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MIT researchers to soon test drones at Cape Cod military base

Posted by Matt Rocheleau January 22, 2014 12:31 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Boston.com Staff

MIT students and researchers will soon begin testing drones at a Cape Cod military base, one of six locations nationwide that the Federal Aviation Administration recently picked as test sites for unmanned aircraft.

Professor Jonathan How of MIT's aeronautics and astronautics department is the academic liaison to the site at [Joint Base Cape Cod](#), [campus officials said](#). He said having a drone test location so close will be a big help to MIT researchers.

"The combination of the Cape Cod site and a lead site at Griffiss International Airport in Rome, N.Y., will present MIT, and other northeastern schools and industry, with cross-country and climactically diverse opportunities to explore UAS [or unmanned aircraft systems] operations and integrate them into general U.S. airspace," How said in a [statement](#) from MIT.

He said FAA restrictions have made it difficult for researchers to test drones in realistic environments, particularly in densely trafficked airspace.

Until now, most drone test flights conducted by MIT students and researchers have been confined to indoor locations.

Formerly known as the Massachusetts Military Reservation, Joint Base Cape Cod is a 22,000-acre military base that stretches to parts of Bourne, Falmouth, Mashpee and Sandwich.

Officials expect to open the drone testing facility there before the end of 2014.

Matt Rocheleau can be reached at matthew.rocheleau@globe.com. Looking for more coverage of area colleges and universities? Go to our [Your Campus pages](#).

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