

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

**GREAT LAKES REGION  
DETROIT AIRPORTS DISTRICT OFFICE  
ROMULUS, MICHIGAN**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

**for**

**OBSTRUCTION REMOVAL**

**at**

**PELLSTON REGIONAL AIRPORT  
PELLSTON, MICHIGAN**



**June, 2025**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) prepared this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the obstruction removal at the Pellston Regional Airport (Sponsor).

In accordance with FAA Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*; FAA Order 5050.4B, *NEPA Implementing Instructions for Airport Actions*, and based on the evaluation of the Final Environmental Assessment (Final EA), there are no significant impacts associated with the Sponsor's Proposed Project. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be prepared, and a FONSI is being issued. This FONSI provides a review of the Sponsor's Proposed Project and the basis of the FAA's finding. Expected environmental consequences of the Proposed Project and mitigation commitments are defined and described further in the Final EA.

## **II. AIRPORT SPONSOR'S PROPOSED PROJECT & FEDERAL ACTION**

The Sponsor's Proposed Project involves the removal of obstructions in the approaches of Runway 14/32 and Runway 5/23. Obstructions include existing trees, as well as vegetation and trees within 10 feet of becoming an obstruction.

The Sponsor's Proposed Project requires the following Federal Actions from the FAA, which is subject to NEPA review:

- Determinations under 49 U.S.C. §§ 47106 and 47107 regarding eligibility of the Sponsor's Proposed Project to receive Federal funding under the Airport Improvement Program (AIP).

## **III. PURPOSE & NEED**

The purpose and need of the Sponsor's Proposed Project are to enhance safety and utility of the Airport for current and future users. The obstructions were found in 2021 and 2023 Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) aerial surveys at both ends of Runway 14/32 and Runway 5/23.

## **IV. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

In accordance with FAA Order 1050.1F, the Final EA (Chapter 2) identified and evaluated all reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Project. The following Final EA alternatives were reviewed for obstruction removal.

### **No Action Alternative**

The No Action Alternative assumes that no action would be taken to remove obstructions. The No Action Alternative assumes that the existing trees identified as obstructions would continue to remain as penetrations to the FAR Part 77 Approach Surface, Visual Approach Surface, State of Michigan Licensing Surface, GQS, PAPI LSCS, and PAPI OCS, as presented in Chapter 1.0 Purpose and Need. Under this alternative, PLN would remain in its current state with no plans to remove obstructions in the Runway 14/32 and Runway 5/23 approaches. The No Action Alternative does not meet the Sponsor's purpose and need for the project; however, it has been included in the analysis per NEPA and FAA Order 1050.1.F. The No Action Alternative would be carried forward as a baseline alternative for environmental consequences to be compared to the preferred alternative.

Alternative 1 – Clear, Grub, and Grade Current and Future Obstructions in Upland and Wetland Areas in the Runway 14/32 and Runway 5/23 Approaches

Alternative 1 proposes to clear, grub, and grade approximately 91 acres of current and future obstructions to the FAR Part 77 Approach Surface, Visual Approach Surface, State of Michigan Licensing Surface, GQS, PAPI LSCS, and PAPI OCS off the ends of Runway 14/32 and Runway 5/23. The obstructions would be removed in two phases. In Phase A, approximately 37 acres of tree obstructions on 16 parcels of Airport property or property with existing avigation easements would be removed, while approximately 54 acres of tree obstructions on 46 parcels of public or private property requiring acquisition of new avigation easements would be removed in Phase B. Although Alternative 1 meets the project’s purpose and need and provides a long-term solution to vegetation management in the Runway 14/32 and Runway 5/23 approaches. This alternative would have the most impacts of the build alternatives on wetlands and has been removed from consideration.

Alternative 2 – Airport Sponsor’s Proposed Project (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative 2, approximately 91 acres of current and future obstructions to the FAR Part 77 Approach Surface, Visual Approach Surface, State of Michigan Licensing Surface, GQS, PAPI LSCS, and PAPI OCS would be cleared off the ends of Runway 14/32 and Runway 5/23. Like Alternative 1, the obstructions would be removed in two phases. Approximately 37 acres of tree obstructions on 16 parcels of Airport property or property with existing avigation easements would be removed in Phase A. Approximately 54 acres of tree obstructions on 46 parcels of public or private property that require acquisition of new avigation easements would be removed in Phase B. Alternative 2 is a reasonable alternative because it meets the project’s purpose and need, provides a long-term solution to vegetation management in upland areas, and minimizes impacts to wetlands.

**V. PUBLIC REVIEW & COMMENT**

Public involvement and agency coordination was conducted by The Sponsor at the beginning of the EA process.

The Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft EA and notice for a Public Meeting was published in the local newspaper. Public comments were accepted from January 15, 2025, through February 14, 2025. Physical copies of the Draft EA were available for public review at the Pellston Regional Airport during normal business hours as well as an electronic copy available on the Airport’s website.

A public meeting was held on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Agency and Public comments can be found in Appendix L of the Final EA.

**VI. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES & MITIGATION**

The Final EA (Chapter 3) describes the environmental consequences of the Sponsor’s Proposed Project and proposed avoidance and mitigation measures. The Sponsor shall implement the following mitigation measures as a condition of environmental approval of the Proposed Project listed in this FONSI.

**1. Biotic Communities / Threatened and Endangered Species**

The Sponsor will implement the following mitigation:

- Selective tree removals (i.e., individual trees) will be employed to the greatest extent possible, especially in areas where the obstruction density is low. In wetland areas, trees will be cut and removed but grubbing or other land disturbance will be avoided.
- Tree cutting will be avoided from April 15 to October 31 and optimally take place under frozen ground conditions to minimize ground disturbance in wetland areas.

## **2. Department of Transportation Act, Section 4(f)**

The Sponsor will implement the following mitigation:

During tree clearing on the Petoskey to Mackinaw Trail, access will be restricted for safety reasons. It is anticipated that the trail will remain open but rerouted at a safe distance away from tree removal activities. The MDNR requests a minimum 30 days' notice prior to any work or tree clearing activities.

Short-term signage will be installed, and safety personnel will be present during construction to notify users that tree removals are in progress.

## **3. Socioeconomics and Children's Environmental Health and Safety Risks**

The Sponsor will implement the following mitigation:

Where avigation easements are not currently in place, they will be obtained prior to tree clearing activities. Property owners with trees on their property that are considered current or future obstructions to the runway approaches will receive a one-time replacement with a low-growing species to help mitigate tree impacts to their property if they so desire. Specific mitigation and tree species will be determined during final design in coordination with the property owner, the FAA, and the Airport.

## **4. Water Resources**

The Sponsor will implement the following mitigation:

Wetlands:

- Proposed mitigation for wetland impacts is expected to include a Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) Part 303 Wetland Protection permit and mitigation of up to 4.766 acres of forested wetlands (1:1 ratio). Mitigation will include the purchase of wetland credits at an EGLE approved mitigation bank.
- Final mitigation requirements are at the discretion of EGLE and will be incorporated into the required wetland permit.
- During final design of the Preferred Alternative, modifications will be considered to lessen the impacts on regulated wetlands.
- All delineated wetlands will be shown on construction plans to protect them from any possible direct or indirect impacts and construction documents will require avoidance and erosion control measures.

## **VII. FAA FINDING**

After careful and thorough consideration of the facts contained in the Final EA, the undersigned finds the proposed Federal Actions are consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives as set forth in Section 101(a) of NEPA and other applicable environmental requirements and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment or include any condition requiring any

consultation pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of NEPA. As a result, the FAA will not prepare an EIS for these Federal Actions.

Having met all relevant requirements for environmental considerations and consultations, the proposed Federal Actions are authorized to be taken at such time as other requirements are met.

These decisions are taken pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 40101, et seq. The FAA finding regarding the proposed airport improvements and funding for the Pellston Regional Airport, constitute an order of the Administrator, which is subject to review by the Court of Appeals of the United States, in accordance with the provisions of Section 1006 of Federal Aviation Act of 1958, as amended, 49 U.S.C. § 46110.

APPROVED:   X  

DISAPPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

**JOHN L. MAYFIELD JR** Digitally signed by JOHN L. MAYFIELD JR  
Date: 2025.06.03 11:43:41 -04'00'

John L. Mayfield Jr., Manager  
Detroit Airports District Office  
Federal Aviation Administration

June 3, 2025

Date