

## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

### BRAC 05 REALIGNMENT AT MIDDLETOWN, CT

On September 8, 2005, the Defense Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC Commission) recommended that certain realignment actions occur at Middletown, CT. These recommendations were approved by the President on September 23, 2005, and forwarded to Congress. The Congress did not alter any of the BRAC Commission's recommendations, and on November 9, 2005, the recommendations became law. The BRAC Commission's recommendations must now be implemented as provided for in the Defense Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-510), as amended.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) which identifies, documents, and evaluates environmental effects of the BRAC Commission's recommended realignment at Middletown, CT. The EA has been developed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and implementing regulations issued by the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The 2006 Base Realignment Closure Manual for Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act was used for guidance in preparing the EA.

#### 1.0 PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action would implement the BRAC Commission's recommendation, as mandated by BRAC law, Public Law 101-510, by constructing new facilities to accommodate the personnel and functions of organization realigning and relocating to Middletown, CT. The following highlights the BRAC Commission recommendation for Middletown, CT which are included as part of BRAC law, as quoted:

*Close the US Army Reserve Center, Middletown, CT, the Organizational Maintenance Shop, Middletown, CT; the SGT Libby US Army Reserve Center, New Haven, CT; the Organizational Maintenance Shop, New Haven, CT; the Army Reserve Area Maintenance Support Activity #69, Milford, CT, and relocate units to a new Armed Forces Reserve Center, Organizational Maintenance Shop and Army Maintenance Support Activity in Middletown, CT, if the Army is able to acquire land suitable for the construction of the facilities. The new AFRC, OMS and AMSA shall have the capability to accommodate units from the following facilities: Connecticut Army National Guard Armories in Putnam, Manchester, New Britain and the CTARNG facility in Newington, CT, if the state decides to relocate those National Guard units*

To implement these recommendations, the Proposed Action is to construct a new AFRC and associated support facilities at Middletown, CT to support five U.S. Army Reserve units and six CTARNG units relocating from the SGT Libby U.S. ARC, New Haven CT and the Army Reserve AMSA #69, Milford CT as well as CTARNG facilities in Manchester, Newington, and New Britain, CT.

The proposed AFRC would provide a 164,007 square foot (SF) 1000-member training facility with administrative, educational, assembly, library, learning center, vault, weapons simulator, and physical fitness areas for four Army Reserve units and six CTARNG units. Associated support facilities include a 34,979 SF Vehicle Maintenance Shop (VMS) and a 3,886 SF unheated storage building. In addition, there would be approximately 8.76 acres of paved areas including approximately 3.80 acres of military equipment parking (MEP) areas and approximately 4.96 acres of privately-owned vehicle (POV) parking areas, walkways, and access roads. Implementing the BRAC Commission's recommendations for Middletown, CT would result in the total assignment of 895 personnel to the new AFRC. Of these 895 personnel, there would be 842 reservists and 53 civilians. There would be 100 full-time personnel.

## 2.0 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The EA evaluated the following alternatives.

**No Action Alternative:** CEQ regulations require analysis of the No Action alternative in an EA, for it serves as the baseline against which the impacts of the proposed action and alternatives will be evaluated. Accordingly, the No Action Alternative is evaluated in this EA. Under the No Action Alternative the various reserve units presently located in areas around New Haven, CT; in Milford, CT; and at the CTARNG would continue to train at and operate from their current locations with current facilities. Many of these facilities are outdated, inadequate, and inefficient.

### **Preferred Alternative:**

**Cucia Park Alternative:** The approximate 42 acre Cucia Park parcel is located across Middle Street from the Bysiewicz Industrial Subdivision (Liberty Park), south of Smith Street. Under this Alternative, the AFRC, OMS, unheated storage building, and MEP area would be constructed on the eastern portion of the parcel, adjacent to I-91. The property is zoned industrial and is located within two miles of Interstate (I) 91. Cucia Park proper is a three acre park in the northwestern portion of the property. The City of Middletown later added 39 acres to the parcel with the intention of industrial development.

The property can accommodate the size and footprint of the proposed facilities while also meeting required AT/FP stand-off buffer requirements. The necessary utilities exist within or near the location and could be extended to the proposed facilities. Construction at this site will result in clearing of 28 acres of forestland, unavoidable loss of 11,636 SF (0.267 acres) of wetlands, and impacts to state listed habitat for the eastern box turtle.

### **Additional Alternatives Considered:**

**Bysiewicz Industrial Subdivision (Liberty Park) Alternative:** Under this alternative, the AFRC, OMS, unheated storage building, and an MEP area would be constructed on a parcel of land located off of Middle Street across from Smith Street within Middletown, CT. The 33 acre property is zoned industrial and is located within two miles of Interstate (I) 91. Existing forested vegetation on the site has been recently cleared by the current owner. The parcel is flat and the owner/developer has been conducting grading activities on-site, as well as road construction and the installation of sewer and stormwater systems. In 2006, a wetlands construction permit was issued by the City of Middletown for the parcel.

In March 2009, the owner's representative of the Bysiewicz Industrial Subdivision (Liberty Park) stated that a company signed an option to purchase three lots on the Bysiewicz property. However, the purchaser had to accomplish certain conditions by late April, or they would lose the option. The Bysiewicz site is analyzed as an alternative in the EA. However, if the lots are sold, the site would no longer meet the Army's needs. It would be eliminated from further consideration, because it would be too small for the Army Reserve project.

**Millennium Industrial Park (Ken Dooley Drive) Alternative:** Under this Alternative, the AFRC, VMS, unheated storage building, and a MEP area would be constructed on the 39-acre Millennium Industrial Park (Ken Dooley Drive). The site is zoned industrial and located within two miles of I-91. The site contains 5.28 acres of wetlands along the eastern border of the parcel. Construction of a new AFRC at this site would require the clearing of 35 acres of forestland, the unavoidable loss of 8,145 SF (0.187 acres) of wetlands, and impacts to state listed habitat for the eastern box turtle. The parcel would also require blasting during site preparation for construction.

### 3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The Environmental Assessment (EA), which is incorporated by reference into this Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI), examined potential effects of the proposed action and no action alternative on 12 resource areas of environmental and socioeconomic concern: land use, aesthetic and visual resources, air quality, noise, geology and soils, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, socioeconomics (including environmental justice and protection of children), transportation, utilities, and hazardous and toxic substances..

Implementation of the proposed realignment actions at the U.S. Army preferred alternative site location, Cucia Park, would not have any significant adverse effects or impacts on any of the environmental or related resource areas at Middletown, CT. Unavoidable wetlands on the alternative site location would require off-site mitigation.

The proposed activity at the Preferred Alternative site, Cucia Park, impacts approximately 0.26 acres of inland wetlands or waters, inclusive of direct, indirect and temporary impacts (includes areas or waters flooded, dewatered or cut). This impact would require obtaining a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Division permit through the District Engineer's Connecticut State Programmatic General Permit 2. This effort under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, also includes application to the CTDEP for a State Water Section 401 Water Quality Certification. A preliminary jurisdictional determination has been filed with the New England District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Division.

At Cucia Park, construction will result in the unavoidable loss of about 0.26 acres of wetlands requiring replication or compensation for the loss at a rate to be determined with the final completion of the formal permitting through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and State of Connecticut. As final design plans and specifications move forward, additional agreements on the mitigation plan development will be addressed through the Corps and State of Connecticut because mitigation requirements may be project specific.

In an effort to determine locations where off-site mitigation for construction of a new AFRC at Cucia Park could be completed if required, preliminary discussions with the Department of Planning, Conservation and Development for the City of Middletown have identified six locations that could be supported by the City of Middletown for potential wetlands mitigation. These properties include: Tuttle Place, Smith Park, Galluzzo Pond, Mile Lane I, High School, Spencer School.

Creation or enhancement of wetland resources is preferred to include habitats that may be utilized by eastern box turtle. The efforts would require design to enhance a combination of upland/wetland habitats since the species have an extremely small home range and are found near small streams and ponds

Incorporation of the City of Middletown's Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency's general provisions found in Section 9.9 of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations would be included in the designs to the extent practical. These general provisions include:

- Before any activity begins, the wetland boundaries will be flagged with continuous construction ribbon and shall be kept in good repair for the duration of the project. The flagging will be visible above the basic ground level vegetation. In addition, no disturbance or activity either permanent or temporary is allowed within 100 feet of the wetland boundaries other than those to be impacted.

- Construction management practices will be used, consistent with the requirements of the terms and conditions of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, State of Connecticut Section 401 Water Quality Certification, and Army construction standards, to control storm water discharges and to prevent erosion and sedimentation and to otherwise prevent pollution of wetlands and watercourses.

Native shrub and tree species would be planted where possible. The Army will identify individual tree species currently existing on site to protect during construction where possible.

Known potential effects resulting from implementing the Proposed Action on the physical and natural environment will not be significant. Preparation of a FNSI is appropriate.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Based on the EA, it has been determined that implementation of the proposed action will have no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative adverse effects on the quality of the natural or human environment. Because no significant environmental impacts will result from implementation of the proposed action, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required and will not be prepared.

#### **5.0 PUBLIC COMMENT**

Interested parties are invited to review and comment on the EA and Draft FNSI during the 30-day comment period, April 22, 2009 through May 21, 2009. The EA and Draft FNSI can be accessed on the World Wide Web at:

[http://www.hqda.army.mil/acsim/brac/env\\_ea\\_review.htm](http://www.hqda.army.mil/acsim/brac/env_ea_review.htm)

Copies of the EA can also be viewed at the following local libraries:

Russell Library  
123 Broad Street  
Middletown, CT 06457

Comments on the EA and Draft FNSI should be submitted during the 30-day public comment period via mail, fax, or electronic mail to the following:

Craig Kelley  
BRAC Environment Coordinator  
99th Regional Support Command (East)  
11 Saratoga Boulevard  
Devens, MA 01432  
(978) 796-2606  
Craig.A.Kelley@NAE02.usace.army.mil

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Joseph H. Ledlow  
Colonel, U.S. Army Reserve  
Regional Engineer