

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT FOR RENOVATION OF THE SOUTH COURSE AT ADMIRAL BAKER
GOLF COURSE, NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA**

Pursuant to Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [§§ 1500-1508]) implementing the provisions of NEPA, and Chief of Naval Operations Environmental Readiness Program Manual (M-5090.1), the United States Department of the Navy (Navy) gives notice that an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared. Based upon this Finding of No Significant Impact, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for the renovation of the South Course at Admiral Baker Golf Course, Naval Base San Diego, California.

Proposed Action: The Proposed Action consists of the renovation of the South Course at Admiral Baker Golf Course in San Diego, California. The Proposed Action would include construction of improvements to on-site water conveyance, retention, and storage; the irrigation and drainage systems; and player safety and course playability at the South Course. Construction of the Proposed Action would require up to 7 months, but the course would be closed for approximately 1 year to complete construction and allow for grow in of new greens.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to renovate the South Course at the Admiral Baker Golf Course to remedy flooding, standing water, and erosion issues; increase water retention in on-site ponds; and improve player safety and course playability through installation of new drainage features; replacement of the irrigation system and pumping station; and redesigning, regrading, and regrassing the course.

The need for the Proposed Action is to improve water management and water quality at the South Course, and alleviate the player safety and playability challenges due to the course's outdated design features and limited site conditions in order for the course to continue operation.

The proposed renovations to the South Course drainage system would improve on-site water retention capacity and storage, improve runoff conveyance, and reduce dependence on (and diversion of) irrigation water from the San Diego River. All proposed renovations would raise the condition and quality of play to enhance the player experience, improve general player

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safety, and extend the life of the operation. These improvements to the South Course contribute to delivering the highest standard of support and quality of life services to the Fleet, Fighter and Family and the general public, including recreational opportunities at Admiral Baker Golf Course.

Alternatives Analyzed: The following alternatives were analyzed in the EA.

Alternative 1 (No Action Alternative): Under the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action would not occur. There would be no activities undertaken to renovate the South Course to eliminate flooding and drainage issues and improve player safety and course playability. However, minor maintenance of drainage structures would continue under routine maintenance and repair activities. The No Action Alternative does not meet the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action; however, it serves as a baseline against which the impacts of the Proposed Action can be evaluated.

Alternative 2 (Project Validation Assessment): Alternative 2 is based on the specific drainage features, irrigation system replacement, maintenance to existing irrigation ponds, and course redesign recommended as Option 2 within the *Admiral Baker South Golf Course Improvements Project Validation Assessment*.

The specific drainage features that would be constructed under Alternative 2 include a new pond (West Pond), and connections between West Pond and existing Pond B and between existing Ponds B and D. These features would facilitate the establishment at the South Course of a proven hydraulic solution to managing water on flat golf courses—integrating a system of ponds or detention areas with a network of zero grade interconnecting pipes to allow the water in all ponds and detention areas to rise and fall as a single system. Clearing, grubbing, and grading would be needed to construct these drainage features. No grubbing, clearing, or tree removal would occur in the riparian areas along the San Diego River.

The South Course irrigation system, including the pumping station, would be replaced. All existing irrigation ponds (Ponds A, B, C, D) would be excavated or dredged to clear the excess debris and silt, and re-lined with an industrial liner. The proposed redesign of the South Course would

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include course-wide regrading/reshaping and regrassing; improvements to tees, greens, and bunkers; and additional improvements for player safety, course playability, and aesthetics.

Alternative 3 (Project Validation Assessment with Additional Features): Alternative 3 would include all components identified as part of Alternative 2 (i.e., specific drainage features [West Pond, West Pond/Pond B connection, Pond B/Pond D connection], irrigation system replacement, maintenance to existing irrigation ponds, and course redesign) and additional conveyance features that would provide more flood protection than Alternative 2. The additional conveyance features that would be constructed as part of Alternative 3 consist of a graded swale on the 14th fairway, a turf-lined swale that would divert a portion of flood flows from the existing grassy swale draining the North Basin directly to Pond D, and removal of golf cart crossing 2 (between Ponds C and D) and replacement with a free span bridge or re-routed cart path that travels around the west side of the pond system.

Alternative to Be Implemented: Alternative 3 (Project Validation Assessment with Additional Features) is selected for implementation as it best meets the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action and would have no significant impacts.

Existing Conditions: Admiral Baker Golf Course, which is the responsibility of Naval Base San Diego, is a 390-acre golf course located in San Diego, California. It consists of two, par 72, 18-hole courses (North and South courses) with a full-service pro shop, driving range, and food and beverage program. The South Course was built in the 1950s on a flat rectangular parcel of approximately 110 acres that provides 6,129 yards of golf. The course design is a conventional parkland style layout with narrow fairways, shared roughs, and holes that run back and forth to optimize space. Over the years, the course has shown wear and tear with widespread bare spots, worn areas, and signs of poor drainage.

Hazardous areas also are present because of the parallel hole layout and competing areas of play from adjacent holes. Irrigation ponds, which are fed by localized and off-site stormwater runoff and groundwater, are overgrown and partially silted in and contain water high in salt content due to runoff.

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There are eleven federally listed threatened or endangered species and one candidate species with the potential to occur near the project area. Of the eleven listed species and one candidate species, there are three species that have the potential to be impacted by the Proposed Action: coastal California gnatcatcher (federally threatened), least Bell's vireo (federally endangered), and Hermes copper butterfly (candidate species).

Environmental Effects: The following is a summary of the environmental impacts of Alternative 3 (Project Validation Assessment with Additional Features).

Air Quality: Air pollutant emissions associated with construction of Alternative 3 would be released from the exhausts of construction equipment, delivery/hauling trucks, and worker commute vehicles. Particulate matter emissions would result from soil movement and wind-blown dust from disturbed surfaces. To minimize dust emissions, all active grading areas would be watered at least twice per day. Operational emissions would be the same as those generated under existing conditions. As such, Alternative 3 would contribute directly to emissions of criteria pollutants, hazardous air pollutants, and greenhouse gases from combustion of fossil fuels. Emissions of pollutants subject to General Conformity are below their respective *de minimis* values. Alternative 3 would result in emissions of greenhouse gases that would fall below a 75,000-metric ton per year increase used as an indicator. Therefore, Alternative 3 would not result in significant impacts to air quality.

Water Resources: Alternative 3 would not result in significant impacts on groundwater, surface waters, wetlands, floodplains, and shorelines. Stormwater retention would improve and there is no substantial change in the amount of impervious surface that could impede groundwater infiltration. Sediment in runoff would be allowed to settle out in onsite ponds, thereby potentially improving water quality. As required by the Clean Water Act, best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented to protect water quality during and after construction. Permanent loss of fringe wetlands could have an impact on water quality; therefore, permanent loss would be mitigated at a minimum 1:1 establishment ratio.

Temporary and permanent discharge of fill would to wetland and non-wetland Waters of the U.S. would result from construction of Alternative 3. All temporary impacts would cease upon

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completion of the proposed renovation activities. Newly constructed project features would be expected to meet the definition of Waters of the U.S. and, therefore, no net loss of Waters of the U.S. is anticipated. However, should a net loss of wetlands onsite become unavoidable, compensatory mitigation would be provided at a minimum of 1:1 establishment so that Alternative 3 has no net loss of wetland Waters of the U.S. With restoration of impacted wetlands and implementation of mitigation, no significant impacts to wetlands are anticipated. Although Alternative 3 would be constructed within the 100-year floodplain, it would not change land use, increase impervious surfaces, or substantially modify existing vegetation communities or structure. Alternative 3 would reduce flooding within the South Course and redirect floodwater into a new retention pond (West Pond) and back into the San Diego River. There would be no impacts on the San Diego River shoreline, and Alternative 3 would create new shoreline through construction of the West Pond and expansion of Pond D. Therefore, impacts on water resources would be less than significant.

Geological Resources: Alternative 3 would not result in significant impacts related to topography or soils and erosion. Less than significant impacts on topography would occur due to the grading and the creation of new drainage/conveyance and course features. Construction of Alternative 3 would include clearing and grubbing, grading, excavation, and regrassing of the South Course. It is conservatively assumed the entire South Course would be disturbed. However, overall improved stormwater control would have long-term, less than significant, beneficial impacts and implementation of BMPs would minimize potential for erosion. No impacts on geology would occur. Therefore, Alternative 3 would not result in significant impacts on geological resources.

Cultural Resources: Two recorded archaeological sites intersect with the Alternative 3 area of potential effect; however, none of the proposed features intersect with any known cultural resources.

Alternative 3 could potentially impact prehistoric archaeological sites by disturbing or destroying unknown buried cultural deposits; however, implementation of a cultural resources monitoring program during construction would reduce the impacts to less than significant. It is anticipated there would be no impacts on architectural resources or traditional

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cultural properties. Therefore, Alternative 3 would not result in significant impacts on cultural resources.

Biological Resources: Temporary impacts on threatened and endangered species and migratory birds could occur from noise and habitat disturbances during construction; however, species are likely habituated to noise. Short-term impacts on terrestrial vegetation and terrestrial wildlife would occur during construction due to vegetation removal and habitat loss, and temporary displacement of wildlife. There would be no significant impacts on federal- or state-listed threatened and endangered species or candidate species with the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures such as surveys for protected birds before and during construction, establishment of a 500-foot buffer or installation of noise attenuation structures around active nests, and habitat avoidance measures. As such, impacts on biological resources from renovation of the South Course under Alternative 3 would be less than significant based on adherence to all stipulations in the Naval Base San Diego Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in formal consultation letter, which contain avoidance and minimization and mitigation measures to ensure no significant impact to species protected by the Endangered Species Act. Therefore, Alternative 3 may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect coastal California gnatcatcher, least Bell's vireo, and Hermes copper butterfly and would not result in significant impacts on biological resources.

Infrastructure: Implementation of Alternative 3 would not adversely affect existing infrastructure at the South Course. Long-term, less than significant, beneficial impacts on potable water and stormwater infrastructure would be expected due to the addition of drainage features and regrading of the South Course that would provide additional storage for stormwater runoff to prevent flooding, and supply the irrigation system during periods of drought. Replacement of the irrigation system would allow for more efficient use of stormwater and minimization of potable water.

During excavation and construction-related activities, stormwater runoff may increase temporarily, but implementation of BMPs would reduce any potential impacts. No impacts would be expected on wastewater, solid waste management, energy, and communications and facilities. Alternative 3 would not result in significant impacts on infrastructure.

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Hazardous Materials and Wastes: Construction activities would require the use of certain hazardous materials; however, it is anticipated that the quantity of products containing hazardous materials used for construction activities would be minimal and their use would be temporary. The potential for spills would exist. Any spills or releases of hazardous substances would be cleaned up in accordance with established procedures and in compliance with existing regulations and requirements, including the installation's Emergency Response Plan. A Hazardous Materials and Wastes Management Plan would be implemented during construction to ensure appropriate procedures are in place to address handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and wastes. There could be impacts from asbestos-containing materials (ACMs), lead-based paint (LBP), and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) associated with the replacement of the irrigation system and pumping station, depending on the age of the equipment. Characterization and surveys would be completed prior to work on these materials, and all ACMs, LBP, and PCBs identified during characterization would be removed and disposed of according to appropriate regulations. There would be no impacts on Defense Environmental Restoration Program sites. Therefore, Alternative 3 would not result in significant impacts related to hazardous materials and wastes.

Public Participation: The public participation process included the publication of a Notice of Availability of the Draft EA in the San Diego Union Tribune newspaper on October 18, 2019, and October 19, 2019. The Draft EA was also available to the public on the Navy Region Southwest website. The public review period was from October 18, 2019, through November 4, 2019, and no comments were received.

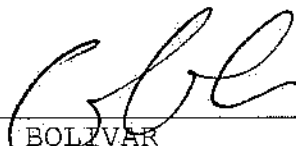
Finding: Based on the analysis presented in the EA, the Navy finds that implementation of the Proposed Action will not significantly impact the quality of the human or natural environment or generate significant controversy.

The EA prepared by the Navy addressing this action is on file, and interested parties may obtain a copy by contacting:

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28 May 20
Date



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