

**FINAL
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FNSI) FOR THE
CONSTRUCTION OF AN
ARMED FORCES RESERVE CENTER AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF BRAC 05 RECOMMENDATIONS AT
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA**

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1400-1508) for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321 et. seq.) and the U.S. Department of Army Regulation 32 CFR 651 (Environmental Analysis of Army Actions; Final Rule), as well as policy and guidance provided by the *Base Realignment and Closure Manual for Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act*, the U.S. Army conducted an environmental assessment (EA) of potential environmental effects associated with implementation of BRAC realignment actions.

Purpose and Need. On September 8, 2005, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC Commission) recommended certain realignment actions in Scranton, Pennsylvania. These recommendations were approved by the President on September 23, 2005 and were forwarded to Congress, and on November 9, 2005, the recommendations became law. The BRAC Commission recommendations must now be implemented as provided for in the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-510), as amended.

The BRAC Commission made the following recommendations concerning Scranton, Pennsylvania:

“Close the Serrenti Memorial United States Army Reserve Center in Scranton, PA, the Serrenti Memorial United States Army Reserve Organizational Maintenance Shop in Scranton, PA, the United States Army Reserve Center in Wilkes-Barre, PA, and relocate units to a new Armed Forces Reserve Center with an organizational maintenance facility in Scranton, PA, if the Army is able to acquire suitable land for the construction of the facilities.”

Description of the Proposed Action. To support the BRAC recommendations, the Proposed Action includes construction of an AFRC training building, Organizational Maintenance Shop (OMS), and an unheated storage building.

Future site improvements are expected to occupy approximately 25 acres. The Army would acquire up to 30 acres of land for construction of these facilities. The Army estimates that construction would begin in April 2009 and would be completed by April 2011.

The new AFRC would serve about 1,000 personnel on a rotating basis, mostly on weekends. The facility would employ approximately 42 permanent full-time personnel. The maximum expected use of the new facility would be about 680 members per weekend. The Army Reserve units to be relocated are: Det 1 858 MD CO; 220 MP DET; 412 EN CO (Vert); and PLT 2 233 QM CO. The Army National Guard units to be relocated are HQ 55; 55 BTB; MI-55; Sig-55; H(-)109; and B/228.

The new facilities included in the Proposed Action would allow for effective and efficient utilization of resources and personnel in support of the Army’s mission.

Alternatives Considered. Potential site locations for the AFRC and OMS were screened for inclusion in this EA. Screening criteria consisted of safety constraints, geographic and environmental constraints, and operational constraints. Based on the selection criteria, three alternatives, Alternative 1, Alternative 2, and the No Action Alternative, were developed for evaluation in this EA.

Alternative 1. Alternative 1 is to construct the AFRC and associated facilities south of I-81, off Rockwell Avenue, adjacent to the Career Technology Center of Lackawanna County.

Alternative 2. Alternative 2 is to construct the facilities at a site located adjacent to I-81 between Olyphant Avenue and Boulevard Avenue.

Both sites have been used for mining and special foundation measures would need to be taken to construct the AFRC at either site. The Army has selected, Alternative 2 as the Preferred Alternative.

The No Action Alternative. CEQ regulations implementing the provisions of NEPA require Federal agencies to consider a "No Action" alternative. These regulations define the No Action alternative as the continuation of existing conditions and their effects on the environment, without implementation of, or in lieu of, a proposed action. Because of the compulsory nature of the 2005 BRAC Commission's recommendations, once Congress has allowed them to become law the Army may not select the No Action alternative with respect to the relocation of functions and personnel to a new AFRC in Scranton.

Factors Considered in Determining that an Environmental Impact Statement is not Required. No significant environmental impacts were identified in the EA (attached). Impacts were analyzed for land use, aesthetics and visual resources, air quality, noise, geology and soils, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, socioeconomics, transportation, utilities, and hazardous and toxic substances. Likewise, the Proposed Action would not result in significant cumulative effects, as no past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions that could combine with the Proposed Action were identified.

Public Comment. A Notice of Availability for the EA and Draft FNSI was published in the *Scranton Times* on March 5, 2009 and the documents were made available for public review and comment for 30-days. Persons wishing to comment could obtain a copy of the EA or inquire into this FNSI by calling Ms. Mona Garrett at (412) 604-8168 or emailing her at mona.garrett@usar.army.mil. A copy of the EA and Draft FNSI were also made available at the Albright Memorial Library, in Scranton, Pennsylvania and on the BRAC website at http://www.hqda.army.mil/acsim/brac/env_ea_review.htm. Four sets of comments were submitted in favor of the Preferred Alternative and opposed to Alternative 1.

Conclusion. Based on the environmental impact analyses described in the EA, which is hereby incorporated into this FNSI, it has been determined that implementation of the Proposed Action would not have a significant impact on the quality of the natural or the human environment. Because no significant environmental impact would result from implementation of the Proposed Action, an environmental impact statement is not required and will not be prepared.

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