

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FNSI)

1. Description of the Proposed Action:

The United States Army Infantry Center and the National Infantry Foundation propose the construction of a new National Infantry Museum (NIM), to be constructed on City of Columbus and Fort Benning lands.

The new NIM would be constructed on an approximately 200-acre site lying between Fort Benning Boulevard and South Lumpkin Road, north of Custer Road, and owned in part by the U.S. Government [Fort Benning Military Installation (Army)] and in part by the Consolidated Government of Columbus/Muscogee County, Georgia (City). The Army property, approximately 104 acres, comprises the southern end of the site and extends northward along Fort Benning Boulevard to the "stone gates" and the northern extent of, and traditional entrance to, the Installation. This action would also include moving the seven buildings associated with World War II Street from their current location behind the existing NIM and in Harmony Church (site of the Chapel) to the site of the new NIM, in addition to the relocation of several monuments at the existing NIM and Sacrifice Field. The Army would lease the Fort Benning property to the NIF for the proposed new museum. Title to the City property would be transferred to the NIF for the new museum prior to the start of construction. The NIF would transfer the museum building to the Army within six months after beneficial occupancy and the Army will maintain the Museum. The NIF would lease certain portions of the Museum to collocate the management and operational staff of the NIF who are engaged in carrying out its responsibilities for raising funds, operation of revenue generating activities, and coordination of NIM activities such as volunteer coordination. All conditions of operations and maintenance of the NIM project would be defined in the lease between the Army and the NIF.

2. Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI): the EA titled "Environmental Assessment of the Proposed National Infantry Museum" was prepared and evaluated pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (Public law 91-190, 42 USC. 4321 et seq.). This EA concluded that the proposed action does not constitute a "major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the natural and human environment" when considered individually or cumulatively in the context of the referenced Act, including both direct and indirect impacts. Therefore, the preparation of a more detailed environmental document, an Environmental Impact Statement, was not required.

Subsequent to the completion of the EA and prior to the finalization of the FNSI, some changes were deemed necessary and were accomplished via an Errata Sheet to the EA. This Errata Sheet includes revisions to the Environmental Assessment of the Proposed National Infantry Museum, dated July 2004 (EA), and signed on July 19, 2004. Further review of the EA and comments necessitate correcting and clarifying information presented in the EA. None of the information provided in this Errata Sheet results in a significant change to the environment conditions or the project activity, the analysis of the potential environmental impacts, or the mitigation proposed; therefore an additional or revised environmental analysis is not required. The Errata Sheet and Final FNSI will be available on the abovementioned webpage and locations and a notice of their availability will be published in the "Columbus Ledger-Enquirer"; the notice will also be sent to the individuals/agencies/etc. on the distribution list for this project.

3. Summary of Potential Environmental Effects and Proposed Mitigation for the Preferred Alternative:

RESOURCE	POTENTIAL EFFECT	MITIGATION
Land Use	Minor adverse effects	No mitigation proposed.
Soils	Minor adverse effects	Adherence to ESPCP, NPDES Permit, and SPCC Plan and best management practices (BMPs) required; no additional mitigation proposed.
Water Quality	Minor adverse effects	Adherence to storm water/other applicable BMPs in the ESPCP, NPDES Permit, and SPCC Plan required; no additional mitigation proposed.
Wetlands	Very minor adverse effects	No mitigation proposed.
Vegetation	Moderate adverse effects	Adherence to ESPCP and NPDES Permit required; coordination with EMD regarding merchantable tree removal; no additional mitigation proposed.
Wildlife	Minor adverse effects	None proposed.
Cultural Resources	Minor adverse effects	Coordination of plans/design w/ appropriate parties; planting of historic and/or native plants; data recovery, recordation, interpretation as detailed in the EA, Errata to the EA, and the draft NIM Mitigation and Monitoring Plan are required.
Air Quality	Temporary minor adverse effects	Adherence to air construction permit, if needed.
Aesthetics	Minor positive effects	No mitigation proposed
Public Health and Safety	Very minor adverse effects	Removal of all wastes, remedial action as needed, and additional sampling, as needed.
Human Environment	Minor positive effects	No mitigation proposed.

Note: There are no cumulative impacts to any media predicted as a result of the proposed action.

4. Public Comments:

a. The EA and draft FNSI for the proposed action were completed and made available to the public for a review period of 30 days after publication in "The Columbus Ledger-Enquirer," in accordance with part 1501.4 (e)(1) of Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations and Army Regulation 200-2.

These documents were available at the following locations, in addition to the following website: www.benning.army.mil/EMD/Legal&PublicNotices.htm: the W.C. Bradley Memorial Library, the South Lumpkin Library, and the Fort Benning Main Post Library. Notices of availability of the EA and draft FNSI were also placed on the abovementioned website, in addition to being mailed to all individuals/agencies/etc. on the distribution list for this project.

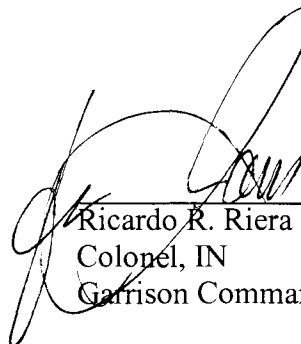
b. Anyone wishing to comment on the proposed action or request additional information was instructed to contact the U.S. Army Infantry Center, Directorate of Public Works, Environmental Programs Management Branch (Attention: Mr. John E. Brown), Building 6 (Meloy Hall) Room 309, Fort Benning, Georgia 31905-5122, or call (706) 545-7549.

c. Summary of Public Comments: three comments were received during the public review period (23 July to 23 August 2004) and are summarized below.

- On 23 July 2004, the Georgia State Clearinghouse (GSC) sent a letter confirming receipt of the EA and draft FNSI and that the documents would be forwarded, through them, for the appropriate state-level reviews.
- On 5 August 2004, the West Georgia Office, Ecological Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, recommended (via email comment) that buffers of existing vegetation be retained between wetlands and streams and any construction. Buffers should be a minimum of 50 feet in width (25 feet on each side of the stream), plus an additional two feet in width for each foot of vertical elevation between the wetland/stream and the construction feature. No direct response was provided to this comment; however, NIF representatives confirmed that this measure would be adhered to, per guidance in Georgia's Best Management Practices Manual for Forestry (1999).
- On 25 August 2004, the GSC sent an additional letter confirming that the abovementioned state-level review had been completed. This was confirmed by attached letters from the Lower Chattahoochee Regional Development Committee, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GA DNR)-Historic Preservation Division, the GA Environmental Protection Division-Flood Plain Management, the GA Soil and Water Conservation Commission, and the GA DNR-Water Protection Branch, which indicated that the EA was "consistent with state and regional goals" and was therefore an approved action.

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REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY

SEP 15 2004
Date


Ricardo R. Riera
Colonel, IN
Garrison Commander

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