

News

Army releases environmental report on considered sites

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By SLOAN BREWSTER, Press staff

MIDDLETOWN — Late Thursday evening, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released the long-awaited National Environmental Assessment of the three properties in consideration for an Army Reserve Training Center.

Two weeks ago, the corps announced 42-acre Cucia Park was the preferred site for the center.

“Now it’s official,” Corps Chief of Public Affairs Ronald Elliot said.

The report spells out findings on the three properties, he said. The other sites assessed were an active farm on Boardman Lane and the Bysiewicz Industrial Subdivision, called Liberty Park.

“It explains what they have found and what needs to be done, and based on that, explains [why] Cucia Park is preferred,” Elliot said.

On page 11 of the executive summary of the report, the site’s benefits are described.

Its size, which can accommodate the footprint of the proposed facility, the fact it is in an industrial zone, the existence of utilities within or near the site and its proximity to Interstate 91, are among the pluses.

“The disadvantages of this site include that it requires the clearing of 28 acres of forestland, unavoidable loss of 11,636 [square feet] (0.267 acres) of wetlands and impacts the state-listed habitat for the eastern box turtle.”

The training center is a response to the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Act, which mandates smaller individual reserve bases be closed and replaced with larger combined locations where reservists train on alternate weekends.

According to corps officials, the center will resemble a college campus with the type of training, including firearm training, completed on computers and in classrooms.

Outdoor drills will be done elsewhere. The Middletown facility will also have storage space but it will contain no firearms. The facility will have the capacity for 655 reservists, but will house a full-time crew of 70 workers.

With the release of the report, a 30-day period during which the public can comment on its findings was opened.

The report is available for review online at hqda.army.mil/acsim/brac/env_ea_review.htm or at the Russell Library at

123 Broad St.

Comments on the report should be submitted during the 30-day public comment period via mail, fax, or e-mail to: Craig Kelley, BRAC Environment Coordinator, 99th Regional Support Command (East), 11 Saratoga Blvd., Devens, MA 01432, (978) 796-2606.

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