

**Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan Implementation Committee  
Executive Conference Room  
Beaufort County Administration Building  
100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort, SC  
July 25, 2014  
9:30 a.m.**

**AGENDA**

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. RECOGNIZE GUESTS
3. REVIEW OF MAY 23, 2014 MEETING MINUTES ([backup](#))
4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
5. JOINT LAND USE STUDY (JLUS) FOR MCAS BEAUFORT AND PARRIS ISLAND: PRESENTATION OF TWO DELIVERABLES (Tyson Smith, White and Smith, LLC, Planning and Law Group) ([backup](#)) ([backup](#))
  - A. Land Use Compatibility Assessment
  - B. SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis Results
6. JOINT LAND USE STUDY PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC OUTREACH PLAN FOR THE DRAFT REPORT
7. REPORTS
  - A. Status of New Development Codes (Planning Staffs)
  - B. Status of Spanish Moss Trail (Dean Moss, Friends of the Spanish Moss Trail)
8. ROUND THE TABLE COMMENTS
9. OTHER BUSINESS: Next Meeting: Friday, September 26, 2014 at 9:30 a.m., Executive Conference Room, Beaufort County Administration Building, 100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort, SC
10. ADJOURNMENT

**Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan Implementation Committee Meeting**  
**Executive Conference Room, County Administration Building**  
**100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort, SC 29902**  
**May 23, 2014**

**ATTENDANCE**

**Members Present:** Robert Semmler, Chairman, Northern Regional Plan Implementation (NRPIC) Committee and Beaufort County Planning Commission; Gerald Dawson, Beaufort County Councilman; Vernon DeLoach, Town of Port Royal Councilman; Brian Flewelling, Beaufort County Councilman; Samuel Murray, Mayor of Town of Port Royal; William McBride, Lowcountry Council of Governments, and Laura Von Harten, Beaufort County Councilman

**Members Absent:** Jerry Cook, Town of Yemassee Mayor; Joe DeVito, Metropolitan Planning Commission Chair; Bob Evans, Beaufort County School Board Chairman; Billy Keyserling, City of Beaufort Mayor; and Mike Sutton, City of Beaufort Councilman

**Staff Present:** Libby Anderson, City of Beaufort Planning Director; Thomas “Tab” Bendell, Jr., County Attorney; Linda Bridges, Town of Port Royal Planning Administrator; Anthony Criscitiello, Beaufort County Planning Director; Ginnie Kozak, Lowcountry Council of Governments; Robert Merchant, Beaufort County Long-Range Planner; and Barbara Childs, Beaufort County Administrative Assistant to the Planning Director.

**Other Attendees:** Reed Armstrong, Coastal Conservation League; Col. Peter Buck, Commanding Officer, U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort; Colleen Barrett, and Jason Mann, U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort; Bill Harris and Alice Howard, Metropolitan Planning Commission; Joe Lee, Town of Port Royal Councilman; and JLUS Consultants: Paul Oskvarek; Tyson Smith of White and Smith, LLC; Vagn Hansen II of Benchmark; and Katherine Bragdon and Elizabeth Scaggs of Marstel Day.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Robert Semmler called the Northern Regional Plan Implementation Committee (NRPIC) meeting to order at approximately 9:33 a.m. He asked that those in the room to introduce themselves, for the record.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mr. Semmler led those assembled with the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

**REVIEW OF NRPIC MEETING MINUTES:** The March 28, 2014, minutes were reviewed. No comments were received. Motion: Beaufort County Councilman Brian Flewelling made a motion to approve the March 28, 2014, minutes as written. Town of Port Royal Mayor Samuel Murray seconded the motion. The minutes were approved (FOR: Dawson, DeLoach, Flewelling, McBride, Murray, Semmler, and Von Harten; ABSENT: Cook, DeVito, Evans, Keyserling, and Sutton).

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT:** Mr. Semmler noted that he attended the first community meeting yesterday [May 22, 2014] at 3:30 p.m. at Battery Creek High School. He noted that the meeting was well attended and public input was received.

### **JOINT LAND USE STUDY (JLUS) FOR MCAS BEAUFORT AND PARRIS ISLAND**

Mr. Tyson Smith, of White and Smith LLC, the JLUS consultant, gave a power point presentation. He noted that during the community meetings yesterday brochures and public input surveys were handed out and explained. The website [www.lowcountry.jlus.com](http://www.lowcountry.jlus.com) was established and the brochures and surveys can be viewed at the website. The surveys will be accepted through July 31 via mail, online at the website, and live polling. The meeting attendees and the Committee suggested outreach via the Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, churches, Lady's Island Professional Business Association, Exchange Club, and County libraries north of the Broad River. The Committee was encouraged to email Mr. Smith with other suggestions for public outreach. Attendance was 22 at the 3:30 p.m. Parris Island meeting, and 25 at the 5:30 p.m. Air Station meeting. The public suggested holding future meetings at later times in the evening and closer to the respective military installations, and advertising the meetings on local radio stations.

Suggestions from the Air Station meeting included flight information, the health impact on humans, relooking at JLUS when the AICUZ (Air Installation Compatibility Use Zone) is in effect, relooking at the disclosure statement in the County Zoning and Development Standards Ordinance (ZDSO), environment impacts, the ability to adjust the JLUS to AICUZ changes, concern for low level flying, and noise abatement.

Mr. Paul Oskvarek assured the Committee that the grant (for the JLUS) can be amended anytime, but advised keeping the work going rather than delaying it. Implementing the JLUS would involve another type of grant.

Col. Peter Buck, Commanding Officer, U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, noted that the first squadron will come to Beaufort July 1<sup>st</sup>. There will be limited flying, but the flying will increase toward the end of the year.

Committee discussion included the pros and cons of delaying the JLUS and the desire to view an All Station Landing Plan as was mentioned in the past.

The Committee unanimously agreed to go forward with the JLUS, and they would ask for an amendment, if needed.

Mr. Smith explained Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) and Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs), the issues involved, the potential concerns, and desiring direction from the Committee.

Mr. Semmler noted that the County ZDSO contained the TDR program where sending and receiving areas were identified.

Mr. Anthony Criscitiello, County Planning Director, confirmed Mr. Semmler's statement, adding that the proposed Community Development Code also contained the TDR program. He will

discuss with the planning directors of the City of Beaufort and the Town of Port Royal regarding TDR receiving areas in their municipalities.

## **REPORTS**

### **A. Status of New Development Codes (Planning Staffs):**

- Mr. Criscitiello reported that the County has scheduled community meetings in Northern and Southern Beaufort County regarding the Code—two have already occurred. He thanked Councilman Brian Flewelling for his leadership. Mr. Criscitiello noted the three-year process regarding this Code. Mr. Semmler noted the times and locations for two community meetings scheduled at Okatie Elementary School and Bluffton Library. Regarding the evaluation of recent developments that used the existing code and how these developments would look with the Code, Mr. Criscitiello noted that he had received a quote but there is a funding issue that must be resolved. Regarding the searchability of the Code, hyperlinks will be contained throughout the document for references, etc.
- Ms. Linda Bridges, Town of Port Royal Planning Administrator, noted that the Town of Port Royal Code and maps were adopted by Town Council in May. It's been a smooth ride, so far. The Town has been accustomed to doing this way of business, so it was not that big a leap.
- Ms. Libby Anderson, City of Beaufort Planning Director, noted that their Code had been put on hold, but she hoped it would be completed by the end of the summer and released for review by committee sometime in August.

**B. Status of Spanish Moss Trail:** Mr. Robert Merchant gave the status on the different phases of the trail. The 3-mile portion between Depot and Ribaut Roads (Segments 3 and 4) is completed. The Path Foundation noted that they soon would be completed with the section between Broad River Boulevard and Roseida Road (Segment 6). The gap between Broad River Boulevard and Depot Road (Segment 5) is where Beaufort County received a federal grant and additional funding from accommodation taxes. The design stage is with SCDOT for their approval; the construction bidding phase would occur this summer with actual construction occurring in the fall. For the portion between Smilex Road and 15<sup>th</sup> Street (Segment 2) in Port Royal, discussion has occurred between The Path Foundation and the Town of Port Royal. The trail north of Roseida Road and the portion beyond 15<sup>th</sup> Street (Segment 1) is unfunded and unplanned. The Sheriff's Department has contacted Mr. Merchant regarding public safety along the trail. Future maintenance of the trail is being discussed with the Friends of Spanish Moss Trail and the affected government entities. A median is considered for Highway 170 to provide a safe crossing for trail users, and possibly at the intersection of Highway 21/Parris Island Gateway.

## **ROUND THE TABLE COMMENTS**

- Councilman Vernon DeLoach asked when the All Station Landing Pad would occur.
- Mr. Semmler encouraged all to get the hard copies of the survey and brochure provided by Mr. Smith.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Next Meeting: Friday, July 25, 2014, Executive Conference Room, Beaufort County Administration Building, 100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort SC 29902

**ADJOURNMENT:** Councilman Brian Flewelling made a **motion**, and Councilwoman Laura Von Harten seconded the motion, **to adjourn the meeting**. The motion was passed (FOR: Dawson, DeLoach, Flewelling, Keyserling, McBride, Murray, Semmler, and Von Harten). Mr. Semmler adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:09 a.m.

*Note: The video link of the May 23, 2014, Northern Regional Plan Implementation Committee meeting is: [http://beaufort.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=3&clip\\_id=1595](http://beaufort.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=3&clip_id=1595)*

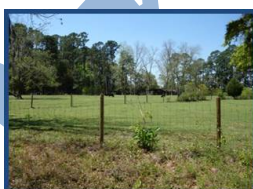
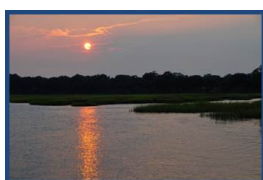
# **DRAFT**

## **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis**

**Presented for Review by the  
JLUS Policy and Technical Committees**

July 25, 2014

### **A Joint Land Use Study for MCAS Beaufort and the Lowcountry Council of Governments**



**White & Smith, LLC**

*Kansas City • Charleston*

**Benchmark CMR, Inc.**

**Marstel-Day, LLC**

This is not a final document and will be revised based on Steering Committee and Public Input.

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis is a common strategic planning tool used to evaluate how internal and external factors can affect an organization's objectives (in this case, compatible land use). The SWOT analysis helps to build the foundation for the recommendations that will be made in the Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Beaufort Joint Land Use Study (JLUS). The SWOT analysis will enable MCAS Beaufort and its surrounding region to build on its strengths, minimize its weaknesses, capitalize on opportunities, and avoid potential threats.

A SWOT analysis may address social, physical, regulatory, and/or economic considerations. The "strengths" and "weaknesses" of a SWOT analysis are the internal factors intrinsic to MCAS Beaufort that either assist or limit the facility's ability to successfully manage encroachment and compatible land use issues. The "threats" and "opportunities" are external factors that are generated by external stakeholders and incentivize action. Table 1 below provides an overview of how these factors apply to MCAS Beaufort, followed by a more detailed description of each SWOT item.

**Table 1: SWOT Analysis Overview**

| <b>Strengths</b>   | <b>Weaknesses</b>  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong community support for Marine Corps presence in the region.</li> <li>• Community has implemented a number of actions to address incompatible development around installation.</li> <li>• Significant economic contribution to local and state economy.</li> <li>• There are few significant environmental constraints on training operations.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2013 AICUZ relies on modeling data from F-35A.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Opportunities</b>   | <b>Threats</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate public on noise modeling procedures used in 2013 AICUZ.</li> <li>• Acknowledge and explore various noise impact mitigation recommendations proposed by the community.</li> <li>• Formalize interaction/communication between MCAS Beaufort and its neighbors.</li> <li>• Coordinate with relevant stakeholders regarding incompatible development, noise concerns, and stormwater management fees.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effects of new aircraft not entirely known.</li> <li>• Public mistrust of information presented by installation in regards to new aircraft.</li> <li>• Population and political power shifts within Beaufort County.</li> <li>• Significant potential impacts of climate change on operations.</li> <li>• Unresolved stormwater management requirements.</li> </ul> |

### **Strengths**

- **Strong community support for Marine Corps presence in region.**

MCAS Beaufort has a largely positive relationship with Beaufort County, as well with the public at large. The community is generally supportive of the installation's mission and the overall presence of the Marine Corps in the region. MCAS Beaufort has a strong role in the social fabric of the civilian community, particularly in concert with MCRD Parris Island and Beaufort Naval Hospital. Community leaders are committed to protecting the installation, recognizing it as a major direct and indirect economic vehicle in the county.

- **Community has implemented a number of actions to address incompatible development around installation.**

The community surrounding MCAS Beaufort has long shown support of the installation's mission and has taken proactive steps to protect the viability of the installation and its economic contribution to the region. As a result of the 2004 Lowcountry JLUS, the City of Beaufort, Beaufort County, and the Town of Port Royal adopted AICUZ ordinances that identified AICUZ airport overlay districts, which limited certain types of development within the AICUZ footprint. Beaufort County also developed a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to provide partial compensation for property owners affected by the AICUZ ordinances. Notably, the community also passed a \$40 million bond issue in 2003 to support a Rural and Critical Lands Program for the purchase of public greenspace, with an additional \$60 million bond in 2006. The Rural and Critical Lands Program has conserved over 17,000 acres through the purchase of conservation easements or fee simple land acquisition and is designed to manage growth, encourage private land conservation, and preserve the rural character of the county. The program has also been used to help create natural buffers against incompatible development around MCAS Beaufort. Combined, these efforts demonstrate the community's commitment to maintaining the Marine Corps' presence in the region.

- **Significant economic contribution to local and state economy.**

MCAS Beaufort is a major contributor to the local and state economy. According to the economic impact report prepared by MCAS Beaufort, the installation generated over \$1 billion in economic impact for fiscal year 2013. MCAS Beaufort supported more than 4,200 military and civilian employees, translating to \$230 million in salaries in FY13, with another \$591 million in retired military and civilian salaries.

- **There are few significant environmental constraints on training operations.**

There are five federally-listed threatened or endangered species on MCAS Beaufort, including the American alligator, bald eagle, pondberry, southeastern myotis, and wood stork. However, the presence of these species does not currently impact mission operations at the installation. MCAS Beaufort's value as an air installation is enhanced because its training space is largely unimpeded by environmental constraints.

### **Weaknesses**

- **2013 AICUZ relies on modeling data from F-35A.**



The noise data for the F-35B did not yet exist when the Department of Navy prepared the 2013 AICUZ for MCAS Beaufort, so noise data from the F-35A was used to model the impacts associated with the F-35B. While this type of noise modeling is generally accepted among industry professionals, the unknown variation between the modeled data and the actual noise impacts has become a source of significant community-military friction in recent months. Specifically, there is a concern that the F-35B's short-take off and vertical landing capability – and the associated increase in engine thrust – would cause the noise impacts to be greater than those presented in the 2013 AICUZ.

## **Opportunities**

- **Educate public on noise modeling procedures used in 2013 AICUZ.**

As mentioned in the “weaknesses” section of this analysis, the 2013 AICUZ relied on noise modeling data from the F-35A and used the data to project impacts from the F-35B. While this is an accepted practice among noise experts, the public perception regarding this discrepancy is one of mistrust because data was presented for “the wrong aircraft”. Public education as to the noise modeling procedures used in the AICUZ – and its adherence to standard industry guidelines – may help to further the discussions between the military and community by increasing transparency in the modeling process used by the Department of Navy. Coordinated outreach and forthright conversation about this issue may help to move the public perception beyond one of mistrust about the process.

- **Acknowledge and explore various noise impact mitigation recommendations proposed by the community.**

A number of mitigation measures have been recommended by the community at large to alleviate some of the potential impacts associated with the new aircraft, including the development of an Alternate Landing Field (ALF) and changing flight patterns away from heavily populated areas. Regardless of whether the proposed mitigation action is technically feasible or cost effective, the installation should engage in discussions with the community to ensure that the community's ideas are being acknowledged in some way. When a recommended action is determined not to be viable, the installation should be forthcoming with its reasoning as to its infeasibility. Where a recommendation has merit, the installation and community should collaboratively explore options to mitigate potential impacts to the community from the new aircraft.

- **Formalize interaction/communication between MCAS Beaufort and its neighbors.**

While MCAS Beaufort enjoys a mostly positive relationship with its neighbors, no formal channels of communication or recurring outreach opportunities currently exist beyond the Air Station's participation in the Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan Implementation Committee. Establishing formal mechanisms for communication will allow MCAS Beaufort and its neighbors to communicate regularly and coordinate on issues of mutual concern, including noise, regional development proposals, economic development, stormwater management, rural lands conservation, and concerns about sea level rise. “Formal” interaction may take the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a recurring collaborative working group, or other mechanism that requires participation by multiple parties.

- **Coordinate with relevant stakeholders regarding incompatible development, noise concerns, and stormwater management fees.**

To alleviate current and potential sources of community-military friction, MCAS Beaufort should work with its partners to coordinate on solutions to issues such as incompatible development, noise impacts from new F-35B aircraft, and stormwater management requirements. Presently, there is significant community-military friction regarding the release of the 2013 AICUZ and the basing of the F-35B at MCAS Beaufort. As is mentioned in the “threats” section, the potential impacts from the aircraft are not entirely known at this time, which causes great concern for many in the community. The unresolved requirement for the payment of stormwater management fees is also a source of conflict between the installation and the community. Because these issues are complex and demonstrate the interrelatedness of the affected parties, it is critical that these issues not be addressed within political or functional stovepipes but dealt with in a collaborative manner. Opportunities exist to coordinate among all related partners on solutions to these challenges.

### **Threats**

- **Effects of new aircraft not entirely known.**

While some effects of the new F-35B were modeled in the 2013 AICUZ, the full range of effects of the aircraft when all squadrons are fully operational is not presently known. The projected increase in the number of flight operations at MCAS Beaufort has many in the community worried about the subsequent impacts to quality of life, including impacts to property values and health. While the first F-35B squadron is expected to arrive in July 2014, all squadrons are not expected to be fully operational until at least 2020, so it will necessarily take some time for the effects to become known to the region. Proactive engagement among all affected parties will be critical to alleviate the public’s fears over the unknown impacts of additional operations.

- **Public mistrust of information presented by installation in regards to new aircraft.**

As previously mentioned, there is considerable mistrust permeating through the community regarding the noise modeling data presented in the 2013 AICUZ. This sense of mistrust must be acknowledged and overcome through a combination of targeted outreach, engagement opportunities, and public marketing efforts if the community and installation are to maintain a positive, collaborative relationship.

- **Population and political power shifts within Beaufort County.**

Accelerated population growth in Beaufort County has paralleled burgeoning tourism and retirement-related service industries, diluting the Marine Corps’ once dominant impact on the county’s economy. Because of the significant population growth over the last 30 years in the Hilton Head and Bluffton areas, the southern portion of Beaufort County has picked up an extra seat on County Council, shifting the political center of gravity away from the northern portion of the county. This may result in a new County Council whose focus tends towards tourism-related interests that could create conflicts with

military training missions. The effects of this dynamic population shift are still unknown, yet highlight the need for the Marine Corps to engage with its local partners in a way that is mutually supportive.

- **Significant potential impacts of climate change on operations.**

Climate change has long been identified as a potential concern for operational and installation sustainability. The threat of sea level rise, increased temperatures, drought events, and increased storm frequency and severity has far-reaching implications for both MCAS Beaufort and the neighboring communities. These potential climate-induced effects have the potential to impact MCAS Beaufort's facilities and infrastructure, in turn hindering the installation's ability to effectively perform operations and mission-related training. The low-lying topography of the South Carolina Lowcountry makes the area especially vulnerable to even slight rises in sea level.

- **Unresolved stormwater management requirements.**

Water quality is of vast importance to Beaufort County. It is seen as the lifeblood of the area's recreation, fishing, and tourism industries, as well as a key factor in the high quality of life of the county's residents. Beaufort County has levied a stormwater management fee on all property owners, to include the three Marine Corps installations in the county. Marine Corps counsel, however, believes that the language in the stormwater management ordinance effectively renders the fee a tax and, since a local entity may not tax the federal government, the Marine Corps should be exempt from paying the management fee. This issue has essentially remained unresolved over the last six years and remains a source of community-military friction for some. Furthermore, there is a possibility of more stringent requirements in the future, especially if efforts to list Port Royal Sound as an Estuary of National Significance are successful.

# DRAFT

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Presented for Review by the  
JLUS Policy and Technical Committees

July 25, 2014

### A Joint Land Use Study for MCRD Parris Island and the Lowcountry Council of Governments



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A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis is a common strategic planning tool used to evaluate how internal and external factors can affect an organization’s objectives (in this case, compatible land use). The SWOT analysis helps to build the foundation for the recommendations that will be made in the Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island Joint Land Use Study (JLUS). The SWOT analysis will enable Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) Parris Island and its surrounding region to build on its strengths, minimize its weaknesses, capitalize on opportunities, and avoid potential threats.

A SWOT analysis may address social, physical, regulatory, and/or economic considerations. The “strengths” and “weaknesses” of a SWOT analysis are the internal factors intrinsic to MCRD Parris Island that either assist or limit the facility’s ability to successfully manage encroachment and compatible land use issues. The “threats” and “opportunities” are external factors that are generated by external stakeholders and incentivize action. Table 1 below provides an overview of how these factors apply to Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, followed by a more detailed description of each SWOT item.

**Table 1: SWOT Analysis Overview**

| <b>Strengths</b>   | <b>Weaknesses</b>  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent community support and positive reputation.</li> <li>• Strong strategic value to the Marine Corps as the only recruit depot on east coast.</li> <li>• MCRD Parris Island’s mission is not currently significantly impacted by “external” encroachment threats.</li> <li>• Significant economic contribution to local and state economy.</li> <li>• Construction of new main security checkpoint expected to relieve traffic congestion.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical constraints on the installation prevent future development or construction.</li> <li>• High volume of traffic on roadways, especially during graduation weekends, is often considered an annoyance by public.</li> <li>• Environmental concerns due to ammunition from ranges deposited in Broad River.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Opportunities</b>   | <b>Threats</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalize interaction/communication between MCRD Parris Island and its neighbors.</li> <li>• Coordinate with relevant stakeholders regarding traffic concerns, access to waterways, and stormwater management fees.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential impacts of the redevelopment of the Port of Port Royal.</li> <li>• Potential effects on training due to increased recreational boating.</li> <li>• Population and political power shifts within Beaufort County.</li> <li>• Significant potential impacts of climate change on operations.</li> <li>• Increasing stormwater management requirements.</li> </ul> |

## **Strengths**

- **Excellent community support and positive reputation.**

MCRD Parris Island has a positive relationship with the Town of Port Royal and Beaufort County, as well with the public at large. Noise complaints are few and far between and the community is generally supportive of MCRD Parris Island's operational mission. The installation has a strong role in the social fabric of the civilian community, particularly in concert with MCAS Beaufort and Beaufort Naval Hospital. MCRD Parris Island engages with the community and hosts the general public at the installation during a number of annual events or learning opportunities, including the Independence Day celebrations aboard the Depot, the Parris Island Museum, and the MCRD Parris Island band's participation at the Beaufort Water Festival. There are also a number of mutual aid agreements in place between the Depot and surrounding fire departments. Community leaders are committed to protecting the installation, recognizing it as a major direct and indirect economic vehicle in the county.

- **Strong strategic value to the Marine Corps as the only recruit depot on the east coast.**

The Marine Corps has two recruit depot facilities – one at MCRD San Diego and the other at MCRD Parris Island. MCRD Parris Island manages the recruitment and training of prospective male recruits east of the Mississippi River, known as the Eastern Recruiting Region (ERR), and female recruits from all over the country. The installation receives, processes, and trains enlisted personnel upon entry into the Marine Corps and sees them through a program of instruction (POI) that includes physical and mental instruction, rifle marksmanship training, and field training. Since its establishment as a recruit depot, MCRD Parris Island has trained well over one million Marines. Because of its unique training mission, the Depot offers significant strategic value to the Marine Corps and is of great importance to the service overall.

- **MCRD Parris Island's mission is not currently significantly impacted by "external" encroachment threats.**

MCRD Parris Island's isolated, island geography circumstantially protects the base from a number of classic encroachment issues, including safety and noise concerns that typically arise as a result of urban growth. In areas where encroachment threats exist, the installation has mitigation or management measures largely in place. As seen in the "weaknesses" and "threats" section of this SWOT analysis, however, there are some traffic and environmental concerns, as well as internal encroachment issues that must be addressed.

- **Significant economic contribution to local and state economy.**

MCRD Parris Island is a major contributor to the local and state economy. According to a report prepared for the South Carolina Military Base Task Force, MCRD Parris Island generated a total of \$594 million in economic activity in South Carolina for fiscal year 2011. The installation supported approximately 5,300 jobs, translating into approximately \$220 million in employee compensation. The Depot significantly impacts several industry sectors, particularly hotels, lodging, and food services during graduations and

Family Days. MCRD Parris Island also generated a total of \$465 million in economic activity within the Beaufort and Jasper County region in FY 2011.

- **Construction of new main security checkpoint expected to relieve traffic congestion.**

MCRD Parris Island will begin construction of a new main security gate in July 2014, relocating the current security checkpoint from Port Royal Island to Horses Island and, therefore, preventing traffic from backing up onto Parris Island Gateway. Traffic has long been a source of friction between the installation and the community and the construction of the new gate demonstrates MCRD Parris Island's commitment to relieving this concern. In addition to changing the location of the main gate, the installation is also adding lanes to allow for faster processing of visitors, allowing for a more efficient traffic pattern and decreasing the likelihood that in-bound visitor traffic will negatively affect traffic in the community.

### **Weaknesses**

- **Physical constraints on the installation prevent future development or construction.**

There are several internal constraints present on MCRD Parris Island that will prohibit significant further development or construction on the installation, potentially restricting its ability to support additional missions in the future. The vast presence of wetlands, cultural resources, and poor soil conditions, as well as its isolated, island geography, prohibits the installation from increasing its footprint or drastically changing its current structure.

- **High volume of traffic on roadways, especially during graduation weekends, is often considered an annoyance by the public.**

The ID check station for entrance to MCRD Parris Island is currently located at the mouth of the Parris Island Malecon Drive causeway, thus, traffic can back up onto state route 280/802, causing congestion and delays. The traffic volume is particularly problematic during Family Days and graduation weekends when the installation hosts XXXX visitors on average. Traffic congestion has been seen at times as a source of friction between the installation and the community. However, as noted in the "Strengths" section of this analysis, MCRD Parris Island is set to realign the main security checkpoint from Port Royal Island to Horse Island. This change is expected to ameliorate some of the traffic concerns associated with the installation.

- **Environmental concerns due to ammunition from ranges deposited in Broad River.**

The rifle ranges aboard MCRD Parris Island are not currently equipped with berms or other entrapment methods, resulting in the deposit of tens of thousands of pounds of lead and copper annually in the Broad River and wetlands beyond the range targets. While the health and environmental hazards posed by copper and lead are well-documented in general terms, the occurrence of munitions constituents contamination at the site is not easily defined or quantified. While there is not necessarily a public outcry against the installation with regards to this environmental concern, there is a public awareness that this contamination is taking place and that it be addressed. MCRD Parris Island currently has a military construction (MILCON) project underway to construct berms to help alleviate this contamination.

## **Opportunities**

- **Formalize interaction/communication between MCRD Parris Island and its neighbors.**

While MCRD Parris Island enjoys a positive relationship with its neighbors, no formal channels of communication or recurring outreach opportunities currently exist beyond the Depot's participation in the Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan Implementation Committee. Establishing formal mechanisms for communication will allow MCRD Parris Island and its neighbors to communicate regularly and coordinate on issues of mutual concern, including traffic, stormwater management, use of surrounding waterways, regional development proposals, and concerns about sea level rise. "Formal" interaction may take the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a recurring collaborative working group, or other mechanism that requires participation by multiple parties.

- **Coordinate with relevant stakeholders regarding traffic concerns, access to waterways, and stormwater management fees.**

To alleviate current and potential sources of community-military friction, MCRD Parris Island should work with its partners to coordinate on solutions to issues such as traffic, waterway access, and stormwater management requirements. As was discussed in the "weaknesses" section of this SWOT, traffic congestion resulting from visitor traffic has been identified as a source of negative impact on the community. Affected parties should explore whether shuttle or ferry services – or other strategies – should be employed to ameliorate traffic concerns. As is mentioned in the "threats" section, waterway access for recreational boaters around MCRD Parris Island and the unresolved requirement for the payment of stormwater management fees is also a source of conflict between the installation and the community. Opportunities exist to coordinate with other partners on solutions to these challenges.

## **Threats**

- **Potential impacts of the redevelopment of the Port of Port Royal.**

Several redevelopment proposals have been proposed for the Port of Port Royal, a 317-acre non-operational port owned by the S.C. State Ports Authority. Of the 317-acre site, 52 acres are suitable for development and boast deep water access and a long coastline. Since 2006, three developers have tried unsuccessfully to buy it for residential and commercial development. One recent proposal is to develop a museum and visitor center to support visitation at Santa Elena, the oldest Spanish settlement in the United States, which is located on Parris Island. To support potential redevelopment, the Town of Port Royal has adopted a planned unit development agreement, which would allow up to 425 residences and 250,000 square feet of commercial space. In March of 2014, the Town also began considering purchasing the port property itself in order to more effectively control the type of potential development at the site. While the sale of the port presents significant challenges regardless of the buyer, future development of the site may have ramifications on operations at MCRD Parris Island. Development would likely increase recreational boating traffic around the installation and, thus, increase pressure to open some waterways that are currently restricted while range operations are underway.



- **Potential effects on training due to increased recreational boating.**

The public has unrestricted access to the waters around MCRD Parris Island most of the time. The only exception is the Restricted Area north and west of the rifle ranges, which includes part of the Broad River shoreline and all of Archers Creek. Public access to this area is currently totally restricted when the rifle ranges are in use. Any further development of the areas around the installation that may increase boating traffic or land use incompatibilities should be discussed and coordinated with the installation to avoid conflicts between civilian and military land uses.

- **Population and political power shifts within Beaufort County.**

Accelerated population growth in Beaufort County has paralleled burgeoning tourism and retirement-related service industries, diluting the Marine Corps' once dominant impact on the county's economy. Because of the significant population growth over the last 30 years in the Hilton Head and Bluffton areas, the southern portion of Beaufort County has picked up an extra seat on County Council, shifting the political center of gravity away from the northern portion of the county. This may result in a new County Council whose focus tends towards tourism-related interests that could create conflicts with military training missions. The effects of this dynamic population shift are still unknown, yet highlight the need for the Marine Corps to engage with its local partners in a way that is mutually supportive.

- **Significant potential impacts of climate change on operations.**

Climate change has long been identified as a potential concern for operational and installation sustainability. The threat of sea level rise, increased temperatures, drought events, and increased storm frequency and severity has far-reaching implications for both MCRD Parris Island and the neighboring communities. These potential climate-induced effects have the potential to impact MCRD Parris Island's facilities and infrastructure, in turn hindering the installation's ability to effectively perform operations and mission-related training. The low-lying topography of the South Carolina Lowcountry, and MCRD Parris Island in particular, makes the area especially vulnerable to even slight rises in sea level. The peak elevation at the Depot is only approximately 20 feet above sea level (ASL), with the majority of the property at less than 10 feet ASL. The Depot's facilities are already vulnerable to storm surges, but the prospect of sustained sea level rise poses a much greater challenge to the long-term sustainability of the installation mission.

- **Unresolved stormwater management requirements.**

Water quality is of vast importance to Beaufort County. It is seen as the lifeblood of the area's recreation, fishing, and tourism industries, as well as a key factor in the high quality of life of the county's residents. Beaufort County has levied a stormwater management fee on all property owners, to include the three Marine Corps installations in the county. Marine Corps counsel, however, believes that the language in the stormwater management ordinance effectively renders the fee a tax and, since a local entity may not tax the federal government, the Marine Corps should be exempt from paying the management fee. This issue has essentially remained unresolved over the last six years and remains a source of community-

military friction for some. Furthermore, there is a possibility of more stringent requirements in the future, especially if efforts to list Port Royal Sound as an Estuary of National Significance are successful.

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