

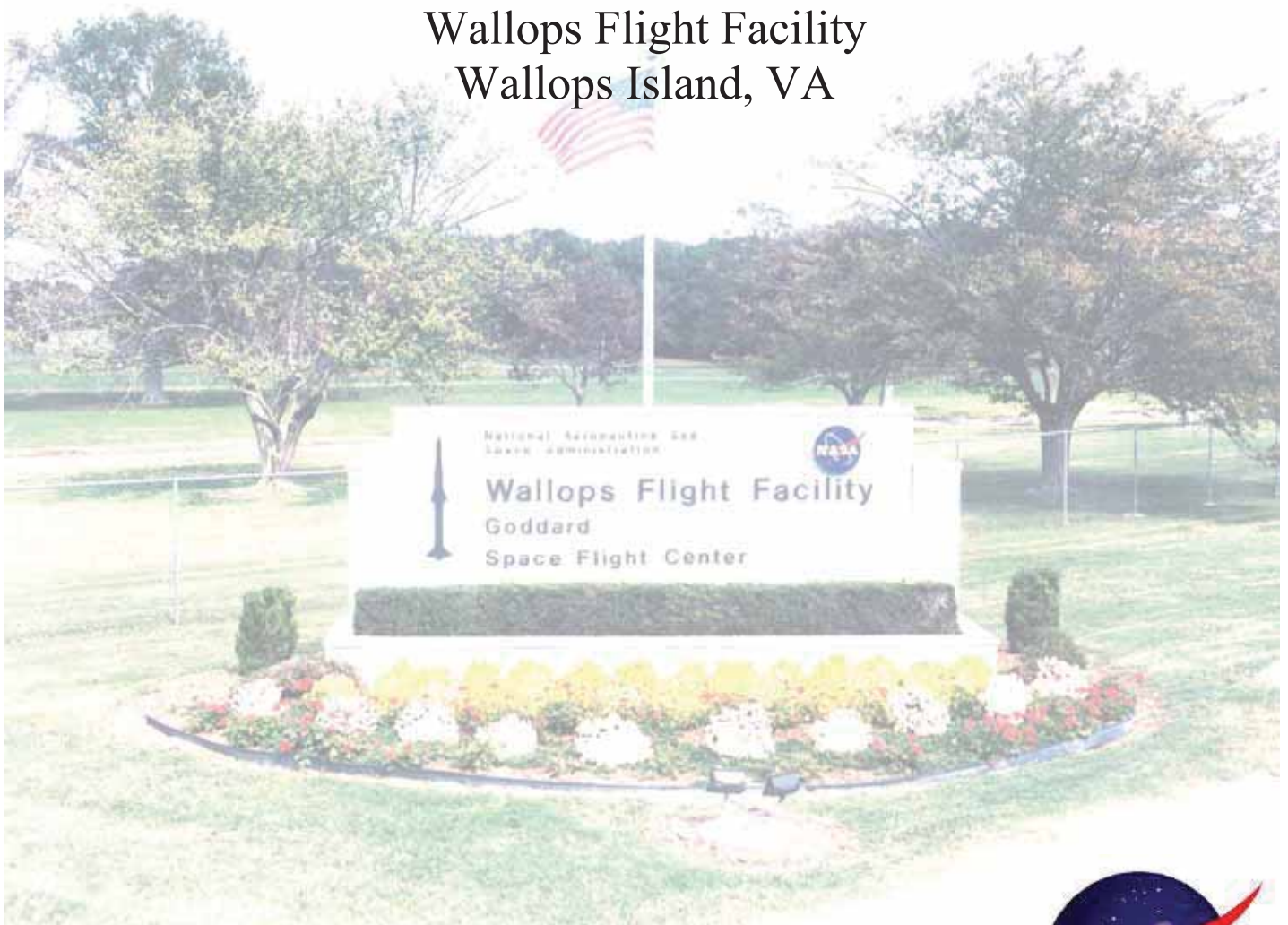
APPENDIX C
SCOPING SUMMARY REPORT (CONDENSED)

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Scoping Summary Report

**NASA WFF SITE-WIDE PROGRAMMATIC
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

Prepared for
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Goddard Space Flight Center
Wallops Flight Facility
Wallops Island, VA



October 2011



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Scoping is an important aspect of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, which states that “There shall be an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to the proposed action.” Scoping not only informs the public about the proposed action and alternatives but identifies the issues and concerns that are of particular interest to the affected populace. This scoping summary report presents an analysis of issues and concerns raised during the official public scoping period of July 11, 2011 to September 2, 2011 for the NASA WFF Site-wide Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS).

This summary report:

- provides an outline of the scoping process;
- describes the scoping meeting format and schedule;
- summarizes comments received during the scoping period; and
- identifies the major issues and concerns derived from scoping meetings, comment sheets, and letters.

2.0 SCOPING PROCESS

Scoping provides opportunities for government and regulatory agencies, interest groups, and the general public to learn about the proposal and alternatives, identify alternative approaches to meet the need, and provide input that is then used to assist resource specialists in data collection and resource analysis for the Draft PEIS.

In a letter dated April 26, 2011, NASA formally invited six cooperating agencies to be part of the NEPA process for this proposal: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Office of Commercial Space Transportation; FAA Air Traffic Organization Office; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS); Department of the Navy Naval Sea Systems Command; Department of the Army Corps of Engineers; and United States Coast Guard (USCG). The United States Fish and Wildlife Service and Department of the Navy Naval Air Systems Command were also invited to be cooperating agencies in letters dated June 1 and June 3, 2011, respectively. Appendix A provides an example of the cooperating agency coordination letter and acceptance letters received by NASA.

On July 7, 2011, coordination letters were sent to federal, state, and local governments and regulatory agencies; elected officials; and various interest groups. The coordination letters outlined the proposal and provided details for a dedicated regulatory agency scoping meeting and a public scoping meeting later the same day. Examples of the regulatory agency and public coordination letters are provided in Appendix B. Official public notification of the NASA proposal began with the publication of the Notice of Intent

(NOI) on July 11, 2011 in the *Federal Register* (Appendix C). On July 29, 2011, NASA issued a press release that outlined the proposal, provided details for the public scoping meeting, and solicited public input on the proposal (Appendix C). The public, regulatory agencies and NASA employees were also invited to provide comments on the Site-wide PEIS website at http://sites.wff.nasa.gov/code250/site-wide_eis.html.

Advertisements were placed a week before the meetings in the following newspapers: *Eastern Shore News* (27 July), *The Daily Times* (27 July), and *Chincoteague Beacon* (28 July) describing the proposal and alternatives (Appendix D). The advertisement provided the time, date, and location of the meeting. The public was invited to comment on the NASA proposal prior to as well as at the scoping meeting. In addition to the newspaper advertisements, an email was sent to all NASA WFF employees on August 3, 2011 provided the meeting information and invited NASA employees to comment on the proposal (Appendix D).

3.0 SCOPING MEETING FORMAT

The two scoping meetings were conducted on August 3, 2011 - one for the regulatory agencies and one for the general public - in an “open house” format to create a comfortable atmosphere where attendees could interact directly with NASA personnel. Attendees were welcomed at the entrance by NASA representatives. Attendees were asked to sign in, provided a factsheet, and directed to the first of five poster displays. Copies of the factsheet and comment sheet are found in Appendix E. Displays were designed to describe the Proposed Action, present the purpose and need for the Proposed Action, and enhance public understanding of the NEPA process while emphasizing the public’s role in shaping the proposal. Copies of the displays are also found in Appendix E.

Immediately following the general information portion of both meetings, NASA gave a thorough presentation that provided attendees with additional information in the following areas:

- Mission Overview – A general look at the overall NASA mission and a more detailed look at the WFF mission and the different ways in which WFF carries out that mission.
- Institutional Overview – A look at location and condition of current WFF facilities on the Main Base, Mainland and Wallops Island, and the long term vision for these facilities that will allow WFF to continue to carry out its mission in the future.
- PEIS Overview – A introduction to the NEPA process and an explanation of how the PEIS relates to the 2005 Site-Wide EA and the WFF Master Plan Update, as well as a general schedule of major milestones and tentative focus areas. The PEIS Overview also provided additional information on WFF; it outlined the Proposed Action/Alternatives, and listed the cooperating agencies.

- Public Comment – A chance for meeting attendees to provide NASA with verbal comments on the Site-wide PEIS. See Section 5.0 for a summary of comments made during the scoping meeting comment period. A stenotype reporter recorded verbal comments which are provided via transcript in Appendix F.

NASA provided the public with three venues for commenting during the scoping period. Attendees could submit written comments they brought with them to the scoping meeting, complete a comment form provided by NASA at the meeting, or send their comments at anytime during the scoping period to Ms. Shari Silbert, NASA WFF Site-wide PEIS Project Manager. NASA representatives from WFF, as well as contractor support from TEC Inc. provided a range of expertise at the public meeting to answer any questions attendees may have had.

4.0 SCOPING MEETING SCHEDULE

In the afternoon of August 3, 2011, a scoping meeting was held with applicable regulatory agency representatives to discuss the proposal and consult with them regarding their concerns. That evening, NASA held a public scoping meeting at the NASA Visitor Center on Wallops Island, central to areas that could potentially be affected by the Proposed Action and communities that have expressed concerns with the proposed NASA action. The schedule and location of each meeting is provided below.

Schedule of Meetings and Attendance		
City/Town	Date and Time	Location
Wallops Island	Regulatory Agency Scoping Meeting Wednesday, August 3; 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.	NASA Visitor Center
Wallops Island	Public Scoping Meeting Wednesday, August 3; 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.	NASA Visitor Center

5.0 SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

A summary of all comments and concerns raised during the scoping period is provided below.

Comment Topic	No. of Comments
Impacts to wildlife/listed species	6
Sea level rise/barrier island dynamics	6
Assawoman Island "land swap"	4
Commercial/human space flight	4
Causeway bridge replacement	2
Impacts to water quality/wetlands	2
Maintenance dredging	2
More explanation/information needed in PEIS	2
Alternative 2	1
Coastal Zone Management Act/Federal Consistency Determination	1
Encroachment	1

Comment Topic	No. of Comments
Invasive species	1
Noise	1
Positive/supportive comment	1
Restricted airspace	1
Socioeconomic impacts	1
Unmanned Aerial Systems test range	1
Wastewater treatment issues	1

During the official scoping period, the NASA received 16 comment letters. A summary of related concerns is located below in the order in which they were received. Complete comment letters can be found in Appendix B:

- Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) – DEQ’s Office of Environmental Review will coordinate Virginia’s review of the PEIS and comment to NASA on behalf of the Commonwealth. Under the Coastal Zone Management Act, NASA must provide a Federal Consistency Determination (FCD) which includes an analysis of the proposed activities in light of the foreseeable policies of the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program and a commitment to comply with the enforceable policies. DEQ recommends that the FCD be provided with the PEIS and that 60 days be allowed for review. DEQ requests 4 printed copies of the document and either 14 CD’s or one electronic copy available for download at a NASA website.
- NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) – Due to shallow water depths and near shore location of the proposed project areas, impacts to listed species of whales are unlikely. Any future in-water work that is necessary for the growth and/or repair of WFF has the potential to impact sea turtles and the PEIS should consider all direct and indirect impacts on sea turtles. The PEIS should also highlight any mitigation measures to reduce the affects to listed species.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – EPA is interested in touring the WFF facility as it will benefit future EPA review of projects at WFF. EPA offers its expertise on NEPA and the Clean Water Act Section 404, and encourages NASA to work with cooperating agencies on this project.
- Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) – DGIF provided a table of listed species for consideration in the EIS and recommends further coordination as the project scope evolves and more site-specific information becomes available.
- U.S. National Park Service – No comment/input at this time.
- Resource Management Associates – Phragmites on Wallops Island is widespread and further expanding with recent construction activities. To limit the spread of Phragmites and its impacts to the Eastern Shore seaside tidal wetlands, NASA should begin an intensive effort to limit the spread of this highly invasive species by requiring advanced treatment and follow-up treatment prior to construction activities.
- Virginia Department of Historic Resources – No comment/input at this time.

- Virginia Commercial Space Flight Authority (VCSFA) – VCSFA owns and operated the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport and is committed to playing a large role in human spaceflight. VCSFA is also interested in the enlargement of the restricted airspace, building a larger launch pad and support facilities (Pad-Sea/C), the replacement of the causeway bridge, maintenance dredging between the Barge Dock and the Main Base that was highlighted in the Notice of Intent.
- Hampton Roads Military and Federal Facilities Alliance (HRMFFA) – HRMFFA fully supports NASAs expand operations at WFF. NASA should consider, as an element of both alternatives, development of an Atlantic Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Test Range at WFF.
- Space Florida – The potential development of launch infrastructure for orbital human spaceflight at WFF is duplicative and competes with infrastructure already in place in the State of Florida. Development of a duplicate site also goes against the NASA Authorization Act of 2011, which clearly states: “*It is the sense of Congress that NASA needs to rescope, and as appropriate down-size, to fit current and future missions and expected funding levels.*”
- Economic Development Commission of Florida’s Space Coast – Some of the potential alternatives detailed in the PEIS scoping materials constitute a direct threat to the economic well-being of the people of the Space Coast, and to the fiscal health of the U.S. population, in general. The results of this effort to expand the capability of manned space launches to the International Space Station from Virginia are ‘undesirable’ to the people of Florida, both as taxpayers paying for redundant infrastructure and as a workforce struggling to maintain thousands of jobs.
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC) – The location of infrastructure and facilities on Wallops Island is vulnerable to sea level rise and barrier island subsidence. TNC recommends that NASA include an alternative that evaluates the costs and benefits of locating new infrastructure off of Wallops Island and strategically relocating existing infrastructure to more secure and protected locations within Accomack County. This alternative should also evaluate the costs and benefits associated with locating certain critical launch infrastructure in the coastal bay and NASA-owned salt marsh west of Wallops Island. TNC is also opposed to a “land swap” with USFWS for access to Assawoman Island and has concerns about the impacts to water quality due to increased operations/expanded capabilities at WFF.
- Accomack County Economic Development Authority – The Economic Development Authority supports Alternative 2 as outlined in the NOI. In particular, commercial manned space flight will spur economic development in Accomack County without adversely affecting the environment.
- Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage (DCR) – DCR notes that there are several natural heritage resources located within the project area: Wallops Island Seeps and Little Mosquito Creek Conservation Sites on Wallops Main Base, Wallops Island Causeway Marshes Conservation Site on Wallops Mainland, and North Wallops Island and Assawoman Island Conservation Sites on or near Wallops Island. The biodiversity significance ranking of these sites ranges from B4 (moderate significance) to B2 (very high significance) based on the statewide importance of these sites for native biological diversity. DCR recommends that

NASA undertake ecological surveys of Assawoman Island, the Main Base, and Wallops Mainland so that planning could consider, to the maximum extent practicable, the protection of natural heritage communities.

- Public comment – The past 50 years have shown an 8 inch increase in sea level in the mid-Atlantic region. Based on this information, a 1 meter sea level rise for the project area is not out of the question in the near future. Why would NASA want to spend hundreds of millions to billions of dollars on facilities that are most certainly in mortal peril insofar as climate driven sea level rise is concerned? Why doesn't NASA use facilities at Andrews AFB or at the White Sands Range in New Mexico that are immune to this type of potential natural disaster?
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – USFWS is particularly interested in several of the proposed projects under Alternative 1: the causeway bridge replacement, maintenance dredging, and installation of 2 permanent rocket launchers. Under Alternative 2, USFWS is interested in the Assawoman Island land swap, since it could potentially align with one of the alternatives being presented in the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Chincoteague and Wallops Island National Wildlife refuges but is opposed to development of the north end of Assawoman Island. USFWS is concerned about the impacts to wildlife (beach nesting shorebirds in particular) from this proposal and suggests 2 alternatives for WFF to consider: develop and implement mobile launch technology for rocket launched or develop a small launch pad on the mainland for launching sounding rockets. USFWS would also like NASA to consider the resource management activities (e.g., species monitoring, habitat management) as part of the list of “Institutional Project Support.” WFF should develop an additional alternative focused on accomplishing its mission while contributing to the conservation value of the area. This could include relocating infrastructure inland whenever possible to reduce sea level rise risks to mission-critical infrastructure; acquiring lands to better buffer WFF from sensitive natural resource areas as well as reducing potential safety and security concerns; developing cooperative resource management approaches that would facilitate conservation, public use of the resources in the area, and the NASA mission; and planned responsible development in the area that would help support and protect the NASA mission and local economy.

The attendance for each of the scoping meetings is provided below. Appendix F provides copies of the scoping meeting sign-in sheets.

Scoping Meeting Attendance	
Regulatory Agency Scoping Meeting	17
Public Scoping Meeting	19

Concerns raised during the regulatory agency scoping meeting include:

- Socioeconomic impacts, as opposed to socioeconomic benefits, to Accomack County resulting from the proposed action and action alternatives.
- Commonwealth of Virginia owned land west of Wallops Island that will need clearly defined boundaries before any land swap can take place under Alternative 2.
- VMRC maintains a GIS database of existing oyster leases that will be helpful in determining impacts.
- VIMS maintains a database for permitted wetlands impacts that will be useful when analyzing cumulative impacts.
- The proposed Atlantic Town Center Wastewater Facility to address wastewater treatment issues in the Towns of Atlantic and Chincoteague, as well as other surrounding areas, may fall within the approach to Runway 220 and NASA needs to make sure that appropriate county officials know that this is not acceptable. A conditional use permit was originally approved by the Accomack County Planning Department; however, the permit is currently under review following a recommendation by the Accomack County Director of Zoning stating that “the developers conditional use permit application should not be accepted or processed” based on current county zoning regulations.
- Need to consider impacts to wildlife due to potential operations on Assawoman Island.
- Noise analysis should be included under the Health and Safety analysis in the EIS.
- NASA should consider the possibility of restricting sounding rocket launches to times when piping plovers and other protected species are not in the area.
- The impacts of sea level rise and global climate change on operations at WFF and Accomack County as a whole needs to be evaluated.

Concerns raised during the public scoping meeting are located below. An official transcript can be found in Appendix F.

- The effects of sea level rise on areas surrounding NASA WFF needs to be considered.
- NASA needs to consider the dynamics of barrier islands and the impacts these dynamics may have on Wallops Island and surrounding barrier islands. It was recommended that the project team study *The Beaches are Moving: The Drowning of America's Shoreline* by Dr. Orrin H. Pilkey. Dr. Pilkey is also giving (gave) a lecture on Barrier Islands on September 9, 2011 at the Barrier Islands Center in Machipongo, VA.
- Encroachment issues that the Accomack County Board of Supervisors is facing and how they might impact operations and airspace at WFF should be included. It was also mentioned that NASA has need to do a better job of vocalizing their needs to the Board of Supervisors and commenting on County actions in order to protect their interests.
- Does WFF see an increase in the demand for wastewater treatment in the 20-year plan?

- How does WFF plan on addressing stormwater runoff issues as facilities are consolidated at WFF and hard surfaces are moved or altered?

6.0 CONCLUSION

The scoping part of the proposed NASA Site-wide environmental impact analysis process was completed successfully. The public was given ample notification of the proposal and scoping process and given opportunities to comment through various means. Meetings were held in a location that afforded the agencies and public access to information on the proposal as well as the time and opportunity to express any concerns or issues with the Proposed Action. Additionally, NASA has provided a project website that the public and agencies can access to obtain publically released documents.