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## **PRESS RELEASE - Army issues final environmental impact statement for proposed training area at Fort Benning**

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**FORT BENNING, Ga.** – The U.S. Army has announced the public availability of a final environmental impact statement for a proposed Heavy Off-Road Mounted Maneuver Training Area at Fort Benning, Georgia. The final EIS, prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, analyzes potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with the Army’s proposal to construct, operate, and maintain the HOMMTA on at least 2,400 contiguous acres on Fort Benning. The proposed HOMMTA would support off-road armored vehicle movement and maneuver training requirements associated with the Maneuver Center of Excellence’s mission to train the Army’s maneuver forces. The proposed action would increase the total amount of heavy maneuver training area on Fort Benning.

Fort Benning, located in west-central Georgia and east-central Alabama, includes approximately 182,000 acres of federally owned land. Fort Benning is home to the MCoE, including the infantry and armor schools, as well as several deployable units that conduct off-road maneuver training. These include the 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade, Task Force 1-28 Infantry and elements of the 75th Ranger Regiment.

The Army's training strategy has changed to "cross-domain movement and maneuver," which requires additional contiguous area for heavy off-road maneuver. Fort Benning requires additional space to conduct the required training.

The proposed HOMMTA development would include the construction of tank trails, culverted water crossings and road upgrades, as well as burying some existing overhead utilities. Buffers would be used to protect environmentally and culturally sensitive resources such as streams, wetlands, cemeteries and archaeological sites to the extent feasible.

The final EIS analyzes three action alternatives for this proposed action: (1) Alternative 1 – Northern Mounted Maneuver Training Area Alternative, including 4,724 acres in the northeastern portion of the installation; (2) Alternative 2 – Red Diamond Alternative, including 3,744 acres near the installation's southern boundary; and (3) Alternative 3 – Eastern Boundary Alternative, including 2,405 acres on the installation's eastern boundary. The alternative of taking no action and continuing with the status quo is also analyzed.

Resource areas analyzed in the final EIS include land use (recreation), air quality, noise, soils and topography, water resources (including wetlands and floodplains), biological resources, cultural resources, socioeconomics, infrastructure, and hazardous and toxic materials and waste. The EIS also analyzes potential cumulative environmental effects. Practical mitigation measures are presented in the EIS to reduce potential adverse effects.

The Army conducted a public review and comment period for the draft EIS between May 29 and July 13, 2020, including a public teleconference on June 30, 2020. The Army considered and addressed comments received on the draft EIS in the final EIS.

After publication of the notice of availability of the final EIS in the Federal Register, the Army will publish its record of decision announcing which alternative is environmentally preferred, which alternative it selects for implementation (be it an action alternative or the no-action alternative), and

which mitigation measures it will implement to reduce potential adverse impacts. Publication of the ROD will occur no sooner than 30 days after publication of the NOA of the final EIS.

For further information, please contact Mr. John Brown at (706) 545-7549 or john.e.brown12.civ@mail.mil. The HOMMTA Final EIS and additional information concerning the proposed action and this NEPA process can be found at <https://www.benning.army.mil>.

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