

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

NOTICE (03-ARC-1)

National Environmental Policy Act; Transfer of NASA Crows Landing Flight Facility

AGENCY: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA, 42 U.S. C. 4321 *et seq.*), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), NASA's policies and procedures for implementing NEPA (14 CFR Subpart 1216.3), and based upon the analyses and evaluations in the Environmental Assessment for the project, NASA has concluded that an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary and has made a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) with respect to the transfer of NASA Crows Landing Flight Facility to Stanislaus County.

DATE: NASA will take no final action prior to the publication of the notice of this FONSI.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: G. Scott Hubbard
Director, Ames Research Center

ADDRESSES: The Environmental Assessment (EA) for Transfer of NASA Crows Landing Flight Facility and the Environmental Baseline Survey (EBS) for Crows Landing Flight Facility may be reviewed at the following locations:

NASA Library
Building N202
Ames Research Center
Moffett Field, CA 94035-1000

Patterson Public Library
46 North Salado
Patterson, CA 95363

Newman Public Library
1305 Kern Street
Newman, CA 95360

Modesto Public Library
1500 I Street
Modesto, CA 95354-1166

A limited number of copies of the EA are available on a first request basis, by contacting the NASA Ames Research Center Environmental Services Office at the address, telephone number, or electronic mail address indicated herein.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sandra Olliges, Chief, Environmental Services Office, NASA Ames Research Center, MS 218-1, Moffett Field, CA 94035-1000; telephone: 650-604-3355; electronic mail: Sandra.M.Olliges@nasa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NASA has reviewed the EA prepared for the property transfer of Crows Landing Flight Facility (CLFF) and determined that it represents an adequate and accurate analysis of the alternatives and the scope and level of associated environmental impacts. The EA is incorporated by reference in this FONSI.

Since accepting this property from the Navy in July 1994, NASA research operations at Crows Landing Flight Facility have been discontinued. Previous activities included advanced flight technology research and development, in addition to data collection for experimental aircraft. Test facilities included short take-off and landing areas (STOL), acoustic analysis arrays, and high precision laser, radar and video tracking systems. Because the agency continues to incur maintenance costs for the facility with no benefit, NASA proposed in June 1999 to divest itself of Crows Landing. On October 27, 1999 Congress passed Public Law 106-82, directing NASA to convey to Stanislaus County all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to Crows Landing Flight Facility. Under the terms of PL 106-82 NASA will cede legislative authority over CLFF to the state of California while retaining future rights for aviation activity.

The property contains several sites contaminated with hazardous materials and petroleum products, for which the U.S. Navy is responsible and is actively addressing under State of California oversight. As a result of this contamination, the property transfer will occur in two or more phases. Phase I, to occur as soon as practicable, will include the uncontaminated parcels of land at the facility. The remaining parcels will be released once NASA, the Navy, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB) declare that remedial actions for contaminated sites within these parcels are complete or have been demonstrated to be operating successfully, pursuant to Section 120(h) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA).

The EA documents the environmental consequences of the proposed action and the following alternatives: (1) transfer of the property directly to the General Services Administration (GSA); and (2) no action. The analysis conducted in support of the EA indicates that the proposed action will have no adverse impact on land use, the economic environment, the social environment, noise, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, solid waste management, toxic substances, and health and safety. The proposed property transfer will have no cumulative environmental impacts. The impacts of ceding legislative jurisdiction to the state of California would be insignificant because Stanislaus County has agreed to provide law enforcement at Crows Landing Flight Facility. The impacts of any future aviation activities by NASA would be insignificant compared to past use by the Navy and proposed aviation use by the County. The County, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), evaluated the impacts of using CLFF for general aviation in the Initial Study for the Crows Landing Flight Facility Reuse Plan, January, 2001. The County determined that the impacts would not be significant.


The action may result in minor impacts to geology and hydrogeology, flood plain management, and water quality. Specifically, ongoing cooperative efforts to combat

sediment and pesticide runoff from the site could be affected by the future landowner. Furthermore, the future landowner could influence efforts to mitigate flooding at the intersection of Highway 33 and Marshall Road, because NASA would no longer coordinate with the California Department of Transportation and Stanislaus County Public Works Department.

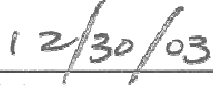
Environmental impacts associated with Alternative #1 are unknown at this time, because GSA has not proposed future uses of the land. Furthermore, Alternative #1 cannot be implemented because Public Law 106-82 has been passed. There are no impacts associated with Alternative #2, the no action alternative, other than those associated with existing conditions.

The EA addresses only those impacts associated with the following NASA actions pursuant to Public Law 106-82: transfer of property to Stanislaus County, the ceding of legislative jurisdiction to the state of California, and the retention of NASA's rights to use the airfield for aviation activities in the future. The impacts of any other future land use are beyond the scope of this EA.

On the basis of the analyses performed in support of the EA and reference material used in the investigation, NASA has concluded that implementation of the proposed action will not individually or cumulatively have a significant impact on the quality of the environment. Therefore, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. NASA will take no final action prior to the publication of the notice of this FONSI.



G. Scott Hubbard
Director, NASA Ames Research Center



Date