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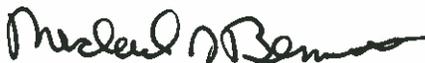
MEMORANDUM FOR The Office Of The Adjutant General, Arkansas, ATTN: DCSEN-E (Mr. Tom Boston), 1301 Missouri Avenue, Camp J.T. Robinson, North Little Rock, Arkansas 72199-9960

SUBJECT: Final Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact for Implementation of Base Realignment and Closure at Northwest, Arkansas

1. References:

- a. 32 CFR 651, 29 March 2002, Environmental Analysis of Army Actions.
 - b. The National Guard Bureau (NGB) NEPA Handbook, Guidance on Preparing Environmental Documentation for ARNG Actions in Compliance with the NEPA of 1969, June 2006.
 - c. Final Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact associated with implementing the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission's recommendations to construct and operate an Armed Forces Reserve Center in Northwest, Arkansas.
2. In accordance with procedures established in 1a and 1b, the Final EA has been approved by the National Guard Bureau. Please find enclosed a copy of the signed Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI). This completes the appropriate NEPA documentation for this project in accordance with reference 1a.
3. If there is a delay in implementation of this project or project conditions change, ensure that the Final EA adequately addresses the action to be taken. If the Final EA does not address the action, new environmental documentation must be approved prior to initiation of the project.
4. The point of contact for this action is Mr. Chris Williams, SE Regional NEPA/ECOP Program Manager, DSN 327-7985, (703) 607-7985, or via email at c.williams20@us.army.mil

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MICHAEL J. BENNETT
COL, NGB
Chief, Environmental
Program Division

Finding of No Significant Impact Implementation of Base Realignment and Closure at Northwest, Arkansas

INTRODUCTION

The Arkansas Army National Guard (ARARNG) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to identify and evaluate potential environmental and socioeconomic effects associated with implementing the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission's recommendations to construct and operate an Armed Forces Reserve Center (AFRC) in Northwest, Arkansas. The EA was prepared pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations (Title 40 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* [CFR] Parts 1500–1508) for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (Title 42 of the United States Code [U.S.C.] 4321 *et seq.*) and 32 CFR Part 651 (*Environmental Analysis of Army Actions*).

1. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

With respect to Northwest Arkansas, the BRAC Commission recommended in relevant part:

Close the Pond United States Army Reserve Center, Fayetteville, Arkansas, and re-locate units into a new Armed Forces Reserve Center in Northwest Arkansas, if the Army is able to acquire suitable land for the construction of the facilities. The new AFRC shall have the capability to accommodate Arkansas National Guard units from the Arkansas Army National Guard Readiness Centers in Fayetteville, Springdale, Rogers, and Bentonville, Arkansas, if the State of Arkansas decides to relocate those units.

PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action is the ARARNG's Preferred Alternative. To meet the BRAC Commission's directive, the Army proposes to construct an AFRC having approximately 110,000 square feet of space on approximately 19 acres of city-owned property in Bentonville, Arkansas. The primary facilities of the new AFRC would consist of training buildings, an unheated storage building, and parking for military and privately owned vehicles. The AFRC would be used Monday through Friday by a full-time staff of approximately 32 personnel and on weekends by the various Reserve/Guard units for training. The facilities would be constructed to accommodate approximately 500 Reservists and Guardsmen.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED Nine contending sites for construction of the AFRC in Northwest Arkansas were identified by the Army Reserve. On the basis of site visits and selection criteria only two parcels were identified as possible options; however, during the site selection process the Army Reserve transferred site selection responsibilities to the Arkansas Army National Guard (AR ARNG). The AR ARNG proceeded to continue the site review process and applied additional selection criteria. Subsequent to the transition of the site selection process the City of Bentonville, Arkansas offered to make four lots in the Harris/Bentonville Industrial Development Corporation Industrial Park available for one dollar to the Military Department of Arkansas for a 99 year lease with a subsequent 25-year commitment

to the AR ARNG. The offer addressed three critical considerations: fiscal responsibility, meeting BRAC Commission goals and major unit location. The Army is expected to conduct its affairs in a fiscally prudent manner, and pursuing sites costing between 1 and 2 million dollars would contravene this responsibility when a suitable site can be acquired for essentially no cost. The offer would meet the BRAC Commission's goals and the additional AR ARNG criteria of reducing the footprint of government owned/leased property. A major unit expected to occupy the new AFRC is presently at an Arkansas Army National Guard facility in Bentonville. Moving the unit to another location in Northwest Arkansas could adversely affect recruiting and personnel retention. In light of these considerations, alternatives to the Bentonville site were viewed as not reasonable and, therefore, they were not evaluated in detail in the EA.

CEQ regulations require inclusion of the No Action alternative. The No Action alternative serves as a baseline against which the effects of the Proposed Action and alternatives can be evaluated. Under the No Action alternative, the Army would not implement the Proposed Action. No land would be acquired, no facilities would be constructed, and no units would relocate from other facilities. The units proposed for relocation under the Proposed Action would continue to operate from their current facilities. The No Action alternative is evaluated in detail in the EA.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Based on the analysis contained in the EA, the ARANG has determined that the Proposed Action will not have any significant adverse impacts on the human or natural environments.

MITIGATION MEASURES

The EA does not identify the need for mitigation measures.

3. REGULATIONS

The Proposed Action will not violate NEPA, the CEQ Regulations, 32 CFR 651, or any other Federal, state, or local environmental regulations.

4. COMMITMENT TO IMPLEMENTATION

The National Guard Bureau (NGB) and ARARNG affirm their commitment to implement this EA in accordance with NEPA. Implementation is dependent on funding. The ARARNG and the NGB's Environmental Programs, Training, and Installations Division will ensure the adequate funds are requested in future years' budgets to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in this EA.

5. PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT

The final EA and draft FNSI were made available for public review and comments from 3 through 17 August, 2009 at locations listed in the public notices. No comments were received. For further information, contact Mr. Tom Boston, State Environmental Specialist, Arkansas Army National Guard, ATTN: DCSEN-E Box 5, 1301 Missouri Avenue, Camp J.T. Robinson, North Little Rock, AR 72199-960.

6. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

After careful review of the EA, I have concluded that implementation of the Proposed Action would not generate significant controversy or have a significant impact on the quality of the human or natural environment. This analysis fulfills the requirements of NEPA and the CEQ Regulations. An Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared, and the National Guard Bureau is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impact.

22 Sept 09
Date

Michael J. Bennett
MICHAEL J. BENNETT
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Programs Division