

## NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

### Environmental Assessment FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF AN INFANTRY PLATOON BATTLE COURSE AT Fort Benning, Georgia

#### To Whom It May Concern:

The United States Army Infantry Center, Directorate of Public Works, Environmental Management Division, Fort Benning, Georgia, hereby announces the completion and public availability of an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) concerning the construction, maintenance, and use of an Infantry Platoon Battle Course (IPBC) that would provide Soldiers the skills necessary to detect, identify, engage, and defeat stationary and moving infantry and armor targets in a tactical array at Fort Benning, Georgia. These documents were prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

The Army intends to construct a permanent IPBC on Fort Benning. An IPBC will allow infantry platoons to maneuver on foot through a series of targets and missions in an obstacle course setting. Moving and stationary targets, bunkers, landing zones, mortar simulation devices and buildings would provide a realistic training environment that allows for multiple advances, defend, and threat scenarios. An IPBC is necessary to sustain and improve the combat readiness of Infantry Soldiers in the Army, Army Reserve, and National Guard infantry units by training to the most current platoon level operational tactics, techniques, and equipment.

Four alternatives were considered in the EA. Alternative I would consist of constructing a permanent IPBC on Fort Benning. The size of the IPBC will be approximately 1,217 acres. The configuration of the IPBC will be in accordance with US Army Corps of Engineers standards and site adapted to Fort Benning's location. Range objectives were moved and reoriented to better fit the topographical conditions, to avoid ordnance impact areas and wetlands, and to minimize encroachment on RCW habitat.

Alternative II would consist of conducting training at an offsite IPBC on Fort Stewart, Georgia, and was considered as an alternative to constructing a new IPBC on Fort Benning. This option would have entailed transporting Soldiers between Fort Benning and Fort Stewart for IPBC training. The Army determined that this option would be logistically difficult and cost prohibitive and eliminated it from further consideration.

Alternative III would consist of upgrading, expanding, or converting three existing ranges on Fort Benning to an IPBC. It was determined, however, that these ranges were best slated to accommodate upgrades to heavier weapons training ranges. No other ranges at Fort Benning were available for upgrades or conversions to an IPBC. Therefore, the alternative of upgrading, expanding, or converting a current range facility was determined to be not reasonable and was eliminated from further consideration.

Alternative IV is the no-action alternative. The no action alternative would consist of maintaining the status quo—not building the IPBC and continuing to conduct training utilizing portable facilities at multiple locations, particularly at the Griswold and Cactus Range areas. No

new construction or activities would occur, and the current environmental conditions would remain as is. The no action alternative does not meet the need for training infantry platoon-level units on Fort Benning but was assessed to establish a baseline of environmental conditions. Two additional alternatives were also given a preliminary analysis, but determined to be not reasonable and were eliminated from detailed analysis.

The EA evaluates the effects associated with each of the alternatives on soils/topography, vegetation, surface water, wetlands, wildlife and migratory birds, protected species, solid waste, hazardous materials and waste, air quality, cultural resources, noise, unexploded ordnance, transportation infrastructure, socioeconomics, land use, and environmental justice.

The EA and Draft FNSI for the proposed action will be available to the public for a review period of 30 days starting from the first day of publication in The Columbus Ledger-Enquirer, in accordance with Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1501.4(e)(1) and Army Regulation 200-2, "Environmental Effects of Army Actions." These documents are available at the following locations, as well as the following website:

[http://www.benning.army.mil/EMd/\\_program\\_mgt/legal/index.htm](http://www.benning.army.mil/EMd/_program_mgt/legal/index.htm).

- W.C. Bradley Memorial Library, located at 1120 Bradley Drive, Columbus, Georgia.
- South Lumpkin Library, located at 2034 South Lumpkin Road, Columbus, Georgia.
- Fort Benning Main Post Library, located in Building 93, Fort Benning, Georgia.

Anyone wishing to comment on the proposed action or request additional information must write to the U.S. Army Infantry Center, Directorate of Public Works, Environmental Programs Management Branch (Attention: Mr. John E. Brown), Building 6 (Meloy Hall) Room 310, Fort Benning, Georgia 31905-5122, or call (706) 545-7549.

Sincerely

Craig Taylor  
Acting Director of Public Works