

Fact Sheet

October 2002



Analyzing Environmental Impacts of a Federal Project

Environmental Review Requirements

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 requires federal agencies to address environmental concerns in the decision making process. The act requires that federal agencies analyze the potential environmental impacts of their proposed actions and consider a reasonable range of alternatives prior to making a final decision.

NEPA is sometimes referred to as the “umbrella” environmental law because it requires consideration of all aspects of the environment. Some areas of the environment have specific laws associated with them, such as the Endangered Species Act and the National Historic Preservation

Act. NEPA requires that all such laws be considered together in an integrated document.

In order to reach an informed decision, NEPA requires a prescribed process, including public involvement, scientific analysis, and the identification of potential mitigation measures. NEPA provides a vehicle for interdisciplinary planning.

Agency Roles

The Air Force is the action proponent for this project and primarily responsible for preparation of the Environmental Assessment. The Federal Aviation Administration may incorporate this radar into their existing radar system and would be responsible for and maintain it should the project be completed.

Public Participation

NEPA is not, however, just a mandate for federal agencies. To be truly effective, NEPA requires the diligence of both the federal agencies and the general public.

NEPA requires federal agencies to involve the public in the decision making process before a decision is made. Early public involvement and public

Resources/Issues Analyzed in an Environmental Assessment

Endangered Species
Fish, Wildlife, and Plants
Wetlands
Floodplains and Floodways
Air Quality
Light Emissions and Visual Impacts
Land Use
Water Quality
Noise
Historical, Archaeological, and Cultural Resources
Public Parks, Recreation Areas, and Refuges
Construction Impacts
Geologic / Soils
Cumulative Impacts

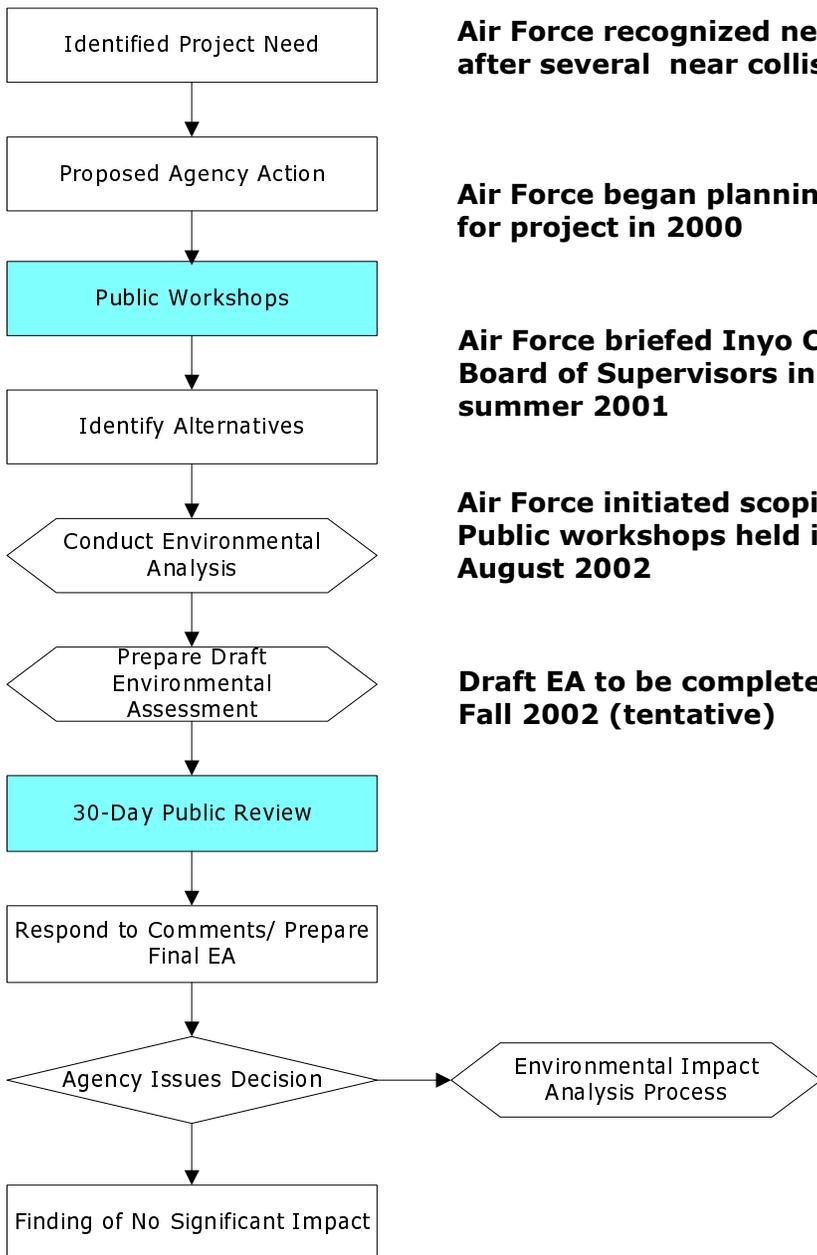
Contents of an Environmental Assessment

Purpose and Need
Alternatives
Existing Conditions
Impact Analysis
Mitigations

review allows all potentially affected or interested parties to have a fair opportunity to be involved.

NEPA is also referred to as the “environmental full disclosure” law, one of whose primary purposes is to inform the Congress and general public

Environmental Assessment Process



Air Force recognized need after several near collisions

Air Force began planning for project in 2000

Air Force briefed Inyo County Board of Supervisors in summer 2001

Air Force initiated scoping - Public workshops held in August 2002

Draft EA to be completed in Fall 2002 (tentative)

of agency actions. The public plays a key role in insuring that decisionmakers are adequately informed before they make decisions that may affect the environment. Public involvement strengthens the process by shaping the issues addressed and ensuring that all important issues are included.

 Formal Opportunities in Process for Public Input and Review

Public comments and concerns may be presented in writing to:

**Air Force Flight Test Center
 Environmental Management
 Attn: Gary Hatch Environmental Public Affairs
 5 E. Popson Ave.
 Edwards AFB, CA 93524
 e-mail – gary.hatch@edwards.af.mil
 fax (661) 277-6145.**