



An Introduction to the US Fish and Wildlife Service's, Urban Wildlife Refuge Program, an Airport Perspective

MR. MARK A. SCHMIDT

AIR FORCE BIRD/WILDLIFE AIRCRAFT STRIKE HAZARD TEAM

Mr. Mark A. Schmidt

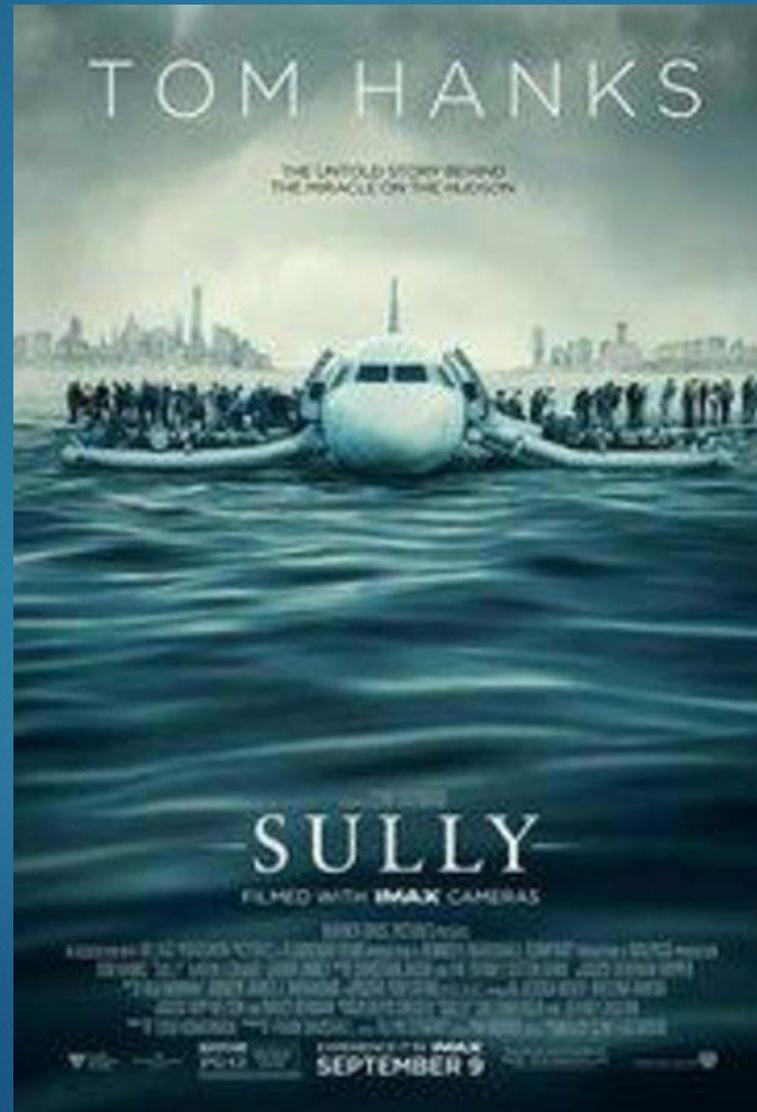
- ▶ US Air Force Reservist
 - ▶ 23+ Years as an Air Traffic Controller, Airfield Operations Experience
 - ▶ 16+ Years as a DoD/FAA Military to Civilian Aviation Liaison
- ▶ Here Today Presenting My Personal and Professional Thoughts and Opinions, Lessons Learned
- ▶ I am NOT...Voicing the Opinions of the Air Force nor DoD
- ▶ Official Air Force Written Guidance and Recommendations Pertaining to This Situation Will Follow at a Later Date

Here's A Famous Lieutenant Colonel...



Remember as a Lt Col, You're Old Enough to Know Better, and Absolutely Expendable!

And a Famous "BASH" Movie



Where Is He Going With This???

- ▶ Sadly, the Stage Is Set For a Really Bad Sequel
- ▶ But In Our (Hopefully Never Coming to Theater Near You) Sequel...
- ▶ Things Will Be a Bit Different
- ▶ In Our Sequel....

I'll Be the Famous Lieutenant Colonel Testifying



My Co-Worker, Mr. Dan Sullivan Will
Testify As Well:





But Our Sequel Will be Completely
Different...Because It Has Already Taken Place

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-28224917>, Crash Scene of USAF HH-60



Sadly, We Know How the Tragic Ending of Our Movie, and We Don't Ever Want to Tell This Story Again

Staff Sgt Afton Ponce, Capt Christopher Stover, Technical Sgt Dale Matthews and Capt Sean Ruane, perished on 7 January 2014, when their HH-60 struck several geese, which penetrated the cockpit windscreen and struck both pilots.

-<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-28224917>

We Have Been There, Seen That and NEVER AGAIN!

- ▶ The Safety World Has Seen All of These Movies, and Lived the Real Life Tragedies Before
 - ▶ Via the DoD Safety Centers and the NTSB
- ▶ There's No Reason For Us to Sit before Congress or Testify For a Safety Board
- ▶ We Know How This All Can End, and to Misquote the Movie Line, "We Still Can't Handle the Truth!!"



So Let's Take a Look At How The Stage and Backdrop of Our Movie Sequel Came to Be.

Albuquerque Sunport International Airport/Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico

USFWS Urban Wildlife Refuge Program

- ▶ From the US Fish and Wildlife Service's website:
 - ▶ "Urban areas present a strategic opportunity to reach new audiences that are currently not visiting nor aware of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. National Wildlife Refuges that in the heart of where the people are located provide the best opportunity to engage new audiences." - www.fws.gov/urban/wildlifeRefuges.php, 13 July 2018
 - ▶ Simple Concept...Bring the Nature Experience to the Urban setting
 - ▶ BUT...The URBAN Setting Should Not Include Nor Impact the AIRFIELD

Valle d'Oro National Wildlife Refuge

Secure | https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Valle_de_Oro/about.html

 **U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service** [All Refuges](#)

 **Valle de Oro**
National Wildlife Refuge | New Mexico

 A UNIT OF THE
National Wildlife
Refuge System

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About the Refuge



Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, the Southwest's first urban wildlife refuge, serves as an urban oasis for both wildlife and people.

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MAPS

MULTIMEDIA

WHAT WE DO
Resource Management
Conservation

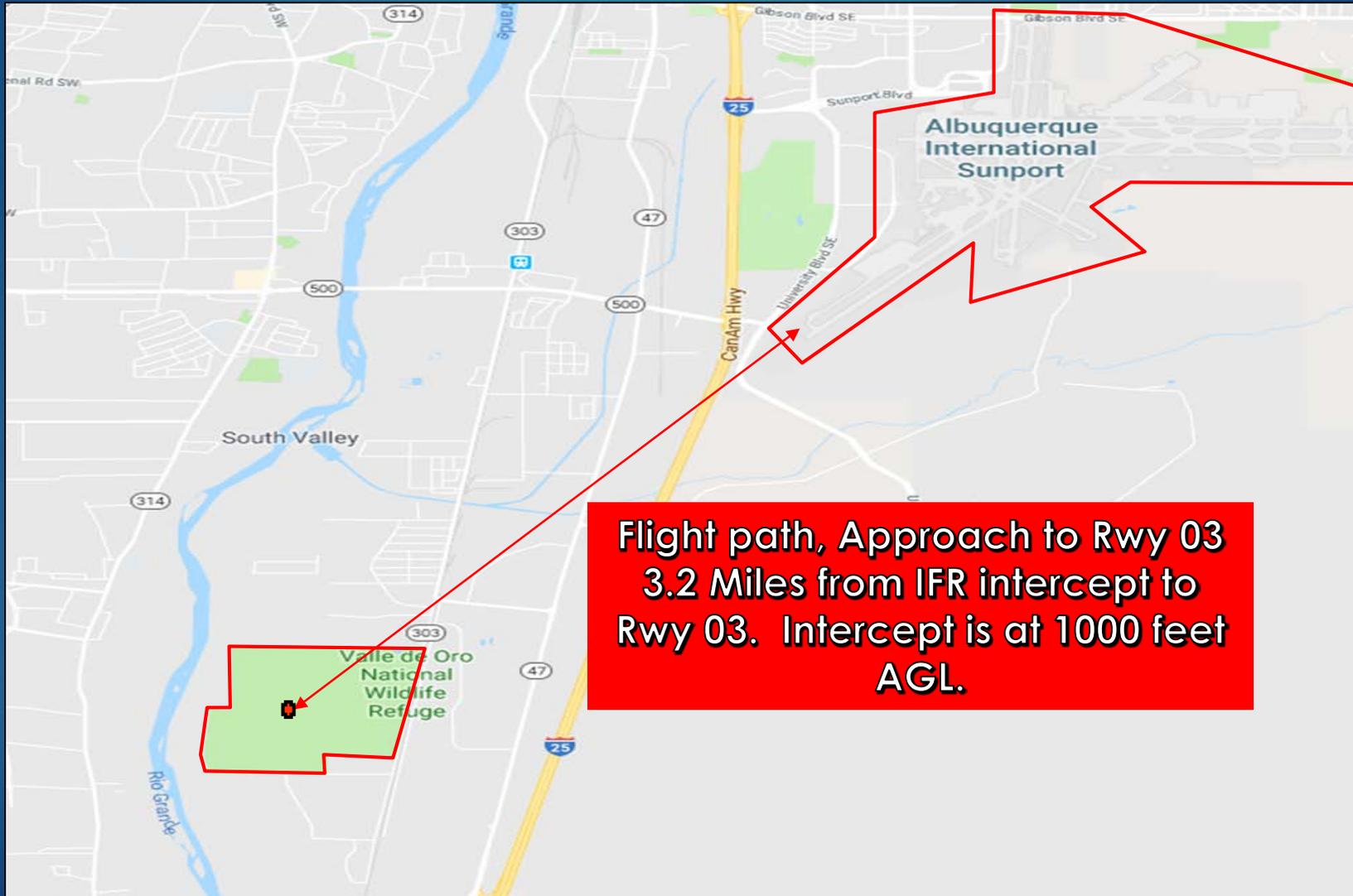
- Approximately 570 Acres
- Former Alfalfa Fields
- Purchased the Land
- Purchased the Water Rights
- Environmental Assessment Process Allows for Seasonal Flooding
- Support From Local Neighbors
- "Friends of Valle d'Oro" Group Helps Fund Raise

Friends of Valle De Oro NWR

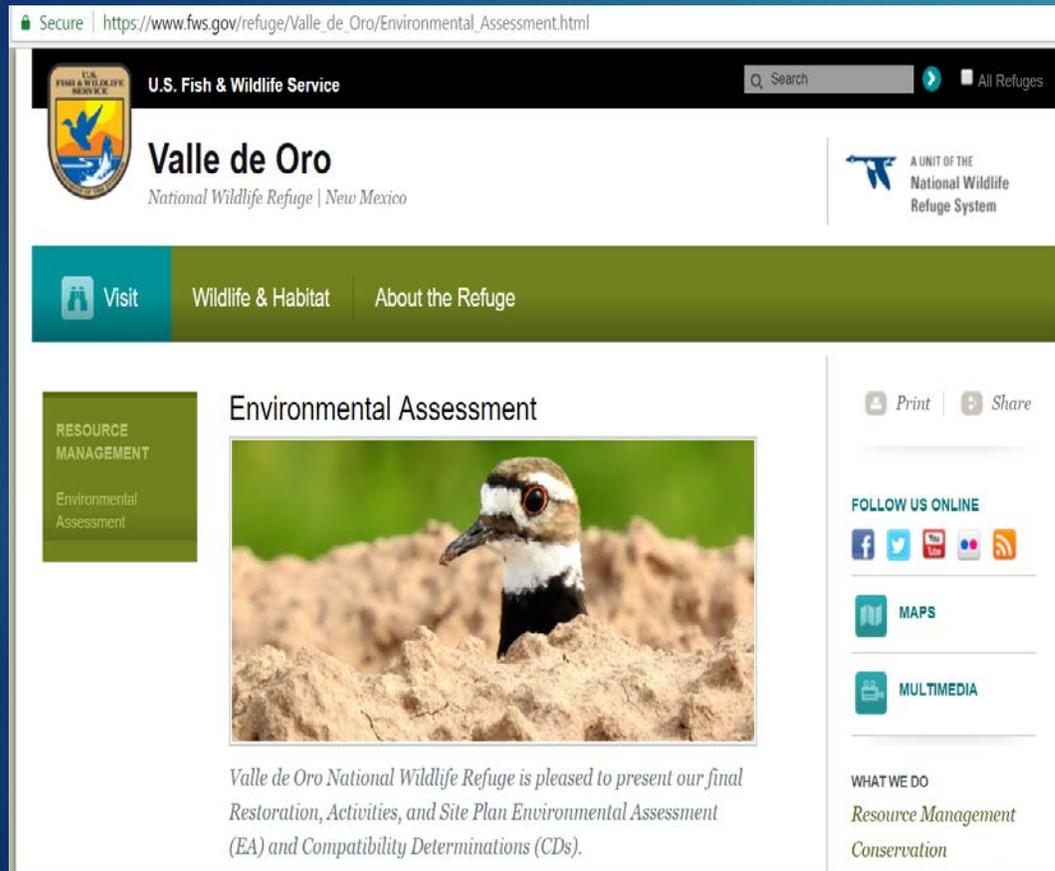


- Assist in Fund Raising
- Writing Grant Proposals
- Gala Events
- Corporate Sponsorship
- Key Local Partnerships
- They Help Provide Feel Good Community Outreach, Freeing Up USFWS to Focus on Development and Operations

Albuquerque International Sunport/Kirtland Air Force Base NM and the Valle d'Oro NWR



Valle d'Oro's Environmental Assessment



The screenshot shows the website for Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge. The header includes the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service logo and the text "U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service" and "Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge | New Mexico". A search bar and "All Refuges" link are also present. The main navigation bar has "Visit", "Wildlife & Habitat", and "About the Refuge". The content area features a "Resource Management" sidebar with "Environmental Assessment" selected, a "Print" and "Share" button, and a "Follow Us Online" section with social media icons. The main content includes a photo of a bird on a nest and a paragraph of text.

Secure | https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Valle_de_Oro/Environmental_Assessment.html

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Valle de Oro
National Wildlife Refuge | New Mexico

A UNIT OF THE
National Wildlife
Refuge System

Visit Wildlife & Habitat About the Refuge

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
Environmental Assessment

Environmental Assessment

Print Share

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MAPS

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WHAT WE DO
Resource Management
Conservation

Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge is pleased to present our final Restoration, Activities, and Site Plan Environmental Assessment (EA) and Compatibility Determinations (CDs).

- ▶ Plan B Approved, Establishing the Go Ahead to Develop Seasonal Floodplains (Wetlands in a Desert Environment)
- ▶ Request From the Air Force and Several Corporate Airlines for a Full Environmental Impact Statement Was Dismissed With the EA's Findings Of No Significant Impact "FONSI"
- ▶ Promotion of the EA Process Was Not Well Conveyed to All KABQ Partners and Airlines

Birds at Valle d'Oro...Before Seasonal Wetland Flooding Program



Photos taken 25 Jan 2018

Pilot's Perspective



Birds at Valle d'Oro...Before Seasonal Wetland Flooding Program



Photos taken 25 Jan 2018

How We Got Here

- ▶ Communication Was Apparently Lacking At Several Levels
 - ▶ How Much Did the ABQ Sunport Know and When
 - ▶ What Was the FAA Regional Office Response and Follow On Actions
 - ▶ USDA Was Largely Excluded From The Development Planning Phase
 - ▶ When and How Were the Airlines Made Aware of These Plans
 - ▶ Stakeholders, Such as the Air Traffic Controllers Were Completely Neglected
 - ▶ Federal Government Agencies Need to Be Open and Honest
 - ▶ Big Politics for a Small Town
 - ▶ City Owned/Operated Airport in Shadows of US Senate/Congressionally Supported Development
- ▶ This Type of Project Needed Input and Awareness at Multiple Levels
- ▶ **Wouldn't It Be Nice If We All Had an Agreement...Oh Wait,**

We Do Have Said Memorandum

Secure | <https://www.faa.gov/airports/environmental/media/wildlife-hazard-mou-2003.pdf>

**Memorandum of Agreement Between
the Federal Aviation Administration,
the U.S. Air Force,
the U.S. Army,
the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,
the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and
the U.S. Department of Agriculture
to Address Aircraft-Wildlife Strikes**

PURPOSE

The signatory agencies know the risks that aircraft-wildlife strikes pose to safe aviation.

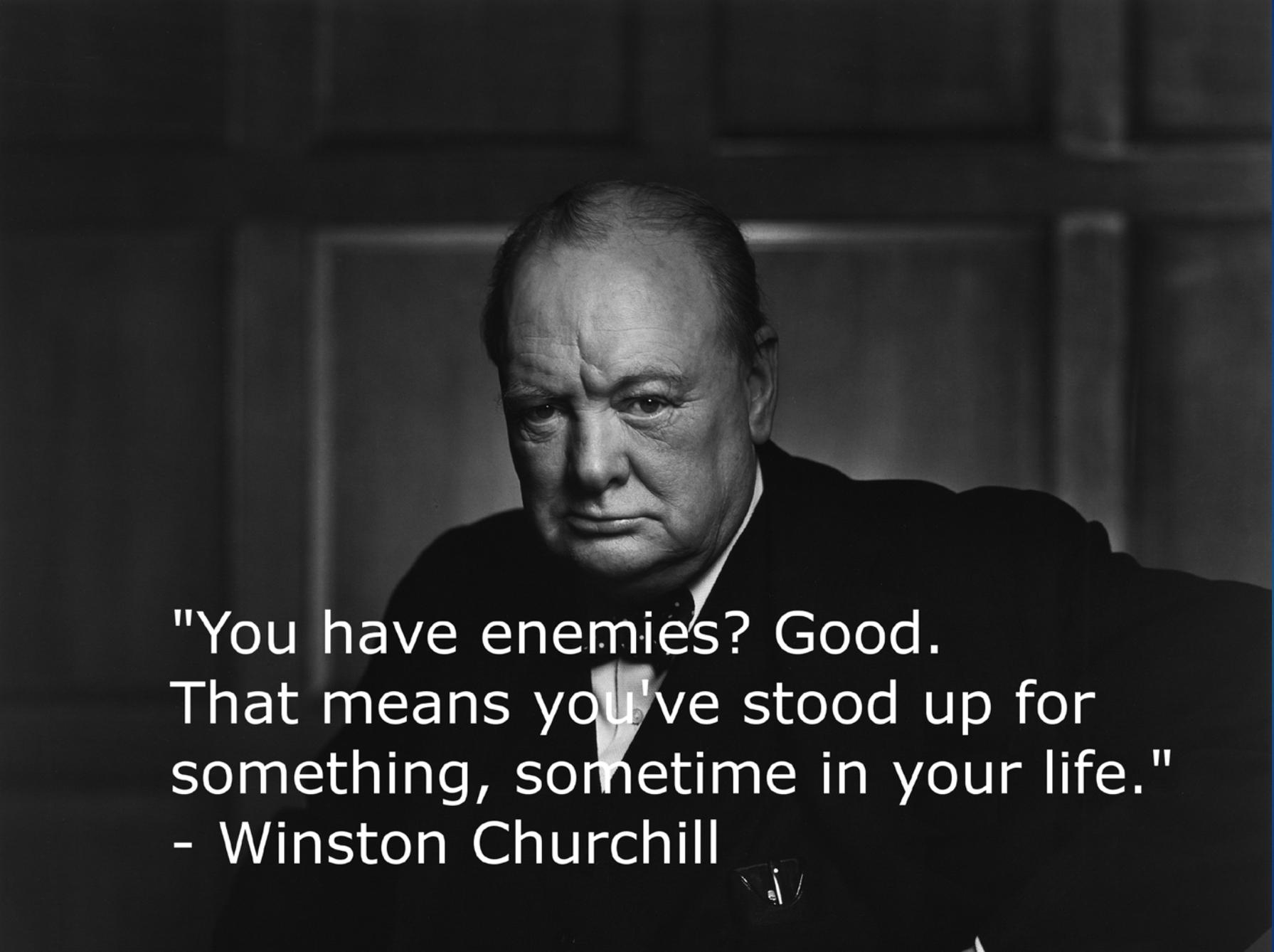
This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) acknowledges each signatory agency's respective missions. Through this MOA, the agencies establish procedures necessary to coordinate their missions to more effectively address existing and future environmental conditions contributing to aircraft-wildlife strikes throughout the United States. These efforts are intended to minimize wildlife risks to aviation and human safety, while protecting the Nation's valuable environmental resources.

How to Ensure It Doesn't Happen to Your Airport

- ▶ Communicate As Much As Possible, At All Levels, With All of Your Neighbors, Partners and Stakeholders
- ▶ Ignorance, and Ignoring Small Ideas Is NOT An Option
- ▶ Share Your Struggles, Build Your Team and Leverage What You Can
- ▶ Community Involvement is Absolutely Paramount
- ▶ Stay Abreast of Any and All Commercial Real Estate Transactions
- ▶ Above All Keep Your Federal Agencies and Their Lines of Communication Wide Open

Take-A-Ways and Homework

- ▶ Find Out What Is Going On With Your Airport
- ▶ Make Friends With Your Neighbors
- ▶ Public Affairs and Community Outreach is Absolutely Essential
- ▶ Fortify Your 5 Mile Radius With Knowledge, Insights and Friendly Relations
- ▶ Be Intently Aware of Real Estate Developments of Any Sorts
- ▶ Work and Partner With Your Federal and State Agencies, USDA, FAA, USFWS and DoD

A black and white portrait of Winston Churchill, looking slightly to the left with a serious expression. He is wearing a dark suit jacket, a white shirt, and a dark tie. The background is a dark, paneled wall. The image is set against a blue gradient background with a yellow rectangle in the top right corner.

"You have enemies? Good.
That means you've stood up for
something, sometime in your life."
- Winston Churchill