

Finding of No Significant Impact
Construction and Operation of an Armed Forces Reserve Center Complex at
Fort Hunter Liggett, California

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (42 USC 4321 et seq.) and Army regulations (32 CFR Part 651), the Army conducted an environmental assessment (EA) of the potential environmental and socioeconomic effects of the construction and operation of an Armed Forces Reserve Center (AFRC) complex at Fort Hunter Liggett.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed action is to implement the Base Closure and Realignment Commission's recommendation pertaining to Fort Hunter Liggett.

The need for the proposed action is to enhance military value, to improve homeland defense capability, to greatly improve training and deployment capability, to create significant efficiencies and cost savings, and to be consistent with the Army's force structure plans and the Army transformational objectives.

Proposed Action

Under the Base Closure and Realignment Commission's recommendations, the Army proposes to construct an approximately 60,000-square-foot AFRC and an approximately 1,000-square-foot unheated storage building to accommodate relocation of the 91st Training Support Division from Camp Parks, California.

Approximately 41 full-time employees would staff the facilities, and 162 part-time reservists would come on rotation one weekend a month for training. Six support vehicles would be relocated to Fort Hunter Liggett. Reservist training would take place inside the proposed AFRC building.

The proposed construction would be completed over 20 months, beginning as early as April 2007. Under federal law, the Army must initiate all realignments no later than September 15, 2007, and must complete all realignments no later than September 15, 2011.

Protection measures included in the proposed action cover air quality, seismic influences, erosion controls, stormwater and wastewater permitting, sensitive wildlife and botanical species, sensitive natural communities, and cultural resources.

Alternatives Considered

Three alternative sites (Alternatives 1, 2, and 3) were considered for implementing the proposed action. Each is located within the Fort Hunter Liggett cantonment area and meets criteria stipulated in the EA. Additionally the No Action Alternative was analyzed in the EA, as prescribed by the Council on Environmental Quality regulations. The No Action Alternative serves as a baseline against which the impacts of the proposed action and alternatives can be evaluated. This alternative however does not meet the BRAC Recommendations and is therefore not considered viable to meet the purpose and need of the project. Under the No Action Alternative, the Army would not implement the proposed action; no construction or relocation activities to support unit realignment would be conducted at Fort Hunter Liggett.

Factors Considered in Determining that No Environmental Impact Statement is Required

In the EA, which is incorporated by reference into this finding of no significant impact, the Army examined the potential effects of the proposed alternatives and the No Action Alternative on the following 11 resource areas: aesthetics and visual resources, air quality, noise, geology and soils, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, socioeconomics and environmental justice, traffic and transportation, utilities, and hazardous and toxic substances.

Implementing the proposed action at any of the three alternative sites would result in minor adverse effects. It would have no effect on environmental justice. The adverse effects on aesthetics and visual resources, air quality, noise, geology and soils, water resources, socioeconomics, traffic and transportation, utilities, and hazardous and toxic substances would be minor. There would be no adverse effects under the No Action Alternative. As part of the proposed action, the Army would implement protection measures for air quality, geology and soils, water resources, biological resources, and cultural resources. Consultations under ESA section 7 and NHPA section 106 were completed.

There would be no significant cumulative impacts from implementing Alternative 1, 2, or 3.

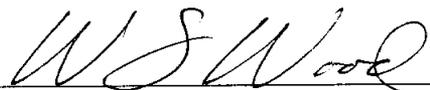
Public Comment

A notice of availability of the EA and draft finding of no significant impact was published in the King City Rustler weekly publication on September 6, 2006 and the Monterey County Herald on September 10, 2006 followed by a 30-day comment period from September 11 through October 11, 2006. Three comments were received during the public comment period; the first, from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board suggesting Low Impact Development design techniques to mitigate stormwater runoff pollution, stream erosion, and sedimentation. These techniques will be considered in the Army's design plans. The second comment was from Robert L. Hoover, PhD, co-chairman of the Friends of Historic San Antonio Mission. In his comment, Dr. Hoover recommended that Alternative 1 has no direct, indirect, or cumulative effect on cultural or historic resources. The third comment, from Steve Craig of the Ventana Conservation Trust, suggested design consideration of noise reduction and water quality control as well as for compatibility with the historic structures in the vicinity.

Conclusion

Implementing Alternative 1, 2, or 3 would have no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative effects on the resources above.

Based on the overall findings of this evaluation, the Army found Alternative 1 to be the environmentally preferred alternative and the appropriate approach to implementing the proposed action. Because no significant impacts were determined as a result of the project alternatives, an environmental impact statement is not necessary. This EA supports the issuance of a finding of no significant impact.



W. Scott Wood
Colonel, US Army, Commanding
Combat Support Training Center

16 Nov '06
Date