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**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FNSI)
WEST VIRGINIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF RANGES AT THE BRIERY MOUNTAIN
TRAINING AREA
PRESTON COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA**

Introduction

The West Virginia Army National Guard (WVARNG) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to identify and evaluate potential environmental effects from the construction and operation of three ranges within the Briery Mountain Training Area (BMTA) at the Camp Dawson Collective Training Center (CDCTC) in Preston County, West Virginia. The three ranges include a Live Fire Breach Facility (LFBF), a Hand Grenade Familiarization Range (HGFR), and a MK 19 range. The MK19 range is used to train Soldiers on the skills necessary to detect, identify, engage, and defeat stationary infantry and armor targets in a tactical array using the MK19 weapons system and training ammunition. WVARNG developed this EA in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA, 42 USC] § 4321 to 4370e), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (CEQ Regulations, 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and *Environmental Analysis of Army Actions* (32 CFR 651). In order to meet the short term immediate needs of the 197th Regional Training Institute (RTI), the WVARNG constructed a non standard MK19 familiarization range on the 1,288 acre BMTA in 2012. This project was accomplished using WVARNG labor and on-hand materials.

1. Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives

Proposed Action. The WVARNG needs the Proposed Action to ensure its units meet mission training objectives with sufficient land area as defined in Training Circular (TC) 25-1. The Proposed Action is also needed for the continued and long-term viability of the CDCTC as a training center with the land and resources necessary to support the WVARNG's and other military users' assigned training missions. Implementation of the Proposed Action would support higher quality, mission-essential, and increased training activities at CDCTC, while limiting the need for out-of-state travel. The WVARNG estimates that, with the three new proposed ranges, training at BMTA could increase by approximately 53 range days per year (all users).

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide the requisite training facilities at the BMTA for in-state training for WVARNG units. The Proposed Action would provide in-state facilities for required training on tasks necessary to conduct breaching techniques (the LFBF), employment of live fragmentation hand grenades (the HGFR) and gunnery exercises for the MK 19. The WVARNG currently conducts this type of training at installations where space is available, primarily in Kentucky and Pennsylvania.

Alternatives Considered. The Proposed Action is the WVARNG's Preferred Alternative (Build Alternative – Range Configuration B). It would require the least amount of land because the surface danger zones (SDZs) for the MK 19 range, LFBF, and HGFR would overlap with the SDZ of the existing modified record firing range. Soldiers could use existing trails for access under the Proposed Action, WVARNG would expand existing training opportunities at CDCTC to include three new ranges. An alternative to the Proposed Action is similar to the Proposed Action, but the locations of the LFBF and the HGFR are switched (Build Alternative – Range Configuration Alternative A). In addition, the WVARNG analyzed the No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative provides a baseline to compare impacts associated with the Proposed Action. Under the No Action Alternative, current installation operations would continue at the BMTA as well as out-of-state training activities.

The WVARNG developed and applied screening criteria to evaluate possible alternatives (see EA, Section 2.2.1). The WVARNG concluded that a suitable site would meet the majority, if not all, of the screening criteria. During this process, the WVARNG determined that constructing and operating these ranges at the BMTA is the only alternative capable of supporting high quality, mission-essential, and increased training activities at CDCTC, while limiting the need for out-of-state travel.

The BMTA provides many advantages: it is a training area at the CDCTC of sufficient size (1,288 acres) that the WVARNG owns in its entirety and standard SDZs will remain completely within WVARNG owned property. The SDZs include a shared impact area. While some land will have to be cleared/graded for the ranges, no grading will occur in the SDZs. CDCTC is the main training area for WVARNG and therefore, using BMTA will avoid or reduce travel times and costs to train in other states. The range footprints will minimize earth disturbance, contain few environmental constraints, maximize opportunities for concurrent training, and will cause no not loss in the capacity of the WVARNG to support the military mission.

2. Environmental Analysis

The potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed action are fully described in the EA. The EA identifies the environmental resources that could be affected by the proposed action, and determines the significance of the impacts, if any, to each of these resources. Based on the EA's analysis, the WVARNG determined that the known and potential adverse impacts from the Proposed Action on land use, air quality, noise, geology and soils, water resources, biological resources, threatened and endangered species, socioeconomics, infrastructure, and hazardous and toxic materials and wastes would not be significant. The Proposed Action would also have no significant adverse effects on cultural resources or raise Environmental Justice considerations.

The WVARNG is committed to preparing updated NEPA analysis if any of the proposed actions analyzed in this EA are not constructed within five years of finalization of this document, or if the WVARNG changes the proposed locations of the facilities. For either circumstance, before project implementation, WVARNG will revisit the baseline environmental information and environmental consequences analysis in this current EA to determine if they are up to date. Additional, follow-on NEPA analysis would be "tiered-off" of this EA if necessary. WVARNG will coordinate all decisions regarding future NEPA analysis requirements with ARNG-ILE.

3. Mitigation

No mitigation measures are necessary to reduce potential adverse environmental impacts to less than significant levels. To address minor site-specific adverse effects, the WVARNG will maintain their stewardship posture by implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) for each resource area and applicable WVARNG construction guidelines for new facilities. Additionally, the WVARNG will obtain all necessary permits and construction site approvals prior to any ground disturbing activities.

4. Regulations

The Proposed Action will not violate NEPA, the CEQ Regulations, 32 CFR 651, or other federal, state, or local environmental regulations.

5. Commitment to Implementation

The National Guard Bureau (NGB) and the WVARNG affirm their commitment to implement this EA in accordance with NEPA. Implementation is dependent on funding. The WVARNG and the NGB's Environmental Programs, Training, and Installations Divisions will ensure that adequate funds are requested in future years' budgets to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in this EA.

6. Public Review and Comment

The EA and draft FNSI will be available for public review and comment for 30 days following publication of a public notice in the Preston County Journal. Copies of the EA and draft FNSI will be made available for public review at the Kingwood Public Library in Kingwood, WV. The public may obtain information on the status and progress of the EA, as well as submit written comments on the EA during the 30-day public review period, through the Public Affairs Office, West Virginia Army National Guard, 1703 Coonskin Drive Charleston, WV 25311, (304) 561-6762.

7. Finding of No Significant Impact

After careful review of the EA, I have concluded that implementation of the Proposed Action with mitigation measures would not generate significant controversy or have a significant impact on the quality

of the human or natural environment. Per 32 CFR Part 651, the EA and draft FNSI will be made available for a 15-day public review and comment period. Once any public comments have been addressed and if a determination is made that the Proposed Action will have no significant impact, the FNSI will be signed and the action will be implemented. This analysis fulfills the requirements of the NEPA and the CEQ Regulations. An Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared, and the NGB will issue this FNSI.

Date

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