



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Mark R. Warner
Governor

July 27, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman
Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

I want to reiterate my concern about recent actions by the National Base Realignment and Closure Commission related to Oceana Naval Air Station. Oceana remains an invaluable asset to the United States Navy, especially in its role as a Master Jet Base and training installation.

In June of 2003, I wrote Admiral Robert J. Natter advising him that the Commonwealth remained committed to assisting the Navy with pursuing viable Virginia alternatives for a new Outlying Landing Field (OLF) if acquisition of the proposed site in Washington County North Carolina was delayed. As you know, legal actions during the past two years have in-fact delayed efforts with the Washington County site that was chosen as optimal because of its proximity to Oceana and Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station.

In light of these continuing legal delays and the desires articulated by national BRAC Commission at its hearing on July 19, 2005, I believe it important to highlight Virginia's earlier recommendation that Fort Pickett in Blackstone, Virginia be considered the best option to rapidly meet the Navy's OLF needs. This 42,000 acres Army installation already possesses necessary runway and attendant aviation support activities that could be immediately transformed to address OLF Navy training needs. It could be accomplished at a fraction of the cost, time and effort needed to design and build a completely new OLF facility on land not yet purchased or already under federal control.

The Navy's review, as outlined in Admiral Natters' July 3, 2003, correspondence attached, apparently did not contemplate the possibility of the then upcoming BRAC process facilitating this option. Clearly the Navy did not expect the lengthy legal delays that have materialized with the Washington County North Carolina site that have all but halted progress. Based upon current discussions as well as concerns that pursuit of the Washington County site could be permanently stopped, any serious examinations in support of the Navy OLF needs must give more detailed consideration to Fort Pickett

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than has been given thus far. The current Army missions at Fort Pickett could be adjusted under the BRAC process to support this option, allowing dual use. Utilization of this site for an OLF would further reinforce the concept of joint service activities. The Commonwealth is prepared to work with both the Army and Navy to ensure the installation and its surrounding areas meet its long-term needs of both services.

Evaluation of Fort Pickett should not deter your staff from alternatively evaluating the feasibility of the Naval Support Activity Northwest Annex in Chesapeake being converted for OLF use. The NSA is 3,624 acre federally owned site straddling the Virginia North Carolina border. Our preliminary review indicates that the combination of adjacent compatible refuge areas as well as contiguous land that could be procured makes this an attractive site for alternative consideration. Primary landing and desired buffer areas could be achieved. The core site is comparable in size to the main Oceana installation and the existence of infrastructure could support transformation needed to address Navy OLF needs at a fraction of the cost, time and effort needed to design and build a completely new site on land that is not currently federally owned. The Commonwealth is prepared to work with the Navy to ensure the installation and its surrounding areas meet long-term needs as well as in relocating current functions to a suitable alternate nearby.

The Commonwealth remains firmly committed to sustaining Oceana with its current mission as the Navy's East Coast Master Jet Base. The combination of recent statements by the leadership of the United States Navy and a review of facts reinforce this position. The options presented by the Commonwealth, we believe, will allow the Navy to quickly address its growing OLF needs while sustaining the core missions at Oceana. This will only strengthen the already solid Master Jet Base activities at Oceana and it's highly ranked strategic military value.

The full resources of the Commonwealth of Virginia are committed to this effort and are available to assist your staff. I have designated The Honorable George W. Foresman (804) 225-3826 and The Honorable Michael J. Schewel (804) 786-7831 to answer questions and provide all needed information.

Sincerely,

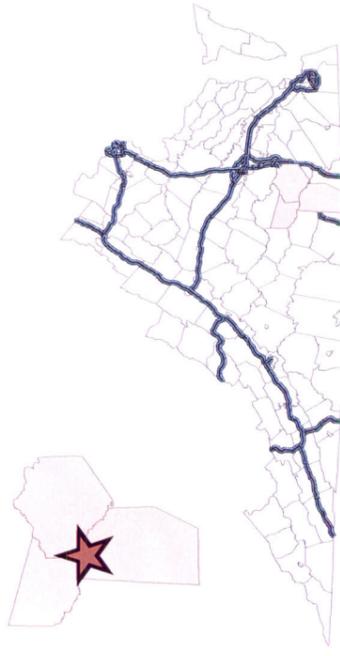


Mark R. Warner

MRW/cmg

Attachments

Fort Pickett Brunswick, Dinwiddie, and Nottoway Counties

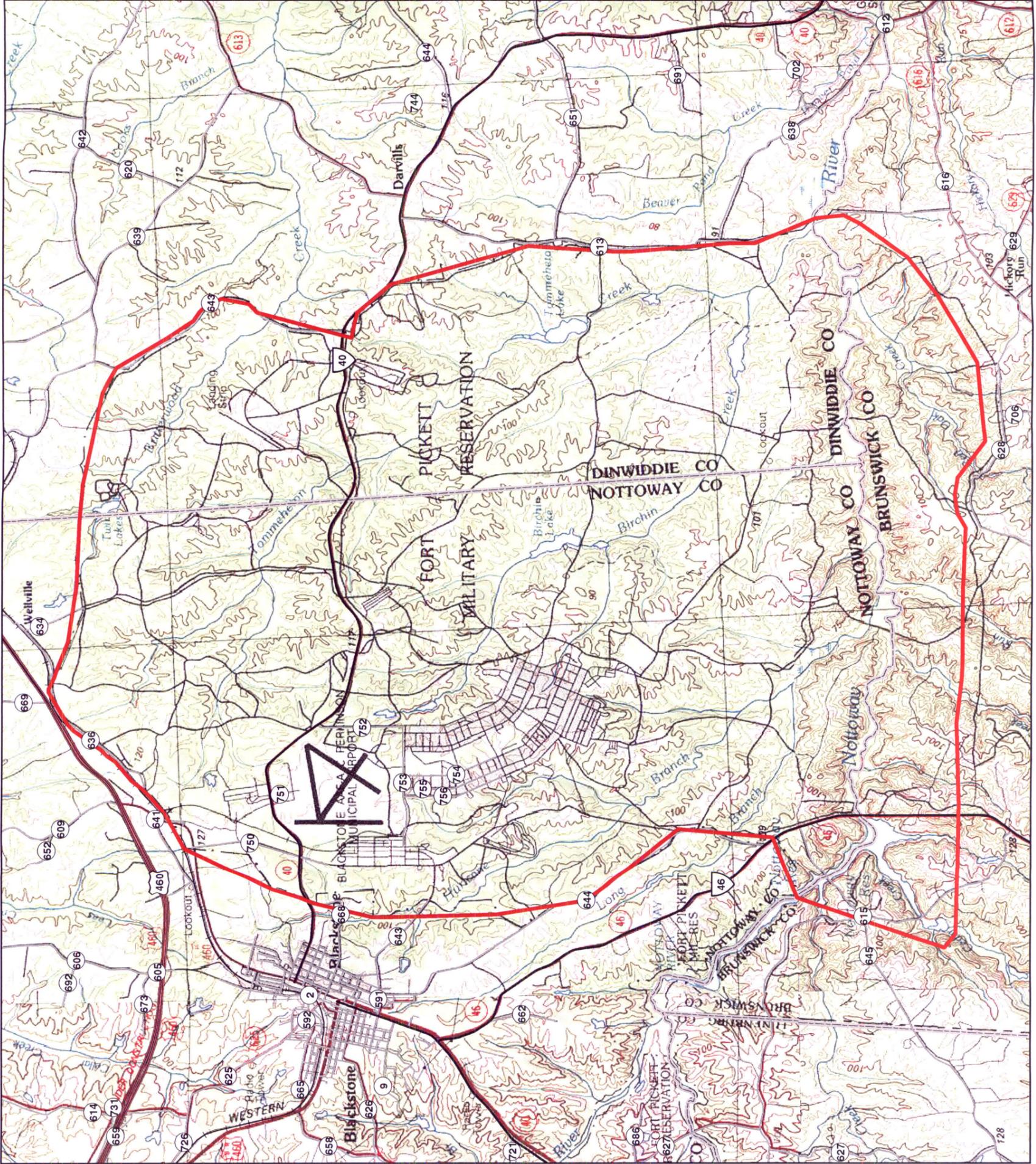


-  Site
-  County Boundary
-  US Interstate Highway
-  US Primary Highway
-  VA Primary Highway
-  VA Secondary Highway
-  Railroad

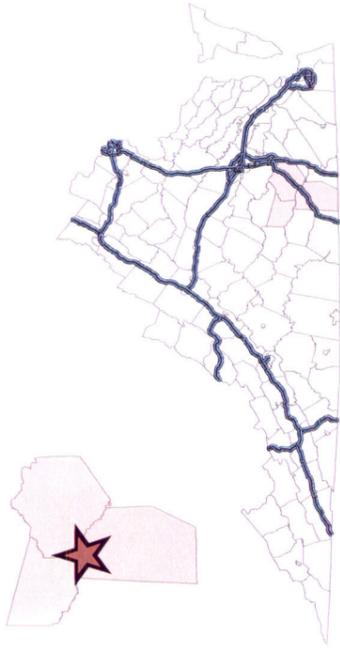
Sources: National Geographic 2001
Virginia Economic Development Partnership 2005
Virginia Department of Transportation 2004



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Fort Pickett Brunswick, Dinwiddie, and Nottoway Counties



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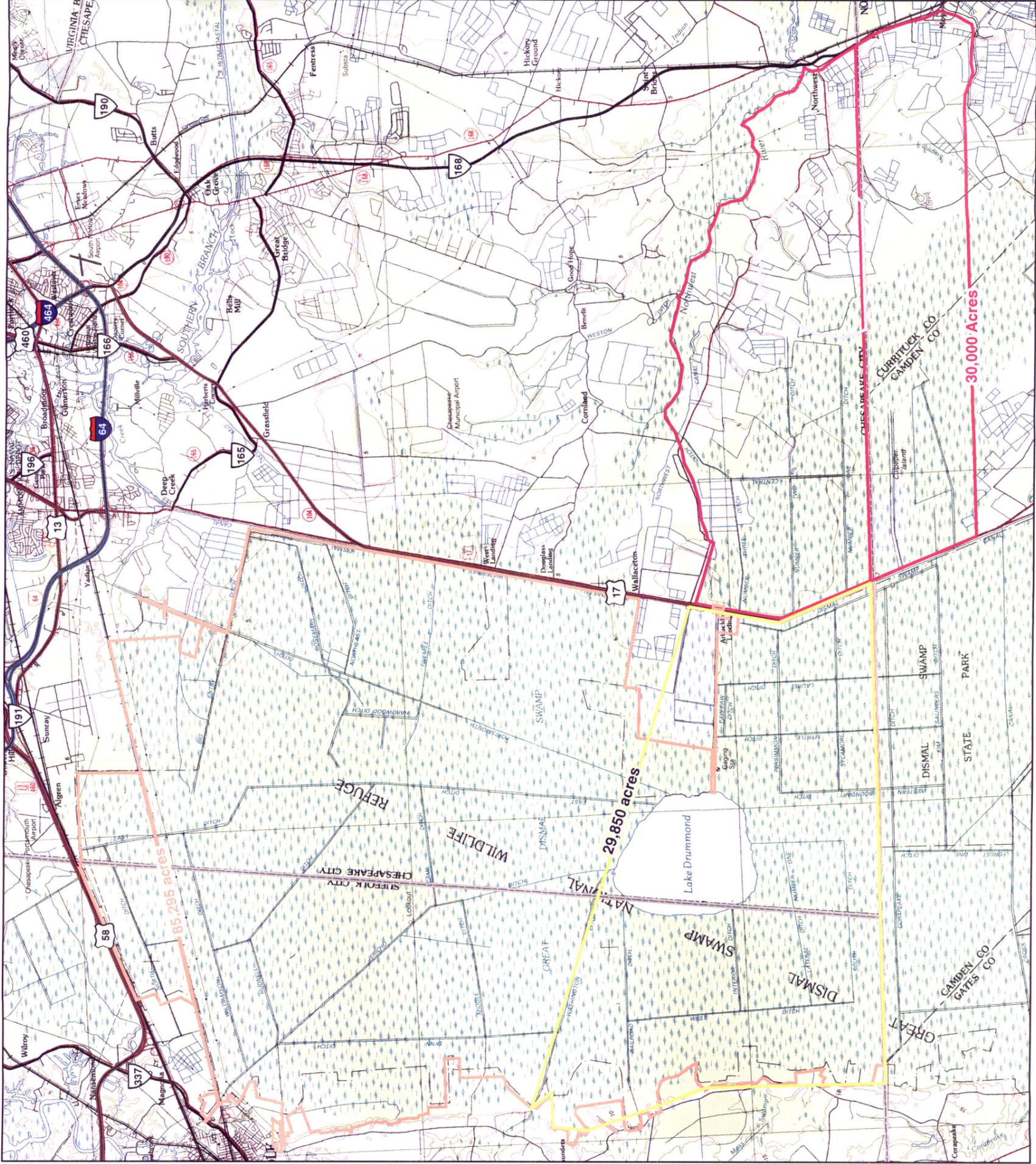
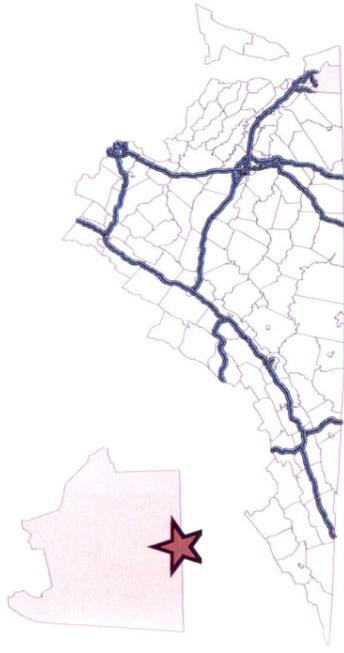
Sources: Aerial Imagery © Commonwealth of Virginia 2002
Virginia Economic Development Partnership 2005
Virginia Department of Transportation 2004



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NSA, Norfolk Northwest Annex Chesapeake City



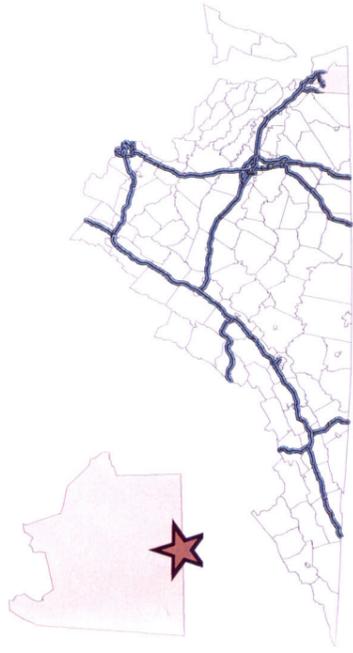
- Site
- Naval Security Group NW
- Great Dismal Swamp
- County Boundary
- US Interstate Highway
- US Primary Highway
- VA Primary Highway
- Railroad

Sources:
 National Geographic 2001
 Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation 2004
 Virginia Department of Transportation 2004
 Virginia Economic Development Partnership 2005



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Sources: Aerial Imagery © 2002 Commonwealth of Virginia
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7/22/2005

