

**DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FNSI)
OF THE MASTER PLAN FOR THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
WARRIOR TRAINING CENTER AT CAMP BUTLER, FT. BENNING, GEORGIA**

Introduction

The Georgia Army National Guard (GAARNG) and the Department of the Army (DA) at Fort Benning, prepared the Environmental Assessment of the Master Plan for the ARNG Warrior Training Center (WTC) to identify and evaluate potential environmental impacts associated with establishing a Collective Training Center at the WTC located at Camp Butler, Ft. Benning, Georgia. The WTC provides Active and Reserve Army personnel with training for Pre-Ranger, Air Assault, Pathfinder, Master Gunner, and Observer Controller special skills. The purpose of the Proposed Action is to redesign and enhance the current WTC through the establishment of a Collective Training Center (CTC). The CTC would provide administrative, instructional, training, medical, and housing facilities to support a battalion-sized unit of approximately 600 Soldiers. The Proposed Action is needed to replace substandard facilities and meet existing Army and National Guard Bureau (NGB) mission requirements.

The EA was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 United States Code [USC] 4321-4370); the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508); the Army NEPA Regulation (32 CFR 651, *Environmental Analysis of Army Actions*); and National Guard Bureau's *Guidance on Preparing Environmental Documentation for Army National Guard Action in Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969*.

The purpose of the EA is to inform federal decision-makers and the public of the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Action and its alternatives, prior to making a federal decision to move forward with the Proposed Action. As required under the above-referenced regulations, the EA is intended to assist federal decision-makers in determining whether or not the Proposed Action would result in significant environmental effects that cannot be mitigated to less-than-significant levels. In this manner, federal decision-makers can make a fully informed decision, aware of the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Action, while complying with these regulations.

1. Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is the ARNG's Preferred Alternative. The Proposed Action consists of the establishment of a CTC for the WTC, including the demolition or renovation of existing facilities; construction of new facilities; improvement of existing utility infrastructure, and expansion/refurbishment of the existing obstacle course and physical fitness areas. In total, approximately 15 acres would be disturbed at the 42.7-acre Camp Butler site to accommodate establishing a new CTC.

Alternatives Considered

As described in detail in the EA, the ARNG undertook a master planning effort in 2007 that resulted in the evaluation of various site development alternatives. Through this planning effort, six alternatives were identified and evaluated for their ability to reasonably accomplish the primary mission of the WTC. Specifically, the 2007 Master Plan used existing site conditions to help determine the suitability of the proposed CTC areas. Items evaluated included existing facilities; land use; environment (topography, hydrology, and species of concern [red-cockaded woodpecker]); viewshed; access, security, and traffic circulation; and infrastructure. Six alternate site layouts were identified. It was determined that a combination of Alternatives 3 and 5 would best meet the mission requirements, and this combination was selected as the Proposed Action alternative. Under this alternative, the company's buildings are laid out in a radial pattern around the Headquarters building, which would remain as the focal point of the site. Staff and visitor parking would remain at the front of the Headquarters building, student parking would be relocated to the southeastern corner of the site, and green space would surround the Headquarters building. The obstacle course would be reconfigured to loop around a shared physical training pit in conjunction with a lighted running trail.

There was a change in mission requirements since publication of the 2007 Master Plan. Additional screening criteria were used to determine whether other reasonable alternatives should be evaluated. The screening criteria included considerations of location, size of parcel, infrastructure availability, and ability to comply with security requirements. As detailed in the EA, it was determined that the WTC provides a unique environment and no other action alternative besides the Preferred Alternative was identified as meeting the purpose and need of the Proposed Action.

In addition to the Proposed Action alternative, the ARNG analyzed a No Action alternative. Under the No Action alternative, the ARNG would not establish a CTC and would continue to train Active and Reserve Army personnel in substandard facilities. Inclusion of the No Action alternative is prescribed by CEQ regulations that implement NEPA (40 CFR 1502.14[d]), and the No Action alternative serves as a baseline against which environmental impacts of the Preferred Alternative are measured.

2. Environmental Analysis

The environmental assessment analyzed the Proposed Action and No Action alternatives for potential impacts to the human (i.e., cultural resources, socioeconomic resources; noise; utility infrastructure; and solid, hazardous, and toxic wastes), and natural (biological, wetlands, air quality, and water resources) environments. Based on the analysis contained in the EA, the ARNG has determined that the Proposed Action would not have any significant adverse impacts on the human or natural environments. In accordance with NEPA Regulations, the ARNG must indicate if any mitigation measures would be needed to implement the Proposed Action. No mitigation measures would be needed; however, under the Proposed Action, management practices will be implemented to address minor adverse impacts to soil and water resources. No other resource impacts are anticipated with implementation of the Proposed Action or No Action alternative. Implementation of the Proposed Action alternative as prescribed, including implementation of the management practices, would likely not produce any significant adverse direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts. Under the No Action alternative, the Proposed Action would not be implemented and baseline conditions would remain unchanged.

Management Practices

The following management practices will be implemented by the ARNG under the Proposed Action alternative:

- **Soil Resources**

- Application of federal and state erosion control and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements, including NPDES best management practices (BMPs), would minimize impacts to insignificance during construction.
- Continued adherence to applicable federal and state laws and regulations would minimize impacts due to training, operations, and maintenance activities in the long term.

- **Water Resources**

- Application of Low-Impact Development (LID) and NPDES BMPs would minimize sedimentation into adjacent waterways during construction.
- Continued adherence to applicable federal and state laws and regulations would minimize impacts due to training, operations, and maintenance activities in the long term.

- **Biological Resources:**

- Use of BMPs for soil erosion prevention to protect vegetation, water quality, and habitat.

Implementation of the above measures would reduce identified effects to less-than-significant levels.

3. Regulations

The Proposed Action will not violate NEPA, CEQ regulations, Army NEPA Regulation, or any other federal, state, or local environmental regulation.

4. Commitment to Implementation

NGB and the GAARNG affirm their commitment to implement this EA and its management practices in accordance with the NEPA. Implementation is dependent on funding. The NGB and GAARNG will ensure that adequate funds are requested in future years' budgets to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in this EA, and to fund the management practices described above.

5. Public Review and Comment

The Final EA and Draft FNSI were made available for public review and comment for 30 days following publication of a Notice of Availability (NOA) in the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, *Tri-County Journal* and *Chattahoochee Chronicle*, *The Bayonet*, and *Stewart Webster Journal Patriot Citizen*. This review period extended from May 3, 2012 to June 1, 2012. As announced in the NOA, these documents were available for public review at the following six libraries:

- **Phenix City-Russell County Public Library** at 1501 17th Avenue, Phenix City, AL 36867.
- **South Columbus Branch Library** at 2034 South Lumpkin Road, Columbus, GA 31903.
- **Columbus Public Library** at 3000 Macon Road, Columbus, GA 31906.
- **North Columbus Branch Library** at 5689 Armour Road, Columbus, GA 31909.

- **Cusseta-Chattahoochee Public Library** at 262 Broad Street, Cusseta, GA 31805.
- **Fort Benning Main Post Library** at 93 Wold Avenue, Building 93, Fort Benning, GA 31905.

In addition, the Final EA and Draft FNSI were made available electronically on the Fort Benning website at: <http://www.benning.army.mil/garrison/DPW/EMD/legal.htm>.

Written public comments were requested to be directed to Mr. John Brent; Environmental Management Division, Chief; IMSE-BEN-PWE-P; 6650 Meloy Drive; Building 6 (Meloy Hall), Room 307; Fort Benning, Georgia 31905-5122; or john.brent@us.army.mil.

Copies of the Final EA and/or Draft FNSI were available from the U.S. Army Maneuver Center of Excellence, Directorate of Public Works, Environmental Programs Management Branch (Attention: Mr. John E. Brown, NEPA Program Manager), Building 6 (Meloy Hall), Room 309, Fort Benning, Georgia, 31905-5122, or at (706) 545-7549.

6. Draft Finding of No Significant Impact

After careful review of the Final EA, I have concluded that implementation of the Proposed Action would not generate significant controversy or have a significant impact on the quality of the human or natural environment.

The Final EA and Draft FNSI were made available for a 30-day public review and comment period. Once any received substantive public comments on the Final EA and/or this Draft FNSI have been addressed, and if a determination is made the Proposed Action will have no significant impact, the FNSI will be signed and the action will be implemented. The analysis fulfills the requirements of NEPA, the CEQ regulations, and the Army NEPA Regulation. An Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared; ARNG-ILE is issuing this FNSI.

<<UNSIGNED DRAFT>>

Michael J. Bennett
Colonel, US Army
Chief, Environmental
Programs Division

Date

The GAARNG is a licensee of land at Fort Benning, and the Proposed Action would occur on land licensed by the GAARNG from the DA at Fort Benning. As the Garrison Commander, I am the approving official for the DA at Fort Benning pursuant to 32 CFR Part 651.6(b), and I concur with the above statements and findings.

<<UNSIGNED DRAFT>>

Jeffrey Fletcher
Colonel, AG
Garrison Commander

Date