

**DRAFT  
Environmental Assessment  
and  
Finding of No Significant Impact**

**For  
Hudson Housing Area and Adjacent Property Sale  
U.S. Army Soldier Systems Center  
Hudson & Stow, Massachusetts**

December 2020

*Prepared for*

**Natick Soldier Systems Center  
15 General Greene Avenue Natick, Massachusetts 01760-  
2642**

*Prepared by*

**New England District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 696 Virginia Road  
Concord, Massachusetts 01742-2751**

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## **Draft FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

### **U.S. Army Soldier Systems Center Hudson Housing Area and Adjacent Property Sale**

#### **Hudson and Stow, Massachusetts**

The Hudson Housing Area and Adjacent Property Sale Conveyance Environmental Assessment (EA) is a decision-support document. The recommended or proposed actions must be assessed for their environmental effects in accordance the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. An EA is completed to evaluate the potential impacts of projects being proposed. The EA also provides responsible and timely protection, conservation, and enhancement of project environmental and cultural resources and ensures environmental mandates and considerations are incorporated in the planning process. The draft EA dated November 2020 addresses the potential environmental effects of the sale of a parcel of land located on the Hudson Housing Area.

#### **Proposed Action and Alternatives**

The EA, incorporated herein by reference, evaluated the alternatives associated with the sale and conveyance of a parcel of land within the study area. In addition to the “no action” plan, the EA evaluates one alternative in detail.

**Proposed Action (Sale of the Hudson Housing Area and Adjacent Property):** The project involves the sale and conveyance of the northern portion of the Hudson Housing Area and Military Training Ground property, located in Middlesex County, Massachusetts. The parcel is approximately 46 acres in size. The majority of the property is located in the Town of Hudson, with a small area located in the Town of Stow. The property is located approximately 20 miles west of Boston and 13 miles northwest of the Natick Soldier Systems Center (NSSC) main installation, with NSSC serving as the current property manager. The property includes 12 residential duplex structures (24-units) and two single family homes along with supporting facilities, including three storage sheds, one indoor/outdoor recreation structure, basketball/tennis court, and two playgrounds. The Proposed Action only includes the sale and conveyance of the property to a new owner. No physical actions to the property will be taken and the parcel will be transferred “As Is” to the new owner.

**No Action Alternative:** The Hudson Housing Area and adjacent land would not be sold and Department of Defense will continue to own property. The NSSC would continue to manage the entire Hudson Housing Area and Military Training Ground property.

#### **Environmental Analysis**

The potential effects of the Proposed Action and the No-Action Alternative were evaluated, as appropriate. A summary assessment of the potential effects of the recommended plan is provided in the Table below:

**Table 1: Summary of Potential Effects of the Recommended Plan**

	Insignificant effects	Insignificant effects as a result of mitigation*	Resource unaffected by action
Air Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Biological Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Climate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Environmental Justice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Floodplains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Geology & Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hazardous Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Historic Properties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Socio-Economics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Threatened/Endangered Species/Critical Habitat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Water Resources/Wetlands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The Hudson Housing Area and Adjacent Property Sale EA is compliant with the NEPA, Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1500–1508) and 32 CFR Part 651. There are no other significant effects on environmental or cultural resources caused by the proposed action. Under the CEQ NEPA regulations, “NEPA significance” is a concept dependent upon context and intensity (40 C.F.R. § 1508.27.) When considering a site-specific action like the property sale, significance is measured by the impacts felt at a local scale, as opposed to a regional or nationwide context. The CEQ regulations identify a number of factors to measure the intensity of impact. These factors are discussed below, and none are implicated here to warrant a finding of NEPA significance. A review of these NEPA “intensity” factors reveals that the proposed action will not result in a significant impact, neither beneficial nor detrimental, to the human environment.

Impacts on public health or safety: The Proposed Action is expected to have no effect on public health and safety since as the project consists only the sale of the housing area and surrounding property. No physical changes to the property are involved.

Unique characteristics: The Proposed Action will not impact wild and scenic rivers, prime farmlands, cultural and historic resources or waters of the United States.

Controversy: The Proposed Action is not controversial.

Uncertain impacts: The impacts of the proposed project are not uncertain, they are readily understood based on past experiences the Army NSSC has had with similar projects.

Precedent for future actions: The Hudson Housing Area and Adjacent Property Sale EA was prepared pursuant to applicable laws and regulations and would not

establish a precedent for future actions.

Historic resources: The Proposed Action will have no effect on historic properties. Coordination with the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer (MA SHPO), the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) THPO was initiated. The MA SHPO concurred with the no effect determination on June 27, 2019. Neither the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Historic Preservation Officer nor the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) THPOs responded to the coordination request.

Endangered species: The Proposed Action will have no known negative impacts on any federal or state threatened or endangered species. The Northern Long-eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) (NLEB), a federally listed “Threatened” species, is found throughout Massachusetts. The sale of the Hudson Housing Area was determined likely to not adversely affect the NLEB based on the assumption of concurrence to a streamlined consultation form sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on November 24, 2020. Concurrence will be assumed after thirty days (December 24, 2020).

Potential violation of federal law: This Proposed Action will not violate federal law.

All applicable laws, executive orders, regulations, and local government plans were considered in evaluation of the alternatives. Based on this report, the reviews by other Federal, State and local agencies, Tribes, input of the public, and the review by my staff, I have determined that the project is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. This Federal action, therefore, is exempt from requirements to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

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Date

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ANDREW H. HENDERSON  
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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AT/FP	Antiterrorism/Force Protection
CAA	Clean Air Act
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
DOD	Department of Defense
EA	Environmental Assessment
ECP	Environmental Condition of Property
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency's
FIRM	Flood Risk Insurance Map
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
IPaC	Information for Planning and Consultation
MA	Massachusetts
MA SHPO	Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer
MESA	Massachusetts Endangered Species Act
MSL	Mean Sea Level
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHESP	Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program
NLEB	Northern Long Eared Bat
NOA	Notice of Availability
NR	National Register of Historic Places
NSSC	Natick Soldier Systems Center
ORT	Ozone Transport Regions
PBO	Programmatic Biological Opinion
SIP	State Implementation Plan
THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
UST	Underground Storage Tanks

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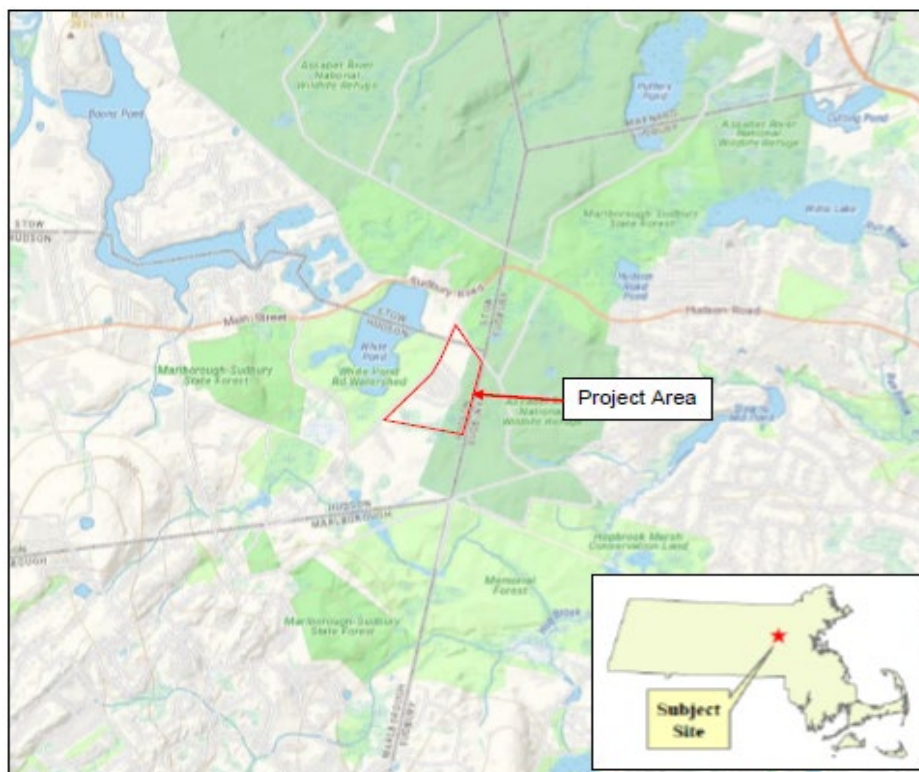
## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT U.S. Army Soldier Systems Center Hudson Housing Area and Adjacent Property Sale**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this Environmental Assessment (EA) is to present information on the environmental features in and adjacent to the project area of the U.S. Army Soldier Systems Center (NSSC) Hudson Housing Area in Hudson and Stow, Massachusetts (MA) and to determine the potential impacts of the project on those resources. This EA describes project compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and all appropriate Federal and State environmental regulations, laws and executive orders. Methods used to evaluate the environmental resources of the area include review of available information and documentation, and coordination with appropriate environmental agencies and knowledgeable persons. This report provides an assessment of environmental impacts and alternatives considered along with other data applicable to the conveyance of the Hudson Housing Area and adjacent property.

#### **1.1 Project Location**

The project site is located in Middlesex County, MA (Figure 1) on the NSSC Hudson Housing Areas and Military Training Ground. The majority of the property is located in Hudson, MA near the Sudbury and Marlborough town lines, with a small area located in



**Figure 1: The Project Area**

Stow, MA. It is situated approximately 20 miles west of Boston and 13 miles northwest of the NSSC main installation. The property is owned by the Department of Defense (DOD), with the NSSC serving as the current property manager.

## **1.2 Project Authority**

The sale of the property is authorized by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018, Title XXVIII, Subtitle E, Section 2844.

## **1.3 Purpose and Need**

The purpose of the project is to dispose of property no longer required by the DOD. Although active duty soldiers and their families once were housed at the Hudson Housing Area, the existing homes on site do not meet the Army Family Housing standards for size, configuration, and Anti-terrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP) requirements. Additionally, the active duty population prefers to use housing in close proximity to the NSSC. The NSSC has chosen to dispose of the property, as it is no longer needed by the facility.

## **1.4 Site History**

### **1.4.1 Sudbury Annex**

The land that makes up the project area was privately owned by local farmers and residents before it was purchased by the DOD. A parcel of land over 3,000-acres in size was acquired by the U.S. government in 1942 to store surplus ammunition during World War II. It was later named the Sudbury Annex. During the 1940's, the Annex was used for ordnance storage with railroad spurs constructed throughout the area to help transport material between bunkers and the existing railroad line.

In 1950, use of the area was expanded to include both storage and training. Later that decade, the area was also used for ordnance testing, research and development that may have included the testing of rockets, pyrotechnics and explosives. In 1958, the Annex was also used as a field resource in testing and experimentation by Natick Laboratories. Activities that took place on the site included the testing of clothing, air drop techniques, field shelters, field organization equipment, fuel delivery systems and food services systems.

The project area was initially developed in 1962 along Bruen Road and was called the Capehart Family Housing Complex. This development was constructed for military housing and contained thirty-five (35) living units (twenty-eight 2-bedroom units, five 3-bedroom units and two 4-bedroom units) for a total of 17 structures (16 duplex units and 1 triplex unit). From 1996 to 1997, this area was redeveloped. The Capehart Housing Complex was demolished and new housing was constructed in its place. At that time, the area was redeveloped and renamed the Hudson Housing Area.

The area was an active facility until it closed under the Defense Base Realignment and Closure Act of 1995. Annex cleanup was completed under a 1991 Federal Facilities

Agreement between the U.S. Army and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The cleanup was completed Jan. 29, 2002, when the site was taken off the National Priorities List (Superfund). The Annex continued to be used as a training site by Fort Devens, with several buildings used for research, development, testing and residential housing by Natick Laboratories.

In 2000, most of the area (2,230-acres) was transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The land was used to create the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge. Another 75-acre parcel was put under the jurisdiction of the Devens Reserve Forces Training Area. The remaining 86.5-acres, located in the southwestern corner of the former Sudbury Annex, continues to be part of the NSSC. This area is currently known as the Hudson Housing Area and Military Training Grounds,

#### *1.4.2 Project Area*

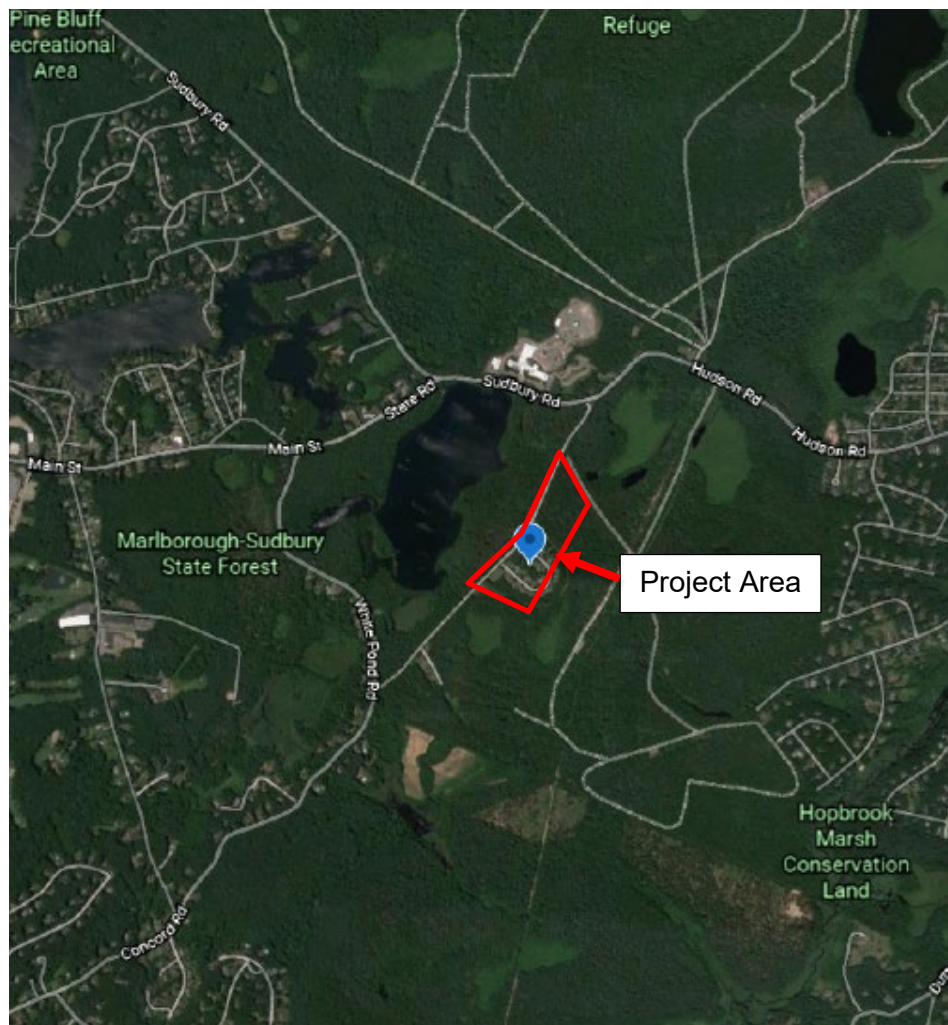
The project site is part of the Hudson Housing Area and Military Training Grounds. The parcel of land to be sold makes up the northern portion of the facility and is approximately 46 acres in size. The project area consists of the developed portion of the Hudson Housing Area and land immediately north and south of the housing area. There are currently 14 residential structures located on the property, including 12 duplexes and two single family houses. The area also includes three storage sheds, one indoor/outdoor recreation structure, a basketball/tennis court and two playgrounds (Figure 2). The land surrounding the Hudson Housing Area, which will also be included in the sale, is undeveloped, consisting primarily of forests and wetlands. The Hudson Housing Area is currently vacant and ready for conveyance.



**Figure 2:** The Structures Included in Hudson Housing Area

The project area is surrounded by the Assabet River Wildlife Refuge to the east and north, a wooded area and White's Pond to the west, and a semi-rural residential area to the north. A 40-acre portion of the Hudson Housing Area and Military Training Grounds lays to the south of the project area. This area will be retained by the NSSC and remain in the federal inventory of DOD owned property (Figure 3).





**Figure 3:** The Project Area Including the Hudson Housing Area and Surrounding Property

## 1.5 Decision to be Made

The decision to be made is the selection of an alternative for the future of the Hudson Housing Area and surrounding property. The decision options are:

- 1) To continue with current operations (the No-Action Alternative);
- 2) Selecting an alternative and preparing a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI); or
- 3) Preparing an Environmental Impact Statement if the alternatives would cause significant environmental impacts.

## 2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The NEPA and the CEQ NEPA implementation regulations mandate the consideration of reasonable alternatives for the proposed action when there are Draft Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

unresolved conflicts concerning available use of resources. “Reasonable alternatives” are those that also could be utilized to meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action.

## **2.1 Screening of Alternatives**

The following potential alternatives that might meet the purpose and need of the project were considered:

- 1) Proposed Action- Sale of the Hudson Housing Area and surrounding property (approximately 46 acres)
- 2) No Action Alternative

## **2.2 Detailed Description of the Alternatives**

Two alternatives, the sale of the Hudson Housing Area and the surrounding property (Proposed Action), and the No-Action were carried forward through the environmental analysis and the potential impacts of the alternatives were analyzed in detail.

### **2.2.1 No-Action Alternative**

The No-Action alternative serves as a baseline against which the proposed action can be evaluated and is required by CEQ regulations for implementing the NEPA. Under the no-action alternative, the Hudson Housing Area and surrounding land would remain property of the U.S. Army, with the NSSC continuing to manage the site.

### **2.2.2 Conveyance of the Hudson Housing Area (Proposed Action)**

The Proposed Action includes sale and conveyance of the Hudson Housing Area and adjacent property. The sale of the property allows the NSSC to excess the property that it no longer needs. The Proposed Action provides a mechanism for the NSSC to convey the property “As Is” to another entity. No physical actions to the property will be taken and the parcel will be transferred “As Is” to the new owner.

## **3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

This section describes the environmental conditions at the project site. The environment described in this chapter is the baseline for the consequences that are presented for each resource and each alternative. The geographic region of influence of the proposed action is in Middlesex County, MA. Most of the baseline information presented in this EA was taken from existing NSSC documentation, online research and coordination with Federal and State resource agencies.

### **3.1 Physical Environment**

The following physical description is based on previous reports and documentation with much of it taken from the 2017 *Draft Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan* Draft Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

– *Natick Soldier Systems Center, Natick, Massachusetts 2017-2021 (NSSC 2017).*

### 3.1.1 Topography, Hydrogeography, and Geology

The subject site has minimal topographic relief, with slopes ranging from a 0 to 3 percent rise with an elevation that ranges from a low of 187 feet above mean sea level (MSL), at the eastern border, to a high of 203 feet MSL near the northern end of the site. The subject site is relatively flat, with elevations mostly at 197 – 200 feet MSL. All elevations are relative to NAVD88 datum.

The site falls within the SUASCO (Sudbury, Assabet, Concord) drainage basin. This watershed is formed by the Assabet and Sudbury Rivers, which join to form the Concord River that drains into the Merrimack River.

According to the Bedrock Geological Map of Massachusetts (Goldsmith et al. 1983), the subject site is underlain by unconsolidated soils of glacial origin. This region was formed approximately 15,000 to 8,000 years ago and the deposits have not been dramatically altered by natural erosion. Some of the surficial deposits were disturbed during construction of the area. Stratigraphy of this area is typically topped by soil that is formed by the weathering of lower layers. Below the soil, glacial outwash generally consists of sand and gravel. Glacial till, which lies below the outwash, has been shown to consist of a mixture of clay, silt, sand, and gravel. Bedrock formations beneath the site, which are located within a narrow geological zone known as the Nashoba Terrane, are mapped as Marlboro Formation. This formation consists mainly of dark green to black amphibole schists, similar in composition to mica; and light and dark colored gneiss, which is the result of granite or sedimentary rock subjected to high-heat and high-pressure conditions. The eastern edge of the parcel may include bedrock consisting of Andover granite, commonly light pink in color with muscovite and garnet. The area is a topographic high, with ground elevations dropping at a 10 to 12 percent slope to the east and west of the housing area boundary and 4 to 8 percent to the south of the area.

#### 3.1.2.1. Soils

The Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey for the project area indicates the presence of Swansea muck, Freetown muck, Hinckley loamy sand, Carver and loamy coarse sand is throughout the site. Freetown muck and Swansea muck are hydric soils commonly found in depressions and composed of deep, poorly drained organic soils. The former is found mostly in the two wettest portions of the largest wetland on the property, and the latter exists in a slough way between the two wet portions (Figure 4).

Hudson Housing Area and Adjacent Property Sale  
U.S. Army Soldier Systems Center



Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
6A	Scarboro mucky fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	0.0	0.0%
51A	Swansea muck, 0 to 1 percent slopes	0.0	0.1%
52A	Freetown muck, 0 to 1 percent slopes	3.3	7.9%
253A	Hinckley loamy sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes	11.1	27.0%
259A	Carver loamy coarse sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes	26.7	65.0%
Totals for Area of Interest		41.1	100.0%

Source: <https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/WebSoilSurvey.aspx>

**Figure 4: Soils Map of the Project Area**

Hinckley and Carver soils, which are deep or very deep excessively drained soils, are also found on glacial outwash plains, kames, eskers, and terraces onsite. Glacial

outwash planes are broad, flat areas formed by deposits of glacial outwash; kames are irregularly shaped hills or mounds; eskers are long, winding ridges; and

### 3.1.3.1 Climate

In general, winters in Middlesex County are cold, and summers are warm. During the winter, the average temperature is 28.0° Fahrenheit (F) and the average daily minimum temperature is 18.5°F. During the summer, the average temperature is 69.1°F and the average daily maximum temperature is 80.3°F. The winters are moderately cold and wet. The last killing frost generally occurs in early May, and the earliest fall frost usually takes place in late September or early October. The summers are typically warm and moist with some periods of high humidity.

The total annual precipitation is about 46.9 inches. Of this, approximately 22.6 inches, or 48 percent, usually falls in April through September. The average seasonal snowfall is about 53.2 inches.

The prevailing wind is from the west-northwest, with the highest average wind speed of 13.9 miles per hour occurring in March. Winter storms moving northeastward along the coast frequently bring rain and thawing and then more snow and cold weather. During the summer, sea breezes frequently moderate the temperature, particularly near the coast (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2009).

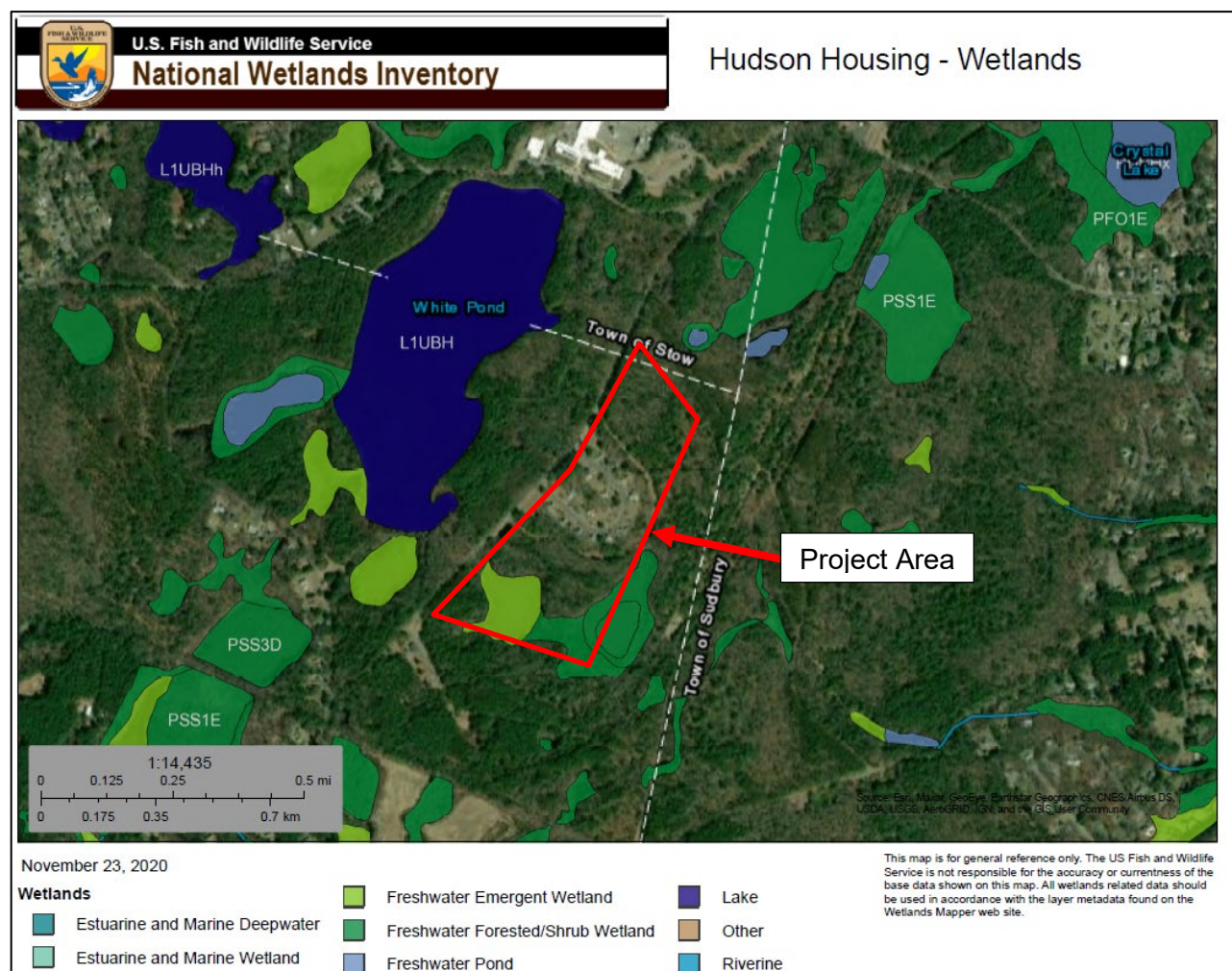
## **3.2 Water Resources**

No permanent surface waters exist within the project area. The nearest waterbody to the site, White Pond, is located a few hundred feet west of Bruen Road, which runs along the western edge of the Hudson Housing Area. This pond was used as a public water supply for the Town of Maynard residents and other local communities until 1996.

A wetland area is present in the southern reach of the parcel. Located south of the Hudson Housing Area property, the wetland is that largest vegetated wetland found on the 86.5-acre property that is still managed by the NSSC. The wetland is orientated east to west and extends into the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge. The area is approximately 8.2 acres in size and consists of two large, circular depressions that are connected by a broad, forested slough. The site contains standing water and emergent shrubs (Figure 5).

No vernal pools are located within the project area boundaries. A second wetland and two vernal pools have been mapped south of the project area, in the Military Training Area. Additionally, a potential vernal pool is located to the north of the project area, within the wildlife refuge.





**Figure 5:** Wetlands located within the Project Area

### 3.3 Biological Resources

#### 3.3.1 Vegetation

The developed portions of the property are characterized by field and roadside plants, such as grasses and other herbaceous species. The residential area contains lawns, landscape shrub species, and garden communities similar in species composition to other residential areas in the region. Oak forests surround the residential area.

The areas located to the north and south of the Hudson Housing Area are primarily undeveloped. The plant communities found in the project area include red and white pine forests, pitch pine-scrub oak vegetation, field and roadside vegetation, and forested wetlands. Red (*Pinus resinosa*) and white pine (*Pinus strobus*) forests were planted in the 1930s and are found throughout the site. Forested wetlands are found to the south of the housing area. Red maple (*Acer rubrum*) and high bush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) are the primary, woody species found in the wetlands, with shrub species, such as winterberry (*Ilex verticillate*) and swamp azalea (*Rhododendron viscosum*),

growing along the wetland edges.

### 3.3.2 Wildlife

Most species have been documented on the site and are typical of wildlife found throughout Massachusetts. White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), Eastern gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*), New England cottontail (*Sylvagus transitionalis*), eastern cottontail (*Sylvagus floridanus*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), striped skunks (*Mephitis mephitis*), and Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*) have been observed on site as well as small burrowing mammals such as Eastern chipmunk (*Tamias striatus*), field mice, voles, and other field rodent species. Multiple bird species have been noted on the site, including black capped chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*), American goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*), American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), American robin (*Turdus migratorius*), mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), and northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), among others.

#### 3.3.3.1 Endangered and Threatened Species

The USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) was used to screen for potential project effects on federally listed species in November 2020. The project area is located within the range of the federally threatened northern long eared bat (NLEB, *Myotis Septentrionalis*). The NLEB is a medium-sized bat about 3 to 3.7 inches in length, with a wingspan of 9 to 10 inches. The northern long-eared bat is found across much of the eastern and north central United States and all Canadian provinces from the Atlantic coast west to the southern Northwest Territories and eastern British Columbia. The species range includes 37 states.

The NLEB was listed as a federally threatened species by the USFWS (April 2, 2015). This listing took effect on May 4, 2015. Increased mortality of the bat caused by white-nose syndrome, an infectious wildlife disease that poses considerable threats to hibernating bat species, has been the primary contributor to a significant decline in the population of the NLEB since 2007 (USFWS 2015a). The NLEB was once widespread throughout New England, but due to white-nose syndrome, the population in New England has declined by at least 90 percent (USFWS 2015b.)

In addition to listing the northern long-eared bat as a threatened species, the USFWS issued an interim 4(d) rule, which prohibits incidental take (an action that is not intended to take a species but may still result in incidental harmful effects on the species) with some limited exceptions provided the activities protect known maternity roosts and hibernacula (USFWS 2015c).

Suitable summer habitat for the NLEB consists of a wide variety of forested/wooded habitats where the bats roost, forage, and travel and have also been observed roosting in human-made structures, such as buildings, barns and sheds. Bats roost singly or in colonies underneath bark, in cavities, or in crevices of both live and dead trees. Individual trees may be considered suitable habitat when they exhibit the characteristics of a potential roost tree and are located within 1,000 feet of other forested/wooded habitat. Females give birth between late May to late July and roost in

maternity colonies composed of 30 to 60 bats. In winter, the NLEB hibernates in caves and mines, called a hibernacula.

No other federally listed, or proposed, threatened or endangered species or critical habitat are known to occur in the vicinity of the project area (USFWS IPaC database November 24, 2020).

A review of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) website found that the developed section of the Hudson Housing Area is not a Priority Habitat of Rare Species and Estimated Habitat of Rare Wildlife. The northern and southern reaches of the parcel have been identified as MA NHESP Priority Habitat of a Rare Species for the Eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina*). Additionally, the property abuts a portion of the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge, which is also identified as a Priority Habitat of a Rare Species for the box turtle (NHESP November 9, 2020).

### **3.4 Socio-Economic Resources**

According to July 2019 data, there were 19,864 people residing in the town of Hudson. There are 7,686 households in Hudson with an average family size of 2.58 individuals. The racial makeup of the town was 92.9% White, 1.3 % African American, 2.5 % Asian, and 6.1 % Hispanic or Latino. Of the town population, 49.1 % were male and 50.9 % were female; 5.9% were under 5 years, 18.9 % were 5 years to 19 years, and 17.8 % were over 65 years (U.S. Census Bureau 2019).

Hudson is a semi-rural, middle to upper middle-class town. In 2018 dollars, the median household income for the town of Hudson is \$87,806. The median household income in Middlesex County, MA is \$97,012, which is higher than the median income state-wide of \$77,378. Approximately 5.8% of the population of Hudson live in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau 2019).

### **3.5 Historic and Archaeological Resources**

The Hudson housing area was initially constructed in the 1950s as part of the historic Capehart Housing Program. The original structures that made up the Capehart Housing Area were demolished and replaced in 1996-1997. The structures currently located in the project area includes 14 residential structures, three storage sheds, one indoor/outdoor recreation structure, basketball/tennis court, and two playgrounds. The residential units were occupied until the end of 2018.

An archaeological survey was completed at the Hudson Housing Area and surrounding property in 2013 (The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc., 2013). Remnants of military use of the site and two small pre-contact sites were identified outside of the housing area. NSSC determined that these sites were not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NR).

### **3.6 Hazardous Materials**

An Environmental Condition of Property (ECP) was completed in 2018 at the



Hudson Housing Area and Military Training Ground in order to determine the presence or likelihood of a release or threatened release of any hazardous substance based. The investigation determined that the undeveloped property located to the north and south of the Hudson Housing Area were never used for the storage of hazardous substances or petroleum products or their derivatives. Additionally, no releases or disposal of hazardous substances occurred in these areas. The ECP did detect that releases or disposal of petroleum products or their derivatives had occurred in the developed portion Hudson Housing Area. This area was originally fitted with 35, 275-gallon #2 heating oil underground storage tanks (UST). The removal of the USTs took place in 1989, with indication of minor soil impacts. However, the site did not require remediation. Replacement USTs were installed and later removed in 1996 without incident.

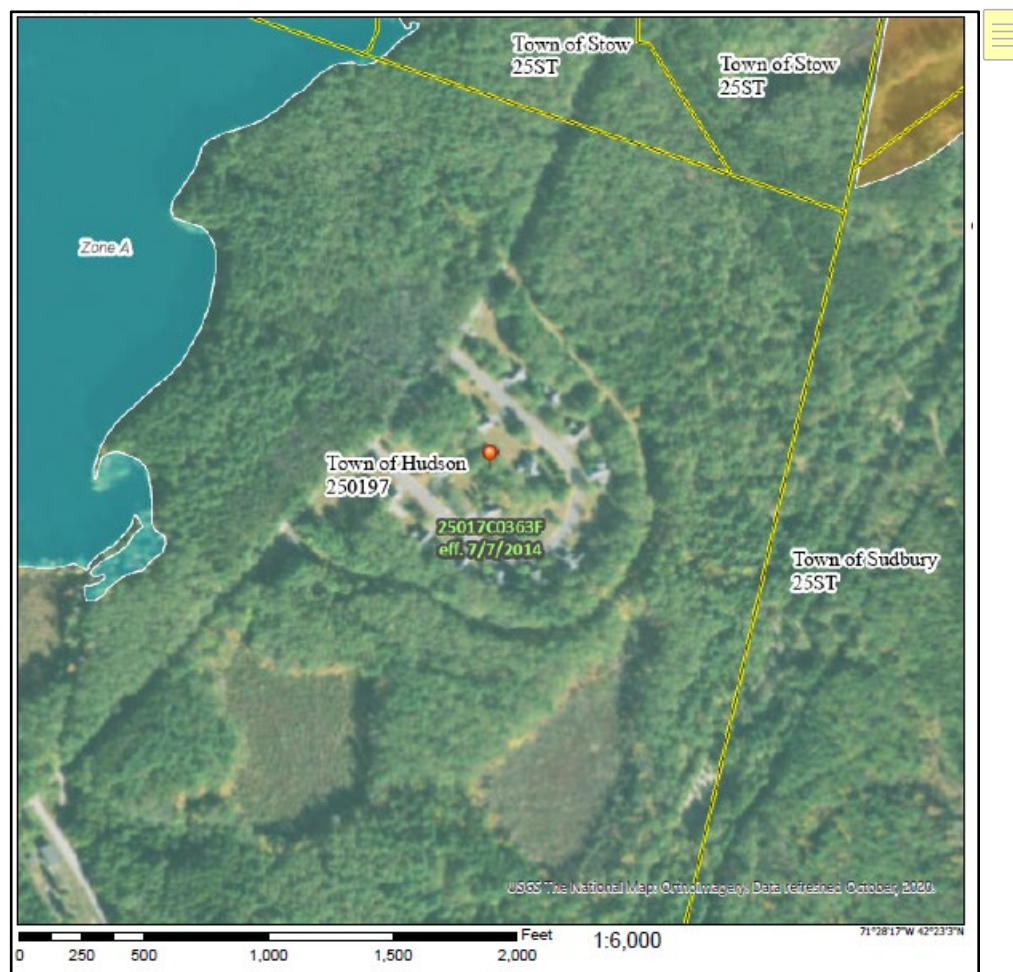
Radon detectors were installed in 2001 in the Hudson housing units. The 3-month average concentrations ranged from 0.6 through 7.6 pCi/l while the 1-year average range was 1.3 – 8.9. Radon removal systems were installed (date unknown) in each residential unit with roof vents visible.

This EA acknowledges that registered pesticides have been applied to the Property and may continue to be present. NSSC has indicated that they know of no use of any registered pesticide in a manner (1) inconsistent with its labeling or with the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA)(7 U.S.C. § 136, et seq.) and other applicable laws and regulations, or (2) not in accordance with its intended purpose. This EA recommends that prospective buyers be notified of the use of registered pesticides and informed of their responsibility and liability should their future actions, including demolition of structures or any disturbance or removal of soil, result in exposure, release, or threatened release of such pesticides.

### **3.7 Floodplains**

Executive Order (EO) 11988 requires that Federal agencies avoid, to the extent possible, adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of flood plains and to avoid support of floodplain development wherever there is a practicable alternative. In accomplishing this objective, “each agency shall provide leadership and shall take action to reduce the risk of flood loss, to minimize the impact of floods on human safety, health, and welfare, and to restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by flood plains in carrying out its responsibilities.”

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) flood map service center (Flood Risk Insurance Map (FIRM) panel number 25017C0363F), the project area is not located within or near the 100-year floodplain (Figure 6).



Source: <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search?AddressQuery=Hudson%20MA#searchresultsanchor>

**Figure 6:** FEMA FIRM Map of the project area.

### 3.8 Air Quality

In accordance with the Clean Air Act (CAA) of 1977, as amended, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) developed National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) to establish the maximum allowable atmospheric concentrations of pollutants that may occur while ensuring protection of public health and welfare, and with a reasonable margin of safety. The USEPA measures community-wide air quality based on NAAQS measured concentrations of six criteria air pollutants; carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, respirable particulate matter, lead, nitrogen dioxide, and ozone. Utilizing this information, the USEPA designates attainment areas and non-attainment areas nationwide. Non-attainment areas are designated in areas where air pollution levels persistently exceed the national ambient air quality standards. The project area in Middlesex County, MA meets the attainment criteria for priority pollutants, according to the latest data available from the U.S. EPA (U.S. EPA 2020).

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is in the Ozone Transport Region (OTR), which extends northeast from Maryland and includes all six New England states. The interstate transport of air pollution from other states can contribute significantly to violations of the 2008 ozone NAAQS within the OTR. Under the CAA, states within the Draft Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

OTR are required to submit a State Implementation Plan (SIP) and install a certain level of controls for the pollutants that form ozone, even if they meet the ozone standards. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has approved SIPs and has submitted periodic revisions to the USEPA for approval in conformance with the CAA (MADEP 2020).

## **4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

This chapter describes the potential environmental consequences that are reasonably foreseeable as a result of implementation of all alternatives that are being considered and analyzed. Impacts described in this chapter are evaluated in terms of type (positive/beneficial or adverse), context (setting or location), intensity (none, negligible, minor, moderate, severe), and duration (short-term/temporary or long-term/permanent). The type, context, and intensity of an impact on a resource are explained under each resource area. Unless otherwise noted, short-term impacts are those that would result from the activities associated with a project's implementation phase, and that would end upon the completion of those phases. Long-term impacts are generally those resulting from permanent changes and the operation of a proposed project.

The proposed action consists the sale of a parcel of land that is approximately 46-acres in size and the conveyance of the property to another owner. The Proposed Action does not include other physical actions related to the land or structures located on the property. The property will be conveyed "As-Is" to the new owners.

### **4.1. Physical Environment**

Because the Proposed Action only includes the sale and conveyance of the Hudson Housing Area and surrounding lands, it will result in no impacts to the physical environment. The No Action Alternative will also have no impact on the physical environment of the project area.

### **4.2 Water Resources**

There are no surface water bodies or wetlands present in the developed Hudson Housing Area. The project area does include a wetland south of the Hudson Housing Area. Neither the No Action Alternative nor the proposed land sale would result in any impacts to the water resources located project area.

EO 11990 "Protection of Wetlands" applies to the Proposed Action. Section 4 of the EO requires that "when Federally-owned wetlands or portions of wetlands are proposed for lease, easement, right-of-way or disposal to non-Federal public or private parties, the Federal agency shall (a) reference in the conveyance those uses that are restricted under identified Federal, State or local wetlands regulations; and (b) attach other appropriate restrictions to the uses of properties by the grantee or purchaser and any successor, except where prohibited by law; or (c) withhold such properties from disposal." Appropriate language must be included in the conveyance of the project area to comply with the EO.

### **4.3 Biological Resources**

The USFWS IPaC was used to screen for potential project effects on federally-listed species in November 2020. An effects determination was sent to the USFWS for the proposed action using the northern long-eared bat key within the IPaC system. This IPaC key assists users in determining whether a Federal action is consistent with the activities analyzed in the USFWS's January 5, 2016, Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO). The PBO addresses activities excepted from "take" prohibitions applicable to the northern long-eared bat under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) (87 Stat.884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

Based upon the Corps IPaC submission, the project is consistent with activities analyzed in the PBO. The Proposed Action may affect the NLEB; however, any take that may occur as a result of the Proposed Action is not prohibited under the ESA Section 4(d) rule adopted for this species at 50 CFR §17.40(o). A USFWS letter, dated November 24, 2020, verifies compliance with the ESA Section 7(a)(2) with respect to the NLEB and concludes the responsibilities for the Proposed Action under the act. The letter can be found in Appendix A of this report.

Due to the fact that the project would occur on Federally owned land, the project is exempt from formal consultation and a Massachusetts Endangered Species Act filing pursuant to 321 Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR) 10.18 was not completed. Instead, informal consultation with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife was pursued.

It is anticipated that no impacts to Federal or State threatened or endangered species within the project area would occur as a result of implementing the Proposed Action or the No Action Alternative.

#### **4.4. Socio-Economic Resources**

The sale of the Hudson Housing Area and surrounding land would have no effect on socioeconomic resources of the surrounding area. The housing area is currently vacant and does not support its original function. The sale of the area will benefit the NSSC by providing revenue and eliminate the need to maintain the facility and the structures located on the property. The No Action Alternative would also have no impact on the socioeconomic resources of the surrounding community.

##### **4.4.1 Environmental Justice**

Executive Order 12898 directs Federal agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of an agency's programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. The proposed project is not expected to pose impacts upon any minority or low-income neighborhoods adjacent to or in the vicinity of the project pursuant to Executive Order No. 12898.

##### **4.4.2 Protection of Children**

Executive Order 13045 requires Federal agencies to examine proposed actions to determine whether they will have disproportionately high human health or safety risks on children. The sale of the property at the Hudson Housing Area is not expected to cause any disproportionate environmental health or safety risks to children.

#### **4.5 Historic and Archaeological Resources**

The proposed sale of the Hudson Housing Area will have no effect on historic properties. The historic Capehart style buildings were demolished in 1996-1997 and new housing units were constructed. The area does not possess any archaeological sensitivity. The Hudson Housing Area was subject to an intensive archaeological survey in 2013. No NR eligible archaeological sites were identified. The proposed conveyance of the project area will have no effect on historic properties. Coordination with the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer (MA SHPO), the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) THPO has been completed. The MA SHPO concurred with the no effect determination in a letter dated June 27, 2019. The THPOs did not response to the invitation to coordination on this project. Correspondence with the MA SHPO is included in Appendix A.

#### **4.6 Hazardous Materials**

Evidence of releases or disposal of petroleum products or their derivatives has been found in developed portion of the Hudson Housing Area. These findings are related to the USTs that were installed in the housing area. The property will be conveyed to the new owner "As Is".

The No Action Alternative and the sale of the Hudson Housing Area and surrounding area would not affect the presence of any hazardous materials.

#### **4.7 Floodplain Management**

According to the FEMA FIRM maps, the project area is not located in a floodplain. Both the No Action Alternative and Proposed Action would not result in adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of flood plains and would not support further development of the floodplain.

#### **4.8 Air Quality**

Middlesex County has met the attainment standards for all six criteria; just recently meeting attainment standards for ozone. On March 12, 2008, a new 8-hour ozone standard became effective and the previous 8-hour ozone standard (1997) was revoked on February 13, 2017, therefore, a Federal Conformity Review is not required for this project.

The No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action would not result in any long- or short-term impacts to air quality.

## **5.0 MITIGATION**

The sale of the Hudson Housing Area and adjacent property will have no significant long-term impacts on the surrounding environment. There is no mitigation required for the Proposed Action

## **6.0 COMPLIANCE**

### **6.1 Intergovernmental Coordination and Consultations**

Consultation with resource agencies was completed as part of the overall project review and approval. These agencies include:

#### **Federal**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

#### **State**

Massachusetts Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Law Enforcement Division of Fish and Wildlife  
Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife/Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program  
Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Office  
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

#### **Local**

Town of Hudson – Town Administrator and Selectmen Office Hudson Conservation Commission

#### **Tribes**

Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

In order to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and implementing regulations 36 CFR 800, a coordination letter was sent to the MA SHPO. The MA SHPO concurred with a no effect determination on June 27, 2018. Therefore, no further coordination is needed for the structures at the Hudson Housing Area under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The letter is included in Appendix A.

EO 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, directs Federal agencies to coordinate and consult with Native American tribal governments whose interests might be directly and substantially affected by activities on federally administered lands. To comply with legal mandates, the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, federally recognized tribes that are affiliated historically with the geographic region of the project area, was be invited to consult on all proposed project. The Tribes did not provide a response.

Coordination letters were sent to the appropriate resource agencies. In response,

the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife provided an email to the USACE on December 22, 2020. In that correspondence the agency stated that “This project is within a Priority Habitat of State-listed species, and therefore any Project or Activity on site requires review pursuant to the MA Endangered Species Act (MESA). The sale of the property, however, does not trigger any review pursuant to MESA.” The agency also stated that the future owners of the property may need to coordinate with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife in order to comply with MESA if there is further development of the property

The USFWS also provided a response to the coordination letters. In an email dated December 14, 2020, the USFWS mentioned indirect impact on the NLEB and the wetlands that are located on or near the property, which might include “at-risk” freshwater turtle species.

All correspondence is included in Appendix A of this document.

## **6.2 Public and Agency Review**

A Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft EA and FONSI will be published in local newspapers. The NAO will request comments during a 30-day public review period. A Public Notice will be posted on the NSSC website. A concurrent 30-day state and agency review of the draft EA and FONSI will also be completed. All comments received during the public and agency review period will be addressed and added to the EA as an appendix. All pertinent correspondence will be included in Appendix A of this EA.

## **7.0 COMPLIANCE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL FEDERAL STATUTES AND EXECUTIVE ORDERS**

### **Federal Statutes**

1. Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, 16 USC 470aa et seq.

Compliance: Issuance of a permit from the Federal land manager to excavate or remove archaeological resources located on public or Indian lands signifies compliance.

2. Preservation of Historic and Archeological Data Act of 1974, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 469 et seq.

Compliance: The project has been coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Officer. There will be no impacts to archaeological resources.

3. American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, 42 U.S.C. 1996.

Compliance: Must ensure access by Native Americans to sacred sites, possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites.

4. Clean Air Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.

Compliance: Middlesex County is in attainment for all six criteria pollutants (i.e., carbon  
Draft Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, particulate matter, lead and ozone). As such, a Federal Conformity Review is not required for this project.

**5. Clean Water Act of 1977 (Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972) 33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.**

Compliance: Not Applicable; project does not involve the discharge of dredged or fill material into a water of the U.S.

**6. Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.**

Compliance: Not Applicable; The project is not located within the state designated coastal zone.

**7. Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.**

Compliance: Coordination with the USFWS signifies compliance with this Act.

**8. Estuarine Areas Act, 16 U.S.C. 1221 et seq.**

Compliance: Not applicable; The report is not being submitted to Congress.

**9. Federal Water Project Recreation Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 4601-12 et seq.**

Compliance: Not applicable; There are no water bodies within the project area.

**10. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.**

Compliance: Not applicable; The project does not involve the modification or control of a natural stream or water body.

**11. Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 4601-4 et seq.**

Compliance: Not applicable; There are no outdoor recreation plans associated with the sale of the Hudson Housing Area and adjacent property.

**12. Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1971, as amended, 33 U.S.C. 1401 et seq.**

Compliance: Not applicable; The project does not involve the transportation or disposal of dredged material in ocean waters pursuant to Sections 102 and 103 of the Act, respectively.

**13. National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.**

Compliance: Coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer(s) signifies compliance.



**14. Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 25 U.S.C. 3000-3013, 18 U.S.C. 1170**

Compliance: Regulations implementing NAGPRA will be followed if discovery of human remains and/or funerary items occur during the sale of the Hudson Housing Area.

**15. National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, 42 U.S.C 4321 et seq.**

Compliance: Preparation of an Environmental Assessment signifies partial compliance with NEPA. Full compliance shall be met at the time the Finding of No Significant Impact is issued.

**16. Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, as amended, 33 U.S.C. 401 et seq.**

Compliance: No requirements for projects or programs authorized by Congress.

**17. Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act as amended, 16 U.S.C 1001 et seq.**

Compliance: Not applicable; The project is not related to flooding, erosion control or sedimentation.

**18. Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C 1271 et seq.**

Compliance: Not applicable; No Wild and Scenic Rivers are located within the project area.

**19. Magnuson-Stevens Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.**

Compliance: Not applicable; This project is not within the coastal zone or designated essential fish habitat area and therefore not subject to this act.

**Executive Orders**

**1. Executive Order 11593, Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment, 13 May 1971**

Compliance: Coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer and tribes signifies compliance.

**2. Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, 24 May 1977 amended by Executive Order 12148, 20 July 1979.**

Compliance: The project area is not located in a floodplain. The Proposed Action will not result in negative impacts to the floodplain and will not support development in the floodplain.

**3. Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, 24 May 1977.**

Compliance: Section 4 of the EO stipulates that if wetlands included in conveyance of property proposed for lease, easement, right-of-way, or disposal to non-Federal public or private parties, then any appropriate wetlands references or restrictions must be included in the conveyance.

4. Executive Order 12114, Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions, 4 January 1979.

Compliance: Not applicable; The project is located within the United States.

5. Executive Order 12898, Environmental Justice, 11 February 1994.

Compliance: The project would not have a significant impact on minority or low-income population in the United States.

6. Executive Order 13007, Accommodation of Sacred Sites, 24 May 1996

Compliance: No Applicable; There are no Indian sacred sites located within the project area.

7. Executive Order 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks. 21 April, 1997.

Compliance: The project would not create a disproportionate environmental health or safety risk for children.

8. Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, 6 November 2000.

Compliance: Consultation with Indian Tribal Governments, where applicable, and consistent with executive memoranda, DoD Indian policy, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Tribal Policy Principles signifies compliance.

### **Executive Memorandum**

1. Analysis of Impacts on Prime or Unique Agricultural Lands in Implementing NEPA, 11 August 1980.

Compliance: Not applicable; There are no Prime Farmland soils in the project area.

2. White House Memorandum, Government-to-Government Relations with Indian Tribes, 29 April 1994.

Compliance: Consultation with Federally Recognized Indian Tribes, where appropriate, signifies compliance.

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## **APPENDIX A – PERTINENT CORRESPONDENCE**

**APPENDIX B - NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT FINDING OF NO  
SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**PUBLIC NOTICE OF  
AVAILABILITY DRAFT  
FINDING OF  
NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE U.S.  
ARMY NATICK SOLDIER SYSTEMS CENTER SALE OF HUDSON HOUSING AREA,  
HUDSON, MASSACHUSETTS**

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR 1500), and 32 CFR 651 Environmental Analysis of Army Actions, the U.S. Army conducted an Environmental Assessment (EA) of the potential environmental and socioeconomic effects associated with the sale of the Hudson Family Housing Area located in Hudson, Massachusetts.

The Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Environmental Assessment (EA) will undergo a 30-day public comment period, **from xx February 2021 to xx March 2021.** This is in accordance with requirements specified in 32 CFR Part 651.14 Environmental Analysis of Army Actions. During this period, the public may submit comments on the proposed action and the EA.

The Draft FONSI and EA are available on the U.S. Army Natick Soldier Systems Center website at: [home.army.mil/natick](http://home.army.mil/natick). The document link is in the middle of the page.

Printed copies of the Draft FONSI and EA can also be viewed at the Hudson Free Public Library.

Comments on the Draft FONSI and EA should be submitted during the 30-day public comment period via mail, fax, or electronic mail to:

Ms. Kathleen A. Atwood  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Environmental Branch  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, Massachusetts 01742-2751  
fax: (978) 318-8560  
e-mail: [Kathleen.a.atwood@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kathleen.a.atwood@usace.army.mil)

Legal Notices were placed in the Hudson Times.