

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NAS Whiting Field Runway Extension Project Resumes - *Waiver Approval Granted from Under Secretary of Defense*

Naval Facilities Command (NAVFAC) and Naval Air Station Whiting Field (NASWF) representatives have received the waiver approval from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment. The process to extend runways at Navy outlying fields (NOLF) in Baldwin County can now resume.

NAVFAC and NASWF are in the process of completing the Environmental Assessment and expect to have the final package assembled by late-July. This package will include the desired option for the runway extension project. Information from the package will be made available to local media, sent to local and state representatives, and placed in an advertisement in local papers.

Residents near the NOLFs Silverhill, Summerdale, and Barin, are encouraged to review a publicly accessible website, <http://www.navyolfextensions.com/index.html>. In addition to providing information about the desired option and the reasons for the extension project, the site provides a forum for comments to project planners. Once the draft Environmental Assessment with the desired option is announced, there will be a 30-day public comment period where community members may communicate with base and NAVFAC representatives, through the website forum, to express opinions, voice concerns or relate information about the project.

"We consider each comment carefully and are truly concerned about minimizing the affect this project will have on the local community," Thomas Currin, Environmental Assessment Planner for the project said. "However, this project is necessary to support the current and future flight training mission in Northwest Florida."

Naval Air Station Whiting Field and Training Air Wing FIVE, the base's major tenant command, provide primary flight training to nearly 60 percent of all Navy and Marine Corps aviators as well as to U. S. Coast Guard aviators, select Air Force pilots and flight students from allied foreign countries. The current training aircraft was implemented in 1977 and is aging. The T-34 Turbo Mentor has already begun transitioning to the T-6B Texan. The transition is expected to be complete by 2015.

Editor's note: Media partners with questions about this release should call the NAS Whiting Field Public Affairs Office at (850) 623-7651 extension #30 or (850) 501-0433 cell.