

KEY FACTS AND POINTS REGARDING THE OLF

- Risk of Bird Strikes

- 100,000 migratory waterfowl winter on the eastern portion of the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge (“Pocosin NWR”), around Pungo Lake, less than 5 miles from the OLF site.
 - ◆ 25,000 tundra swans and 65,000 snow geese, in addition to other migratory birds routinely winter at the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge
 - ◆ 25% of the country's entire eastern population of tundra swans winter at the Pungo Lake area
- The Air Force Bird Avoidance Model rates the risk of bird strikes as “severe” for 50% of the year.
- Mitigation measures will not stop the birds from flying through the airspace to forage and migrate, which they do during the day and at night.
- Ret. Air Force Col. Jeffrey J. Short, who designed the military’s Bird Avoidance Model and led the Air Force’s Bird/Animal Strike Hazard (“BASH”) program, informed the Navy by letter that Site C [Washington and Beaufort counties] posed serious dangers to its pilots and the \$50+ million Super Hornets because of the potential collisions with birds and wrote “it would seem to be a folly for the Navy – and the U.S. taxpayers – to invest in the development of an OLF near [the Pocosin NWR].” He also stated that “In 25 years of dealing with military BASH issues, I cannot recall a worse place to situate an airfield for jet training [than Site C].”
- Ronald L. Merritt, a former Geo-Marine employee during the time of Geo-Marine’s study for the Navy and former Chief of the BASH Team for the Air Force, wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Navy expressing his serious concerns about the significant dangers posed by birds at Site C. He stated that “It’s not *if* a bird strike is going to occur. It’s *when* the bird strike will occur and how severe it will be when it occurs.”

- Governmental Opposition

- The United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service has objected to Site C for the OLF, based on impacts to migratory birds and other wildlife.
- Several North Carolina agencies, including the Division of Coastal Management, the Wildlife Resources Commission, and the N.C. Fish and Wildlife Service have raised concerns and objections to Site C.

- Elected officials, including Governor Easley and Senator Basnight have voiced opposition to Site C and asked the Navy to work with them to find a more suitable location for the OLF.
- Several counties have passed resolutions in opposition to Site C, and many more will be considering similar resolutions within the next month.
- Loss of Revenue and Farmland
 - Contrary to the DEIS, which proposes easements that would allow landowners to retain their property, the FEIS states the Navy will purchase 30,000 acres of land in fee simple. With fee simple purchases, landowners will lose title to their land, the counties will no longer collect significant property taxes from the land, and sales taxes will no longer be generated from the working landscapes.
 - Approximately 1,700 acres of the core area are mapped as prime farmland soils. The Navy admits in the Record of Decision that to remove these soils will cause a significant loss of prime farmland in Washington.
 - At least 74 families who own property, residences, and farms in the core area will be permanently displaced by the OLF. Many of these families are descendants of the earliest settlers of this country and have worked the land for generations. The loss of this unique cultural history would be devastating.
 - There are numerous citizens who will be adversely affected by the noise, most notably citizens of the Town of Roper which is situated near the end of the proposed OLF runway.
- Environmental Justice
 - The FEIS concludes that the Washington County OLF site will disproportionately impact both low-income and minority populations. Despite this conclusion, the FEIS fails to address ways to reduce or avoid these impacts.
 - In the DEIS, the Navy stated that the preferred site was at Oceana, using Fentress as the OLF. It is significant that by redirecting the impacts to Washington County, the Navy is reducing the impact on a more affluent and Caucasian population.