore this ecosystem. Because burning depends on wind direction and humidity, prescribed burn decisions cannot be made until the morning of the burn. It appears that troops on the ground will greatly interfere with burning the forest on a scheduled and last minute basis. Not being able to have the capacity to burn when needed will greatly interfere with the mission of the FFS to restore and maintain this piney woods.	As discussed in Section 2.3.2 of the Final EIS and other locations throughout the document, proposed training would be conducted in accordance with respective Florida Forest Service (FFS) management plans. Consequently, training would be conducted in coordination with the FFS so as to not negatively impact requirements for forest management activities, including prescribed burning. The FFS develops a Prescribed Burn Plan for each forest on an annual basis, which identifies what areas are to be burned each year. Thus, the areas to be avoided would be known. Therefore, if the FFS requires prescribed burning of certain areas, these areas would not be used for training activities.
O_017-R1	Both BRSF and THSF are state-owned lands; land that is owned by the people of the State of Florida. According to 18-21.004 (1) (a) Management Policies, Standards, and Criteria (1) (a) . .all activities on sovereignty lands must not be contrary to the public interest. . As defined in 18-21.003 (51), "Public interest" means demonstrable environmental, social, and economic benefits which would accrue to the public at large as a result of a proposed action, and which would clearly exceed all demonstrable environmental, social, and economic costs of the proposed action. . According to 18-21.004 (1) (b) All leases, easements, deeds or other forms of approval for sovereignty land activities shall contain such terms, conditions, or restrictions as deemed necessary to protect and manage sovereignty lands. These projects do not meet the criteria as being in the public interest nor do they promoted the protection and management of sovereign lands according to 18-21, F.A.C. The League supports and promotes policies that manage land as a finite resource and that incorporate principles of stewardship. According to 18-21.004 (2) (a) Resource Management. all sovereignty lands shall be considered single use lands and shall be managed primarily for the maintenance of essentially natural conditions, propagation of fish and wildlife, and traditional recreational uses such as fishing, boating, and swimming. Compatible secondary purposes and uses which will not detract from or interfere with the primary purpose may be allowed. These projects do not meet the criteria for the best use of our	Use of the forests would only occur by permission of the Florida Forest Service (FFS) via a permit or lease agreement, and all activities would be conducted in accordance with requirements of the respective forest management plans. The permits/lease agreements and associated operational plans would contain terms, conditions, and/or restrictions as identified in EIS Sections 2.5 and 2.7 to protect and manage the forest lands.

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	natural resources according to 18-21, F.A.C. As proposed, the training will impact our land, water quality, air quality, and species habitat.	
O_018-R1	Comment 1) There is a deficiency within the NEPA Process which does not address cumulative impacts from earlier NEPA decisions. To concentrate several missions on Eglin AFB, required conducting a series of steps leading up to a BRAC. When this many missions are co-located on one site " someone " somewhere had to conduct a NEPA EIS. Were Cumulative impacts discussed? What was that outcome? Where can the public go to inform themselves of this decision that got us to this point today?	Cumulative impacts associated with GLI are adequately discussed in Chapter 7 of the GLI EIS. The implementation of BRAC decisions for Eglin and associated NEPA documents are available by request from the Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office. Cumulative impacts for that action are discussed in the associated EIS.
O_018-R2	Comment 2) The NEPA EIS allows one of two options: The two alternatives are 1. NO Action and 2. Allowing action. I believe the criteria developed for this EIS was far too narrow. I would also like to see GRASI and GRASI GLI as two separate NEPA EIS'. We are not on DOD Lands where a FONSI is acceptable. We are discussing public lands, purchased for the purposes of conservation for future generations. Many of the lands closed through BRAC still belong to the military " thus allowing an option not presented to the public during this process. All federal agencies are required to weigh their options through the NEPA process. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to integrate environmental values into their decision making processes by considering the environmental impacts of their proposed actions and reasonable alternatives to those actions. Early on in the NEPA Process, if no environmental issues arise, the agency may conduct an Environmental Assessment (EA). If however an impact is likely, the agency must perform an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS must offer options to the Stakeholders and Decision Makers as the process proceeds to the final stage. This has not occurred. I would like to go on record and stress NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE.	Please see Comment Response I_004-R2.
O_018-R3	Comment 3) Pg 5-67 5.11.1 Affected Environment. This very small section attempts to address the socioeconomic and environmental justice concerns of GRASI & GLI. At a time when the Veterans Administration is under scrutiny for not providing medical and mental assistance in a timely manner to our veterans, this forest in its natural setting is considered to be a premier ecological asset. Through conservation efforts we can measure success (diversity is increasing). And now the military wishes to expand exercises on the ground. For many young Men and Women returning from	Comment 3: Additional text to discuss the potential impacts to the economic value of the forests, including human health, ecotourism, and property valuation, has been added to Final EIS Sections 3.11, 5.11, 6.11, and 7.11. Comment 4: The Proposed Action would not affect local residents' ability to locally, lawfully collect timber to heat their homes and their stoves. Therefore, this issue is not addressed in the EIS. Comment 6: Impacts to the public, including year-round residents, would be minimized through implementation of General

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	military duty in foreign lands, our forests offer serenity and peace. That serenity and peace will be disturbed by Military Training Exercises. The Military is responsible for creating and developing much collateral damage in the arena of mental issues based on what our active service is taught and trained. Often, natural areas without modern electronics and constant stimulation, advertisement, and modern lifestyles are the last opportunity for tranquility. Mental health specialists are well aware of these issues, I would hope your EIS considered this aspect of an ecosystem service that BWRSF & THSF offer the many veterans who call our area home. Comment 4) Pg 5-72 Table 5-54. Natural Resource Consumption (X axis) and Land Use & Socioeconomics /Environmental Justice (Y axis). Not sure if the EIS addressed this, but many of the residents with in-holding's depend on locally collected timber to heat their homes and their stoves. This topic was discussed at the Blackwater River State Forest Liaison Mtg in Feb 2014, after this area experienced a hard winter. Would military use impact or affect these individuals? Comment 6) Pg 5-69. Recreation and Tourism. Some transient recreational users, such as hikers, may be annoyed by noise from aircraft operations. What about the year round residents? What is the military approach to addressing this? What about the year round animal residents? Are they considered in this EIS? Comment 7) Pg 5-68. Environmental Justice. As indicated in Table 5-52 and Figure 5-43, the individual counties and the two county ROI have a lower percentage of minority and low-income populations than the state and the nation. Many of the residents living less than 5 miles from the coast are living in rural communities and live there for the peace and quiet " away from the hustle and bustle. Now this proposed GRASI and GLI will reduce their property values and encumber their life style, and potentially shift from one higher demographic perhaps to this lower demographic of minority and low-income. Did the EIS address or study this aspect?	Operational Constraints identified in EIS Section 2.5 and avoidance of noise-sensitive areas such as residential areas. Biological resources, which refers to vegetation, wildlife, protected species, sensitive habitats, and invasive plant and animal species associated with the land areas proposed for use are discussed in Sections 3.8, 4.8, 5.8, and 6.8 of the EIS. Furthermore, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections. Comment 7: Executive Order (EO) 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, directs federal agencies to identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority population and low-income populations. The EIS complies with EO 12898 by addressing environmental justice in EIS Sections 3.11, 4.11, 5.11, 6.11, and 7.11, and follows the Council on Environmental Quality Environmental Justice Guidance under the National Environmental Policy Act.
O_018-R4	Comment 5) Pg 5-71 5.13.1.2 Transportation. Many of the roads discussed are currently being widened or repaired. Will the additional use of these heavy military vehicles add more impact on these systems? How will the military mitigate additional traffic to these communities?	Yes, roads would be impacted. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, roads, trails, and stream/wetland crossings would be inspected before and after each training mission to identify maintenance issues that could cause problems if not repaired. Training activities would be shifted or redirected if conditions of roads and stream and wetland crossings require repair or other measures to prevent erosion from impacting surface waters and wetlands. The FFS would be notified of

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		any identified issues. Regarding traffic issues, Section 3.13.3 of the EIS indicates that the 5 to 10 vehicles used for troop transportation would not be expected to result in any significant increase/impact on traffic or transportation resources.
O_018-R5	Comment 9) Pg 5-66. Table 5-50. Private Parcels Present at BRSF. I see that the military has a very good grip on the number of privately owned parcels in the forest, and so why is it that private land owner's have not received written notification of GRASI or the GLI? Advertising in the newspaper and on-line is not feasible for many of these folks. There is little cell coverage in the mid to northern counties. Private Citizens have been posting signs and leaving information is the small stores scattered throughout the forest. If the military cannot notify the very individuals most impacted by these activities, how can I as a citizen KNOW that you have done due diligence in providing information about this potential use?	According to 40 CFR 1506.6(b)(3), "Public Involvement" may take many forms, provided they are practicable. Given the large geographic areas in question, individually identifying all landowners adjacent to and within the state forests was not practicable. Consequently, the Air Force made good faith efforts to inform the public of the Proposed Action during the scoping process in summer 2013 and during the public review phase in summer 2014 via advertisements in local newspapers, by providing public service announcements that were relayed via local radio and on local TV news programs, and by informing local government officials. A website was also created to provide the public with information. Those persons and organizations that expressed interest during the scoping process and specifically requested notification of the availability of the Draft EIS were also individually notified. The Public Involvement Package, which outlines all public participation activities conducted by the Air Force is included in the Final EIS as Appendix B. If you would like to specifically be added to the mailing contact list for future notifications you may contact the Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office.
O_018-R6	Comment 10) Pg 5-58. Sensitive Habitat Section. Line 2. Burrows that cannot be avoided would be relocated in accordance with FWC guidelines. I am personally hyper-sensitive to this statement since after locating , marking, and GPSing gopher tortoises on a parcel (primitive camping area on Red Rock Road) for a mountain biking trail " in FULL Cooperation with the FFS & FWC, a timber company came onto that site and logged the area. The company set up their timber operations and staging area on the highest elevation, which coincided with the Gophers. Are there two sets of rules that the public must use? Clearly the FFS & FWC were not communicating, how can I expect the military to communicate effectively? And will the other 2-300 residents of these burrows be excavated or will they be buried as a casualty? Pg 5-52 Lines 15-17, acknowledges more than 360 other species which may be found sharing the Goher Tortoise	Comment 10: Avoidance of burrows is the primary goal. However, Section 3.8.4 of the EIS has been updated to reflect that relocation of gopher tortoise commensals, if necessary, would be accomplished in accordance with FWC gopher tortoise permitting guidelines, specifically Appendix 9, Handling of Commensal Species During Relocations. Appendix 9 of the FWC guide focuses on four listed species (indigo snake, pine snake, Florida gopher frog, and Florida mouse) but also encourages relocation of nonlisted commensals. Comment 11: Per EIS Section 2.7, units would avoid known locations of protected species and use approved boat landing areas, preferably hardened boat landings, for insertion and extraction of boats. Mussels would not likely be affected; both the FWC and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reviewed and commented on the

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	Burrow. Comment 11) Pg 5-57. Table 5-43. Amphibious Operations. What I am interpreting this to say is that it is okay for the military to expand its range for training, but Threatened and Endangered (in this case Mussels) cannot expand their range. This is a forest undergoing restoration and we would hope that species would expand their ranges, most especially the T&E species that we consider rare. Comment 12) Pg 5-56 5.8.2.3 Protected Species. Lines 2-6, Please name several species which have acclimated to noise and other disturbances. Comment 13) Pg 5-55. 5.8.2.2 Wildlife. Lines 17-19, Permanent disturbances. Has the military conducted a baseline of species complete with abundance on BWSF? If not, how can this statement be upheld? Along those lines, many of the endangered Mussels which are found within these waters use fish, species specific fish, as a vector to move their larval forms into the upper watersheds. What level of mitigation can the military develop to address this scientific finding? USGS is embarking on this level of science. Comment 14) Pg 5-53 5.8.1.5 Invasive Species. Invasive species occur in disturbed areas. Lines 2-3, Invasive species have the potential to compete with and displace native species. I'[d] like to suggest the Military put $100K into invasive species removal fund to monitor and address, early detection, these nuisance species. Comment 16) Pg 5-50 to 5-51, Table Protected species known or potentially occurring in BRSF. In my comments to the Military in Dec 2013, I included a number of rare aquatic species which were being discovered in the Blackwater River system as a result of increased woody material, a resource often removed from the system. I cannot help but notice that no insects were discussed or mentioned, especially after I called attention to them. Was this oversight? Or was this purposeful omission? Comment 17) Pg 5-49, Will military recruits really be able to tell the difference between an Indigo Snake and a Black Racer? Please expand on this. Comment 18) Pg 5-48, 5.8.1.2 Wildlife. It would be remiss to not mention the extensive study that Francis M. Weston Audubon Society conducted in the BWSF to assist their Forest Service Personnel in documenting the use of the forest by many different migratory and resident species.	Proposed Action and did not identify any adverse impacts to mussels. Additionally, as indicated in Section 2.7 sensitive species surveys (which includes aquatic surveys) at action areas would occur at least every 3 years. Comment 12: Birds, such as the red-cockaded woodpecker, and wildlife, such as gopher tortoises, on Eglin have been exposed to military noise and disturbance for several years. Populations near high-noise areas are stable or increasing. EIS Appendix H, Section H.2.8 provides additional information on effects of noise on wildlife. References to Appendix H and examples of bird species acclimated to noise have been added to Final EIS Sections 5.8.2.2, 5.8.2.3, 6.8.2.2, and 6.8.2.3. Comment 13: No, the typical species are well documented in forestry management reports and state Fish and Wildlife Commission reports. Depletion of a particular species has not been observed on Eglin AFB where survival training has been ongoing for years. As mentioned in EIS Section 2.7, units would use approved and preferably hardened boat landings. Neither mussels nor their habitat are likely to be adversely affected, nor would the Proposed Action affect species involved in the mussel life cycle. As indicated in Section 2.7 sensitive species surveys (which includes aquatic surveys) at action areas would occur at least every 3 years. Comment 14: Thank you for your comment. As described in the EIS, the military follows procedures to reduce the spread of invasive species. These are noted in EIS Section 2.5 and in the GRASI Biological Assessment, Section 2.3, provided in Appendix C, and the Air Force would coordinate with the FFS to address any identified invasive species impacts/issues related to military training. Additionally, substantive ground disturbance is not a component of the Proposed Action and therefore there would be limited opportunity for invasive species. Comment 16: Wildlife and vegetation (including aquatic species) in general are discussed in EIS Sections 5.8.2.1, 5.8.2.2, 6.8.2.1, and 6.8.2.2, with additional attention on those species with state or federal listing as endangered, threatened, or special status in EIS Sections 5.8.2.3 and 6.8.2.3. Impacts to rare plants and animals

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		have been addressed under wildlife and vegetation, even though they are not specifically named. As part of the supporting consultation conducted in conjunction with the EIS impacts to the Westfall's clubtail dragonfly was addressed in the biological assessment as provided in Appendix C. Conservation measures in the biological assessment (and EIS) for the dragonfly (such as restricting unimproved vehicle low-water crossing) would also serve to minimize potential impacts to other aquatic insects. Comment 17: Section 2.7 of the Final EIS has been updated to reflect that any species with a similarity of appearance to a protected species would not be disturbed. In response to public input, the Air Force has also added a mitigation to EIS Section 2.7 to avoid disturbance of all snakes, not just sensitive snake species. Comment 18: The Florida Forest Service Draft 10-Year Resource Management Plan, for which the Audubon surveys were conducted, was an important resource for the BRSF discussion. The Air Force has requested a copy of the Audobon study referenced in the comment and has incorporated any relevant additional information into EIS Sections 5.8.2.2. and 5.8.2.3.
O_018-R7	Comment 15) Pg 5-52, 5.8.1.4 Sensitive Habitats. Lines 1-2, now less than 3 million acres remain. that said, the military has not conducted their due diligence in locating other nearby lands for military training. For example, the St Joe Company sold 400,000 acres to the Mormon Church. This land has been managed for timber, which does not typically use fire for land management (fire residue impacts the quality of paper). This land could be 'rented' from the church for maneuvers. In addition, there is another private land owner who has offered to lease his lands to the military, 90,000 acres, for training exercises. It would appear that the military is trying to take public lands, which have been in restoration, and use them for training " without the blessing of the user groups. If only 3 Million of the once 90 Million areas of longleaf remain, perhaps the military could use some other land not in longleaf restoration for their military exercises.	Please see Comment Response I_087-R2.
O_018-R8	Comment 26) Pg [5-]33. Lines 20-25. Perhaps the military should look into this. Comments 28 & 29) Pg 5-32 Lines 1-18. Comment # 26 indicates no data, but lines 12-15 indicate otherwise. Is a comprehensive studies required? It is disturbing to note that there are 187 low water crossings	Comment 26: Proposed mitigations identified in EIS Section 2.7 would require field assessments prior to any land-disturbing activities. Comments 28 and 29: The referenced language on Page 5-32 is associated with water crossings, for which data are available

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	which will soon see detrimental impacts with no monetary mitigation set aside. Comment 30) Pg 5-31. Unpaved Road & Crossings. These are the number one contributing sources of sedimentation and habitat loss and smothering. Any military activity will serve to enhance and continue to degrade the water quality. Comment 33) Pg 5-27 Table 5-20. BRSF Hrdric Soils. I would hope the Military could stay out of the 40,068 acres of hydric soils they have identified in each tactical area.	from the Florida Forest Service (FFS) and were used in the EIS. The language referenced in Comment 26 is associated with the proposed roads for fixed-wing aircraft landing sites. As indicated in Section 2.7 of the EIS, site studies would be required before any land-disturbing activities. Any water crossing would be approved by the FFS. Comment 30: As identified in EIS Sections 3.6.3 and 3.7.3, use of water crossings would result in the potential for increased erosion impacts and sedimentation. However, implementation of General Operational Constraints identified in Section 2.5 and Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations identified in Section 2.7 would serve to minimize the potential impact of military training activities, while public use of these crossings may yet continue without the benefit of EIS-identified mitigation or constraint.
O_018-R9	Comment 34) Pg 5-1 Lines 13-18. Since NEPA EIS' have been conducted on similar landscapes, please provide monitoring reports so the public can see the level of monitoring that has been conducted.	Eglin AFB has many survey and monitoring reports that can be provided to the general public upon request. The process for obtaining official non-classified government monitoring reports performed by Eglin AFB can be obtained through an official Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request from the Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office.
O_019-R1	Please do not use any part of Blackwater forest or Coldwater for any type of military maneuvers!!! Eglin and surrounding areas are already taking up a LOT OF LAND!!! Can't you utilize what is already in place?	As discussed in Section 1.4 of the EIS, the Proposed Action is needed because there is a projected regional shortfall of military testing and training land and airspace in the GRASI region. The demand for the land range and use of restricted areas over the Eglin Range Complex create scheduling conflicts for nonhazardous training. Obtaining the necessary permits to use new areas for nonhazardous training and placing training emitters in remote locations would create flexibility, improving training outcomes through better scheduling and reducing the competing demands on restricted areas. Eglin AFB's primary mission is test and evaluation, and training activities sometimes have a lower priority. From time to time, training units are unable to obtain the necessary time on the range or in the restricted areas to complete their requirements. As a result, the Air Force needs additional flexibility in the GRASI region to accommodate the increasing levels of testing and training activity required by the current mission. More specifically, additional flexibility for training activities outside Eglin AFB would allow test and training

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		units to accomplish their missions when time on the range or in the restricted areas is not available. As a result, the Air Force needs additional land areas in the GRASI region to accommodate the increasing levels of testing and training activity required by the current mission. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_020-R1	I live in Blackwater and we love our forest just the way it is there are thousands of acres on eglin for you all to train and play war games we appreciate what you do for our country but we have lived here all our lives as our grandparents have before us. We are very much against this	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.
O_021-R1	On page 5-49 Section 5.8.1.3 The only bird that will be protected in the forest is the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker but the Southeastern American Kestrel is listed as threatened on the Florida species list and the Sherman Fox squirrel is a mammel that is also listed as threatened? Why aren't these two species going to be protected under the EIS? As a representative of FMW Audubon, I served on the BRSF Liaison Committee for 3 years. As questions arose about birds in the forest, the FFS would turn to me for answers for there had never been a bird survey of BRSF. When I learned that BRSF had been designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA) with global priority by National Audubon, our chapter volunteered to conduct a seasonal bird survey. A dedicated team of bird watchers visited each of the thirteen areas, four times a year. for three and a half years. We learned a lot about the birds of BRSF and compiled a bank of data on the avian life there. At the same time, we came to appreciate the efforts and resources expended by the Florida Forest Service in restoring this historic	Thank you for your comments. Protected species, including state-listed threatened, endangered, and species of special concern, are listed in ESI Table 5-38, Section 5.8.1.3. The FWC has offered to provide location information on kestrel breeding sites at BRSF. A buffer would be created around these locations and avoided by military activities. The Sherman fox squirrel is listed as a state species of special concern. It has no federal status. Figures in Section 3.8 and Final EIS Sections 5.8 and 6.8 have been updated to reflect the occurrence of the subspecies of the southeastern American kestrel at BRSF, as well as any location information that FWC provides on this species and its habitats.

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	longleaf/wiregrass ecosystem. One of our most interesting finds in the forest was a nonmigratory subspecies of the American Kestrel which is listed as threatened in Florida. At one time this small falcon was present throughout the southeast but as the longleaf forest were cut the subspecies lost its home. This subspecies of kestrel has declined in population by over 80% in the last 50 years. It had never been recorded in BRSF and only a few times in the panhandle. Our team found this Kestrel in BRSF in the spring of 2009. A pair was observed feeding young in a cavity in a large dead longleaf in a clear-cut area on Beaver Creek Road. This bird likes to hunt over clear-cut areas in longleaf forests. Loss of habitat was the major reason its numbers have diminished but contributing to its demise was fire suppression, and the removal of old-growth trees and snags. The return of the wiregrass/longleaf ecosystem in BRSF has created a home for this threatened subspecies. We notified FWC when we first saw this pair and they put up a nesting box. The next season (2010) they reported a nesting success and now five pair are nesting in the eleven boxes that have been erected in clear-cut areas in the forest. The Southeastern subspecies of the American Kestrel was not mentioned or considered in the GRACI EIS as a threatened species. The proposal to land helicopters and troops in clear-cuts will have a great impact on the survival of this struggling Florida bird species. Please consider this species and the other unknown wildlife that may be making a new start in this restored longleaf/wiregrass when you consider FFS's decision to allow military training in Blackwater River State Forest.	
O_022-R1	As stated in section 3.Proposed Action Affected Resource Assessment During training, some wildlife such as birds, reptiles, and small mammals would be consumed by troops. However, the amount consumed would not be enough to decrease a population or have regional impacts and would not be considered significant given the extent of public use and hunting in the state forests. Consumption levels would be minimal, and be less than wildlife takes from recreational hunters." 3.7.1. lines 23-28 I felt the bird population in the forest would be protected from consumption until I read that in 2007 the congress gave a broad authorization to the Armed Forces to take any birds during military readiness activities 3.8.1.1 Regulatory Drivers Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 USC 703-712; 1997-Supp) and EO 13186, Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds:	In response to your question, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is the regulatory agency that determines the extent of impact to migratory birds, based on analysis of the Proposed Action. The USFWS has reviewed the biological assessment and determined that the proposed action would not have a significant adverse effect on migratory bird populations. The biological assessment and USFWS response is provided in Appendix C of the EIS.

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	Protects migratory birds and their habitats and establishes a permitting process for legal taking. The Armed Forces are exempted from the incidental taking of migratory birds during military readiness activities (such as those described in this EIS), except in cases where an activity would likely cause a significant adverse effect to the population of a migratory bird species. 3.8.1.1 The Fish and Wildlife Service finalized regulations on February 28, 2007, broadly authorizing incidental takings of migratory birds during military readiness activities.7 These regulations allow incidental takings if DOD implements conservation measures to minimize or mitigate "significant adverse effects" on migratory bird species. My question is: who is judging the significant adverse effects on this taking of migratory bird species? and How? This forest is under restoration to a longleaf/wiregrass ecosystem. The birds are only beginning to return to this recovering habitat. It is still in a fragile state of recovery. There had never been a population bird survey until 2013 so there is no measuring stick to determine how this population has recovered in the last 20 years or what an adverse effect would be. For example, the red-headed woodpecker was practically gone from NW Florida in the early 1990's. Then the FFS started leaving standing snags. Now they are plentiful in the forest and are starting to be seen in other neighborhoods. (Francis M. Weston BRSF Bird Survey -2009-2013) But it is not the time to take any of these returning bird species. These troops could easily consume the bird population of BRSF and have a great adverse effect on this recovering ecosystem but we do not have the scientific knowledge to know where that demarcation is.	
O_023-R1	During my experience in BRSF, I have never passed a day that I did not encounter an individual or a group in a recreational activity. These activities were not always planned or coordinated with FFS. BRSF is a recreational-centered state forest. I cannot conceive how the proposed military activities can avoid conflict with these forest users. It appears to be a certainty that at sometime the area where troops are on the ground will have to be restricted from the public use. This will probably mean that some roads will be temporarily closed to public use. It is for sure that the roads being used as aircraft land strips will be closed from public use from time to time. My question is (and I have searched the EIS for a reference and found none) Who will enforce these restrictions? Will military police be used to stop the public from entering an area? If so, will they be armed?	It is correct that some small road segments would be occasionally closed for short periods during training activities. These closures would be scheduled in coordination with the Florida Forest Service, and recreational users would be notified in advance of any potential closures. Troops on the ground would maintain the barriers (e.g., cones or military vehicles) during the training exercise. There is no intention for armed troops to be on the ground anywhere in the forests. Furthermore, there would be no live munitions used anywhere in the forests. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates

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		expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_024-R3	The impacts will be significant to the animals that reside in the forest, whether that residence is seasonal or permanent. The impacts will be significant to the rare and/or endangered plants that are likely to be destroyed. Should any major accidents occur, the impacts to the Apalachicola River and Bay ecosystem, and to those whose livelihoods depend on that system, may be far beyond significant.	Thank you for your comment. Inadvertent contact with protected plant species, which could occur from foot traffic in off-road areas, would not likely result in permanent damage to the plant community. The military activities described in the EIS do not have the potential to result in an accident with impacts on a scale to signficantly affect a species population, or forest river, or bay ecoystem.
O_024-R4	As Franklin County becomes known for nearly constant low-altitude military overflight as aircraft go to and from the forest thousands of times each year, the negative impacts on tourism and property values in the county will be significant.	Please see Comment Response I_122-R3
O_024-R5	Perhaps it all comes down to what we mean by "significant." Nobody outside the military (or its consultants) would believe that 1160 annual intrusions of a particular type, accompanied by the firing of nearly 780,000 rounds or other explosive devices, accompanied by treetop-height overflights at all hours of day and night could be anything other than significant. Military training activity is inherently inconsistent with the purpose and mission of this particular state forest. The level, intensity, frequency, and duration of the activity described in the EIS will have substantial and significant impacts that are unacceptable.	As discussed in EIS Section 2.6, significance of impacts is determined by considering how the Proposed Action interacts with the various resources in terms of context, intensity, and duration as described in each respective Chapter 3 resource section. Where appropriate and established significance thresholds are available they are utilized to determine the significance of impacts; in such cases where there are no established significance thresholds, precedence or professional scientific judgment is utilized to determine significance. These training activities have been occurring on Eglin AFB for many years, and have undergone extensive environmental analyses. These analyses provide an excellent baseline for determination of impacts. In several cases, sensitive species and habitat have actually been recovered on Eglin AFB, despite extensive use (reference the Interstitial Area Range Environmental Assessment and other NEPA documents provided as references on the GRASI EIS website). Within the context of the EIS, significant impacts are identified as impacts where physical aspects are easily perceptible and typically endure over the medium-to-long

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		term, with a regional context and a high intensity; however, significant impacts can occur potentially over the short term under any context given a high intensity. Significant adverse impacts are typically not recoverable over the short term, and require long-term recovery processes with extensive mitigation or revision of Proposed Action to avoid or minimize impacts. This provides the basis for significance determination in this EIS, and each respective resource area has a detailed discussion on the criteria for impact determination.
O_024-R6	As discussed further below, the EIS fails in its task of providing description and analysis of a range of alternatives. Had it done so, it is conceivable that an alternative could have been identified, the environmental impacts of which would have been minimal and insignificant, and therefore acceptable. However, whereas the action-alternative as described will have environmental impacts that are significant for people, wildlife, plants, and the ecosystem as a whole, the only choice that can be made on the basis of this EIS is the non-action alternative.	Please see Comment Response I_004-R2.
O_024-R7	The resource at risk: Before moving on to specific areas of concern, it is essential to understand the nature of this ecosystem, and the role played by Tate's Hell State forest in that ecosystem, and in the lives of the people of Franklin County. The ecosystem that comprises the entire watershed and floodplain of the Apalachicola River, Apalachicola Bay, and nearby coastal waters is extraordinary, unique, and irreplaceable. Because so much of it is largely undeveloped from an urban perspective and retains much of its ecological function the river and estuary as a whole is one of the most productive such systems still in existence. It has the highest herpetological diversity of any area in North America. It has the greatest diversity of fish of any river system in Florida. The system has been designated UNESCO United Nations Man in the Biosphere Reserve. It is the home of a National Estuarine Research Reserve. The area is home to three State of Florida Aquatic Preserves and much of the systems water are classified as Outstanding Florida Water and Class II State Waters managed and protected for Shellfish harvesting. It is an area where the federal and state governments have made substantial investments in lands for the conservation of natural areas, in order to preserve and enhance the functioning of the ecosystem, as well as to preserve and enhance	Thank you for your comments. EIS Chapter 6 discusses the Tate's Hell State Forest affected environment (i.e., soil, water, and biological resources, respectively). As discussed in Section 2.5, all activities would be conducted in accordance with the respective Florida Forest Service forest management plans and identified General Operational Constraints, as well as mitigations identified in Section 2.7. Consequently, the Air Force and other regulatory agencies (see EIS Appendices B and C) believe that military actions would not impede restoration efforts or impair the ecological functions of the many important natural resource systems that compose the watershed. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste

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	opportunities for citizens to utilize the resources. These include the Apalachicola Natural Forest, St. Mark's and St. Vincent National Wildlife Preserves, Tate's Hell State Forest, and the Apalachicola Wildlife and Environmental Area, and a number of State Parks and Preserves. The ecosystem is essential habitat for oysters, crabs, shrimp, and other aquatic creatures that support some 3000 jobs in Franklin County. Recreational fishing is also supported, and is a hugely important element of the area's rapidly-growing tourism economy. And the system has impacts far beyond the local area: the plume of essential aquatic nutrition (the so-called Green River) that the Apalachicola River delivers to the eastern Gulf of Mexico is now known to extend for hundreds of miles southward, where it nourishes species such as amberjack, groupers, snappers, and triggerfish, all of which are important both commercially and recreationally. This is no ordinary river, and Tate's Hell is no ordinary forest. Accordingly, because of all of the potential ramifications for the ecosystem, environmental impacts that might be insignificant on an isolated, inland, upland forest that received no visitation, are very significant in this estuarial, wetland forest, which receives extensive visitation. Tate's Hell State Forest was acquired by the State of Florida not principally for forestry, but to preserve, restore, and enhance the ecological function of its wetlands in delivering clean water to sustain the highly-productive fisheries of Apalachicola Bay. Since that acquisition, substantial investment has been made in restoring the natural flow of water through the wetlands the forest comprises, which was disrupted by the historic ditching, dredging, and road-building of prior forestry activities. The people of Franklin County not only assented to this acquisition, which removed much valuable private land from this low-income county's tax rolls, they provided active political support for the acquisition.	issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_024-R8	The resource at risk: Preserving and restoring the ecological functions of the forest was and is essential to the people of Franklin County, as is preserving citizen access for largely unimpeded use of the forest for camping, hunting, fishing, paddling, hiking, nature observation, equestrian activity, or simply enjoying the quiet beauty of the forest. The character of this forest, and its ecological role in the estuary, and its role in the lives of the people who frequent it, add significance to any negative impacts that military activity may have. Any activity what causes noticeable change in	The flight response of an animal is not the basis for a significance determination. As discussed in Section 3.8.3 of the EIS, although wildlife species in general may exhibit startle or escape responses to aircraft overflight and other activities, these responses are not necessarily detrimental long term to a species, nor is reaction to noise alone enough to imply adverse effect. Animals react to a variety of external stimuli. Most affected individuals would likely resume normal activities soon after training events are completed.

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	the way the forest functions, or in the way people use the forest, is by our definition significant. The EIS has many examples, some explicit and others implied, where changes in a human or animal behavior will be altered by the training events. In at least one place, the expected flight of animals is cited as the basis for insignificance -- if they are not there anymore, then they are not impacted, correct? That misguided thought process inevitably leads to findings of insignificance, no matter what the actual impacts are. And in this forest, in this ecosystem, that is simply wrong.	Low-level aircraft flight noise, expendable use, or presence of personnel is not expected to significantly affect the overall health or viability of wildlife populations. Short-term startle effects due to visual sightings of aircraft or personnel could cause temporary displacement of individuals inhabiting areas surrounding the activity areas. However, areas that would be permitted for use represent only small portions of the forest areas, and animal species would likely habituate to aircraft presence over time, given the ongoing tempo of day-to-day training. Some degree of habituation may already exist for some individuals, because a variety of activities and aircraft overflights by civilians, the FFS, and the military currently occurs in the forest regions. Long-term reactions or significant behavior modifications are not expected from the Proposed Action. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_024-R9	Failure to consider alternatives: The Environmental Protection Agency describes what an EIS must be, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act: "An EIS is a full disclosure document that details the process through which a ... project was developed, includes consideration of a range of reasonable alternatives, and analyzes the potential impacts resulting from the alternatives." The Council on Environmental Quality uses even stronger language. An EIS must: "Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives, and for alternatives which were eliminated from detailed study, briefly discuss the reasons for their having been eliminated." We are not aware of any rules or policies that exempt off-base military activity from the requirement that "all reasonable alternatives"	Please see Comment Response I_004-R2.

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	be explored, analyzed, evaluated, and presented. This requirement is explicitly adopted in order to prevent the type of all-or-nothing choice that is being presented in the current EIS. Presentation of a range of alternatives leads to an understanding of the various activities and impacts, so that informed and rational decisions can be made regarding which alternative to choose. Certainly it is possible to vary the locations, flight paths, levels, intensities, frequencies, and durations of the training exercises; analysis of alternatives incorporating significant variation of parameters is an essential part of the EIS process. Having failed to present a range of reasonable alternatives, in our view the EIS as drafted provides no basis for any decision other than to adopt the no-action alternative.	
O_024-R10	1. Specific concern: noise: The noise created day and night for 232 or more days each year by treetop-height aviation and over three-fourths of a million shells and other explosive devices will have substantial and significant impact upon all sentient beings that use the forest. It is hard to think of any forest activity that will not be substantially altered by the noise of military training at the level, intensity, frequency, and duration described in the EIS. Wildlife behavior will be altered, as will that of people who use the forest. This will be especially true at night, when sound takes the place of sight as the principal medium of human sensation. It is true that those who can move away from the noise will do so. That fact, however, is proof of the significance of the intrusion, rather than a reduction of impact as presumed in the EIS. Further, in the case of the most sensitive and most mobile species (including humans) the relocation may be permanent. Military noise will drive some people and wildlife out of the forest forever. This is particularly troublesome in the case of bears, which may find themselves driven into nearby residential areas, thus taking the impacts outside of the forest and into the community. We also concur in the concern raised by an equestrian user regarding the reaction of horses, which may react to unexpected, sudden, loud noises in ways that endanger riders, bystanders, and the animals themselves.	Expected noise impacts associated with the Proposed Action are discussed in EIS Sections 5.3 and 6.3. It is acknowledged that individual overflight events could potentially be disruptive to residents and users of the state forests. Expected land use impacts are discussed in Sections 5.10 and 6.10, while expected impacts to biological resources are discussed in Sections 5.8 and 6.8. Proposed GLI training activities would take place throughout the state forest, such that any given location would be exposed to training noise relatively infrequently. Given this intermittent pattern of military training, animals may be temporarily disturbed but would not be expected to change long-term behavior patterns. Known noise-sensitive locations would be avoided during training, somewhat reducing the potential for impacts to humans. Commercial horse stables within the state forests, such as Coldwater Creek, are known noise-sensitive locations and would be avoided under the Proposed Action. Horseback riding occurs in large portions of the state forests, and complete avoidance of overflying horseback riders is not practicable. The state forests are currently overflown by military aircraft, and horses that have lived in the area for extended periods of time may have become somewhat accustomed to the noise of these overflights. Horses are more likely to "spook" when exposed to novel visual and auditory stimuli. Eglin AFB has allowed horseback riding for years; the military activities on Eglin AFB have not negatively affected horseback riding, and there are no recorded instances of military activities resulting in safety issues with

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		horseback riding on the base. Even so, the Air Force has established activity buffers around stable areas and horse trails on BRSF to further minimize any potential issues, as identified in the Final EIS Tables 2-24 and 2-25. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_024-R11	2. Specific concern: contamination: Military training activity described in this EIS creates many pathways for chemical contamination of the soil, water, and air to occur. Although in an isolated, inland, upland forest these impacts might be considered insignificant, in a coastal wetland such as Tate's Hell, adjacent to and draining to highly-productive and sensitive estuarial waters (including extensive shellfish beds), any such contamination must be presumed significant until proven otherwise. Vectors for contamination include residues from expendables, impacts from ordinary spills of fuels, lubricants, coolants, and other fluids associated with aircraft and ground vehicles, more severe spills from the occasional accidental collisions (not certain, but likely) and crashes. And unlike the common practice on military bases, it is not acceptable in the forest to build a fence around a spill site, deny public access, and declare the problem solved. Spills may not be either frequent or 5 catastrophic, but they will occur and their impacts must be judged to have ecologic significance.	During training, all appropriate steps would be taken to minimize potential impacts. For example, all solid waste generated would be collected and disposed. All metallic debris (e.g., brass cases) from training operations would be collected and recycled and, therefore, not disposed of as solid waste. The following would also be prohibited as part of training: throwing smokes, flares, or simulators directly into a water body; abandoning, dumping, burying, or otherwise concealing munitions, pyrotechnics, or residue, including packing materials; and releasing chemicals or metals (including brass) into streams, wetlands, or water bodies. Although spills and leaks could occur, it is anticipated that spills during refueling would be rare, since refueling is conducted under strenuous process protocols for safety and accident prevention. In the event that a spill does occur, personnel are trained in spill response and would be equipped with spill kits that can be used to absorb and remove any fuel spilled during product transfer. The military must follow more stringent rules than the public with regard to spills. All spills and accidental discharges of petroleum, oils, lubricants, chemicals, hazardous waste, or hazardous materials, regardless of the quantity, would be reported. For any spills, cleanup procedures, as required

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		by Eglin AFB, the Florida Forest Service, or the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, would be followed. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_024-R13	(a) Collision of two or more military vehicles -- although this will not have direct impacts on non-participants, such collisions have the potential to release significant amounts of noxious fluids (fuel, lubricants, coolants) into the soil and/or waters of the forest. Especially for those events that occur at night in the wettest locations, mitigation will be very difficult, and significant ecosystem damage may occur.	There is the potential for vehicle collisions even without the Proposed Action. However, under the Proposed Action, all vehicles would be traveling at the speed limit (which is relatively slow) and typically in the same direction (e.g., convoy style). As a result, collisions between vehicles, if they occur, would not result in major damage. Further, military vehicles are designed to withstand stresses above those experienced by civilian vehicles, and all are equipped with spill containment kits (which personnel are trained to use), which cannot be said for civilian vehicles. Fluid releases, should they occur, would not be on the order to cause significant ecosystem damage. At most, isolated and temporary contamination of an area would be limited to the immediate vicinity of the leak given the use of spill kits and personnel training as described in Section 2.5 of the EIS. Any leaked materials not captured would undergo the natural processes of chemical breakdown, photodegradation and biodegradation.
O_024-R14	(b) Collision of military vehicle with civilian vehicle -- less likely than (a), but certainly cannot be ruled out and/or prevented with absolute certainty. In addition to the literal impact on the civilian(s) and vehicle(s), such collisions have the same potential for toxic fluid release as (a). In fact, the potential may be even larger, as civilian vehicles lack the robustness of military vehicles, and may be more likely to leak as a result of impact.	Military personnel are highly trained regarding operations of vehicles. In addition, to minimize the potential for collisions, military vehicles would operate on established roads under 35 miles per hour. Speeds would be further reduced on smaller or unpaved roads. Additionally, potentially dangerous vehicle training, such as blackout driving, would be done only on roads that would be temporarily closed (likely in concert with emplacement of obstacles) to the public to prevent safety mishaps.

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O_024-R15	(c) Allision of military vehicle with animals -- it will be difficult if not impossible to prevent allisions with animals in the forest, some of which are quite large (deer, bears, hogs). Obviously, there will be significant, potentially fatal impact for the animal involved.	The potential for collision impact with wildlife would be similar to that currently experienced by civilian users of the forest. However, the potential would be greatly diminished by the slow travel speeds and awareness of the operators during training; similar training activities on Eglin AFB have resulted in few collisions between military vehicles and animals (see the Eglin AFB Interstitial Range Environmental Assessment provided as reference on the EIS website). Collision between vehicles moving at slow speeds and stationary (i.e., allision) highly visible objects in the road would be so remote as to be discountable.
O_024-R16	(d) Vehicles leaving roadways as a result of evasive action to avoid other vehicles or large animals -- depending upon the details such incidents might have little to no significant impact, but potential is there for significant problems, especially if fluids are leaked and/or the vehicle comes to rest in either permanent or ephemeral water.	It would be anticipated that the scenario described would be rare or unlikely to occur. However, military personnel are trained in spill response and would be equipped with spill kits that can be used to absorb and remove as much petroleum or hazardous liquids spilled as possible. The military must follow more stringent rules than the public with regards to spills. Consequently, all spills or releases and accidental discharges of petroleum, oils, lubricants, chemicals, or hazardous materials, regardless of the quantity, would be reported. For any spills, cleanup procedures, as required by Eglin AFB, the Florida Forest Service, or the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, would be followed.
O_024-R17	4. Specific concern: aircraft crashes: Just as vehicles occasionally collide, aircraft occasionally crash, especially during training exercises, and especially CV-22s. A military aircraft went down in a residential area in California just a few weeks ago, and residents of this area remember quite clearly the crash of a military aircraft at St George Island. Any such event has the potential of fluid spillage, fire, and injury of people and property by impact. Since crashes are neither planned nor controlled, there is no practical way either to prevent or to mitigate damage. The only perfectly certain way to prevent all crashes is never to allow the aircraft to leave the ground. As it appears that there will be thousands of flights each year, it seems that it will be a question of when aircraft come down, rather than if. Whether it occurs in the forest, in the bay, in the river, or in populated areas, the environmental impacts will be significant if not disastrous. The EIS reader searches in vain for detailed contingency plans for dealing with the consequences of crashes under these various circumstances. This is a	As the EIS states, of the 42 fatal overland aircraft mishaps in northwest Florida (extending from Tallahassee to Pensacola) over the last 15 years, none involved military aircraft. To minimize the potential for any aircraft mishaps during training, Eglin AFB would issue a nonmilitary air traffic advisory to all aircraft transiting the area being used by the military. Eglin AFB would continue to implement its Mid-Air Collision Avoidance (MACA) Program. This program is designed to help increase military pilot awareness of the training airspace and activities. Implementation of established procedures would ensure that the potential for mishaps involving military aircraft continues to be extremely low. In case of an in-flight emergency, military pilots are trained take all appropriate emergency measures, including avoiding populated areas, if at all possible. Eglin AFB personnel have extensive training and experience on how to respond to and deal with an aircraft mishap. The base as well as the state

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	fundamental, fatal flaw in the EIS that must be remedied before any decision is made.	forests also maintain numerous mutual support agreements with local fire/emergency services departments detailing procedures for responding to such emergencies. These procedures include measures to respond to fire or releases of fuel.
O_024-R18	5. Specific concern: overflight impacts: In addition to the noise and disturbance in the forest itself, the noise and disturbance caused by aircraft going to and from the forest may be substantial and significant. Franklin County residents are familiar with and have grown accustomed to such flights as a consequence of activity at our local airport(s). Depending upon the flight paths taken, the level and frequency of activity described in the EIS has the potential to increase citizens' exposure to such impacts by several orders of magnitude.	There are no specific plans to use Carrabelle Thompson Airport as part of GLI training. Proposed GLI training would slightly increase air traffic over the state forest, including the portion of THSF nearest to Carrabelle Thompson Airport. GLI training would be conducted under visual meteorological conditions using "see and avoid" measures. Aircraft conducting GLI training would operate in compliance with all FAA regulations for operations outside of military special use airspace.
O_024-R19	5. Specific concern: overflight impacts (Cont.): Furthermore, as described by the manager of the Carrabelle airport, the potential for dangerous conflict with civilian aviation is both significant and potentially hazardous to all concerned; given his experience and expertise, his views should be given utmost respect and consideration. The more distant (from the forest) location of the airport in Apalachicola suggests that the potential conflict there is substantially less, yet presumably not zero.	There are no specific plans to use Carrabelle Thompson Airport as part of GLI training. Proposed GLI training would slightly increase air traffic over the state forest, including the portion of THSF nearest to Carrabelle Thompson Airport. GLI training would be conducted under visual meteorological conditions using "see and avoid" measures. Aircraft conducting GLI training would operate in compliance with all FAA regulations for operations outside of military special use airspace.
O_024-R20	5. Specific concern: overflight impacts (Cont.): Unless all of the flights to and from the forest are routed over completely unpopulated areas, the quality life underneath the flight paths will be diminished. And certainly to some, those diminutions of happiness are significant environmental impacts for which no mitigation is possible.	Aircrews typically try to avoid populated areas to the extent practicable. However, traveling to and from the state forests without passing over any noise-sensitive locations would not be practicable. As noted in EIS Sections 5.3.2 and 6.3.2, aircraft would follow variable routes to and from training locations in the state forests. Aircraft en route typically operate at or above 500 feet above ground level unless operating in special use airspace. Noise levels associated with overflight of aircraft frequently involved in GLI training are listed in Tables 3-9 and 3-13. While overflights could be disruptive, routing would vary from one mission to the next such that overflight/ pass-by of any given location would be relatively infrequent.
O_024-R21	6. Specific concern: lost access to the forest: Unquestionably, citizens will have their access to the forest substantially diminished. Although at any given instance the foreclosed area may be small, the frequency and duration of the activities make the cumulative impact of these closings	Only small portions of the forest would be used, and only a few at any one time, in accordance with applicable Florida Forest Service (FFS) management plans, per EIS Section 2.3.2. The goal is to conduct training activities in a manner compatible with existing forest

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	substantial and significant, as perceived by those who are excluded. Several activities are described as likely to occur up to 232 days per year. If all of those occur on the same days, then 232 days will have some impact on civilian access. If those activities do not all occur on exactly the same 232 days, then the total number of foreclosed days would be much larger. Further, the area effectively foreclosed is much larger than the official activity zones and their respective buffers; any area where the activity can be seen, heard, smelled, or felt experiences some loss of effective access. And, the closing of roads that cross the roads used as airstrips necessitate a re-routing of traffic that may create effective foreclosure for visitors on foot, bicycle, or horse. The loss of access by the visiting public is both substantial and significant.	uses and to not preclude use of identified recreational areas. Ultimately, the FFS would determine, through use permits/lease agreements, the location, duration, and frequency of training activities permitted in the forests. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_024-R22	7. Specific concern: wildfire: There are many ways that military training activities could lead to unintended wildfires; fueling activity, vehicle accidents, pyrotechnic devices, and campfires during the cross-country exercises come quickly to mind. Even though much of the forest is wetland, during a long, hot, dry summer and autumn the fire risk can be substantial. A wildfire is more likely to start under those conditions, and is more likely to cause significant negative environmental impacts. The reference in the EIS to the beneficial effects of prescribed burns is simply fatuous. Prescribed burns are planned and managed by professional foresters, and would not be conducted when the risk of uncontrolled wildfire is greatest. Unless the USAF has unshared plans to alter its use of the forest when fire risk is high, we must conclude that the probability of significant environmental impact from wildfire is significant.	Eglin AFB has strict procedures in place to avoid training-related fires. Before a mission begins, units must obtain the daily fire danger ratings, which may restrict the use of munitions depending on the fire rating condition. Adherence to these restrictions is mandatory. Units must also appoint a fire marshal on a daily basis (eligible personnel must have a minimum rank of a noncommissioned officer or equivalent rank) while in the field to ensure all personnel have been trained concerning the safe use of incendiary devices and to supervise the immediate suppression of fires. The base as well as the state forests also maintain numerous mutual support agreements with local fire departments detailing procedures for responding to fires. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational

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		conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_024-R23	8. Specific concern: direct degradation of the resource: The contention that military training can be conducted in all seasons of the year and under all conditions of terrain without doing damage to that terrain is impossible to accept. Much of the forest is wetlands, and when those lands are thoroughly saturated significant damage from vehicular use is likely, especially given the amount of activity described in the EIS. Similarly, the impact on stream crossings, areas used to land watercraft, and areas used as aircraft landing zones will be significant because of the sheer volume of activity, but also due to the fragility of the habitats. When activity must be scheduled for 232 or more days each year there is very little of the flexibility that would be necessary in order to avoid adverse conditions on the ground. The fact that the EIS stipulates that activity sites will be rotated in order to minimize these effects is explicit recognition that direct degradation of the resource will occur. We disagree that such rotation will be sufficient action to avoid significant impacts.	The EIS does identify potential for adverse impacts from training activities. However, vehicle use would only occur on established roadways, as identified in Section 2.5 of the EIS. Only Florida Forest Service (FFS) approved vehicle water crossings would be used up to 12 times per year (EIS Section 2.3.2.12) at any one forest. EIS Section 2.3.2.17 identifies up to 10 occurrences of amphibious training activities at any one forest. Given these frequencies, the Air Force believes that rotation of use areas would minimize any adverse impacts. Finally, per EIS Section 2.5, General Operational Constraint 2(d) would require pre- and post-mission surveys of action areas to identify the extent of environmental impact to training areas and adjustment of constraints and mitigations as necessary. As a result, the Air Force does not believe impacts would be significant. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_024-R24	Another issue that should be addressed specifically in the final EIS is the extent to which the military activities will conflict with the work that has been done, and is being done, to restore natural drainage patterns to previously ditched-and-drained areas. Various culverts and ditches have been blocked or filled-in so that water drains in ways that mimic what nature intended. As a result, the forest roads do not drain like city streets. During the wettest seasons, military users are likely to find water where they want it least, e.g. on roads to be used as landing strips. What happens	Please Comment Response I_067-R10.

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	then? Will the activity be relocated and/or postponed, or will the water be removed in some way?	
O_024-R25	8. Specific concern: direct degradation of the resource: Increased use of roads will require additional maintenance and increase cost of management for THSF and/or Franklin County. Specific plans for these contingencies should be included in the final document.	An Operational Plan is currently being drafted between Eglin and the Florida Forest Service (FFS) and will outline/identify these issues and requirements. After the EIS is complete, the Record of Decision (ROD) has been signed, and the FFS has concluded their review/comment process, this document would be finalized and provided for public review and comment by the FFS.
O_024-R26	9. Specific concern: size of buffer areas: This concern demonstrates the fundamental conflict between civilian use and military training, in a way that offers no useful way to avoid impacts on would-be users. The problem is especially acute for those who conduct their activities away from the cleared and designated recreation zones to which the buffers apply. In general, the buffers are too small to prevent negative impacts. People and animals will still see, hear, smell, and feel the military activity. The sounds and vibrations will not stop when they get to buffer boundaries. But if the buffers are enlarged, the effect is to foreclose still more of the forest to civilian use.	The buffers restrict military training activities, not civilian activities. The military is restricted from certain activities within these buffers. These buffers have been developed using proven methodologies as described in Section 2.5 of the EIS. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_024-R27	10. Specific concern: impacts on threatened species: Tate's Hell State Forest is the certain or likely home to some 90+ species of plants and animals that are officially listed as Threatened or Endangered, or unofficially experience significant stress as a species. Despite the military's best intentions, we cannot believe that none of those species will suffer any harm as a result of the activity. Again, the level, intensity, frequency, and duration of activity make it all but impossible to avoid some harm to some species. One reason is that many of the plants are hard to recognize and occur in small patches that are all too easy to destroy with a vehicle or with troop movement. Likewise, some animals can be hard to recognize, especially in sub-adult or non-breeding morphs (e.g. juvenile king snakes). Third, there are species that are in trouble but have not made any official	As discussed in EIS Section 2.5, Operational Constraints 4(c) and 4(f) requires in-briefing and communication of environmental restrictions for commanders, student trainers, and operational unit personnel prior to first time training at the emitter sites, BRSF and THSF; then at least annually thereafter. As a state species of special concern, the alligator snapping turtle is mentioned in EIS Sections 5.8.1.3, Protected Species, and 6.8.1.3, Protected Species, as well as in the Biological Assessment submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. While no specific mitigations are proposed for this species, the EIS requires that units avoid contact with protected species. Relocation of gopher tortoises and animals that use the burrows, if necessary, would be accomplished in accordance with

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	lists yet. For instance, the Apalachicola Alligator Snapping Turtle was only identified as a separate species within the past year; it occurs only in the Apalachicola River drainage, it probably merits a listing of Threatened, it almost certainly exists in Tate's Hell, but it receives no recognition from the military. Fourth, there is the issue of the gopher tortoise. Many different creatures depend greatly upon the burrows that these turtles excavate. To say that gopher tortoise animals and there burrows will be "cleared and relocated" betrays an ignorance or misunderstanding of this ecosystem that will make effective stewardship of these creatures problematic at best, and impossible at worst. And since there is no alternative action presented that allows a reduced level of activity, we must conclude that the only way to provide effective protection for the rare, threatened, and endangered species in Tate's Hell State Forest is to choose the no-action alternative, and to keep military training out of the forest.	Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission guidelines. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_024-R28	11. Specific concern: conflicts with civilians: In addition to the ways already discussed that military exercises will interfere with civilian enjoyment of the forest, there is substantial potential for conflict with hunters. In general, hunters will be armed, often camped out all night, sometimes hunting at night (alligators), and not always in the best frame of mind to be interfered with. It is all too easy to imagine an unexpected night meeting between a hunting party and a military cross-country group, and having the incident turn out badly for all concerned. Confining activity to nights only during hunting season does not solve this problem. The final EIS should give thorough and detailed consideration to how this problem may be prevented, and (failing that) how it will be handled if/when it does occur.	The military understands that during training, units may encounter hunters and other civilian personnel in the field. The military understands that these nonmilitary personnel have a right to enjoy the forest. Military units are highly trained, and their training includes how to respectfully interact with the public and avoid any confrontational scenarios. As stated in EIS Section 2.5 Operational Constraint 4(c) all personnel would be briefed on environmental restrictions and safety procedures prior to training activities. The intent/objective of most of the training activities outside use of roadways or helicopter landing zones (HLZs) within the forest is to remain unseen/unnoticed, as these are mostly special forces troops. Training activities within the forest outside of established roadways or HLZs would typically avoid designated trails and always avoid recreational sites. Training would mainly occur in small forest management units in order to minimize interference with other users. Additional language to Section 2.5, Operations Constraint 3(i) has been added providing examples of how the Air Force would coordinate with the FFS to make the public and recreators aware of when and where training activities would occur prior to the activity. Personnel would avoid contact with the public to the extent possible. However, should there be an encounter military personnel would identify themselves and then suspend training activities and move

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		away from the area, yielding to the public user. On roadways and vehicle trails military personnel would yield to the public. Additional information has been presented in Section 3.4 of the Final EIS on procedures that would be applied in military/civilian interactions.
O_024-R29	12. Specific concern: cumulative impacts A properly-executed EIS takes into account the cumulative impacts of all of the proposed actions in each alternative. Cumulative, in this context has two distinct meanings, both of which are pertinent, and both of which are essentially ignored. First, cumulative analysis means that all of the various actions taken in a given setting are considered jointly. Environmental impacts are often nonlinear functions of the level of action, so that failure to consider all actions taken together will understate the impact on the environment, especially on wildlife, civilian users, and nearby residents. Second, cumulative analysis refers to the passage of time: how will all of these actions taken over many years alter the natural and human communities in which they take place? Wildlife populations may often weather a year or two of disturbance, especially when they are not consecutive, but many consecutive years of disturbance will eventually cause the population to attempt migration. In our highly disturbed landscape, such migrations are likely to fail. And of course, the plants cannot migrate at all. It appears that no concern for either sense of cumulative impacts has entered into this EIS. Rather, each action and each possibility of impact is examined in isolation, as if no other action is occurring. The final EIS needs to give explicit consideration throughout to the cumulative impacts of the proposed alternatives.	The analysis in Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 considers holistically all potential impacts to the state forest from the various aspects of the Proposed Action. Cumulative impacts associated with the Proposed Action and past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions not part of the Proposed Action are presented in Section 7 of the EIS. As stated in Section 2.5 of the EIS, the Air Force would coordinate with the FFS to continually evaluate potential impacts and mitigation effectiveness. Mitigations and training activities woudl be adapted /adjusted as necessary to minimize or mitigate any identified impacts. The Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections. Additional language has been added to Chapter 7 addressing the cumulative impacts of the reduced scale subalternative associated with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions in or near the state forests.
O_024-R30	12. Specific concern: cumulative impacts: An important aspect of the cumulative analysis should be the impact upon tourism and property values. As the area gains and maintains a reputation as a place where military training exercises routinely interfere with citizens' ability to enjoy the forest, their homes, and their vacations, there will be significant impacts on the tourism economy, and upon the long-term growth of property values. No serious consideration is given to these issues.	Please see Comment Response I_122-R3.
O_024-R31	13. Specific concern: how will activity be monitored?: Leaving aside issues of significance, it is nonetheless clear that the minimization of impacts requires that trainees and their supervisors adhere to many constraints and	As stated in Section 2.5 of the EIS, the Air Force would coordinate with the FFS to continually evaluate potential impacts and mitigation effectiveness. Mitigations and training activities woudl be adapted

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	restrictions regarding what they do, where they do it, and when they do it. How will all of this be monitored, and what sort of sanctions will be imposed (and by whom) if the restrictions are not met? If activity planned for 232 days annually actually occurs on 242 days, how will the public know that, and what sanctions will be imposed? If, rather than 750,000 rounds of blank ammunition the trainees fire off 850,000 but then only manage to "police" 450,000 of the casings, how will the public know that, and what sanctions will be imposed? If a gopher tortoise is struck and killed by a military vehicle, how will the public know that, and what sanctions will be imposed? Will there be independent and objective outside agencies involved, or will we rely upon self-reporting by the military? Plans and details regarding monitoring, reporting, and imposing sanctions for failure to comply are an essential part of any EIS that imposes conditions. This EIS is very rich with conditions and constraints, but very poor with the details of monitoring, reporting, and imposing of sanctions. The final EIS should include these details, and those details should specify monitoring by objective, expert, non-military observers.	/adjusted as necessary to minimize or mitigate any identified impacts. The FFS would monitor the activities of the Air Force within the forests. In situations where operational conditions or mitigations are not followed, the Air Force and/or the FFS may restrict further military unit training. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections. Additional language has been added to Chapter 7 addressing the cumulative impacts of the reduced scale subalternative associated with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions in or near the state forests.
O_024-R32	14. Specific concern: cultural impact -- the role of the forest in local culture: Little if any attention in the EIS is given to the cultural aspect of the disruption of local citizens' use of the forest. Stewardship of this land is regarded by many in the community as something akin to a sacred trust. Their support for the creation of the State Forest, and resultant significant loss of tax base that is no minor burden in this low-wealth county, was founded on their desire for perpetual preservation and perpetual unfettered access. Having that trust violated by military activity that harms the environment and interferes with their use of the forest, is significant far beyond any mere count of the days of access lost, or the shell casings not policed. This issue is all the more salient because the people of Franklin County will receive no compensation for the additional sacrifice that they are asked to provide.	Use of the forest and the potential impact to land use and socioeconomics is discussed in EIS Sections 3.10 and 3.11, respectively, as well as Sections 5.10 and 5.11, respectively, for Blackwater River State Forest and Sections 6.10 and 6.11, respectively, for Tate's Hell State Forest. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_024-R33	15. Specific concern: environmental justice: An EIS must give consideration to issues of environmental justice, which arise when any	Executive Order (EO) 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income

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	group of people have imposed upon them a disproportionate share of the environmental costs of an action. This is especially true when there are no concomitant benefits received by the community. Since its creation, Franklin County has very proudly done its share and then some for the defense of our nation. (Note that many of the streets in Apalachicola are named in honor of men who gave their lives in wartime service.) And the area is still incurring costs for its contributions, as shells continue to be unearthed at relict firing ranges. To impose the further costs of environmental degradation of the forest, foreclosed access for upwards of 232 days each year, and the domestic tranquility lost to seemingly continual overflights, is unfair and unjust. This would be true even if there were some compensation for the county. In its documentation, the USAF proudly notes the economic benefits of its activity in north Florida: $5 billion in Escambia County, nearly $1billion in Santa Rosa County, $7 billion in Okaloosa County, and $1.8 billion in Bay County. In contrast, even though military exercises are already occurring in Franklin County airspace, at the Apalachicola airport and on the Apalachicola River, the economic benefits in Franklin County are zero. The military benefits of the proposed action are national or even global, the economic benefits occur elsewhere, and all of the environmental costs occur here. That is a violation of the fundamental concept environmental justice, and must not be allowed to occur.	Populations, directs federal agencies to identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority population and low-income populations. The EIS complies with EO 12898 and follows the Council on Environmental Quality Environmental Justice Guidance under the National Environmental Policy Act.
O_024-R34	16. Specific concern: the issue of significance: Decisions regarding military exercises in Tate's Hell State Forest will ultimately hinge upon whose concept of "significant" prevails. We believe that the level, intensity, frequency, and duration of the planned encroachments are unquestionably significant to those whose lives and livelihoods are disrupted. USAF clearly disagrees. Perhaps turning things around will help our perspective to become clear. Imagine, if you will, that operational areas of Eglin Air Force Base were open to unfettered civilian access 232 days every year; that groups of civilians could appear at any hour of day or night in these areas; that upon arrival of civilians (whose plans might or might not be announced in advance) all military activity in those areas would have to cease, and all military personnel and equipment relocated out of the affected areas; and that these civilians would be operating various kinds of heavy equipment, and driving around at night without headlights. We submit that the	As discussed in EIS Section 2.6, significance of impacts is determined by considering how the Proposed Action interacts with the various resources in terms of context, intensity, and duration as described in each respective Chapter 3 resource section. Where appropriate and established significance thresholds are available, they are utilized to determine the significance of impacts; in such cases where there are no established significance thresholds, precedence or professional scientific judgment is utilized to determine significance. These training activities have been occurring on Eglin AFB for many years and have undergone extensive environmental analyses. These analyses provide an excellent baseline for determination of impacts. In several cases, sensitive species and habitat have actually been recovered on Eglin AFB, despite extensive use (reference the Interstitial Area Range

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Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
	imposition of this situation would be regarded as significant.	Environmental Assessment and other NEPA documents provided as references on the GRASI EIS website). Within the context of the EIS, significant impacts are identified as impacts where physical aspects are easily perceptible, and they typically endure over the medium-to-long term, with a regional context and a high intensity; however, significant impacts can occur potentially over the short term under any context given a high intensity. Significant adverse impacts are typically not recoverable over the short term and require long-term recovery processes with extensive mitigation or revision of Proposed Action to avoid or minimize impacts. This provides the basis for significance determination in this EIS, and each respective resource area section includes a detailed discussion on the criteria for impact determination. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_026-R2	Fixed-Wing Aircraft Landing Sites FWALS ES.4.1.2.2 - I would like to submit new information pertaining to the amount of traffic that goes down Gully Branch Rd. I can't speak for the other areas as I can't hear them from my house ,but I can say that during spring and fall, traffic is "frequent" (1 " 5 vehicles per hour - mostly during the day.) During hunting season traffic is "busy" (> 5 vehicles per hour day and night). The only time I can classify the traffic on Gully Branch as infrequent is for about 2-3 weeks at the start of summer and again in the fall when the yellow flies swarm. Then there is less than 1 vehicle per hour. There is an electronic counter box at the Gully Branch /Pine Log Creek Bridge but I do not know if or who monitors or maintains it.	Thank you for your input. FWALS activity on both forests has been removed from the Proposed Action. Please note that the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale

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		subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_026-R4	[Noise and it's Impact on Life in the Swamp (CONT.)] To better understand the exact nature of the amount of air traffic being proposed, I have summarized the activities listed for these airstrips (FAWS) in the following Table 1. . Even recognizing that these numbers reflect that maximum number permitted, they are still significant and respectfully request to be clarified. Perhaps per airstrip. [Table 1 - Summary of activities at Fixed-wing Aircraft Landing Sites (FWALS).] These numbers can't be right. 1,808 landings and take offs per month on only 6 airstrips in both state forest sites. 904 hours of noise duration per month (obvious overlap - one month is only 720 hours). 17,000 + pairs of boots on the ground per month? Please clarify so we can understand. This is not intermittent by any standards. This is constant. The data in the Summary Table was taken from details presented in the Draft April 2014 Executive Summary of the GRASI LIEIS . It was not contained in the "Welcome" hand out at the public hearings. I want to assure that these tables and figures are available to the people and decision makers of Florida. For clarification purposes I have included additional information clarifying, in layman's terms, the extent and degree of these proposed activities.	It is true that the numbers of training operations stated in the EIS are conservative estimates of actual training to be conducted. The Air Force has chosen to use conservative estimates in the EIS to avoid inadvertently understating impacts to residents and users of the state forests. In addition to the "high-end" estimates of total operations tempo, impacts calculations were conducted using highly conservative modeling of spatial distribution of the training across the large state forests. EIS Section 3.3.3 and Appendix H discuss conservative modeling estimates used. The net effect of applying multiple conservative estimates (e.g., about frequency of occurrence and spatial concentration) is that the final analysis results overstate actual impact levels. In a situation where certain factors are unknown, it is necessary to use conservative estimates to ensure that restrictions on operations to protect residents and users of the state forest go, if anything, too far rather than not far enough. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_026-R5	Comment for clarification. Why are blanks only allowed in THSF?.	Blanks are only allowed in THSF per the Florida Forest Service. Given the numerous "in parcels" (i.e., private landowners throughout the larger forested area), it was presumed that the noise from noise-generating expendables would be untenable. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp

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Comment ID	Comment	Air Force Response
		sites.This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_026-R6	BEARS. New Information for consideration and comment. Tate's Hell State Forest is a bear sanctuary and refuge area. The FWC Site for the East Panhandle Bear Management Unit (BMU), which includes Tate's Hell State forest, reported that in 2002 there were an estimated 653 bears living in the area. The next survey commences this year, 2014. Twenty five percent (25%) of all bear related calls the FWC receives come from this BMU. Nine hundred and forty four (994) were calls from this BMU just last year. From 2010 to 2013, three percent (3%) of the calls were for threatened/attacked/ or killed animals, one percent (1%) threatened humans. But eighty one percent (81 %) were in the garbage, in the yard, or in the bird feeder. These were garbage savvy bears who learned that one piece of pizza has the same calories as 3,000 acorns. They encroached on man's space for food. They are man and pet savvy. The bears coming out of the swamp during these maneuvers will be frightened, displaced, and many may never have encountered a man or his pets. They won't go north to the County Line "airstrip" or west to the Tower Road "airstrip". They will head south to the populated areas of Carrabelle, Eastpoint, and Lanark. The number of bear "human encounters will increase significantly with the number of serious encounters increasing drastically. The GRASI "Welcome' document presented at the recent public hearings, have a nice picture of a bear on the cover. However, no mention of bears exist in that document . However, in a review of the draft EIS documents, it stated that " If bears were encountered, they would be allowed to leave the area.. Please clarify where you expect these bears to go.	According to the FWC Bear Management Plan, the East Panhandle Area covers eight counties and over 5 million acres, with THSF accounting for just 3.5% of the BMU. The text in Final EIS Section 3.8 has been clarified to state that bears would be left undisturbed by ground training activities, meaning the bears would be allowed to proceed on their present course. When encountering bears that are feeding or otherwise occupying an area, military personnel would be the ones to leave. Additional information has been added to Final EIS Sections 5.8 and 6.8 regarding potential for increased bear-human interactions as a result of training activities.
O_026-R7	Please clarify how you expect to police brass when you are standing in 2 feet of water or up to your knees in mud. Brass consist of heavy metals. The soil pH in the swamp is about 4.5. Quite acidic and will dissolve the casings in no time to end up in the watershed basins.	As discussed in the EIS the Air Force woud avoid deposition of blank casings, marking cartridges, Chem-lites, and pyrotechnics debris into water [Operational Constraints 5(qq) and 5(rr)]; if personnel are within swampy or wet areas they would not utilize these expendables. Additionally, under the Air Force's preferred alternative (the Subalternative), expendable use woud only occur at

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		the hardened camp sites at BRSF and there would be no expendable use at THSF; this would serve to eliminate the potential issues associated with brass casings in water or wet areas.
O_026-R8	For the GRASI ESI to state "There are no GIS data for eagle nests in either forest." is because they did not even look. Eagle nesting sites are posted on the Florida Wildlife and Conservation Commission (FWC) website.	Data on the FWC website do not consist of GIS files but location data that have not been updated since 2012. GIS analysts obtained available GIS data from state and federal websites. The Air Force has requested from FWC directly available nest data, and Sections 5.8.1.3 and 6.8.1.3 of the EIS have been updated, including all pertinent figures with eagle nest locations.
O_026-R9	The "Welcome" document presented at the public hearings is full of this type language without the benefit of defining the terms. The word "significant", "insignificant", and "adverse" are used throughout this document without explaining how the Air Force defined these terms.	The Welcome document was only to provide a general summary of introductory information and was not meant to be comprehensive. The items mentioned are discussed in Sections 2.6 and 3.1 of the EIS.
O_026-R10	Please clarify, in real units, what the Air Force defines as "large percentages" and what it call's " small pockets of wetlands".	These are only meant as general examples, and "large percentages" and "small pockets" of wetlands are relative in terms of the context. As discussed in EIS Section 2.6, significance of impacts is determined by considering how the Proposed Action interacts with the various resources in terms of context, intensity, and duration as described in each respective Chapter 3 resource section.
O_026-R11	The Air Force may not consider these adverse impacts significant but I believe the wildlife and people who live in this area do consider them significant. Please clarify and put this all in context so informed decisions can be made.	As discussed in EIS Section 2.6, significance of impacts is determined by considering how the Proposed Action interacts with the various resources in terms of context, intensity, and duration as described in each respective Chapter 3 resource section. Where appropriate and established significance thresholds are available they are utilized to determine the significance of impacts; in such cases where there are no established significance thresholds, precedence or professional scientific judgment is utilized to determine significance. These training activities have been occurring on Eglin AFB for many years, and have undergone extensive environmental analyses. These analyses provide an excellent baseline for determination of impacts. In several cases, sensitive species and habitat have actually been recovered on Eglin AFB, despite extensive use (reference the Interstitial Area Range Environmental Assessment and other NEPA documents provided as references on the GRASI EIS website). Within the context of the EIS, significant impacts are identified as impacts where physical aspects

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		are easily perceptible and typically endure over the medium-to-long term, with a regional context and a high intensity; however, significant impacts can occur potentially over the short term under any context given a high intensity. Significant adverse impacts are typically not recoverable over the short term, and require long-term recovery processes with extensive mitigation or revision of Proposed Action to avoid or minimize impacts. This provides the basis for significance determination in this EIS, and each respective resource area has a detailed discussion on the criteria for impact determination.
O_027-R2	How and why, they wish to use our forests is not accurately documented.	The purpose and need for the Proposed Action are provided in Sections 1.3 and 1.4 of the EIS.
O_027-R3	They presented the only things they wanted without concerns of the landowners and public in the area.	Landowner concerns were addressed by providing activity buffers around adjacent landowners as identified in Section 2.5 of the EIS.
O_027-R4	According to the Air Force's references; they don't follow their own rules to present/conduct/write the Scoping Initiative or the draft Environmental Impact Statements (EIS). Since the military machine had years to work on this, then present the EIS to the public with 30 days to respond. Let me see; over 2000 pages to read, check the references, go back and read some more or re-read. As a working person you will not ever complete the reading let alone form a proper response within the allotted time.	As discussed in Section 1.2 of the EIS the overall GRASI program began in 2008, while the GRASI Landscape Initiative (which is a component of the overall GRASI program) began in 2012. The public and agency review period was 45 calendar days, as required by NEPA. The EIS, including the table of contents, a glossary, and index, is 413 pages. The appendices to the EIS, which include all public involvement efforts as well as supporting baseline information for the EIS, are 773 pages long, for a total of 1,186 pages.
O_027-R5	Compound the problem, the public town-hall meetings were poorly advertised and held without adequate room once the public truly began to be slightly informed. Not one landowner was contacted. You could have had a more favorable response from the public if you took the time to just write letters to these landowners. No, you took the easiest way to make public notification; that appears to most, you really do not want public knowledge of this travesty.	The Air Force conducted public involvement by implementing the requirements of 40 CFR, Part 1506.6, which states that Agencies shall: (b) Provide public notice of NEPA-related hearings, public meetings, and the availability of environmental documents so as to inform those persons and agencies who may be interested or affected. It further states that we should advertise in "papers of general circulation." Given the large geographic expanse of the proposed area, it was impractical to identify and mail notices to each landowner surrounding or within the vicinity of each forest. The Air Force made a good faith effort to inform potentially interested members of the public through advertisements in local newspapers and public service announcements via radio and television. These efforts are detailed in Appendix B of the EIS. The Air Force's public involvement efforts have met the requirements and intent of NEPA.
O_027-R6	Congress, through BRAC, has placed the Army's 7th Special Forces onto	Please see Comment Response I_014-R2.

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	Eglin's Range. The Congressional decision now places extreme burden on scheduling Non Hazardous training on Eglin's range. Initially reports say 2500 special forces moved here; however, another source claims up to 5000 Army troops will be here. My claim: get rid of the priority system of scheduling and schedule the missions. If a weapon's test is delayed, so be it, reschedule and go on, but don't preempt others that are on the schedule.	
O_027-R7	TWO: The public will get a few weeks to review the documents and develop questions/find answers if possible before the town-hall meetings.	The public and agency review period was 45 calendar days, as required by NEPA. The notification of availability of the EIS was made on May 11, 2014, in the Federal Register, on the website, and in local newspapers. Public meetings were advertised through print media, radio, and television. Appendix B of the EIS identifies the public involvement efforts undertaken by the Air Force.
O_027-R8	THREE: by the way, the USAF did not bother to record the comments/concerns made by the public last year.	All public scoping comments, both written and oral, were made available in Appendix B of the Draft EIS.
O_027-R9	FIVE: if they do not want public feedback at these meetings then it is a waste of time for ALL.	All public scoping comments were captured and provided in Appendix B of the Draft EIS. NEPA does not require responses to scoping comments. However, scoping comments were considered throughout the development of the Draft EIS. All public comments received on the Draft EIS during the 45-day public comment period are provided in the Final EIS, along with responses to those comments that were substantive in nature. Adjustments to the EIS based on any applicable comments appear in the Final EIS.
O_027-R10	Oh yes, there was a court reporter during the last three town-hall meetings. When will the public have access to those records?	All scoping transcripts were made available in Appendix B of the Draft EIS. Both scoping and Draft EIS public hearing transcripts are available in Appendix B of the Final EIS.
O_027-R12	All of the reports in the EIS (environmental impact statement) about noise are so underrated. If you do not participate in any activities in the forest then you have NO KNOWLEDGE, NO EXPERIENCE and NO QUALIFICATION to make any evaluation of "noise impact". Even the daily training flights from NAS Whiting Field encroach on the natural enjoyment for all of us. You can not have a conversation (side-by-side) when helicopters come over head. Just because helicopters are 2000 feet or so away, on a lake, EIS claims the campers will suffer "insignificant noise levels"? Think again. I have been there many times over the last eight years. From CV-22s, C-130s, TH-34s, T-34s, T-6Bs, CH-47s, F-15s, F-16s and now the very loud F-35s.	The EIS (Sections 5.3.1 and 6.3.1) acknowledges that military training occurs currently over BRSF and THSF, and that noise generated by military aircraft during training can be quite loud. It is also noted in Section 3.3.3 that "individual OHO operations could be highly disruptive and annoying to people located nearby." It is further recognized that water absorbs very little sound energy and, therefore, sound waves traveling across water lose less intensity than sound waves traveling across land. The 2,200-foot minimum standoff distance between overwater hoist operations and known noise-sensitive locations was established after taking into account noise levels calculated for overwater sound transmission and the

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		frequency of occurrence of the training events. OHO would be conducted about once per month at an approved location somewhere in the state forest. As discussed in Section 3.3.3, GLI training would be conducted in preparation for covert missions. Training locations would be selected to avoid inhabited areas to the greatest extent possible, both to maintain mission realism and to be a "good neighbor" to residents and users of the state forests. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_027-R14	Another benefit claim by the EIS: ECONOMY AND SOME JOBS. HOW??? Lets see...the troops train for combat, feed off the land or what they take with them. All supplies come from the military supply system and not from the local stores. What is planned for permit fees are crumbs compared to the tourist trade. So that is not a selling point. From Florida's Fish and Wildlife Commission reports jobs and economic impact over 5 billion dollars and the USAF thinks about $400,000.00 to use two forest should cover annual cost to the forest service, if they would actually get that money. [SEE SUBMITTAL FOR LISTED ECONOMIC FACTS]	The permit/lease fee has yet to be negotiated between the Air Force and the Florida Forest Service (FFS). Potential beneficial economic benefits associated with the increased revenue to FFS from the Air Force lease would likely be minor, and any localized spending of military during training activities is considered incidental and would not be significant.
O_027-R18	Please review the Florida Department of Environmental Protection Report, dated October 15, 2010; Permit Number 0006176-006-HO . Eglin AFB will continue to have environmental issue; however, the cleanup is not always complete. Just because the areas are CLOSED to the public does not resolve the hazardous conditions to wildlife and groundwater. If all the areas have been cleaned up, maybe, just maybe more land could be used for ground training.	The issue is not the lack of "clean land" on Eglin AFB, but the presence of safety hazard distances on Eglin AFB during hazardous weapons testing and training. Within these safety hazard distances, no personnel are allowed for safety reasons, therefore they cannot conduct nonhazardous training activities within these safety areas. As discussed in Section 1.4 of the EIS, the Proposed Action is needed because there is a projected regional shortfall of military training and testing land and airspace in the GRASI region. The demand for the land range and use of restricted areas over the Eglin

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		Range creates scheduling conflicts for nonhazardous training. Obtaining the necessary permits to use new areas for nonhazardous training and placing training emitters in remote locations would create flexibility, improving training outcomes through better scheduling and reducing the competing demands on restricted areas.
O_029-R1	The subject draft EIS inadequately addresses the potential range of alternatives because it purports to limit them based on a narrow set of criteria. The action proponent should reevaluate the scope of this EIS and redraft its criteria so as to broaden the range of reasonable alternatives. These reasonable alternatives include (but are not limited to) the use of private property, including the lands owned by the Mormon Church within the area enumerated in the criteria. Lands owned by St. Joe, also within the criteria area, and other areas of training on military facilities owned by the Department of Defense, including Naval Air Station Pensacola, the outlying fields at Saufley, Whiting, Wolfe, NAS Whiting Field, Army maintained facilities in Alabama and Georgia, and/or the established ranges the Navy and Air Force have in the Ocala National Forest and at Avon Park, Florida.	Please see Comment Response I_054-R2.
O_029-R2	...the Air Force should have considered additional alternatives including conducting the training only at certain limited times during the year (i.e., not during hunting season or other periods of prime recreation), evaluating new ways to schedule the 640 square mile resource that Eglin already controls so that the compatibility of this new training (which training should have been evaluated in other environmental reviews), and an alternative which address conducting this training on privately held lands.	Please see Comment Response I_054-R2.
O_029-R3	Because the Air Force improperly limited their criteria, the range of alternatives evaluated only includes the proposed action and no action. This is inadequate to meet the requirements of NEPA and specifically the CEQ regulations... As indicated in the CEQ regulations, just because the Air Force does not control the alternative does not mean that such an alternative is not reasonable and therefore should be evaluated. Failure of the Air Force to acknowledge and address these reasonable alternatives is fatal to its draft EIS.	Please see Comment Response I_054-R2.

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O_029-R4	The draft EIS does not adequately address the environmental impacts of the project without the use of mitigation. CEQ has provided detailed guidance on addressing mitigation in an environmental impact study. The Air Force should specifically reference that guidance and provide an assessment of the proposed action without the use of mitigation so that the public can better understand the impacts of the proposed action.	Environmental analysis within the EIS was conducted without consideration of mitigations. As discussed in EIS Section 2.5, in the context of the General Operational Constraints are actions inherent to the Proposed Action (and therefore not mitigations), meaning that they are part of the Proposed Action. Similar to how Use of Expendables is a component of the Proposed Action, so too is each General Operational Constraint detailed in Section 2.5. Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations are those identified through impact analysis within the EIS to minimize potentially adverse impacts; mitigations are identified in EIS Section 2.7.
O_029-R5	The Air Force should evaluate the cumulative impacts of every EA associated with testing, evaluation, and training within this draft EIS. The draft EIS should address the cumulative impacts of this action in light of the numerous other environmental assessments (EA) which exist at Eglin Air Force Base and which are essentially mitigated "findings of no significant impact" (FONSIs) put in place to accomplish that particular and limited training without the need for a more detailed EIS. This draft EIS should enumerate each and every mitigated EA that exists at Eglin which forms the basis for the environmental impact analysis which allows for the various test and evaluation and training missions which currently are part of Eglin's overall training and testing mission. Since the proposed action is premised on Eglin's inability to adequately schedule its testing and evaluation missions along with its increased training missions, it is imperative that the underlying EAs justifying the earlier actions taken at Eglin are evaluated in a comprehensive, cumulative effects manner. Without an over-achieving evaluation of the environmental impacts of the training and testing missions at Eglin, the proposed action to move training off Eglin's property cannot be justified.	Section 7 of the EIS adequately addresses cumulative impacts that have the potential to effect the geographic area covered by this EIS.
O_029-R6	NEPA, CEQ regulations implementing NEPA, and relevant case law specifically prohibit an action proponent from expending resources and effort to implement a proposed action prior to the evaluation of that action under NEPA. In this case the Air Force has made a significant commitment of resources in the nature of memorandums of understanding with state agencies and others which have shaped the proposed action and resulted in the limited criteria and range of alternatives evaluated. Such a commitment of resources has predisposed the action proponent to its	There has been no irretrievable commitment of resources by engaging in memorandums of understanding/agreement. Federal agencies are required to expend some level of resources for planning and NEPA purposes. Please see Comment Response I_014-R2 regarding capacity issues. The Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act, as referenced in Section 1.2 of the EIS, encourages partnership between state and federal agencies.

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	proposed action and away from its single alternative of the no action alternative. The Air Force needs to address how it will be able to justify taking no action after expensing all of this time and money. Such a commitment of resources and a predisposition towards the proposed action is a violation of federal law. The Air Force should specifically address in this draft EIS each and every prior expenditure of resources in furtherance of the proposed action not already addressed so that the public has a full awareness of the proponents' actions leading up to the scoping of this draft EIS. An action designed to use state lands for federal training based on a premise that it is required because the base is otherwise overly scheduled requires nothing less. Additionally, the Air Force should articulate each and every report, communication, and official request it made to DOD, the Administration, and Congress articulating its inability to adequately schedule its test and evaluation mission to accommodate its training mission. The Air Force should also address where it got the specific authorization to engage with state authorities for the use of state lands.	
O_029-R7	The Air Force should separate the GLI action from its other GRASI missions.The draft EIS indicates that certain areas of the state forest are currently not open to the public but would be utilized by Air Force personnel for training. The Air Force should explain in detail why it can use areas in the BRSF not open to the public when the public cannot use these areas. These areas are specifically identified as the STOP camp and the SRYA sites. Explain why these areas that are off limits to the public can be made available to the Air Force. Also explain in detail the amount of money (or payment in kind) that the Air Force will pay to the state of Florida for the use of the land and any damages it causes. This should include the amount of money the Air Force plans to escrow to protect against any damage that does not immediately manifest but which is likely to manifest itself in the future based on the use of the state lands.	The Air Force does not control access or administer FFS assets. Currently, the Air Force is proposing to lease the hardened camp sites much the same way previous users have done. The FFS may or may not approve the request to use the hardened camp sites. If an agreement is reached, the official process for obtaining details about the agreement is to submit a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.
O_030-R1	As we have spoke about in the past and I have witnessed at various meetings that have been conducted in Franklin County by the GRASI Commission an alternative solution for using Tates Hell State is still the solution to the many negatives that will come out of the US Air force using the Tates Hell State Park. GUSC offsets a generation of Base Relocation and Closures (BRAC) by offering open access to an austere environment that replicates Central and South America, Sub Sahara Africa and South	As stated in Section 1.3 of the DEIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to partner with other agencies to provide additional capacity for DoD testing and training needs, not to lease or acquire private lands. Additional language has been added to Section 1.3 and 1.4 to further clarify the purpose and need for action.

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	East Asia.	
O_031-R1	I really would like you to consider how much activity goes on in this particular section, in T-2 and T-6.	While specific details of use per recreational area (or tactical area) at each forest are unavailable, additional information on the number of users in each forest has been added to Sections 5.10.1 and 6.10.1 of the Final EIS.
O_031-R2	...the one [chart] I have clearly indicates areas of yellow, which is severe noise impact. ...the Air Force has identified severe adverse impact. I appeal to you to consider this particular area is used heavily.	The yellow shading in each impact summary table does not indicate a "severe" impact, simply the potential for an adverse impact. The level, or severity, of each impact (which considers the context, duration, and intensity of the activity) is discussed in the supporting text for each table.
O_031-R3	Seven of the 14 criteria that we rate Tate's Hell on are considered adverse. I don't see how the state forest can keep up the theme of restoration when you define adverse as unrecoverable and significant in this report. I don't know why that one isn't marked, and it has a little statement that says there's nothing adverse going on. That's just a clarification I would like to see in the impact statement.	Adverse impacts are not defined in the EIS as unrecoverable and significant. EIS Section 2.6 describes, in general terms, what defines an adverse impact within the context of the EIS--an impact that generally results in detriment or degradation of the impacted resource, the degree or level of impact directly related to the context, intensity, and duration of the impact. EIS Section 2.6 further defines what constitutes a significant adverse impact within the context of the EIS, which would be an impact where the physical aspects are easily perceptible and typically endure over the medium-to-long term, with a regional context and a high intensity. However, significant impacts can occur potentially over the short term under any context given a high intensity. Significant adverse impacts are typically not recoverable over the short term and require long-term recovery processes with extensive mitigation or revision of Proposed Action to avoid or minimize impacts. Therefore, an adverse impact does not mean a significant adverse impact. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while

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		analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_032-R1	...regardless of what they [civilian pilots] find printed about whom to contact, they won't find that they can't talk to them at an altitude below 1500 feet or be seen on radar below 2,000 feet. Flying death and blind is the nearest assurance to disaster that a pilot could experience.	GLI aircraft training would be conducted under visual meteorological conditions only and would comply with visual flight rules. As discussed in EIS Sections 5.2.2 and 6.2.2, continued application of "see-and-avoid" methods would be required to ensure that appropriate separation between aircraft is maintained. Ground-based radar is not a reliable method for tracking and de-conflicting aircraft operating at low altitudes distant from the radar unit and would not be relied on to provide separation for aircraft conducting GLI training.
O_032-R2	...mix in military aircraft flying from 360 to 600 miles per hour doing maneuvers. If you need a clue, it's not getting any better...add ...increase[d use]...Young men and women repelling and parachuting from aircraft hovering in place in rather low altitudes or aircraft ascending from the ground where no airfields are pointed out on the charts. The only way to ensure their safety is to strip general aviation of their freedoms to fly by imposing restricted airspace to shift all blame and liability over to general aviation. This is no guarantee to avoid incident...	As stated in EIS Sections 5.2.2 and 6.2.2, aircraft conducting GLI training would operate in compliance with all federal aviation regulations for operations outside of special use airspace. No new special use airspace or modification of existing special use airspace would be created as part of the Proposed Action. Sections 5.2.2 and 6.2.2 note that implementation of the Proposed Action would increase aircraft activity in the airspace above BRSF and THSF. Any increase in air traffic increases the importance of all pilots using "see and avoid" measures to maintain safe distances from other aircraft. As long as all aircraft comply with FAA regulations and practice effective "see and avoid" measures, flight safety should be maintained.
O_034-R1	I have been in special operations training business since 1998 in Calhoun and Liberty County. I have 90,000 acres under management, and we have been training people there since 1998, and we started that because of the loss of the Republic of Panama in 1999. So we have a great alternative if this doesn't work out for Tate's Hell State Forest, ... I turned in an email to Mr. Penland...back in January 23rd.	As stated in Section 1.3 of the DEIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to partner with other agencies to provide additional capacity for DoD testing and training needs, not to lease or acquire private lands. Additional language has been added to Section 1.3 and 1.4 to further clarify the purpose and need for action.
O_035-R1	There are many studies that confirm that with repeated noise intrusions, birds will abandon or avoid the noisy areas. Nesting birds will abandon eggs and chicks in the nest if repeatedly disturbed by noise. Low flying aircraft and especially helicopters will result in a flush of roosting, nesting and foraging birds. When birds flush from a nest the eggs and the chicks are vulnerable to predators and the parents may abandon the nesting area if disturbed repeatedly. The impact of repeated loud noises on BRSF resident and nesting birds is too great a risk to take on this recovering	As discussed in Appendix H, Section H.2.8, bird response to noise may vary and even include habituation or acclimation to a particular type of disturbance. Military actions would be intermittent, lacking a pattern of use. Thus, repeated disturbance to a particular area, nest, or individual is unlikely. Also, Section 2.5 of the EIS identifies pre- and post-mission surveys and monitoring of the effects of training activities on the environment. These actions would be conducted by trained biologists in coordination with the Air Force and the Florida

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	longleaf/wiregrass ecosystem. The damage will be done before the effect is observable. And who and how will this damage be assessed?	Forest Service.
O_036-R1	I want to note that we have not heard any information about why the national forests in this area were not considered.	The Air Force has coordinated with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to gauge their interest in participating as a GRASI GLI partner. So far, the Air Force and the USFS have not reached an agreement for USFS support the GLI training initiative. The Air Force will continue explore with the USFS and other federal agencies opportunities to support GRASI.
O_036-R2	The National Park Service, for example, is deeply concerned about the effective noise on wildlife and has issued a 71-page annotated bibliography of what little studies have been done of the effective noise on species. Included in that is the study done on red-cockaded woodpeckers, but that was about a single flight of a civilian helicopter, not the large military helicopters, and not the repeated flights, and I have yet to find any evidence that any specific distance from the red-cockaded woodpecker's nest would be helpful. In the two studies, only one-tenth of all nests were abandoned after a single nearby flight of a civilian helicopter. We don't know what the effect of noise on many other birds would be, but we can certainly expect a great number of nest abandonments if this can be extrapolated to other birds. I realize that the EIS doesn't have to take into account the many creatures of this Tate's Hell State Forest that are not rare, not have been labeled endangered or threatened, but simply in the plant life, the proposal is to give pictures to the personnel, all 72 personnel, on the ground and certain activities, and that way they will be able to avoid the rare plants. As a member of the Florida Native Plant Society, I can tell you how hard it is to teach plant identification to people. Certainly a few photos are not going to do it, and are not going to guarantee that those plants are not trampled, especially at night.	Thank you for your comments. As noted in EIS Table 2-25, aircraft would observe a 500-foot buffer around red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) nests. RCW populations on Eglin AFB, which supports a greater frequency of aircraft operations and other military exercises, have been stable or increasing for many years. EIS Appendix H.2.8 provides more detail on noise impacts to birds and wildlife. We concur that identification and avoidance of rare plants would require thorough training and that nighttime operations would be problematic in that regard. To assist with avoidance protocols, Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission biologists would be periodically providing new spatial data to the Air Force to map locations of protected plant species, as discussed in EIS Section 2.5.
O_036-R3	I don't know how continued and expanded military uses of Tate's Hell State Forest fit in with the stated primary objective of restoring the ecosystem, especially at the hybrid wet acreage which is the majority here, including wet prairie, wet flatwoods, strand swamp, bottomland forest, bay gall and floodplain swamps. Most of the acreage in Tate's Hell is wet most of the year. There is no way to stay hundreds of feet away from it.	As discussed in EIS Sections 1.2, 1.3, and 2.3.2, all training would be conducted in a manner compatible with current and future Florida Forest Service (FFS) Forest Management Plans. Should the FFS determine that the training activities are not compatible with forest management activities, the FFS would no longer permit the Air Force to train. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training

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		buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_037-R2	The discrepancy that came up last night that I discussed that was the difference in these two charts and the word -- the use of the word significant and the fact that the Air Force says there's no significant impacts. Well, these jets, it's significant to all the critters that are up there, and to us that live here. Using value-laden terms like significant or better, is -- is considered contextual truth. It has to be in context. You can't use the term better without saying something. If I say my car is better than yours, it doesn't mean anything. Significant to us and significant to the Air Force may be two different things, and a clarification on this statement might read a little bit different, such as these are, the yellow are adverse impacts, and it has been determined by the Air Force that they are not significant to the Air Force, which could be significant to everybody else.	Significance within the context of the EIS is described in Section 3.1.
O_037-R3	On the bear issue, if you look at this map, okay, all of that activity, there's not -- the bear at night when you go in there and start doing all of this, where are bears going to go? We already have a problem with nuisance bears in Carrabelle, Lanark, and Eastpoint. At least those bears are garbage savvy and people savvy, pet savvy. They've learned that a piece of pizza is worth 3,000 acorns. The bears are going to come out of that forest after these operations. They're going to displaced, scared, angry, and dislocated. The encounters, well, where are they going to go? They are not going to run up to T-6, Boundary Line Road and in the forest because you've got planes landing there all night long and all day long, and then they can't go over to Tower Road off into the National Forest. You've got another airstrip there. They are going to come down. They are going to be in the streets, and I think the EIS needs to address the issue of the bear migration and bear interactions.	Thank you for your comment. We cannot speculate on the specific response reactions or nonresponse of bears for military actions that are highly intermittent, of varying intensity, and fluid in nature, except to say that is very unlikely that bears would be motivated to migrate for long distances as a result. Bears would not be flushed out, chased or driven to populated areas by military activities. The type of disturbances created by military actions include vehicle operations, the presence of people and noise from gunfire, and activities not entirely unlike that of other recreational actions currently occurring at the forests. Long-distance flight behavior by bears has not been observed at Eglin AFB, which is used by units every day and to a much greater degree than what is proposed for THSF and BRSF.

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O_037-R4	...the EIS states that you are supposed to avoid wetlands...Gully Branch Road runs right through the wetlands. It is a drainage basin for the entire basin. I don't -- in fact, one of the dots on there is one of the designated wetland crossing areas. Okay. I don't know how you can stay 100 feet away from the wetlands when you're landing planes when the road is not even a 100-foot wide.	Use of roadways for aircraft landings has been removed from the Proposed Action.. As stated in EIS Section 2.5, there would be no land disturbance of wetland areas under the Proposed Action.
O_039-R1	The two alternatives evaluated by this EI[S] were disappointing. We were offered an all-or-none choice, and leaves us no option but to support the "No Action Alternative." . the Apalachicola River is a national treasure and has many designations. There are locations that the proposed action is more appropriate and should be considered as alternatives. We . recommend you look to other areas not under ownership of or designated for purchase by the State of Florida for the protection and preservation of the Apalachicola Ecosystem, a national treasure in its own way.	Please see Comment Response I_004-R2.
O_039-R2	...the level intensity and frequency of the proposed action threaten the 20 years of restoration intended to reestablish the ecological functions of this vast wetland as a major component of the Apalachicola River Floodplain, delta, and estuary. Tate's Hell swamps sustains the primary nursery areas of Apalachicola Bay fisheries and wildlife habitat. . The Apalachicola River host the highest biodiversity of any river system in North America. Apalachicola Bay is one of the most productive estuaries in the Northern Hemisphere. The area in Tate's Hell State Forest is close to three State of Florida aquatic preserves, a National Estuarine Research Reserve, and the UNESCO, United Nations Biosphere Reserve as well as other lands that have been purchased through a number of conservation land acquisition programs for the conservation of natural areas, and one of those includes the Apalachicola Wildlife and Environmental Area managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. I just wanted to make sure that that point is emphasized that this is a very unique and important, both ecological area as well as the economy that is built around that entire system of ecological and conservation areas.	Thank you for your comments. Military actions would not impede restoration efforts or impair the ecological functions of the many important natural resource systems that compose the watershed. As stated in EIS Section 2.3.2, all training activities and locations would occur in areas approved by the Florida Forest Service and would be in compliance with requirements identified in the respective forest management plans.
O_039-R3	The cumulative impacts of the proposed action when added to the current use would result in impacts from noise, air quality, and likely water contamination that cannot be tolerated by wildlife in their natural habitat on a recurring and frequent basis. The habitat would no longer be viable for nesting, resting, or foraging in a manner that sustains the overall ecological	Training of this nature has been conducted on Eglin AFB for many years. The General Operational Constraints identified in EIS Section 2.5 have been proven effective in minimizing or alleviating potentially adverse impacts and were developed through many years of coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Florida

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	functions. . The operational constraints considered in the draft EIS are not convincing that adequate protection is provided for these resources, but for distances, for noise, air quality, and water, and water resources -- wetland and water resources are not adequate to mitigate impacts from frequent disturbance. I question if the level of recurring intensity in this proposed action is considered was evaluated, rather it appears they evaluated individual occurrences in isolation.	Department of Environmental Protection. Training activities were evaluated using a holistic approach, and cumulative impacts are adequately discussed in Chapter 7 of the EIS.
O_040-R1	I support the military reviewing the reasonable alternative site that was presented by Mr. Bruce McCormack, President of Gulf Unmanned Systems Center last night at the public meeting or hearing in Carrabelle. The site, as presented, consist of approximately 90,000 acres under privately-held ownership that's primarily located in Calhoun County and adjacent counties. It's been used since 1999 for special operations training. The original EIS was approved in 2002, and re-approved again in 2011 for military operations. While these military exercises would be located outside of Franklin County, primarily in Calhoun County, the property and project would be managed by our office in Carrabelle primarily by employees from Carrabelle and Franklin County.	As stated in Section 1.3 of the DEIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to partner with other agencies to provide additional capacity for DoD testing and training needs, not to lease or acquire private lands. Additional language has been added to Sectoin 1.3 and 1.4 to further clarify the purpose and need for action.
O_041-R1	We are an organization of almost 400 members, small business owners, who rely on the bay, Apalachicola River, and bay to produce their living, and most everybody is a small independently-owned business. I'll submit most of my comments in writing, but I've spent the last, almost 20 years being quite successful in filling a unique knitch here. We spend over $900,000 a year trying to advertise the area to people who want to come and get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, which includes the air traffic. A lot of what I hear from tourists is they like what we don't have, which is a lot of light pollution, noise pollution, chain stores, that sort of thing. So it's more about what's not here than what's here, and we -- air traffic is extremely rare here. When a plane goes over, we all stop what we're doing and look because it's rare, and visitors comment on that a lot, and it's important that peace is maintained because I think that's why a lot of people come here, and as we seek to diversify our economy in concert with the Governor's office, and go deeper into tourism and geotourism, which is all about exploring nature and what's around us naturally, I think that it's important to consider how any of this would have an impact...we are kind of the last place you can go to see some of this wildlife. So we're	Please see Comment Response I_122-R3.

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	concerned about negative impacts on our traditional economy and our newly-found economy in tourism.	
O_043-R1	I know that you need to practice and train, but not over where we horseback ride. A helicopter just hovering over an area could cause a rider to be killed, and the horse seriously injured if it took off running through the trees. Please find another area to do these kind of exercises. I have already be seriously injured while riding, and don't need another injury at this time in my life. I'm 65 and don't have a lot of riding time left, and I want to do it in the safest places. Nobody I know would risk injury to themselves or their horses.	Please see Comment Response I_021-R1.
O_043-R2	I'm afraid that you will hurt the attendance of people coming to Coldwater to ride as well. My son is in the Navy and I truly respect the military. I grew up in a military household. But there is a place for everything, and Coldwater is not the place for military exercises.	Please see Comment Response I_021-R1.
O_044-R1	The training activities described in ES 4.1.2.7, ES 4.1.2.5, ES 4.1.2.14 and ES 4.1.2.17 are NOT compatible with recreation areas!	As discussed in Section 3.10.3 of the EIS, no recreational sites would be used or closed. While the quality of the recreational experience may be somewhat diminished, this would not preclude recreational use or cause general incompatibility, and impacts would be short term. Overall, there would be some small-scale, temporary public access restrictions to specific training locations while training occurs. However, this would not negatively impact overall land use because this would only occur on small segments of roadway or in small forest management units and would be short term in nature; access would resume once training activities have ceased. Any closures would be of small areas or road segments that make up a minute percentage of the entire forested area. Additionally, the Air Force is evaluating a reduced-scale training subalternative that reduces the geographic scope of actions and amount of aircraft operations, emplaces additional training buffers around recreational use, and eliminates expendable use outside of the BRSF hardened camp sites, amphibious operations, emplacement of obstacles, bivouacing and assembly areas and other activities. This will serve to minimize impacts to the public and natural resources through reduced noise, disturbance, safety/wildfire issues, hazardous materials and waste issues, and recreational conflicts. Details on this reduced-scale subalternative can be found in Section 2.3 of the

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		Final EIS, while analyses for each resource area are provided in Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in respective sections.
O_045-R1	. I have 40-plus years in outdoor recreation business, half of it was in the state park system. When I retired, the other half was in the state forest system, and I would have the luxury of being able to work in a lot of our large areas, and we coined a term out there called, "Space, Solitude, Self-reliance." And that's the outdoor recreation experience that we have in our state forest system, and I'm retired now, so I'm speaking on behalf of the Florida Outdoor Recreation Coalition, but with that, when people come out there to those areas, they expect that experience that they can't get anywhere else anymore, and that is to have 200,000 acres, maybe it's Tate's Hell or Blackwater, but to go out there, and take your kayaks, to go out there, and go hunting, to go out there -- and even just to ride your truck out there on one of those roads just to be in the peace and all of a land that large and not to have it interrupted. And that's what happens when you start going into and placing things. Yes, you may come in now. No, you can't come in here, back and forth. We lose that freedom to be able to get out on those lands and enjoy those outdoor recreational experiences of being alone by yourself that is disappearing so quickly on this earth.	Only small segments of roadways may experience closures for a temporary duration. These would be determined in coordination with the Florida Forest Service (FFS) as part of the permit/lease agreement. Citizens would be notified of any potential closures prior to their occurrence. Campers and other recreationalists would still be able to access the forest. Impacts to recreational users from training activities is discussed in EIS Sections 3.10, 5.10, and 6.10. There may be annoyance or disruption of recreational uses on occasion. Recreational users would be notified of the presence of training activities (including location and duration). Hiking trails and other recreational sites would be buffered from activities. While troops may cross a trail, they would not use it as normal hikers and recreationalists use it. Only small portions of the forest would be used in accordance with applicable FFS management plans, per EIS Section 2.3.2. The goal is to conduct training activities in a compatible manner with existing forest uses and to not preclude use of identified recreational areas. Ultimately, the FFS would determine, through use permits/lease agreements, the location, duration, and frequency of training activities permitted in the forests. As discussed in the EIS, some interactions with other park users can be expected. However, training activities would avoid use of established recreational sites, and activity buffers have been established around adjacent residences and recreational sites (see EIS Section 2.5), thus minimizing the potential impacts. As part of the use permit/lease agreement, the Air Force would work with the FFS to identify training locations suitable for use to minimize interactions with park users and residences and would adjust training locations should they prove to be incompatible.
O_045-R2	my other concerns ...is the impact that anytime man has on any piece of property, and as soon as we start putting things out there in such fragile areas like Blackwater, and I was there just last week, hiking the trail, and finding out, wow, here's this big pitcher plant bog right off the trail, and it astonished me. How do we really make sure that we protect that?	The EIS Executive Summary, Table ES-22 states that specifically to avoid pitcher plant bogs, "all activities must remain on roadbeds of established roads, including troop movements, vehicle operations, digging, and any type of ground surface disturbance. No refueling of vehicles or aircraft allowed." Table ES-22 lists protection measures for other important and sensitive species and habitats as well.

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		Section 2.7 lists additional proposed resource specific protection measures.
O_045-R3	How do we effectively monitor it [protections to prevent impacts to biological resources]? I want to make sure that is in place.	EIS Section 2.5 states the Air Force would prepare a mitigation plan that identifies Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations to be implemented, responsible parties for mitigation implementation and compliance evaluation, and monitoring mechanisms for evaluation of mitigation effectiveness. Similar approaches have been effectively used at Eglin Air Force Base. Monitoring would be conducted via a combination of Air Force and FFS personnel, and mitigations and training activities would be adjusted/adapted as necessary to either minimize or further mitigate any identified impacts.
O_045-R4	When something goes wrong, when something does mishap, what are the steps in place,... It can take you forever to get anything back together. We need something in place immediately that shows concerns when we see something on -- that goes on on these properties, and that's all I have to say.	The Florida Forest Service (FFS) and the Air Force would conduct periodic evaluations of training sites and activities to identify any potential issues and implement or change mitigations and operational constraints to resolve identified issues. Additionally, EIS Section 2.5 indicates that a process would be developed to allow the public to submit complaints or identify issues. Any claims for possible damages must be evaluated in accordance applicable Air Force regulations and procedures. Specific concerns can always be addressed to the Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office.