

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

1 Introduction

Fort Benning has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to examine the proposal by the 75th Ranger Regiment (75RR) to construct, operate, and maintain a Field Ammunition Supply Point (FASP) at Fort Benning, Georgia (GA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 US Code [USC] 4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Part 1500-1508), and the Army NEPA Regulation (*Environmental Analysis of Army Actions*; 32 CFR Part 651).

The EA evaluated the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Action, identified possible/potential mitigation measures to lessen or eliminate adverse effects, and examined reasonable alternatives for the Proposed Action. The intended audience of the EA is Army decision-makers, interested government agencies, federally recognized Native American Tribes, and non-governmental organizations, and members of the public. The information contained in this EA was reviewed and considered by the Army prior to the final decision on how to proceed with the implementation of the Proposed Action, if at all.

2 Background

Fort Benning serves as the home to numerous deployable Army and other tenant units; including the 75RR. The 75RR is the US Army's elite light infantry airborne special operations force that is part of the US Army Special Operations Command. The Regiment, headquartered at Fort Benning, GA is composed of three Ranger battalions and an additional Special Troops battalion. The primary mission of the Regiment is to plan and conduct special missions in support of US policy and objectives. They perform a variety of direct action raids in hostile or sensitive environments globally, which include airfield seizure, special reconnaissance, personnel recovery, clandestine insertion, and site exploitation. The Regiment can deploy a battalion within hours of notification.

3 Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide an additional ammunition holding area (AHA) for the 75RR by constructing, operating, and maintaining a new FASP at Fort Benning, GA. The 75RR currently utilizes magazines and support buildings to store and secure arms, ammunition, and explosives (AAE) for both training and operational deployment. The current Ranger AHAs at Fort Benning are strategically located near routes and training areas commonly utilized by the 75RR and consist of earth covered magazines (ECMs) and modular storage vaults that are relocatable. This decentralized storage stratagem promotes flexibility and accessibility to maximize efficient training schedules and loadouts, while minimizing time between notifications to mobilize and force deployment.

The Proposed Action would disperse the 75RR's concentration of AAE among AHAs and increase their total net explosive weight (NEW) stockpiled, as determined by US Army Technical Center for Explosives Safety (USATCES) and DoD Explosive Safety Board (DDESB), and improve the 75RR's proficiencies for rapid deployment by streamlining initial loadout capabilities.

4 Description of the Proposed Action

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5 Description of the Alternatives

Although a number of locations across Fort Benning exist from which a FASP could be sited, Section 1.3 (Purpose and Need) emphasizes that the site must promote flexibility and accessibility to make the best use of resources available in support of the 75RR. As a result, Fort Benning developed screening criteria for comparison against conceivable alternatives in an effort to narrow down the analysis to specific areas and reasonable alternatives. Alternatives that failed to meet the criteria were eliminated and not carried forth for consideration within this EA. The alternative must:

- Be an available parcel on Fort Benning with no less than seven contiguous acres in size and located within a one mile radius of the 75RR's compound;
- Meet the requirements to qualify for an explosives safety site plan as approved by USATCES and DDESB;
- Avoid areas that would present substantial safety and land use conflicts;
- Require minimal site preparations (e.g., undeveloped, level, sparsely forested trees, etc.) prior to construction;
- Avoid parcels where the Proposed Action would result in a "take" as defined by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) or significant adverse impacts to Federal Threatened and Endangered (T&E) species or their habitat;
- Support the mission requirements of the 75RR and the Installation.

As a result of the screening criteria, only one viable location was identified for potential placement of the FASB. This EA carries forward the analysis of potential impacts of two alternatives; the Preferred Action Alternative (PAA): Sightseeing Road and the No Action Alternative.

6 Anticipated Environmental Effects

The analysis contained in this EA indicates that the PAA could have minor adverse impacts to Hazardous Materials and Waste (HM&W), Land Use, Soils, and Water Resources. Potential adverse impacts would be considered short-term for HM&W, Soils, and Water Resources as a result of FASP construction activities. Ongoing operational activities have the potential to result in long-term, minor adverse impacts to HM&W and Land Use. Additionally, no environmental impacts are anticipated from the No Action Alternative. Environmental consequences of the Valued Environmental Components (VECs) fully analyzed are summarized in Table S.1 below.

As discussed in Section 4, these minor adverse direct/indirect impacts do not result in significant adverse cumulative effects when considering other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities involving Fort Benning. Adherence to Federal and State laws and regulations, as well as Installation management plans, and Army Regulations would minimize impacts to HM&W, Land Use, Soils, and Water Resources.

7 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures, beyond compliance with applicable laws and regulations and associated required Fort Benning Plans, are required to avoid significant impacts under any of the PAA.

8 Public Availability

The Final EA and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) were made available to the public for a 30-day public comment period from February 27 – March 29, 2019. An announcement that these documents are available was published via a Notice of Availability (NOA) in The Columbus Ledger-Enquirer, The Journal, and Benning News (online) in accordance with the Army NEPA Regulation. These documents are also available at several local libraries and are posted on the Fort Benning website at <http://www.benning.army.mil/Garrison/DPW/EMD/Legal.html>.

The NOA of the Final EA and Draft FNSI was mailed to all agencies, individuals, and organizations on the Fort Benning NEPA distribution (mailing) list for the Proposed Action. Fort Benning did not receive any comments during the 30-day comment period. Therefore, there were no issues or concerns raised that affected the EA's analysis or decision of a FNSI for the Proposed Action.

9 Conclusions

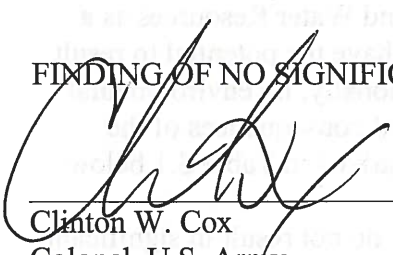
In consideration of the analysis in the EA, I have decided to implement the PAA. Implementation of either the PAA or the No Action would not have a significant impact on the quality of human life or natural environment. The PAA would meet the purpose and need of the Proposed Action by providing a FASP at Fort Benning to accommodate the missions of the 75RR.

A FNSI is warranted for this Proposed Action and does not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This analysis fulfills the requirements of the NEPA of

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1969, as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500–1508), as well as the requirements of the Environmental Analysis of Army Actions (32 CFR 651).

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY:



Clinton W. Cox
Colonel, U.S. Army
Garrison Commander

4 Apr 2019

Date