

## 1.0 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1.1 Fighter Modernization

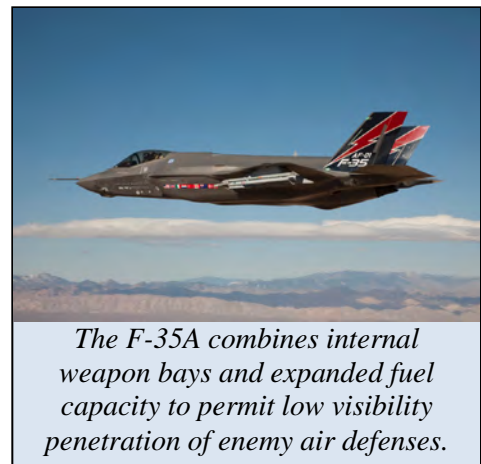
During the 1980s, the United States (U.S.) Air Force assessed its tactical capabilities against projected threats and determined a multirole aircraft deficiency would emerge in the near future. Such a deficiency could jeopardize the U.S. ability to ensure its forces have the freedom of action to conduct operations against opposing forces. As a result, the Air Force developed a strategy to modernize the aging inventory of legacy aircraft with an almost all-stealth fighter force by 2025. This began with the F-22 Raptor in the early 1990s. In 1993, the Joint Advanced Strike Technology Program was established to define and develop a common joint strike fighter airframe that would fill multiple combat roles and meet the growing sophistication of enemy defense systems. In 1994, the U.S. Congress and the Department of Defense (DoD) determined the Joint Strike Fighter (or F-35 Lightning II) would be developed to replace and supplement Air Force legacy fighter and attack aircraft such as the F-16 Fighting Falcon and A-10 Thunderbolt II.

#### 1.1.2 F-35 Aircraft Characteristics

The F-35 is a supersonic, single seat, single engine, all weather fighter aircraft capable of performing and surviving lethal strike warfare missions. The F-35 is capable of speeds up to Mach 1.5 and can employ air-to-ground, air-to-air, and guided weapons from an internal weapons bay. The Air Force F-35A version also possesses a 25-millimeter cannon for close air support and anti-armor missions. In addition, it employs defensive countermeasures such as flares, although its stealth characteristics may reduce the need for such measures. There are three variations of the F-35: the F-35A Conventional Take-Off and Landing version the Air Force is purchasing; the F-35B Short Take-Off and Vertical Landing version; and the F-35C Carrier Variant.

The F-35A Conventional Take-Off and Landing variant embodies critical combat capabilities to fulfill multiple Air Force mission roles, emphasizing air-to-ground missions by providing a unique combination of the following capabilities:

- *Stealth:* Design features and radar-absorbent composite materials make the F-35A harder to detect than conventional aircraft of similar size.
- *Range and Supersonic Speed:* The F-35A offers an equivalent or greater combat radius than legacy fighter aircraft while performing at substantially higher speeds than some legacy aircraft. The higher speeds and lower observability make pilots less vulnerable to enemy aircraft and ground-based threats.
- *Sensor Integration to Support Precision Munitions:* New computer systems, combined with an internal munitions bay, permit F-35A pilots to detect enemy threats and deliver precision munitions at substantially greater distances than legacy aircraft.



- *Comprehensive Combat Information Systems:* Highly sophisticated avionics systems, including a helmet-mounted display, are integrated throughout the F-35A to provide the pilot with information from many sources and produce a clear, easily understood picture of the combat situation.
- *Reduced Maintenance Costs:* Computerized self-tests of all systems, improved maintenance, and other autonomic logistics information system components reduce both maintenance time and costs.

The Air Force has begun the strategic basing process and identified installations to receive the first F-35A beddowns. Pilot training and operational testing for the F-35A is already established at Eglin Air Force Base (AFB) in Florida, Edwards AFB in California, Nellis AFB in Nevada, and at Luke AFB in Arizona. Two basing locations have already been identified to support operational squadrons: Hill AFB in Utah (the first operational beddown or Ops #1), where aircraft started arriving in 2015, and the third beddown at Burlington Air National Guard Base in Vermont (Ops #3), which is scheduled to receive its first F-35A in 2020. Under this Proposed Action, the second operational F-35A beddown (Ops #2) is planned in the Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) Area of Responsibility (AOR). This beddown proposal consists of basing two F-35A squadrons, with the first aircraft scheduled for delivery in 2019. This Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) analyzes the impacts associated with implementing Ops #2 within the PACAF AOR.

## **1.2 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION**

The proposed beddown and operation of the F-35A within the PACAF AOR meets the President and Secretary of Defense's directives to reduce vulnerabilities and provide rapid worldwide deployment. The PACAF F-35A beddown would also serve as a stabilizing presence within the region by providing efficient and effective response to threats, and undertake the Combat Air Force core competencies of air and space superiority, global attack, precision engagement, and agile combat support.

### **1.2.1 Purpose**

To maintain capable ready forces required for national defense, the Air Force must integrate the F-35A mission while transitioning from the legacy-fighter aircraft programs. The purpose of the Proposed Action is to maintain efficient and effective combat capability and mission readiness in the PACAF AOR as the Air Force faces deployments across a spectrum of conflicts, while also providing for homeland defense. Beddown and operation of the F-35A at a PACAF AOR base would represent a major step toward this goal. This beddown action assures availability of combat-ready pilots in the PACAF AOR, flying the most advanced fighter aircraft in the world.

### **1.2.2 Need**

The Secretary of the Air Force determined there was a need to locate F-35A aircraft in the PACAF AOR based on the following priorities:

- Support the Pacific rebalance as directed by the President and the Secretary of Defense to counter the threats arising in the Pacific arena;
- Support the location of robust fifth-generation aircraft capability to offset similar threats in the PACAF AOR;
- Support future significant peacekeeping requirements or conflicts that may occur in the Pacific region; and
- Provide adequate war planning response times in the PACAF AOR.

### 1.3 THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS PROCESS

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that a federal agency, when considering undertaking a major federal action, employ a systematic, interdisciplinary approach to: (1) analyze the potential environmental impacts of a proposed action, (2) consider alternatives to the proposed action, and (3) make an informed decision prior to implementing the action. This act applies to actions occurring in the U.S. and its territories, Antarctica, and for actions within 12 nautical miles (NM) (about 14 miles) from U.S. shorelines.

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] §§ 1500-1508), and the Air Force’s regulations (32 CFR § 989) implementing NEPA, require the Air Force to consider potential environmental consequences of its proposed action early and concurrent with the initial project planning stages. Adherence to these regulations ensures the Air Force considers environmental impacts of its actions in planning and decision making, and provides an opportunity for public input into the decision making process. The Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP), as contained in 32 CFR § 989, is the Air Force procedure for implementing NEPA. Through EIAP reviews, all information pertinent to the proposed action and reasonable alternatives, as well as the no-action alternative, are used to determine the appropriate level of NEPA analysis. For this Proposed Action, the Air Force determined the appropriate level of analysis was an EIS. The flow chart to the right identifies key milestones of the EIAP associated with the F-35A beddown proposal in the PACAF AOR.

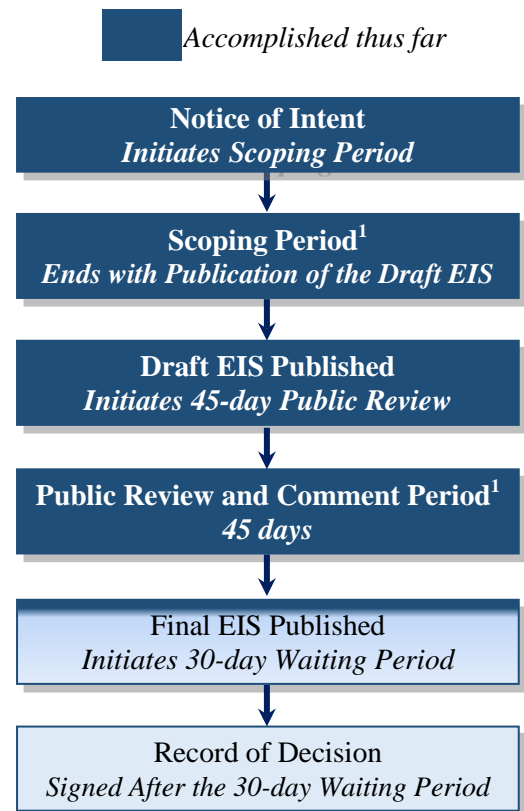
#### 1.3.1 Streamlining the NEPA/EIAP Process

In accordance with CEQ regulations implementing NEPA, and with the intent of reducing the size of this document, this EIS summarizes and incorporates by reference relevant material from other NEPA documents, as applicable.

#### 1.3.2 Scoping Process

Scoping began with publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register* on March 5, 2015 (Appendix A). Advertisements announcing the NOI and scoping meeting locations, dates, and times were placed in the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* (daily), *Delta Wind* (weekly), *Alaska Dispatch News* (daily), and the *Juneau Empire* (daily) newspapers at least a week prior to the scoping meetings. In daily newspapers, advertisements ran for three consecutive days and once in the weekly newspaper.

Scoping meetings were held in North Pole, Fairbanks, and Delta Junction on March 24, 25, and 26, 2015, respectively. In total, 195 people attended and 25 written comments were submitted at the scoping meetings. Another 45 comments were received up to publication of the Draft EIS. In general, the comments were supportive of basing the F-35A at Eielson AFB, although one commenter opposed the basing action in its entirety. During scoping, issues of concern included noise generated at the airfield by low-altitude aircraft, and in the airspace by higher-altitude aircraft creating sonic booms; the effects of



<sup>1</sup>Opportunities for public involvement

noise to humans, wildlife, livestock, and quality of life; increased air emissions further deteriorating North Pole air quality; increased wildland fire danger in the Delta Junction area because of more ordnance use; the effects of aircraft-generated noise on recreating in the state and national parks; and how increased military air traffic could impact civil aviation in the region.

### 1.3.3 Public Review and Comment Period

The public review and comment period began on September 4, 2015, with the publication of the Draft EIS Notice of Availability (NOA) in the *Federal Register*. The Draft EIS was distributed for review and comment to government agencies, local organizations, Alaska Native tribal entities, members of the public who requested a copy, and to libraries in time to coincide with the NOA announcement (Volume II, Appendix A). The Draft EIS was also available for review or download from the project website at <https://www.PACAF-F35aeis.com> on September 1, 2015. The advertisements, as well as the NOA, supplied the dates, times, and locations of the hearing meetings that were held in North Pole, Delta Junction, and Fairbanks on September 21, 22, and 23, 2015, respectively.

The three hearing meetings were held in two concurrent formats: an open house with displays where the public could interact with members of the Air Force NEPA team and the formal hearing where the public was given the opportunity to provide oral testimony on the Draft EIS. In total, 196 people attended the hearing meetings, 48 oral comments were recorded by a stenographer, and the Air Force received 20 written comments. Additionally, 12 emailed comments were submitted through the project website and nine letters were received over the 45-day comment period. The public review and comment period ended on October 20, 2015.

Copies of all comments recorded and received during the 45-day public comment and review period are presented in Volume II, Appendix G and can be viewed on the project website at <https://www.PACAF-F35Aeis.com>. They are also found in the hard copy Final EIS and on the CD accompanying the stand-alone Executive Summary. The following is a summary of comments received at each of the hearings. Written comments received after the hearings, through email and the U.S. Postal Service, echoed the comments received at the hearings.

For North Pole, of the 11 oral comments delivered, all but one was in support of basing the F-35As at Eielson AFB. Most found that the economic benefit of having the increased Air Force personnel and their dependents far out-weighed any noise issues. Commenters asked that we address issues such as noise reduction in schools (see Sections 4.3.3 and 4.9.3), concerns with the effects increased security for areas that are public (see Section 4.5.2.2, *Fire Risk and Management*), and air quality resulting from an increase in the population (see Section 4.4.2.1). There was also a comment that expressed concern for sonic booms and their effect on wildlife (see Section 4.3.2.2 and Volume II, Appendix E, Section E.2.14.2). Another commenter requested discussion that is more detailed on whether there is suitable rental housing in the area. For example, are the units close enough to the base, are there enough suitable and affordable housing units in the area to support construction employees in the short term and an increase in military and civilian personnel in the long term (see Section 4.6.2.1, *Schools, Housing, Transportation, and Utilities*).

At Delta Junction, four individuals provided oral comments and two submitted written comments. One commentator voiced their concern about the increase in greenhouse gasses (see Section 5.2.1.3) and asked if our analysis included other sources of emissions in addition to those of the F-35A (see Volume II, Appendix F). That commentator also stated concerns with an increase in sonic booms (see Section

4.3.2.2). Another commentor suggested we establish a 30-mile radius sonic bubble as a solution for sonic boom noise (see Volume II, Appendix G, comment response AA-3). The last commentor wanted to know how the Air Force and civilian aircraft could interact together (see Section 4.2.2.3). The written comments were supportive; however, there was concern regarding safety and that the Automated Surface Observation System office at Fort Greely should continue to be staffed to ensure aircraft safety with increased air traffic in the region (see Volume II, Appendix G, comment response SA-7). The other written comment was from the City of Fairbanks Mayor expressing his support of the basing action.

The Fairbanks hearing was the most heavily attended, with 33 oral comments and 15 written comments provided. The oral comments were mostly supportive, endorsing the basing of aircraft at Eielson AFB and appreciation for the Air Force's recognition of Alaska's strategic value. The Fairbanks Office of Economic Development asked the Air Force to be forthcoming with the construction schedule so that there would be funding available for the growth associated with the Proposed Action. One commentor was concerned about the Draft EIS not assessing the impact of using Historically Underutilized Business contracting (see Volume II, Appendix G, comment response SO-3). Another commentor suggested that the Proposed Action would improve water and wastewater utility services (see Volume II, Appendix G, comment response WR-2). A commentor was concerned that the existing Special Use Airspace Information System would be inadequate to support the airspace expansions and the increased use (see Volume II, Appendix G, comment response AA-5). There were also several oral comments opposing the Proposed Action. All 15 written comments were in support of basing F-35As at Eielson AFB.

Letters, postmarked after the close of the comment period, were received from Governor Bill Walker, State Representative Gabrielle LeDoux, State Representative Jim Colver, State Senator Click Bishop, and the Alaska Congressional Delegation comprising Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan, and Representative Don Young. All stated their support for basing the F-35As at Eielson AFB.

While all comments submitted were considered by the Air Force, only substantive comments are addressed. Substantive comments are those that identify issues and concerns related to the Proposed Action and No-Action Alternatives. Non-substantive comments are those that only express a conclusion, an opinion, or a vote for or against the proposal itself; or that otherwise state a personal preference or opinion.

#### **1.3.4 Interagency and Intergovernmental Coordination during Scoping**

According to NEPA, Section 102 (42 U.S. Code [USC] § 4332), CEQ regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR §§ 1501.7(a)(1)), and Executive Order (EO) 12372, the Air Force notified, coordinated, and/or consulted (where applicable) other federal, state, and governmental agencies with authority over resources or that potentially have an interest in the Proposed Action. During the scoping process and prior to the meetings, the Air Force sent letters to interested and affected government agencies, government representatives, elected officials, and interested parties potentially affected by the Proposed Action. Appendix B (in Volume II) contains the stakeholder mailing list. The letters announced the Air Force's intent to prepare an EIS, summarized the Proposed Action and No-Action Alternatives, outlined and invited participation in the scoping process, listed the scoping meeting dates and locations, and solicited comments. Appendix C (in Volume II) provides a sample letter sent to these recipients and a summary of the consultation and coordination efforts associated with this EIS. Any responses received from these stakeholders are included as well.

Throughout the scoping process, letters of support were received from Governor Walker, the Alaskan Congressional Delegation (Senators Murkowski and Sullivan, and Representative Young), the Alaska State Legislature's Joint Armed Services Committee, and the mayors of Delta Junction, Fairbanks, and Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB). Additionally, the mayor of Delta Junction requested that the Air Force examine the potential for increased wildfire and sonic booms due to increased operations in Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC) airspace; and the superintendent of schools for the FNSB School District indicated that there was capacity in the district to meet increased educational needs for incoming Air Force families.

The National Park Service (NPS), Alaska Region, responded with a request to evaluate how aircraft operations would affect the natural soundscape and subsistence pursuits underlying the Special Use Airspace (SUA), as well as to provide detailed information on how the airspace units are now used and what would change (see Section 3.2 *Airfield and Airspace Operations and Management* [affected environment] and 4.2 *Airfield and Airspace Operations and Management* [environmental consequences]). On June 17, 2015, the Air Force met with the NPS, Alaska Region. The NPS indicated that their greatest concern was with aircraft operations over Denali National Park, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, and Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. The Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, which includes the Charley Wild and Scenic River, has been identified as a Point of Interest and is evaluated in this EIS. Denali and Wrangell-St. Elias National Parks do not underlie the primary northern JPARC airspace, where F-35As would operate, so they were not identified as specific Points of Interest in the analysis.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Region 10, provided recommendations for focused analysis on particular resources such as the potential for discovering previously unknown contaminated sites, aquatic resources to include wetlands and riparian areas, air quality, environmental justice, children's health and safety, hazardous materials/waste and solid waste, and cumulative impacts. The resources identified by the USEPA are examined in this EIS.

### **1.3.5 Agency and Government-to-Government Consultation**

Consultation is required with various authorities during the impact analysis process. Table 1.3-1 lists anticipated consultation requirements and the status of the consultations. Appendix C provides copies of all associated correspondence and responses.

**Table 1.3-1. Consultation Requirements**

<i>Consultation</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Status</i>
State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)	Buildings, sites, districts, structures, or objects eligible or listed in the National Register of Historic Places, including Traditional Cultural Places and Section 106 consultation	A consultation package was sent on July 31, 2015. An initial finding of no effect (direct or indirect) was identified and concurrence with the finding was requested from the SHPO. On September 1, 2015, the SHPO provided partial concurrence on the no effects conclusion to properties underlying the northern JPARC airspace. However, they requested further information about on-base facility construction and modifications. A revised consultation package was sent to the SHPO on December 3, 2015, with additional information and a request for concurrence with findings of “not eligible” for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for specified Cold War and Post-Cold War facilities on Eielson AFB. On December 30, 2015, the SHPO agreed with most but not all of the findings, but requested that Eielson AFB obtain Alaska Heritage Resources Survey numbers for several existing facilities prior to providing concurrence, and that the base provide an historic assessment of the Small Arms Range Complex. A third consultation package providing the requested information was sent to the SHPO on January 20, 2016. The SHPO provided full concurrence with Air Force findings on January 21, 2016, concluding consultation requirements.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	Protected species (threatened/endangered species; migratory birds, bald and golden eagles)	On base and in the airspace, there would be no adverse impacts to federally listed species, migratory birds, or eagles.
Alaska Native	Government-to-government consultation with Alaska Native tribal entities	A formal request for government-to-government consultation was sent in August 2015. To date, no responses were received from this request. Phone calls to tribal representatives indicated that no further coordination was requested.
USEPA, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation/Division of Air Quality	Federal actions must conform to the appropriate state, tribal or federal implementation plan (SIP, TIP, or FIP) for attaining clean air (“General Conformity”)	The emissions generated by the Proposed Action and No-Action Alternatives were analyzed. Emissions would not cause degradation of local air quality. The northern JPARC airspace is not within any non-attainment or maintenance areas and would not affect any Prevention of Significant Deterioration Class I sites.
USEPA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation/Division of Water	Provides for protection of waters of the U.S. from degradation; includes analyses of practicable alternatives if jurisdictional wetlands or floodplains would be affected	This EIS identified that there was no practicable alternative for constructing facilities in wetlands and in the 100-year floodplain.

*Legend:* SHPO=State Historic Preservation Officer; SIP=State Implementation Plan; TIP=Tribal Implementation Plan; FIP=Federal Implementation Plan.

#### 1.3.5.1 *State Historic Preservation Office*

A consultation package was sent on July 31, 2015. An initial finding of no effect (direct or indirect) was identified and concurrence with the finding was requested from the SHPO. On September 1, 2015, the SHPO provided partial concurrence on the no effects conclusion to properties underlying the northern

JPARC airspace. However, they requested further information about on-base facility construction and modifications. A revised consultation package was sent to the SHPO on December 3, 2015, with additional information and a request for concurrence with findings of “not eligible” for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for specified Cold War and Post-Cold War facilities on Eielson AFB. On December 30, 2015, the SHPO agreed with most but not all of the findings, but requested that Eielson AFB obtain Alaska Heritage Resources Survey numbers for several existing facilities prior to providing concurrence, and that the base provide an historic assessment of the Small Arms Range Complex. A third consultation package providing the requested information was sent to the SHPO on January 20, 2016. The SHPO provided full concurrence with Air Force findings on January 21, 2016, concluding consultation requirements. All correspondence is provided in Appendix C, Volume II.

#### 1.3.5.2 *United States Fish and Wildlife Service*

On August 11, 2015, the USFWS was sent a package describing the Proposed Action and preliminary results of the findings of effects on federally listed threatened and endangered species. However, as no listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat are present in the area of potential effect for the Proposed Action Alternative, the request for concurrence with a finding of “may effect, but not likely to adversely affect the continued existence” for the two species identified, was made in error. No consultation is required if listed threatened or endangered species or their habitat are not present. The remainder of the letter was correct in requesting a finding of no adverse impacts to migratory bird species or other species of special concern, such as eagles. The USFWS has chosen not to provide comment, thereby providing default concurrence with the findings of no adverse impact on migratory birds and other species of special concern, as documented in this EIS. The letter and its attachments are provided in Appendix C, Volume II.

#### 1.3.5.3 *Government-to-Government*

In an ongoing effort to identify traditional cultural resources, as well as satisfy the requirements of various laws, regulations, Executive Orders (EO), and instructions, the Air Force initiated consultation with Alaska Native entities according to EO 13175: *Memorandum on Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments*; DoD Instruction 4710.02: *DoD Interactions with Federally-Recognized Tribes*; and Air Force Instruction (AFI) 90-2002: *Air Force Interactions with Federally-Recognized Tribes*. After publication of the NOI, the Air Force sent letters to tribal entities potentially impacted by the Proposed Action. The letters announced the Air Force’s intent to prepare an EIS, summarized the Proposed Action and No-Action Alternatives, outlined the scoping process, invited their participation, and listed the scoping meeting dates and locations. A sample of the letter is provided in Volume II, Appendix C.

On August 13, 2015, Alaska Native tribes were sent a letter from the Eielson AFB Wing Commander asking whether the tribe, tribal representative, and/or corporation would like to enter into formal government-to-government consultation (see Volume II, Appendix C). If they wished to do so, it was requested that the Wing Commander be contacted so that a meeting could be arranged. In mid-October 2015, phone calls to tribal representatives indicated that no consultation was requested from any of the tribal representatives.



### 1.3.6 Lead and Cooperating Agencies

The Air Force is the lead agency for the PACAF F-35A beddown EIS, with Headquarters PACAF serving as the Proponent for the action. As defined in 40 CFR § 1508.6, a potential cooperating agency is any other federal agency which has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental issue. In addition, in certain circumstances, non-Federal entities may seek and be granted cooperating agency status. For this Proposed Action, no cooperating agencies were identified.

### 1.4 Scope of Resource Analysis

Table 1.4-1 identifies the environmental resources and areas of likely effects that have been identified and are addressed in the EIS. Effects were analyzed for operations at the base (and adjacent regional area) and within the northern JPARC airspace.

**Table 1.4-1. Environmental Resources Evaluated**

<i>EIS Section/Resource Category</i>	<i>Subcategories</i>
3.2/4.2 Airfield and Airspace Operations and Management	Aircraft/Airspace descriptions, operations, restrictions, and mitigations
3.3/4.3 Acoustic Environment	Noise contour bands, points of interest exposure, maximum sound exposure, speech interference, sleep disturbance, and classroom interruptions
3.4/4.4 Air Quality	Criteria pollutants, conformity rule, greenhouse gas emissions, and hazardous air pollutants
3.5/4.5 Safety	Airfield hazards, airspace hazards, and public safety
3.6/4.6 Socioeconomics	Population, demographics and economics; schools, housing, transportation, and utilities; and health, fire, and crime response
3.7/4.7 Land Management	Land ownership and status and land management plans for federal, state, and local special use areas
3.8/4.8 Cultural Resources	Traditional/Alaska Native, prehistoric and historic archeological resources, historic architectural, subsistence, and Section 106
3.9/4.9 Environmental Justice and Protection of Children	Low income, minority, children, and elderly populations
3.10/4.10 Natural Resources	Wildlife, vegetation, wetlands, and special status species
3.11/4.11 Earth Resources	Topography, geology, soils, and seismology
3.12/4.12 Water Resources	Surface and groundwater quantity and quality, stormwater, and floodplains
3.13/4.13 Hazardous Materials and Wastes, Toxic Substances, and Contaminated Sites	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act; Resource Conservation and Recovery Act; Environmental and Installation Restoration Program; Toxic Substances Control Act, and Compliance Resource Program
3.14/4.14 Recreational and Visual Resources	Activities undertaken away from home and visual resources such as landforms, vegetation, and water surfaces

### 1.5 Clarifications and Changes to the EIS

Public and agency comments on the Draft EIS revealed the need to clarify or enhance certain information on a few topics in the Final EIS. These clarifications and enhancements improved the accuracy and thoroughness of the analysis presented in the Draft EIS, but did not alter any conclusions regarding the nature or magnitude of impacts on any resources. In addition, changes to military construction projects as well as minor editorial and typographical corrections were made. Changes and clarifications presented in the Final EIS include the following:

- Throughout the EIS, clarified airspace and acoustical discussions, and corrected typos, spelling, as well as grammar where applicable.
- Information on the public comment period, hearing meetings, and comments received were added in Section 1.3.3 and Appendix G created and included Volume II.
- Updates to agency and government-to-government coordination and consultation were made to Section 1.3.5 and Appendix C.
- Further clarification of the alternative selection process was added to Section 2.1. Changes in the buildings being modified, renovated, and demolished and the reopening of the South Gate vice modifying the North gate were added to Section 2.2.2.2. All are within the same area identified in the Draft EIS.
- Clarification was added in Section 3.13.2.1 on the Environmental Restoration Program at Eielson AFB.
- Based on information produced in September 2015 (after the publication of the Draft EIS), the discussion on availability of housing was revised in Section 4.6.2.2.
- Results of consultation with the Alaska SHPO were added in Section 4.8.2.1.
- Further identification of the types of wetlands impacted and the extent of impacts to floodplains were added to Section 4.10.2.1 and 4.12.2.1, respectively.
- Chapter 5, Cumulative Effects, was updated to reflect two projects that were identified during the comment period, which could interact with the Proposed Action Alternative.