

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**Department of the Army****Draft Environmental Impact Statement to Fully Integrate the Overhills Property Into the Fort Bragg Training Program, Fort Bragg, NC****AGENCY:** Department of the Army, DOD.**ACTION:** Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The Department of the Army announces the availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to fully integrate the Overhills property into the Fort Bragg Training Program, Fort Bragg, Cumberland and Harnett Counties, North Carolina. Presently, realistic training in Fort Bragg's Northern Training Area (NTA), one of Fort Bragg's largest training areas, is hampered by the two sets of training rules that govern training in the units. Although no physical barriers separate the Overhills training units, NTA V–VII, from NTA units I–IV, the Overhills Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) limits the number of personnel and types of activities during training exercises, effectively creating a training barrier. Applying the same training regulation to the Overhills that governs training on the rest of the installation's training program, and maximize training possibilities through the NTA.

DATES: *Comments:* To be considered in preparation for the Final Environmental Impact Statement, comments must be received not later than March 28, 2005 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Meetings: A public meeting will be held at the Cumberland County Library and Information Center, 300 Maiden Lane, Fayetteville, North Carolina, no earlier than 15 days after the release of the DEIS to the public.

ADDRESSES: Please direct written comments or requests for copies to the DEIS to David A. Heins, Chief, Environmental Sustainment Division, Public Works Business Center, ATTN: AFZA–PW–E, Fort Bragg, NC 28310, or e-mail to heinsd@bragg.army.mil.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David A. Heins, (910) 396–8207 or e-mail to heinsd@bragg.army.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Fort Bragg serves as headquarters for the XVIII Airborne Corps and Army Special Operations Command, and is home to the 82nd Airborne Division. The primary mission of Fort Bragg is the training and deployment of military units. Fort Bragg supports the most intensive and varied training program in the continental United States. An average of 2.5 million personnel days of

training is conducted at Fort Bragg and Camp Mackall (a sub-installation to Fort Bragg) each year. Training to sustain readiness is Fort Bragg's primary activity.

Land upon which to train personnel is vital to Fort Bragg's mission. In 1995, Fort Bragg directed a study that identified a shortfall of maneuver land of 81,876 acres, and a weapons range and impact area shortfall of 43,636 acres. In order to reduce this training land deficit, the Department of the Army purchased the Overhills property from the Rockefeller family in 1997.

The Overhills property comprises 10,580 acres in Cumberland and Harnett Counties, North Carolina, and adjoins the northern boundaries of Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base. An Environmental Assessment was prepared in 1999 to adopt an Interim Training Program (ITP) on the Overhills tract. Under the ITP, training was restricted to company-level, low impact (limited) military training.

Presently, the maneuver/training areas at Fort Bragg are so heavily utilized that the land to support training needs to be used to its fullest extent. These factors, in conjunction with the training land deficit identified by Fort Bragg, demonstrate the need to make maximum use of available training lands on Fort Bragg. Fully incorporation the Overhills tract, which represents the eastern part of the NTA and comprises almost half of the training area, into the installation's training program would enhance training throughout the NTA, and help sustain environmental resources in other training areas on Fort Bragg.

The Army proposes to fully integrate the Overhills into Fort Bragg's training program. The DEIS analyzes the No Action/Status Quo alternative as well as three action alternatives. Alternatives considered in detail in the DEIS are:

Alternative 1 (No Action)—Continue limited training, existing recreation, and preservation of the Overhills Historic District (the District). Fort Bragg would conduct this training in accordance with the existing Fort Bragg SOP for training on the Overhills. This SOP limits training exercises to company-sized units (approximately 250 personnel, including exercise support personnel) and prescribes the procedures for use of the Overhills for training. Company-size exercises generally require fewer than 75 vehicles per exercise. Exercises would be scheduled 4–6 times per month. The following types of exercises are permitted under the Overhills SOP:

Dismounted movement: Air mobile insertions; firing of blank small arms ammunition (up to .50 caliber) and

simulators; movement of wheeled vehicles on maintained roads and trails; fixed activities limited to bivouac, signal, or medical in existing clearings; military operations on urbanized terrain (MOUNT) training in buildings, but only on non-contributing elements within the District and non-eligible resources outside the District; hasty hand-dug personnel fighting positions; use of flame-producing munitions of any type.

Hunting and fishing would continue to be allowed subject to restrictions imposed on public access by military training schedules.

The District would be preserved in accordance with the "Standards for Preservation" in the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (38 CFR Part 68). Training in buildings considered contributing elements would not be permitted, but maneuvers in open areas within the historic district boundary would continue.

Alternative 2—Limited training, additional recreation, and adaptive reuse and/or layaway of selected contributing elements within the District. Training units would be limited to company-size (250 personnel plus support personnel), but training would be conducted in accordance with the Installation Range Regulation (IRR), not the Overhills SOP. The following additional training would be permitted:

Ground and air maneuvers involving both mechanized and light infantry with attached combat support and combat service support; operation of wheeled and tracked vehicles off road; river crossing, bridging, and waterborne operations (including water drops); construction of fortifications and obstacles; helicopter landing zones; excavations (in addition to hand-dug positions) for survivability emplacements, such as vehicle fighting positions; and use of tear gas and obscurant smoke.

A youth golf program and a horse stables program would be added to the recreational programs at Fort Bragg. These programs would utilize several of the historic buildings and structures on Overhills such as the Donald Ross golf course, the polo barn, and riding stables. New facilities would also be constructed. Hunting and fishing would continue as discussed under Alternative 1.

This alternative would maintain the historic integrity of 15 of the 56 contributing elements of the historic district. The remaining buildings and structures would be incorporated into the Fort Bragg training program after mitigating for the loss of historical

integrity by fulfilling all requirements under the National Historical Preservation Act (NEPA), the Fort Bragg Integrated Cultural Resource Management Plan (ICRMP) and Army Regulation 200-4, Cultural Resources Management.

Alternative 3—Intermediate training, additional recreation, and adaptive reuse and/or layaway of selected contributing elements within the District. Under this alternative, the level of activity on the Overhills would be increased to accommodate battalion-sized units (approximately 1,000 personnel), plus support personnel. Training would occur in accordance with the IRR. There are 40 battalions at Fort Bragg. Battalion-size field exercises typically use 75 or fewer vehicles per exercise, including support vehicles. Each battalion holds one or two 3-day field exercises per year. Movement between NTA units I-IV and Overhills (NTA V-VIII) would be fluid with no training restrictions other than the number of personnel permitted on the Overhills.

Additional recreation would consist of the youth golf and horse stables programs described for Alternative 2. Hunting and fishing would continue to be permitted, as discussed in Alternative 1. This alternative would treat the District as discussed under Alternative 2.

Alternative 4 (Preferred Alternative)—Maximum training, existing recreation, and no preservation of the District. Under this alternative, the level of training would be increased to accommodate brigade-sized units; the Overhills would be fully incorporated into the installation's training program, and used in the same manner as the other training areas on Fort Bragg. Units up to, and including brigade size, would train in accordance with the IRR. Up to approximately 5,000 personnel would have access to the Overhills for training purposes at one time.

No additional recreational use of the Overhills would occur under maximum training due to the need for maneuver frontage and flexibility. Hunting and fishing would continue as discussed under Alternative 1.

After mitigating for the loss of historical integrity by fulfillment of all legal requirements under the NHPA, the Fort Bragg ICRMP, and AR 200-4, Cultural Resources Management, the 56 contributing elements would be integrated into the training program. All contributing and non-contributing elements as well as standing structures determined not eligible for the NRHP would be evaluated for use in training exercises. The buildings that could be

incorporated into the training program would remain; the non-essential buildings and structures would be demolished.

The Overhills DEIS provides an analysis of both the beneficial and adverse environmental impacts of the different use alternatives for the Overhills, and analyzes quantitatively and qualitatively the potential environmental impacts of the proposed alternatives. The resource areas discussed and evaluated are: soils, surface waters, groundwater, wetlands, vegetation, wildlife, protected species, hazardous materials/waste management, solid waste management, air quality, noise, safety, land use, demographics and economy, recreation, archaeological resources, and the historic district. The DEIS indicates that Alternative 1 (No Action) has the fewest potential impacts because no new training types will be added, and all of the historic buildings and structures will be preserved. Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 would have some potential adverse impacts to several of the analyzed resources; however mitigations to reduce those impacts are identified in the DEIS.

Scoping and Comments: Fort Bragg has distributed a series of newsletters that are also posted on the Fort Bragg website and may be viewed at http://www.bragg.army.mil/envbr_review.htm. All future newsletters, notices of meetings, and other public and stakeholder participation opportunities will also be posted on this website. Comments or questions may also be submitted on this website. Fort Bragg invites individuals and organizations to participate in the DEIS review process by submitting written comments (see **ADDRESSES**) and by attending a public meeting. A public meeting will be held at the Cumberland County Library and Information Center (see **DATES**).

Dan K. McNeill,

General, USA, Commanding.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Notice of Proposed Information Collection Requests

AGENCY: Department of Education.

SUMMARY: The Leader, Information Management Case Services Team, Regulatory Information Management Services, Office of the Chief Information Officer, invites comments on the proposed information collection

requests as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

DATES: An emergency review has been requested in accordance with the Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 3507(j)), since public harm is reasonably likely to result if normal clearance procedures are followed. Approval by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has been requested by February 18, 2005. A regular clearance process is also beginning. Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before April 12, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Written comments regarding the emergency review should be addressed to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Attention: Carolyn Lovett, Desk Officer, Department of Education, Office of Management and Budget; 725 17th Street, NW., Room 10235, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503 or faxed to (202) 395-6974.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 3506 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35) requires that the Director of OMB provide interested Federal agencies and the public an early opportunity to comment on information collection requests. OMB may amend or waive the requirement for public consultation to the extent that public participation in the approval process would defeat the purpose of the information collection, violate State or Federal law, or substantially interfere with any agency's ability to perform its statutory obligations. The Leader, Information Management Case Services Team, Regulatory Information Management Services, Office of the Chief Information Officer, publishes this notice containing proposed information collection requests at the beginning of the Departmental review of the information collection. Each proposed information collection, grouped by office, contains the following: (1) Type of review requested, e.g., new, revision, extension, existing or reinstatement; (2) title; (3) summary of the collection; (4) description of the need for, and proposed use of, the information; (5) respondents and frequency of collection; and (6) reporting and/or recordkeeping burden. OMB invites public comment.

The Department of Education is especially interested in public comment addressing the following issues: (1) Is this collection necessary to the proper functions of the Department; (2) will this information be processed and used in a timely manner; (3) is the estimate of burden accurate; (4) how might the Department enhance the quality, utility,