

**BY ORDER OF THE COMMANDER  
ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE**

**ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE  
INSTRUCTION 11-502**



**9 JUNE 2025**

***Flying Operations***

***SMALL UNMANNED  
AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS***

**COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PUBLICATION IS MANDATORY**

---

**ACCESSIBILITY:** This publication is available on the e-Publishing website at [www.e-Publishing.af.mil](http://www.e-Publishing.af.mil) for downloading or ordering.

**RELEASABILITY:** There are no releasability restrictions on this publication.

---

OPR: 78 OSS/SUAS

Certified by: 78 OSS/CC  
(Lt Col Christopher Lessard)

Supersedes: ROBNSAFBI11-502, 2 November 2021

Pages: 15

---

This instruction implements AFMAN 11-502, *Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems*. It establishes policies and procedures essential for the safe and orderly conduct of small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (SUAS) operations at Robins Air Force Base (RAFB). The provisions of this instruction are directive upon units assigned and attached to RAFB and those off base organizations serviced by the SUAS Management Office (78 OSS/SUAS). This publication may not be supplemented at any level. Requests for waivers must come through the chain of command from the commander of the office seeking relief from compliance. Waiver requests must be submitted to the OPR of this publication for coordination prior to certification and approval; waiver authority has not been delegated. The waiver approval authority for all compliance items within this publication are at Wing Level (Tier T-3). Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) using Air Force (AF) Form 847, Recommendation for Change of Publication; route AF Forms 847 from the field through the appropriate function's chain of command. Ensure that all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with Air Force Instruction (AFI33-322), *Records Management and Information Governance Program*, and disposed of in accordance with Air Force Records Information Management System (AFRIMS) Records Disposition Schedule (RDS) located at <https://www.my.af.mil/afirms/afirms/afirms/rims.cfm>. See Attachment 1 for a glossary of references and supporting information.

***SUMMARY OF CHANGES***

This document has been revised and must be completely reviewed. Changes include the following: revised paragraph 4.1. Flight Approval Authority, 78 ABW/CC delegation of authority to the 78 OSS/CC; 4.8. Communications Requirements, added BDOC and ECC to the notification requirements.

**Table of Contents**

**Chapter 1— OVERVIEW 5**

1.1. Purpose. .... 5

1.2. Scope. .... 5

1.3. Responsibilities. .... 5

1.4. Review. .... 5

**Chapter 2— ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES 6**

2.1. General..... 6

2.2. SUAS Management Office..... 6

2.3. Group/Squadron/Unit Commanders/or equivalent..... 6

2.4. Squadron/unit SUAS Program Manager (PM)..... 7

2.5. SUAS-E, SUAS-I, and SUAS-O..... 7

**Chapter 3— PROCUREMENT REQUIREMENTS 8**

3.1. General..... 8

3.2. Spectrum Management..... 8

3.3. Concept of Employment (CONEMP)..... 8

3.4. DoD Commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) SUAS Cyber Security Exemptions.... 8

3.5. Technical Airworthiness Authority..... 8

3.6. Airspace Coordination and Approval..... 8

3.7. Domestic Use Guidance..... 8

**Chapter 4— OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS 9**

4.1. Flight Approval Authority..... 9

4.2. Safety/Risk Management..... 9

4.3. Medical Requirements..... 9

4.4. Government Contract Employees..... 9

4.5. Weather Requirements..... 9

4.6. Notice to Airmen (NOTAM)..... 10

4.7. SUAS Operations Area.....	10
4.8. Communications Requirements.....	10
4.9. Visual Observers (VO).....	10
4.10. Contingencies.....	10
4.11. Incident/Accident/Mishap Reporting.....	11
4.12. Stores or Weapons Release.....	11
4.13. Flight Data Capture.....	11
4.14. SUAS Equipment Custodian.....	11
<b>Chapter 5— SUAS-O TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION</b>	<b>12</b>
5.1. General. ....	12
5.2. Initial Training (IT).....	12
5.3. Mission Training (MT).....	12
5.4. Continuation Training (CT).....	12
<b>Attachment 1— GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFO</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Attachment 2— SUAS OPERATIONS AREA</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Attachment 3— SUAS SECTOR MAP</b>	<b>15</b>

## Chapter 1

### OVERVIEW

**1.1. Purpose.** This instruction provides guidance for Air Force civilian and military personnel, and DoD contractors employing or testing Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (SUAS) Groups 1, 2 and 3 at Robins AFB. See Attachment 1 for a glossary of references and supporting information. Additionally, ensure each unit's mission tasks operate under the appropriate authority IAW AFMAN 11-502, Attachment 8.

**1.2. Scope.** This instruction applies to all host, attached, mission partner, and other tasked units at Robins AFB.

**1.3. Responsibilities.** Commanders and supervisors at all levels are responsible for implementation of this instruction as it pertains to SUAS operations within their jurisdiction.

**1.4. Review.** The SUAS Management Office (78 OSS/SUAS) will review this instruction annually.

## Chapter 2

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**2.1. General.** The 78 OSS/SUAS is designated as the installation level SUAS Management Office for Robins AFB.

**2.2. SUAS Management Office (78 OSS/SUAS) will:**

2.2.1. Provide for the safe and effective integration of SUAS capability at Robins AFB.

2.2.2. As required, provide units with current checklist to follow, and guidance to assist units in establishing SUAS programs within their organization.

2.2.3. Ensure compliance with this instruction by all units. Provide staff support and assist those units in managing their training programs to meet the unit's Mission Essential Task List (METL) requirements.

2.2.4. Administer SUAS standardization and evaluation program IAW AFMAN 11-502.

2.2.5. Approve all and de-conflict Flight Authorizations for SUAS operations at Robins AFB.

2.2.6. Maintain Flight Crew Information File (FCIF) and Special Interest Items (SII) issued from MAJCOM or Numbered Air Force on the Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems Management Office SharePoint site, as appropriate.

2.2.7. Conduct annual staff assistance visits to all units.

2.2.8. Coordinate with the Wing Safety office on all SUAS mishaps, incident investigations, and inquiries.

**2.3. Group/Squadron/Unit Commanders/or equivalent will:**

2.3.1. Coordinate with and gain approval from the SUAS Management Office prior to establishing a SUAS program within their unit.

2.3.2. Designate in writing, all unit SUAS Program Managers (SUAS-PM), SUAS-Instructors (SUAS-I), and SUAS Examiners (SUAS-E). The SUAS-PM should be a SUAS-I with the most SUAS experience, if possible, and is responsible for oversight of the unit's SUAS training program. Commanders may designate SUAS-Is who are not assigned to the unit when necessary to meet unique unit requirements.

2.3.3. Develop and maintain a unit SUAS training program tailored to meet the unit's METL requirements and theater-specific operations plans and orders.

2.3.4. Develop unit currency guidance that meets or exceeds the minimum currency guidance

in AFMAN 11-502.

**2.4. Squadron/Unit SUAS Program Manager (PM) will:**

2.4.1. Develop and incorporate unit-specific SUAS mission training (MT), continuous training (CT), and SUAS-I upgrade training programs IAW AFMAN 11-502.

2.4.2. Manage training and certification records of all assigned or attached SUAS Operators (SUAS-O). Use Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems Manager (SUASMAN) link, <https://suasman.sofapps.net/Default.aspx>, to maintain SUAS-O training records.

2.4.3. Submit all unit-developed training programs through unit chain of command to MAJCOM for review and approval.

2.4.4. Report training and equipment deficiencies to the commander.

2.4.5. Be delegated in writing by the unit commander as the Flight Approval Authority IAW AFMAN 11-502.

2.4.5.1. Complete the Risk Management (RM) worksheet and flight authorization checklist IAW AFMAN 11-502 prior to each flight/mission. Forward flight authorization requests to the SUAS Management Office 5 duty days prior to flight for approval/deconfliction.

**2.5. SUAS-E, SUAS-I, and SUAS-O will:**

2.5.1. At a minimum, comply with all training and certification requirements, and maintain currency as required by AFMAN 11-502.

2.5.2. Not place the aircraft, people, other aircraft, or real property in jeopardy or create a hazard by flying over populated/residential areas, assemblies of people, or along heavily trafficked roads, unless operationally required and authorized by an approved FAA Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (COA) or Concept of Employment (CONEMP).

2.5.3. Fly only those SUAS for which they are certified. Do not conduct training events for which they are not certified or current unless under the supervision of a qualified SUAS-I.

2.5.4. Establish and maintain current FCIF and SII in SUASMAN. Review and understand read file prior to conducting any SUAS operations. Ensure each crewmember is briefed on items affecting safety or mission completion.

2.5.5. Train Visual Observers (VO) in basic see-and-avoid techniques to safely assist in operations.

## Chapter 3

### PROCUREMENT REQUIREMENTS

**3.1. General.** Each unit will determine SUAS requirements based on the unit's METL. Prior to beginning the procurement process, all units requesting to operate SUAS on Robins AFB, must gain approval with the SUAS Management Office.

**3.2. Spectrum Management.** The use of SUAS frequencies requires approval from the Installation Spectrum Manager's office. All units, to include contracted SUAS-Os, must coordinate with the Installation Spectrum Manager prior to any purchase or obligation of funds to assure spectrum supportability and certification of the desired equipment.

**3.3. Concept of Employment (CONEMP).** All units operating SUAS must have a unit-specific installation commander approved CONEMP IAW AFMAN 11-502.

3.3.1. Base legal must conduct a review of the CONEMP prior to installation commander approval. The legal review will address acquisition/collection/retention/dissemination of information and imagery IAW applicable law and policy.

3.3.2. Unit commanders must ensure all SUAS operations are within the bounds of the approved CONEMP.

**3.4. DoD Commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) SUAS Cyber Security Exemptions.** COTS SUAS operations pose a cyber-security risk for the Department of Defense. Prior to purchase or use of COTS SUAS on Robins AFB, approval is required IAW AFMAN 11-502. Use the following link to complete and submit exemption requests: COTS UAS Exemption Requests <https://org2.eis.af.mil/sites/12594/A3T/S/SitePages/COTS%20UAS%20Exemption%20Requests.aspx>

**3.5. Technical Airworthiness Authority (TAA).** All units must obtain airworthiness approval IAW AFMAN 11-502 prior to flight.

**3.6. Airspace Coordination and Approval.** All SUAS operations within the Robins Class D airspace require coordination IAW FAA/DOD guidance/agreements, and require an approved FAA COA. Airspace authorizations to operate SUAS within the Robins AFB Class D will be coordinated through AFSOC/A3OU and by the SUAS office, in coordination with the unit.

**3.7. Domestic Privacy Concerns.** In order to ensure accountability and promote transparency in the protection of privacy and civil liberties, all SUAS operations within the installation boundaries of Robins AFB fall within the "DoD Installation Support within Airspace Delegated by the FAA for DoD Use" and requires installation commander approval. Installation commander approval/signature on the CONEMP constitutes approval. Intelligence oversight training will be provided by the unit SUAS-PM, and be documented and maintained at the unit.

## Chapter 4

### OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

**4.1. Flight Approval Authority.** 78 ABW/CC has delegated Flight Approval Authority for all SUAS mission requests to the 78 OSS/CC. The SUAS-PM must consider mission validity, SUAS-O certifications, training status, and risk mitigation before requesting flight authorization.

4.1.1. Forward flight authorization requests to the SUAS Management Office NLT 21 duty days prior to flight for approval/deconfliction. SUAS Management Office will ensure proposed routine SUAS flight schedule requests are routed for 78 OSS/CC approval and forwarded along with any changes to mission partner scheduling offices.

4.1.2. The SUAS Management Office will notify 78 OSS/OSAT (Robins Tower) Robins Emergency Control Center (ECC) DSN 468-3487 and 78 SFS (Security Forces) Base Defense Operations Center (BDOC) DSN 468-2187/3270/9144 NLT 3 duty days prior to scheduled SUAS flight.

4.1.3. In the event of an unscheduled emergency or urgent non-emergency request for SUAS missions, the SUAS-PM will coordinate directly with the 78 OSS/CC for approval.

**4.2. Safety/Risk Management.** Unit commanders utilizing SUAS assets should understand the potential hazard these aircraft pose. Commanders will ensure appropriate safety programs are implemented for both the SUAS being employed and the SUAS capable payloads. The SUAS-O is responsible for halting or canceling activity in the approved operating area if, at any time, the safety of persons or property on the ground or in the air is in jeopardy.

4.2.1. The SUAS-PM will complete the Risk Management (RM) worksheet and flight authorization checklist IAW AFMAN 11-502 for each flight/mission. Prior to each sortie, at a minimum, the SUAS-O will lead a flight brief to include an ORM assessment, and a review of the FCIF and SII.

**4.3. Medical Requirements.** No person may directly participate in the operation of SUAS or act as a VO if they know, or have reason to know, of any physical or mental condition that would interfere with the safe operation of the aircraft. Personnel are restricted from flight duties when taking medications whose known common adverse effect or intended action(s) affect alertness, judgment, cognition, special sensory function, or coordination, this includes both over the counter and prescription medications. SUAS-Os will not consume alcoholic beverages within 12 hours of flight operations.

**4.4. Government Contract Employees.** Government contractors hired to operate SUAS will uphold the requirements of this instruction IAW their statement of work. All contracts shall include language mandating compliance with this instruction and AFMAN 11-502.

**4.5. Weather Requirements.** To safely conduct flight operations and adhere to operator's manual restrictions, SUAS-Os will contact Base Weather at 468-3573 or 468-0969 at least two

hours prior to conducting operations to obtain current and forecasted weather conditions.

4.5.1. Minimum weather requirements to operate SUAS at Robins AFB is, ground visibility of at least 3 statute miles (SM) and a ceiling of 1,000 feet or greater.

**4.6. Notice to Airmen (NOTAM).** A NOTAM must be issued prior to conducting routine SUAS operations not more than 72 hours in advance, but not less than 24 hours prior to SUAS operations. The SUAS Management Office will notify Airfield Management Operations (AMOPS) of the proposed SUAS operations, and AMOPS will issue the NOTAM.

4.6.1. The NOTAM will include date, time and duration, location or operating area, altitude, and nature of the activity.

**4.7. SUAS Operations Area.** SUAS operations are only authorized within the installation boundaries of Robins AFB at or below 800' Mean Sea Level (MSL). See Attachment 2.

4.7.1. The SUAS Sector Map will be used when coordinating flights through the SUAS Management Office. See Attachment 3.

**4.8. Communications Requirements.** SUAS-Os will notify Robins Tower, BDOC, and the ECC at least 30 minutes prior to beginning flight operations, and request approval. Prior to launch, the SUAS-O will establish and maintain two-way communications with Robins Tower via the Ramp Net. If approved by Robins Tower, alternate means of communication will be via cell phone.

4.8.1. Robins Tower may delay, limit, prohibit or terminate SUAS operations when the safety of manned aircraft operations is a concern.

4.8.2. Robins Tower will notify 78 ABW Command Post when SUAS operations start and terminate.

4.8.3. SUAS-Os will notify Robins Tower, BDOC, and the ECC when flight operations terminate.

**4.9. Visual Observers (VO).** VOs must be used at all times to ensure see-and-avoid requirements are met, and must have and maintain instantaneous communication with the SUAS-O. The SUAS-O is responsible to ensure the VOs are able to see the aircraft and the surrounding airspace throughout the entire flight, (with or without the aid of binoculars) and provide the SUAS-O with the SUAS's flight path, and proximity to all aviation activities and other hazards (e.g., terrain, weather, structures) sufficiently to exercise effective control of the SUAS.

**4.10. Contingencies.** Immediately land or, if situation dictates, attempt to initiate RTH (return to home) feature if the SUAS becomes unresponsive to control inputs or performs abnormally. Immediately notify Robins Tower if the SUAS departs the approved area, and provide the last known altitude and direction of flight. Notify the SUAS Management Office, 468-2868 who will notify Base Safety. If required, the SUAS Management Office will complete a Mishap Report

IAW AFMAN 11-502.

**4.11. Incident/Accident/Mishap Reporting.** Follow procedures in AFMAN 11-502 and the FAA COA. In addition, all units will report incidents, accidents, mishaps and unintentional non-determined loss of link to the SUAS Management Office and to unit safety representatives. Record all incidents on the AF incident report located in SUASMAN.

**4.12. Stores or Weapons Release.** Not authorized at Robins AFB.

**4.13. Flight Data Capture.** Each flight will be recorded by the SUAS-O IAW AFMAN 11-502 para 2.16. Any video recordings or photographs that include areas outside of Robins Air Force Base's boundaries will be cropped and deleted from the gathered images.

**4.14. SUAS Equipment Custodian.** Unit commanders will appoint a SUAS equipment custodian in writing and forward a copy to the SUAS Management Office. Equipment custodians will maintain an account in SUASMAN and keep all equipment inventory and operational status up-to-date IAW AFMAN 11-502.

## Chapter 5

### SUAS-O TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

**5.1. General.** SUAS-Os must be trained, certified, and authorized to plan and conduct SUAS operations in the Robins AFB SUAS operations area. Upgrade training will be conducted by a certified SUAS-I. Training, certification, and currency requirements will be conducted and documented IAW AFMAN 11-502.

**5.2. Initial Training (IT).** IT certifies or qualifies an individual in basic operator duties of an assigned SUAS without regard to a unit-specific mission. IT focuses on basic knowledge and skills required to operate a specific SUAS. AFSOC/A3OU is the approval authority for SUAS IT courseware/syllabi. IT includes operation of all baseline mission equipment, but does not emphasize tactical employment, nor does it address the operation of specialized equipment, software, or sensors uniquely employed by specific units.

**5.3. Mission Training (MT).** Completion of IT is a prerequisite for MT and is certified by SUAS-I. MT certifies or re-certifies an operator in duties required to perform SUAS missions specific to their unit. Upon completion of all MT training events the SUAS-O must be mission certified by the unit commander. SUAS certification is valid for 24 months.

**5.4. Continuation Training (CT).** CT will be conducted to maintain and develop proficiency in SUAS to support the units' mission. SUAS-Os will complete all required currency events within the time period specified in AFMAN 11-502 to be considered current/proficient. Unit SUAS PMs may add any additional CT events to unit specific requirements, based on the commander's guidance. Currency will be tracked via SUASMAN.

DEEDRICK L. REESE, Colonel, USAF  
Commander

**Attachment 1****GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

**AFMAN 11-502**, *Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems*, 29 July 2019

**AFPD 11-5**, *SUAS Rules, Procedures and Service*, 07 June 2019

**CJCSI 3255.01**, *Joint UAS Minimum Training Standards*, 4 September 2012

**AFI 33-322**, *Records Management and Information Governance Program*

***Abbreviations and Acronyms***

**AFMAN**—Air Force Manual

**AFSOC**—Air Force Special Operations Command

**AMOPS**—Airfield Management Operations

**COA**—Certificate of Waiver or Authorization

**CONEMP**—Concept of Employment

**COTS**—Commercial-off-the-shelf

**CT**—Continuation Training

**FAA**—Federal Aviation Administration

**FCIF**—Flight Crew Information File

**IAW**—In Accordance With

**IT**—Initial Training

**METL**—Mission Essential Task List

**MSL**—Mean Sea Level

**MT**—Mission Training

**PM**—Program Manager

**RM**—Risk Management

**SII**—Special Interest Item

**SUAS**—Small Unmanned Aircraft System

**SUAS-E**—Small Unmanned Aircraft System Examiner

**SUAS-I**—Small Unmanned Aircraft System Instructor

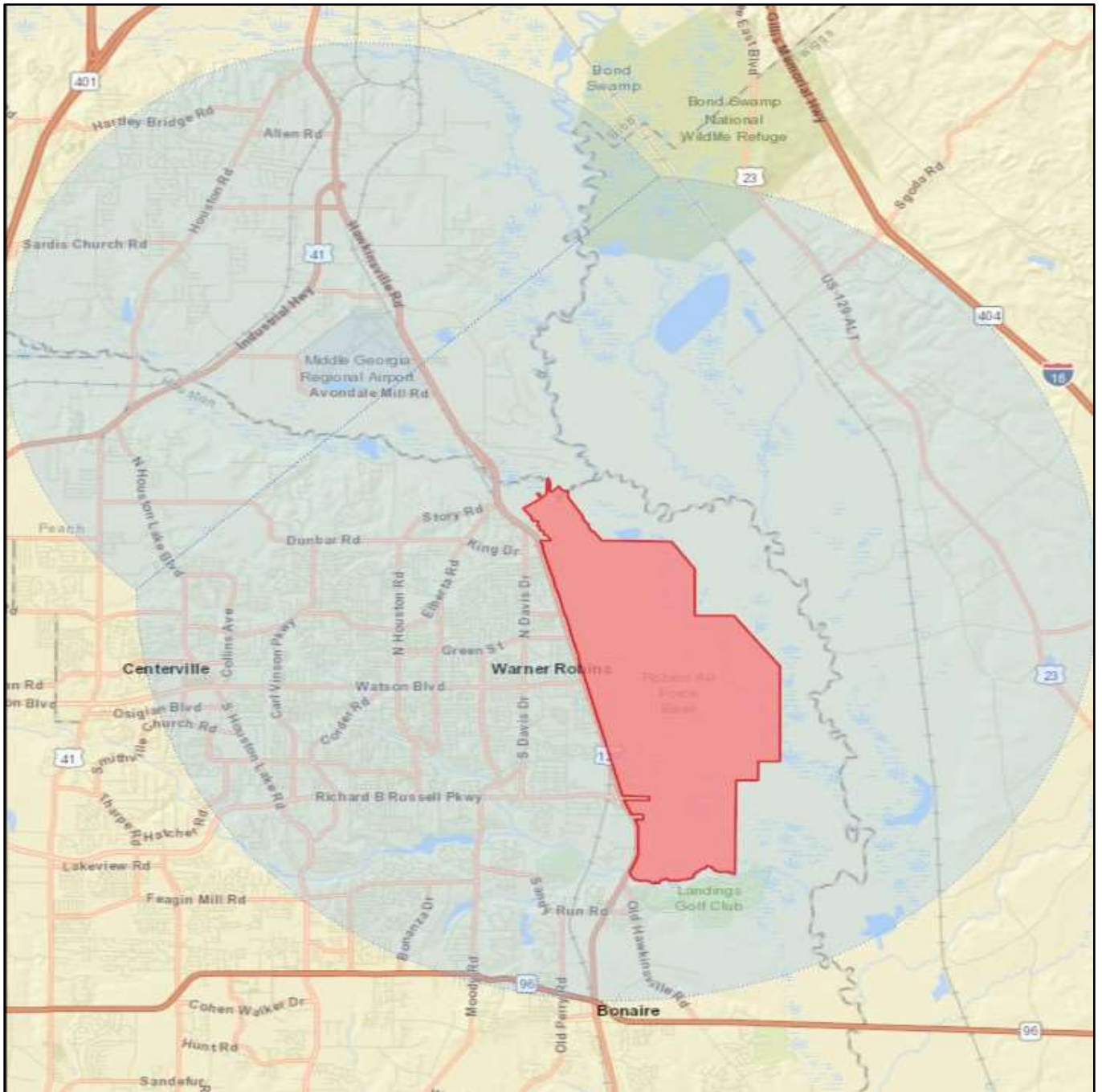
**SUAS-O**—Small Unmanned Aircraft System Operator

**SUASMAN**—Small Unmanned Aircraft System Manager

Attachment 2

ROBINS AFB SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS AREA

Figure A2.1 Robins AFB Small Unmanned Aircraft Operations Area.



Robins AFB SUAS Operations Area at or below 800' MSL

Class D Airspace

Attachment 3

ROBINS AFB SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SECTOR MAP

Figure A3.1 Robins AFB Small Unmanned Aircraft Sector Map

