

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FNSI)**

### **PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A U.S. ARMY RESERVE CENTER ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, HARFORD COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508) for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 U.S. Code [USC] 4321 et seq.) and Environmental Analysis of Army Actions (32 CFR Part 651), the U.S. Army performed an Environmental Assessment (EA) of the potential environmental effects associated with the construction and operation of a new U.S. Army Reserve Center (USARC) at the U.S. Army Garrison Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) within the Edgewood Area (APG-EA) in Harford County, Maryland. The EA is incorporated by reference to this Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI).

#### **Purpose and Need**

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to support the training and mobilization of ten existing USAR units. The existing ten USAR units currently occupy approximately 8,175 square feet of space in an existing Reserve Center on the APG within the Aberdeen Area (APG-AA), approximately 13 miles north of APG-EA; and approximately 18,296 square feet of space at a leased facility in Abingdon, Maryland, approximately five miles north of APG-EA.

The Proposed Action is needed because the existing facilities do not meet the current training and mission requirements for the units and the ten units will not be able to properly conduct fundamental training to meet readiness and mobilization objectives. The facility on the APG-AA has a utilization rate of over 200 percent and is in disrepair. The facility in Abingdon, Maryland is overcrowded at 200 percent and is deficient in administrative, storage, educational areas, and parking. This facility cannot be expanded and minimum force protection standoff distances cannot be achieved. Existing overcrowded facilities restrict unit capacity to meet Command Focus Areas for improved mobilization and deployment. As units react to Department of Defense (DOD) Transformation, existing facilities will continue placing unnecessary stress on limited operations and maintenance operating budgets.

#### **Proposed Action**

The Proposed Action is the construction and operation of a new 500-member USARC on the APG-EA consisting of the following facilities:

- 69,000 square-foot training building
- 6,250 square-foot organizational maintenance shop (OMS)
- 2,750 square-foot unheated storage facility near the OMS
- 208 space parking lot for privately owned vehicles (POVs)
- 4,520 square-yard fenced military equipment parking lot

Additional construction activities would consist of paving, fencing, general site improvements, and extending utilities to serve the new facilities. Anti-terrorism/force protection (AT/FP) safety and security measures, including minimum standoff distance from roads, parking areas, and vehicle unloading areas, would be incorporated into the facility design and siting. Accessibility for disabled persons would be provided in public areas.

The USARC training building would provide administrative offices, classrooms, library, learning center, assembly hall, arms vault, weapons simulator, kitchen, unit storage, locker and shower rooms and physical readiness areas for the units. Activities at the USARC would be training-related with no live weapons firing. Activities at the OMS would include vehicle maintenance and repairs (e.g., oil change, tire rotation, etc.), as well as parts storage and maintenance administrative support.

Buildings would be of permanent construction with reinforced concrete foundations; concrete floor slabs; structural steel frames; plumbing; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems; and mechanical, security, and electrical systems. The new APG-EA USARC would be designed to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver standards and have an energy reduction of 40 percent from a building meeting the minimum requirements of American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) 90.1-2007. The design, construction, and operation of the USARC would be consistent with and meet the intent of Executive Order (EO) 13514 (Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance), the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 and APG's Net Zero Water Strategy.

The military vehicles and equipment kept on-site would be parked empty or loaded with equipment for training. Occasionally, some of these vehicles could be staged and moved as a convoy for off-site training.

The USARC would employ approximately 31 permanent full-time personnel and would serve about 500 personnel on a rotating basis, mostly on weekends. The maximum expected use of the facility would be approximately 260 members per peak weekend, and there would be parking for 208 POVs, which considers those that would carpool. Construction funding has been approved for fiscal year 2013.

### **Preferred Alternative**

The site of the Preferred Alternative is a government-owned, approximately 15 acre site located in the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Austin and Wise Road in APG-EA, in Harford County, Maryland (hereafter referred to as the Preferred Site). The Preferred Site is an open field and contains a ball field. The Preferred Site is designated by APG as being in the 'troop' land use category (this land use is designated for operational facilities for Table of Organization and Equipment units, Basic Combat Training and One Station Unit Training complexes and for

selected Initial Entry Training complexes). Utilities are available to the site and would be extended to serve the Preferred Site.

### **No Action Alternative**

Inclusion of the No Action Alternative is prescribed by CEQ regulations. Under the No Action Alternative, the U.S. Army would not implement the Proposed Action. No new facilities would be constructed at the APG. The No Action Alternative would not address the purpose and need for the Proposed Action; however, inclusion of the No Action Alternative serves as a benchmark for evaluation of the potential impacts of the Proposed Action. The No Action Alternative was evaluated in the EA.

### **Alternatives Considered but Eliminated**

A key principle of the NEPA is that agencies consider a range of reasonable alternatives to a Proposed Action. Considering alternatives helps to avoid impacts and allows analysis of reasonable ways to achieve the stated purpose. To be considered reasonable, and warrant detailed evaluation, an alternative must be viable, capable of implementation and satisfactory with respect to meeting the purpose of, and need for, the action.

Three sites within APG-EA were considered and dismissed as possible alternative sites because they were not reasonable to meet the purpose and need of the Proposed Action.

### **Potential Environmental Impacts**

The attached EA contains a comprehensive evaluation of the existing conditions and the environmental consequences of implementing the Proposed Action at the Preferred Site and the No Action Alternative, as required by the NEPA. Impacts were analyzed for land use, aesthetics and visual resources, air quality, noise, soil resources, water resources, biological resources, coastal zone management, cultural resources, socioeconomics, transportation, utilities, and hazardous and toxic substances. Implementation of the Proposed Action at the Preferred Site would not have significant direct and/or indirect impacts to the resources analyzed.

The potential for cumulative effects to the environment was evaluated by reviewing other projects in the vicinity of the Preferred Site that could affect the same environmental resources. Projects scheduled to occur in the near future in the vicinity of the Preferred Site will not significantly impact or increase the environmental effects described in the EA.

### **Public Review and Comment**

The EA and draft FNSI were available for review for a period of 30 days. Copies were available for review at the Harford County Library, Edgewood Branch, 629 Edgewood Road, Edgewood, MD 21040 (410-612-1600), and on-line at the following URL Address:

<http://www.parsenviro.com/FTP/comments/EdgewoodEA.pdf>. A copy of the Notice of Availability for the EA was published in the Aegis and the Baltimore Sun on 21 June 2013. Written comments were to be received within 30 days from the publication of the Notice of Availability for consideration. Two agencies commented during the 30-day review period; 1) The U.S. Army Garrison, APG and 2) The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) through the Maryland State Clearinghouse. The U.S. Army Garrison, APG commented on wetland buffers, hazardous waste generation, and stormwater permitting, as well as providing a few minor editorial suggestions. The MDP through the Maryland State Clearinghouse coordinated the review of the EA by state and local agencies. Agencies that provided comments as summarized in the MDP comment letter were: the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), the Maryland Department of Transportation, MDP, the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT), the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and Harford County. As noted in the MDP comment letter, the MDNR, Maryland Department of Transportation, Harford County, MDP and MHT found the Proposed Action was consistent with their agencies' plans, programs and objectives. The MDE found the Proposed Action to be generally consistent with their plans, programs, and objectives but included certain qualifying comments related to a variety of State requirements, permitting processes and programs under MDE's jurisdiction for the following areas: asbestos handling, particulate matter from materials handling and construction, air quality, potential soil contamination, energy conservation and efficiency, aboveground and underground storage tanks, solid waste management, hazardous materials generation or handling, brownfields development, and water quality. The Proposed Action will comply with all applicable federal laws and will be designed and constructed to be consistent with current applicable state and local building and development laws and regulations to the extent practicable.

### NEPA Determination

Based on the findings of the EA, there would be no significant impacts resulting from the Preferred Alternative or No Action Alternative. This Finding of No Significant Impact was prepared to accompany the EA, which concludes that preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement will not be required for this Proposed Action.

### Signature:

Approved by:



JEFFREY M. HRZIC

Chief, Environmental Division

U.S Army Reserve, 99th Regional Support Command

Date: 13 Jan 2014