

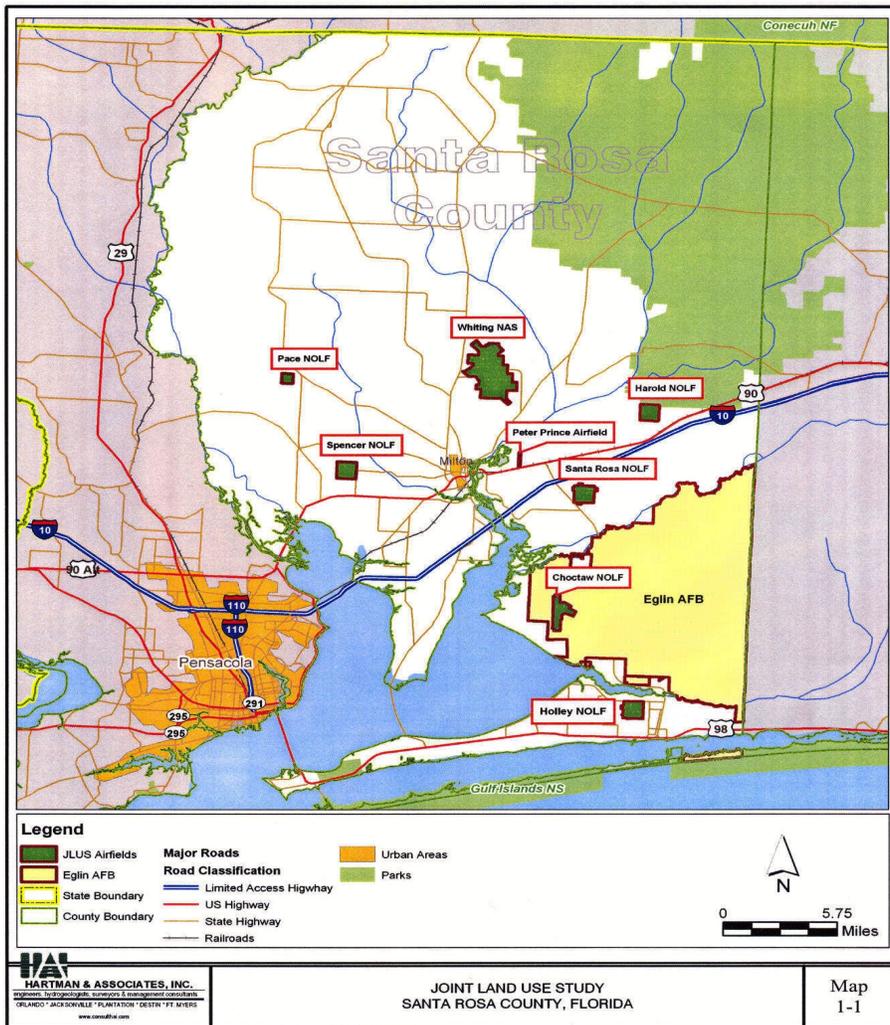
Joint Land Use Study (JLUS): Case Study

Naval Air Station Whiting Field, Santa Rosa County, Florida

Background: Naval Air Station (NAS) Whiting Field is located in the western part of the Florida panhandle near the Gulf of Mexico. Since 1943, NAS Whiting Field has been the Navy's aviation training facility for instructing student aviators in primary and intermediate fixed-wing training and primary and advanced helicopter training.

September 2003

CHAPTER 1: JLUS INTRODUCTION



Santa Rosa County Joint Land Use Study
 Santa Rosa County and NAS Whiting Field

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NAS Whiting Field was nominated for a Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Installations and Facilities due to rapid population growth and urban development near NAS Whiting Field and its Navy Outlying Landing Fields (NOLF), which was starting to impact the Navy's flight-training mission. The JLUS comprises eight separate and distinct studies NAS Whiting Field (North and South Fields combined); Peter Prince Field (County Airport); and NOLFs Choctaw, Harold, Holley, Pace, Santa Rosa, and Spencer. This case study focuses on the primary study area surrounding NAS Whiting Field.

NAS Whiting Field has two separate airfields, each with two 6,000-foot runways, separate control towers, and day and night operations. The north airfield is primarily for fixed-wing aircraft; the south field accommodates helicopter operations and is used for instrument approaches and weekend operations. Aircraft based at NAS Whiting Field includes the TH-57 Sea Ranger, T-34C Mentor (single-engine turboprop), which is being replaced by the T-6A Texan II.

County Demographics/Economic Impact: Santa Rosa County's population grew 44.3 percent between 1990 and 2000, making it the tenth fastest growing county in Florida. In recent years development pressures have increased as future residents recognize the county's outstanding natural resources, pleasant environment, and protection from coastal flooding and hurricane damage.

Mission Change: The aviation training mission and Air Installations Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) documents have remained mostly unchanged except for the change from the T-34C to the T-6A aircraft, which has ejection seats (both are single-engine turboprop airplanes), a slight increase in flight operations, and introduction of the Navy's unmanned aerial vehicle training program at NOLF Choctaw.

The County/Community Response: In June 2002, the Santa Rosa County Policy Committee and Technical Advisory Group were formed to develop the scope for the JLUS and initiate the study in partnership with the Navy and the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA). The JLUS Policy Committee consisted of an elected official (county commissioner), the base commanding officer, county economic development director (TEAM Santa Rosa), county property appraiser, and county grants coordinator. Support staff (working group) consisted of the county planning director, county engineer, county geographic information system (GIS) analyst, and NAS Whiting Field aviation/community planner. In addition, three public workshops were held to give residents an opportunity to participate in the process. By early September 2003 the study was completed, recommendations made, and implementation initiated.

Recommended JLUS Implementation Actions: Based on consensus among committee members and input from the public, the JLUS recommended the following actions at NAS Whiting Field:

1. Density reduction and airfield compatibility;
2. The 50 percent line;

3. Clustering of residential homes away from airfield and study area;
4. Land acquisition and economic development; and
5. Land acquisition for conservation purposes.

Density Reduction and Airfield Compatibility: Approximately 93 percent of the nonmilitary lands near NAS Whiting Field is used for agriculture or sits as vacant property, which makes it prime for development. Development densities allowed for large-lot residential subdivisions with a density of one unit per acre, which is considered too intensive for the volume of flight operations at NAS Whiting Field. The JLUS recommendation is to reduce density within the agricultural zoning classification to one unit per 5 acres. However, one unit per acre would be acceptable if residential homes are clustered away from the perimeter of the Accident Potential Zones (APZs).

Implementation Status: The County did not implement the recommendation to reduce the permitted development densities. Florida's Bert J. Harris Act, which requires that property owners be compensated for any taking of property rights, made this recommendation unfeasible. The county chose instead to implement clustering requirements and pursue land-purchase options to provide a protective buffer adjacent to the airfield.

The 50 Percent Line: This recommendation splits a large parcel (at least 35 acres) in half, providing a buffer area (agricultural) closest to the APZs, and clusters residential development in the half furthest from the airfield at a density of one unit per acre. Parcels with less than 35 acres should be acquired by the county or NAS Whiting Field.

Implementation Status: On April 14, 2005, the county amended its Land Development Code to establish a half-mile Military Airport Zone (MAZ) and require any residential subdivision development on parcels of 20 acres or greater within the MAZ to cluster dwellings in the half of the parcel furthest from the airfield. The remaining undeveloped area must be placed in a conservation or agriculture easement and may be used for agriculture, silviculture, recreation, or infrastructure necessary to support the development.

Cluster Residential Homes Away from Airfield and Study Area: Several large tracts straddle the Whiting Field study area. The county should establish an overlay zone or comprehensive plan that requires fringe parcels to cluster development outside the study area but within the same parcel.

Implementation Status: The Land Development Code amendment adopted on April 14, 2005, also requires that development of parcels that straddle the MAZ line cluster be limited to that portion of the parcel situated outside the MAZ boundary, whenever possible.

Land Acquisition and Economic Development: Demand by aviation-related industries is emerging in northwest Florida for available industrial or commerce sites accessible to airfields. The JLUS recommendation, based on the HAI Halford study (April 2003), is for

Santa Rosa County to acquire 237 acres abutting the southeast corner of NAS Whiting Field and evaluate use of this site for an industrial or commerce park. In addition, the county should evaluate the economic development potential and acquisition feasibility of other parcels adjacent to Whiting Field.

Implementation Status: As of November 2008 Santa Rosa County has received \$2.6 million from the state's Defense Infrastructure Grant Program to purchase land around NAS Whiting Field. In December 2003 the county purchased 237 acres adjacent to the eastern boundary of Whiting Field. The parcel abuts a 32-acre parcel adjacent to the east gate of Whiting Field that was purchased by the county in December 2001. Planning is underway for development of the site as an aviation industrial park.

In January 2004 the county purchased a 113-acre parcel encompassing an Accident Potential Zone 2 on the north side of Whiting Field. The site is currently being considered for use as an agribusiness incubator. An adjacent 4.5-acre parcel and single-family home underlying an Accident Potential Zone 1 was purchased by the county in January 2006.

Approximately 250 acres of active agriculture land adjacent to the northwest corner of Whiting Field is targeted for purchase of agricultural easements using a \$477,500 U.S. Department of Agriculture/Natural Resources Conservation Service Farmland Preservation Grant awarded to the county. An additional 271 acres of active agriculture land is targeted for agriculture easements through a U.S. Navy Encroachment Partnering project.

Land Acquisition for Conservation Purposes: Clear Creek runs along the eastern and southern borders of Whiting Field, Coldwater Creek is less than 2 miles from the base, and the base is near the Blackwater River State Forest. The county should pursue grant funds from the Florida Forever land acquisition program to purchase vacant land abutting NAS Whiting Field to create a wildlife corridor, preserve pristine lands, and provide recreation opportunities.

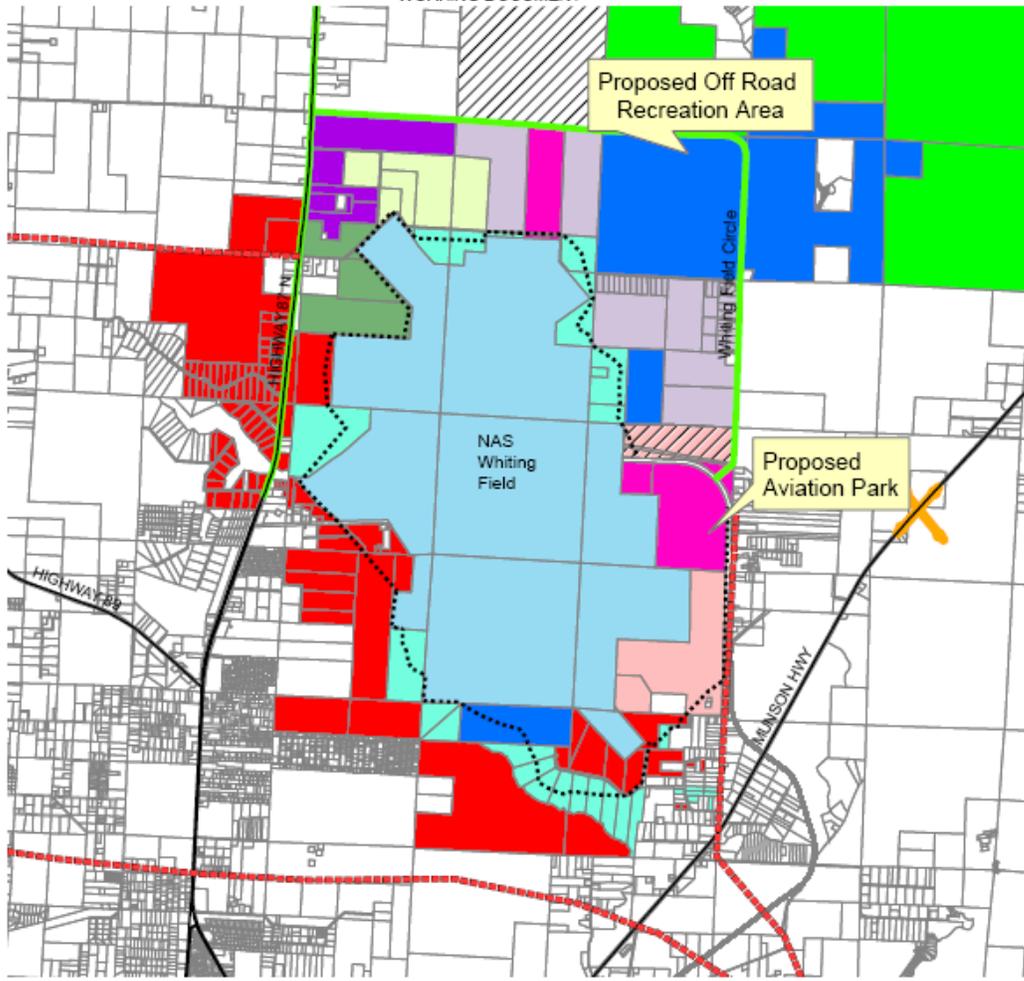
Implementation Status: A joint effort between the county, the Navy, and the Nature Conservancy culminated in 2006 with the State of Florida approving the purchase of 1,100 acres by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Greenways and Trails. This project wraps around Whiting Field and will allow for the expansion of the Blackwater Heritage Trail.

Also in 2006, the State of Florida approved 100 percent funding for a Florida Forever grant project for purchase of 1,900 acres northwest of Whiting Field. An additional 2,800 acres to the west and south of the airfield were previously approved for 50 percent funding through Florida Forever.

The JLUS report and implementing documents can be found on the Santa Rosa Website under Regulations for Airport Environs:
<http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/zoning/index.html>

Land Acquisition & Other Planning Efforts Around NAS Whiting Field

WORKING DOCUMENT



Legend

Better Santa Rosa Plan

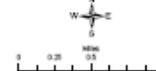
Goal

- 4 Lane
- Repair Bridge
- Multiple Use Trail
- Possible Bypass Road
- Main Roads

Land Acquisition Projects

- Targeted for Nature Conservancy Acquisition
- Acquired - CF Florida Conservation Forestry
- Acquired - Nature Conservancy
- Clear Creek I Approved "B" List
- Clear Creek II Approved "A" List
- Greenways & Trails Approved 100% Funding
- NAS Whiting Field Encroachment Project
- NAS Whiting Field Encroachment Project II (In Progress)
- Santa Rosa County Desired Purchase Area
- Santa Rosa County Desired Purchase and NAS Whiting Field Encroachment Project III
- Santa Rosa County Ownership
- Targeted for AG Easements Farmland Grant Submittal
- NAS Whiting Field

Map Document: C:\map\1-4\dev\aviranty\proj\0\Grants for Land Acquisition Plans Around NAS WF Small Map Feb 15.mxd
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Map Prepared by:
Planning, Zoning
and
Development Division
January 11, 2006
Last Update: Feb 15, 2007

Recommended JLUS Implementation Actions for NOLFs Choctaw, Harold, Holly, Pace, Santa Rosa, and Spencer Field:

In general, the NOLFs are also located in rural agricultural areas. The findings and recommendations for these airfields were primarily density reduction, clustering away from the airfield APZs, and land acquisition; some recommendations also included planned unit development techniques to direct development away from the airfield, and purchase of development rights.

**SANTA ROSA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
JOINT LAND USE STUDY (JLUS)
SEPTEMBER 2003
SUMMARY MATRIX OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

AIRFIELD	POPULATION		RECOMMENDATIONS						
	CURRENT	POTENTIAL	CLUSTER DEV.	DENSITY REDUCTION/ CONTROLS	LAND ACQ.	EGLIN AFB ACCESS MGMT. AGRMT	DIVESTI-TURE	REQUIRE RESIDENTIAL SOUND INSULATION	AGRICULTURE EASEMENTS
NAS WHITING FIELD	427	8,915	•	•	•				•
NOLF CHOCTAW	167	9,568		•	•	•			
NOLF HAROLD	42	1,087	•		•				•
NOLF HOLLEY	3,075	7,590					•		
NOLF PACE	116	1,920	•						•
NOLF SANTA ROSA	547	2,960	•		•				
NOLF SPENCER	2,386	5,065	•	•			•		
PETER PRINCE FIELD	781	3,887		•				•	

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Implementation Status: Military Airport Zones, Military Influence Areas, and Notification Zones have been established around each of the airfields, and land-use restrictions, clustering, and notification requirements have been adopted into the county’s Land Development Code. Most significantly, the county amended its Comprehensive Plan to prohibit any rezoning that would result in increased residential densities within a Military Airport Zone.

The county is actively pursuing alternative locations for NOLF Spencer and NOLF Holley with the goal of working with the Navy to relocate these airfields, which have already experienced significant encroachment.

To date, land acquisition efforts have focused on Whiting Field. One Florida Forever project seeks to acquire acreage southwest of NOLF Choctaw, while another project seeks to acquire most of the remaining acreage around NOLF Harold.