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John R. Cooper
TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR

June 28, 2021

Sharon Nethery
Lamar County Commission
P.O. Box 338
Vernon, Alabama 35592

**Subject: Annual Inspection Report
Lamar County Airport (M55)**

Dear Ms. Nethery:

An inspection of the Lamar County Airport was conducted by personnel of the Alabama Department of Transportation Aeronautics Bureau on June 17, 2021. The purpose of the inspection was to update the information currently on file regarding the airport and to ascertain compliance with the rules and regulations of the Alabama Department of Transportation governing licensed public-use airports within the State of Alabama.

Attached you will find a copy of the Annual Inspection Report for the airport. As noted in the report, the airport **does not meet** the requirements for the issuance of a **day VFR only operating license**. The operating license for the airport is being withheld pending the required actions necessary to correct the safety deficiencies. The Code of Alabama 23-1-375 prohibits the operation of an airport for which a license has not been issued.

There are numerous obstructions to both approaches that pose safety hazards to landing and departing aircraft and must be removed. Some of the same obstructions have been identified in our reports dating back to 2018. Please note that the obstructions identified in this report are representative and may not identify all obstructions. It should also be noted that due to the condition of the airport's lighting system, the airport cannot be licensed for night operations.

Due to the recurring nature of the violations detailed in this report, a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) should be submitted to this office **no later than 30 days** after receipt of this report. The CAP should include details on how the airport sponsor plans to address the safety violations and a timeline for correcting these deficiencies. The plan should also address intentions for the future of the airport, as it appears that the property and facilities are not being properly maintained. The county has 360 days from receipt of the inspection report to correct all safety violations. It should be noted that an operating license has not been issued for the Lamar County Airport since 2017.

If you should have any questions concerning the inspection or corrective actions, please do not hesitate to contact the Aeronautics Bureau at (334) 242-6820.

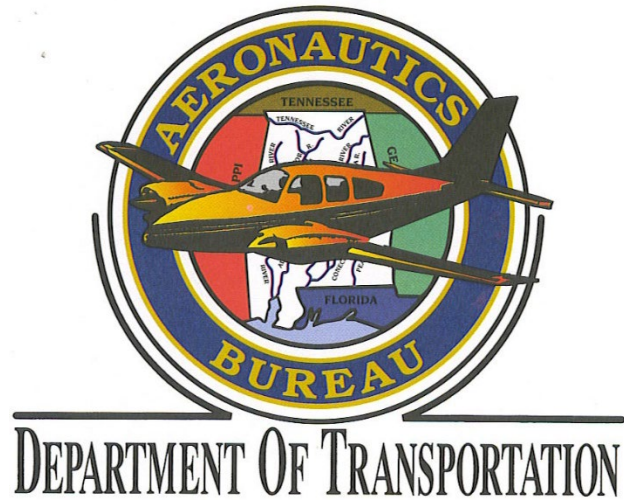
Sincerely,

Frank Farmer
Chief, Aeronautics Bureau

Copy: Chris Wilbanks, County Engineer; Lamar County

Annual Inspection Report

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***Lamar County Airport (M55)
Vernon, Alabama***

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Lamar County Airport (M55)
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**Annual Inspection Report
Lamar County Airport (M55)
Vernon, Alabama**

June 17, 2021

Introduction:

Code of Alabama 23-1-357(c). The department may perform such acts, issue and amend such orders and make, promulgate, or amend general or special rules, regulations, and procedures and establish minimum standards, consistent with the provisions of this article as it shall deem necessary to carry out the provisions of this article and to perform its duties hereunder, all commensurate with and for the purpose of protecting and insuring the general public interest, health, welfare, and safety. (Act 2000-220, 10.)

In accordance with the provisions of the Code of Alabama 23-1-357(c) an inspection of the Lamar County Airport was conducted by Mr. Jeb Baird and Mr. Gus Slaten of the Alabama Department of Transportation Aeronautics Bureau on June 17, 2021.

The corrective actions that may be prescribed in this inspection report do not relieve the airport owner from compliance with any other Federal, State, or local laws, ordinances or regulations that may be applicable. It is the responsibility of the airport owner to be aware of and obey all Federal, State or local laws, ordinances or regulations that may have a bearing on the corrective actions that may be specified in this report.

Inspection Methodology:

The inspection of the required State Approach/Departure Path and Federal Runway Protection Zones was accomplished by use of approved engineering methods and equipment. The angles, locations and heights of trees or other objects within these areas were derived by use of a Theodolite and electronic distance measuring device.

All other areas of the inspection were conducted visually and photographed for reference purposes.

License Status:

Code of Alabama 23-1-375(a). ...a person or municipality may not operate an airport, restricted landing area, or other air navigation facility without a license issued by the department.

Based upon the findings of the inspection conducted on June 17, 2021, it was determined that the airport **does not meet** the requirements for the issuance of an operating license.

The inspection was conducted on the airport under the provisions of the Administrative Code for the following areas:

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1. Approach and Departure Paths Administrative Code 450-9-1-.12(1) (See Appendix 1)

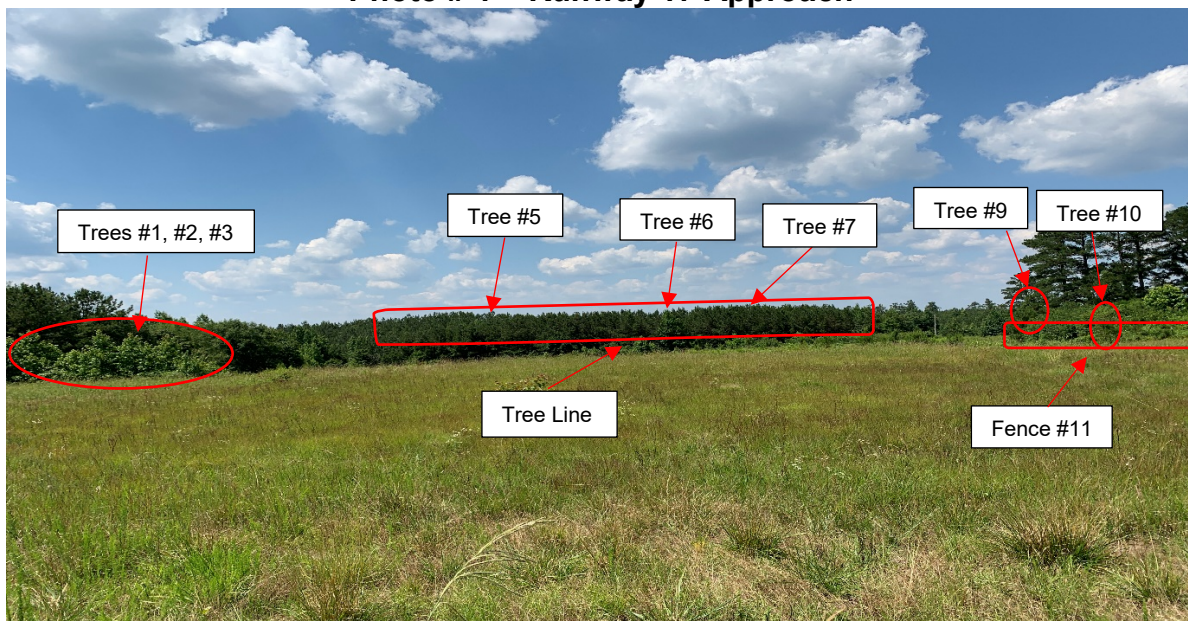
State Licensing Standards:

- For all hard surface runways the approach and departure path begins 200 feet from the runway end (runway threshold).
- For all hard surface runways with a displaced threshold, the approach and departure path begins at the point of displacement (See Appendix 1).
- The approach and departure path for all runways slopes up at a ratio of 20:1.
- All penetrations of the approach and departure paths, whether natural or manmade, constitute an obstruction to navigation and must be removed.
- The land beneath the approach and departure path must be controlled by the airport owner. This is accomplished by ownership of the property in fee simple or by written perpetual agreement with the owner of the land.

Inspection Results: **Violation**

- Runway 17 – Obstructions labeled Tree #1, #2, #3, a line of trees containing Trees #5, #6, #7, Trees #9, #10, and Fence #11 are violations to the ALDOT 20:1 Approach Surface (See Photo #1 and Appendix 2).
- Runway 35 – Obstructions labeled Tree #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, and #9 are violations to the ALDOT 20:1 Approach Surface (See Photo #2 and Appendix 3).

Photo # 1 – Runway 17 Approach



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Photo # 2 – Runway 35 Approach



Required Action:

- Remove all obstructions within the ALDOT 20:1 Approach/Departure Path
- Obstructions detailed in this report are representative and may not include all obstructions.

2. Primary Surface Administrative Code 450-9-1-.12(2)

State Licensing Standards:

- Primary Surface (See Appendix 1): The primary surface is 250 feet wide, centered on the runway centerline and extends 200 feet past the end of the marked runway. The primary surface is required to be free of all obstructions, manmade or natural. The only allowable objects are runway lights, guidance signs, or navigation equipment that by function is required to be within the primary surface boundaries.

Inspection Results: *Violation*

- Old inoperative VGSI fixtures are located 70 feet from centerline at both runway ends. The fixtures are not frangible and are surrounded by loose metal poles (See Photo #3 and #4).

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- The Primary Surface is overgrown. Grass and brush exceeds 12 inches in height.
- Trees #1, #2, #3, #10, and a fence are close in obstructions violating the primary surface for Runway 17 (See Photo #1 and Appendix 2).
- Trees #1, #2, and #6 are close in obstructions violating the primary surface for Runway 35 (See Photo #2 and Appendix 3).

Photo # 3 – VGSI and Overgrown Brush



Photo # 4 – VGSI and Overgrown Brush



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Required Action:

- Remove the inoperative VGSI fixtures and all associated materials from the primary surface.
- Remove close in obstructions from primary surface at both runway ends.
- Mow grass around Runway.

**3. Runway Safety Area
Administrative Code 450-9-1-.12(3)**

State Licensing Standards:

- Runway Safety Area (Appendix 1): All runways are required to maintain an obstruction free area adjacent to each runway. This area is 120 feet wide, centered on the runway centerline, and extends for a distance of 200 feet past the runway end. The area must be compacted and graded smooth with no ruts, humps, depressions or other potentially hazardous surface variations. The slope along the longitudinal centerline shall not exceed a rise or fall of three percent in elevation relative to the runway end elevation. The lip from the top of the pavement to the grade adjacent to the runway should not exceed 3 inches.

Inspection Results: *Violation*

- Threshold light fixture angle iron at the approach end of Runway 17 is protruding approximately 8 inches (See Photo #5).
- The Runway Safety Area is overgrown, grass is higher than 12 inches.

Photo #5 – Light fixture angle iron



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Required Action

- Remove light fixtures or bring up grade around light bases in a manner that does not create any hazardous surface variations.
- Mow grass surrounding the Runway.

4. Airport Markings Administrative Code 450-9-1-.12(4)

State Licensing Standards:

- Airport Markings: All runways are required to be marked in a manner identifying the boundaries of the landing areas. The runway markings must be painted white and be maintained in a legible condition.

Inspection Results

- The airport markings are in **POOR** condition (See Photo #6 and #7).

Photo # 6 – Runway 17 NPI Markings



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Photo #7 – Runway 35 NPI Markings



Required Action:

- Clean runway markings. If the markings are unable to be cleaned, the markings should be reapplied in accordance with FAA AC 150/5340-1M.

**5. Wind Direction Indicator
Administrative Code 450-9-1-.12(5)**

State Licensing Standards:

- Wind Direction Indicators: All airports are required to have an operational wind direction indicator. It must be installed in a highly visible area and free from obstructions to ensure true wind direction and velocity. Night operations require the indicator be lighted.

Inspection Results:

- The wind direction indicator is faded and torn (See Photo #8).
- The light fixture is inoperative.

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Photo # 8 – Wind Direction Indicator



Maintenance Required:

- Replace Windssock and repair lighting system

**6. Airport Lighting
Administrative Code 450-9-1-.12(6)**

State Licensing Standards:

- Airport Lighting: Runway lights and a lighted wind direction indicator are required for night operations. A rotating beacon is suggested. All runway, threshold, and taxiway lighting shall be maintained in operational condition and shall not be obscured by natural growth such as grass and/or weeds.

Inspection Results:

- The airport lighting system is inoperable, and therefore **does not meet** requirements for night operations.

Required Action:

- Repair lighting system for an operating license with no limitations.

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7. Runway, Taxiway and Apron Conditions Administrative Code 450-9-1-.12(7)

State Licensing Standards:

- Runway, Taxiway and Apron Conditions: All airport pavement surfaces associated with aircraft operations must be kept smooth and free of any defect or obstruction that could damage an aircraft. The lip of the airport pavement surfaces must not exceed three (3) inches in elevation from the top of the pavement to the shoulder. The drop should only be enough to allow sufficient drainage and not pose a control problem for aircraft exiting the runway. The aircraft parking apron is for the operation and parking of aircraft only and should be smooth and free of obstructions or defects that could cause damage to aircraft during operations.

Inspection Results:

- Runway pavement is in **POOR** condition due to cracking, vegetation, and failing crack seal. Some areas are showing block cracking, an early sign of pavement failure (See Photo #9).
- Taxiway pavement is in **POOR** condition due to cracking, vegetation, and an area of erosion that is washing away the taxiway subgrade (See Photo #10).
- Apron pavement is in **FAIR** condition due to cracking and vegetation (See Photo #11).
- Gravel is being washed onto the runway from water runoff, causing a foreign object debris (FOD) hazard (See Photo #12).

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Photo # 9 – Block Cracking & Vegetation



Photo #10 – Taxiway Edge Erosion



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Photo #11 – Apron Pavement



Photo #12 – Gravel on Runway



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Required Action:

- Plan a pavement maintenance project to stop further pavement degradation and subsequent failure.
- Repair taxiway section that is experiencing erosion damage.
- Remove gravel and any other FOD from runway surface.

**8. Fueling Area Requirements
Administrative Code 450-9-1-.12(8)**

State Licensing Standards:

- Signs should be posted prohibiting open flames or smoking in fueling areas. The fueling facility must be labeled indicating the type fuel being dispensed.
- Grounding cables must be available.
- A fire extinguisher approved for the purpose of extinguishing petroleum product fires available during all fueling operations.
- Serviceable hoses and connections that would preclude a rupture or leaking of fuel.

Inspection Results:

- There is no fueling area at this location.

**9. Prohibited Activities
Administrative Code 450-9-1-.16**

State Licensing Standards:

- Prohibited Activities: The use of any portion of the aircraft operations area, or airport property within the boundaries of the imaginary surfaces of a licensed airport for any purpose other than the operation of aircraft shall be deemed a non-aeronautical activity and is prohibited.

Inspection Results:

- No prohibited activities were observed during the inspection.

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Summary:

The table below summarizes items noted in this report:

Inspection Summary

Inspection Area	Violation/Maintenance	Corrective Action
Approach/Departure Path	Violation	Remove all obstructions to the ALDOT 20:1 Approach/Departure Surface.
Primary Surface	Violation	Remove all obstructions to the primary surface. Mow grass/brush.
Runway Safety Area	Violation	Bring up grade around light fixtures or remove them from the Runway Safety Area. Mow grass/brush.
Airport Markings	Maintenance	Clean or replace markings in accordance with FAA AC 150/5340-1L.
Wind Direction Indicator	Maintenance	Replace wind sock. Repair lighting system for night operations.
Airport Lighting	Maintenance	Repair inoperable lighting system for license with no limitations.
Pavement Surfaces	Maintenance	Plan a pavement maintenance project to stop further pavement degradation. Remove vegetation and FOD.

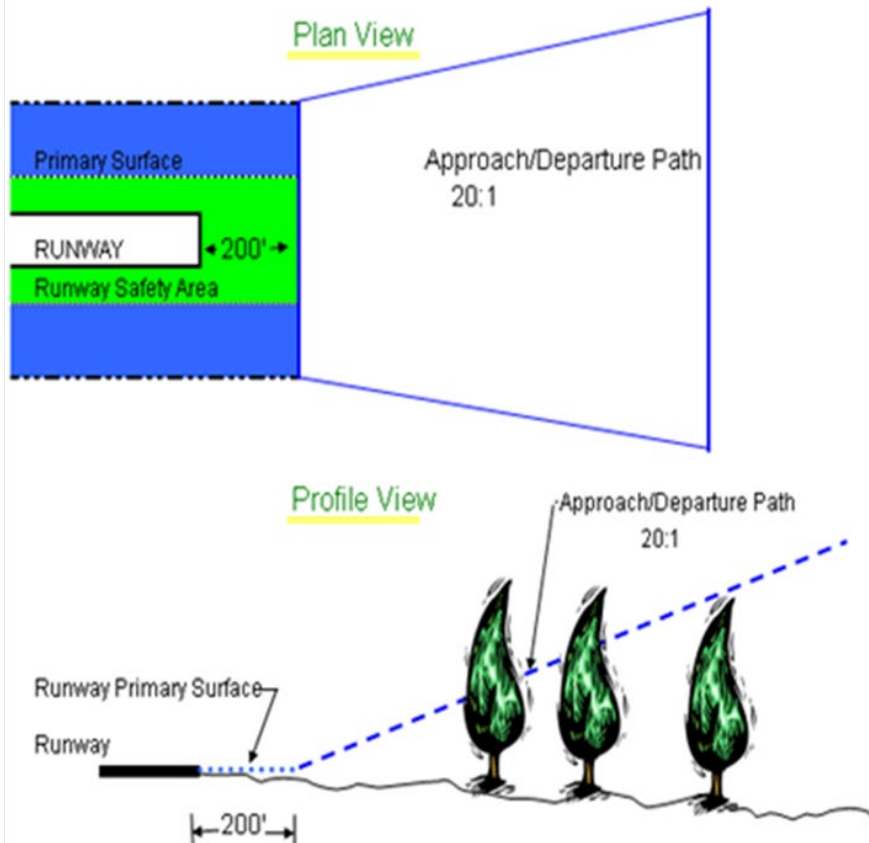
Please contact the Aeronautics Bureau of the Alabama Department of Transportation at (334) 242-6820 with questions concerning the Annual Inspection Report.

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APPENDIX 1

Approach and Departure Path Dimensions			
Inner Width	Outer Width	Length	Acreage
250 Feet	450 Feet	1,000 Feet	8.04 Acres
Primary Surface Dimensions			
250 Feet Wide Centered Along Runway Centerline			
Extending 200 Feet Past the Runway End			
Runway Safety Area Dimensions			
120 Feet Wide Centered Along Runway Centerline			
Extending 200 Feet Past the Runway End			



Appendix 2

Lamar County Airport
 Vernon, AL.
 Runway 17
 Obstruction Evaluation
 June 17, 2021

Notes:
 1.Drawing not to scale
 2.For informational purposes only and not to be used for any other purpose
 3.Aerial image may not be current

Obstructions detailed in this report are representative and may not identify all obstructions

**1.Tree 18' Abv. RWY
 149' From RWY
 126' Right of CL
 0:1 Obst Clnc**

**3.Tree 11' Abv. RWY
 163' From RWY
 94' Right of CL
 0:1 Obst Clnc**

**6.Tree 28' Abv. RWY
 637' From RWY
 20' Left of CL
 15:1 Obst Clnc**

**9.Tree 14' Abv. RWY
 336' From RWY
 137' Left of RWY
 9:1 Obst Clnc**

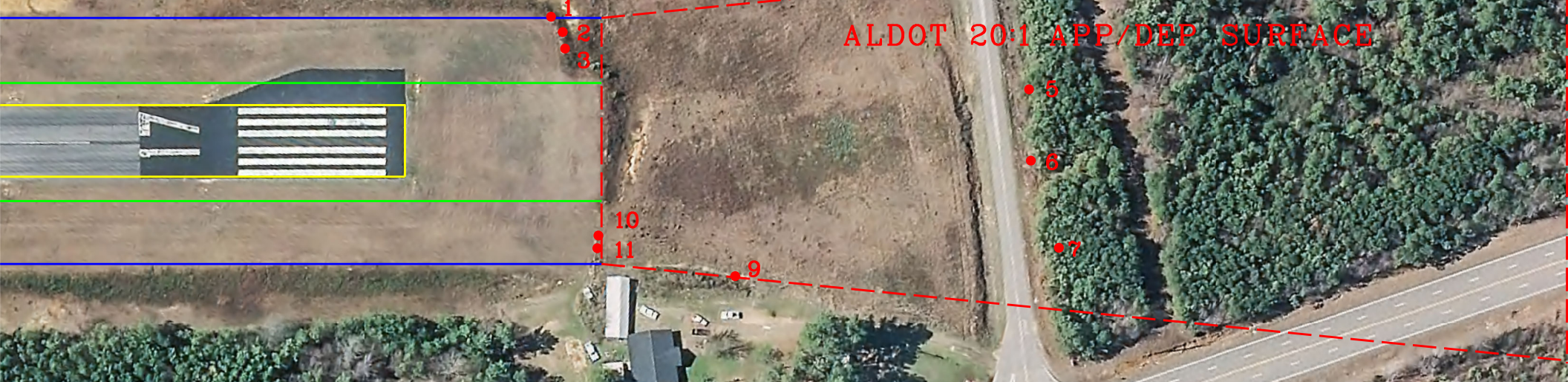
**11.Fence 2' Abv. RWY
 196' From RWY
 109' Left of CL
 0:1 Obst Clnc**

**2.Tree 13' Abv. RWY
 160' From RWY
 111' Right of CL
 0:1 Obst Clnc**

**5.Tree 30' Abv. RWY
 635' From RWY
 52' Right of CL
 14:1 Obst Clnc**

**7.Tree 28' Abv. RWY
 665' From RWY
 109' Left of CL
 16:1 Obst Clnc**

**10.Tree 6' Abv. RWY
 197' From RWY
 96' Left of CL
 0:1 Obst Clnc**



Appendix 3

Lamar County Airport
Vernon, AL.
Runway 35
Obstruction Evaluation
June 17, 2021

Notes:

- 1. Drawing not to scale
- 2. For informational purposes only and not to be used for any other purpose
- 3. Aerial image may not be current

Obstructions detailed in this report are representative and may not identify all obstructions.

1. Tree 22' Abv. RWY
198' From RWY
125' Right of CL
0:1 Obst Clnc

3. Tree 15' Abv. RWY
219' From RWY
49' Right of RWY
1:1 Obst Clnc

5. Tree 17' Abv. RWY
202' from RWY
11' Left of CL
0:1 Obst Clnc

7. Tree 36' Abv. RWY
390' From RWY
52' Right of CL
5:1 Obst Clnc

9. Tree 60' Abv. RWY
698' From RWY
7' Right of CL
8:1 Obst Clnc

2. Tree 11' Abv. RWY
189' From RWY
71' Right of CL
0:1 Obst Clnc

4. Tree 16' Abv. RWY
208' From RWY
21' Right of CL
0:1 Obst Clnc

6. Tree 18' Abv. RWY
191' From RWY
74' Left of CL
0:1 Obst Clnc

