



# The Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment

## Brooks City-Base, San Antonio, Texas

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### Planning/USAF Commander's Guide to Environmental Quality

### Conservation

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Conservation is the practice of preserving and protecting a resource while effectively using it to meet operational requirements. Conservation policies and programs are established by the following:

- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is our basic national charter for protection of the environment;
- The Environmental Impact and Analysis Process implements NEPA and is followed to analyze proposed actions and identify environmental impacts;
- Natural and Cultural Resources Management Programs help you protect these resources while permitting effective accomplishment of the military mission;
- The Comprehensive Planning program assists in base development decisions; and
- The Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) program promotes compatible land use in areas around your installation.

### Environmental Impact Analysis Process

#### Focus Area

Air Force Instruction 327061, *Environmental Impact and Analysis Process (EIAP)*, establishes policies, procedures, and responsibilities for Air Force implementation of NEPA. The process requires that decisions made on proposed actions be based on an understanding of the potential environmental effects of the action, reasonable alternatives, and the noaction alternative. Proponents of proposed actions are responsible for initiating the EIAP early in the planning stages of a proposal. There are three major elements of the process:

- A *Categorical Exclusion* exempts a proposed action from further environmental analysis.
- An *Environmental Assessment* is a document that provides evidence and analysis to determine if the action will have impacts. **If it will not have impacts, a *Finding of No Significant Impact* can be issued.**
- **An *Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)* must be prepared if significant impacts are possible.** A *Record of Decision*, summarizing the decision process, is then published in the Federal Register.

**Solutions:** The toughest part of the EIS is getting an adequate description of the operator's proposed action, such as the number of flights, frequency, types of aircraft, etc.

- The EIAP is done before the action is made.

#### Measuring Success:

- EIAP actions identified and progress of phases is effectively monitored;
- EIAP actions having operational mission impacts have alternatives under consideration;
- Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements are adequately funded; and
- Public Affairs is actively involved in EIAP.

### Comprehensive Planning

#### Focus Area

The Air Force Comprehensive Planning Program (AFI 32-7062) is your master plan for the development of your installation. The result of the process is called the General Plan, which includes component plans that address specific resources, functions and programs available to support the mission. Before you do anything to the installation, you ought to know where the installation resources, such as wetlands, are. The plan should be the basis for new beddowns, new facility siting, and any other activity that could affect your resources, functions, and programs. The Base Civil Engineer is the keeper of the plan, and you are the decision maker.

#### Measuring Success:

- Mission changes or force structure changes are reflected in comprehensive plans;
- Effective implementation of the Comprehensive Plan;
- Significant environmental resources are identified and protected; and
- Federal, state and local agencies' objectives are addressed through effective coordination.

### Noise

#### Focus Area

The Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) program (AFI 327063) is a DoD planning program designed to promote compatible land use around military airfields and has a threefold purpose:

- To assess aircraft noise and minimize the effects of flying on areas adjacent to installations;
- To prevent incompatible development in high noise and accident potential areas; and
- To maintain operational capability through compatible land use planning and control.

#### Measuring Success:

- AICUZ study is current, reflecting aircraft operations, and number and type of aircraft;
- Minimum flight disturbances to identified noise sensitive areas around the base;
- Coordinated planning activities with local community planning agencies;
- Published procedures to investigate noise complaints; and
- Effective land use control implemented to prevent incompatible development.

### Natural and Cultural Resources Management

#### Focus Area

Your installation may have natural (AFI 32-7064) and cultural (AFI 32-7065) resources including forests, rivers, endangered species, historic buildings, artifacts, historic documents, and archaeological sites. All resources should be managed to assure protection and enhancement while permitting the successful accomplishment of the military mission. The following federal acts impact the management of those resources:

- Endangered Species Act
- National Historic Preservation Act
- American Indian Religious Freedom Act
- Sikes Act
- Federal Records Act
- Archaeological Resources Protection Act
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Clean
- Water Act

**Solutions:**

Air Force installations that have natural or cultural resources must develop a program for restoring, improving, developing, and conserving those resources.

- Prepare and implement the Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan which addresses land management, grazing and croplands, wetlands and flood plains, forestry, fish and wildlife, and outdoor recreation;
- Maintain liaison with other federal, state, and local agencies and develop cooperative agreements to implement coordinated, multiple-use natural resources programs (agencies include your state forestry office, state game and natural resources department, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service);
- Prepare and implement a Cultural Resources Management Plan which addresses archaeological sites and historic buildings (including those of the Cold War period 1946 - 1989), as well as museum collections, artifacts, and historical documents; and
- Develop programmatic agreements and maintain liaison with regulatory agencies (e.g., State Historic Preservation offices and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation).

**Measuring Success:**

- Actions have been implemented to protect and enhance the base's natural resources;
- People are properly trained;
- Working relationships with federal, state, and local agencies are strong;
- Cultural resources are protected and preserved; and
- The Cultural Resources Management Plan is current and is being executed