

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
MILITARY FUELING FACILITIES
JOINT BASE LEWIS-McCHORD, WASHINGTON

Background

The Joint Base Lewis-McChord Installation Status Report – Infrastructure indicates the mission land vehicle capacity of the current refueling facility infrastructure can service only 15 percent of the units that call Joint Base Lewis-McChord home. Compared to the Unified Facilities Criteria 3-460-01 standard of having a dispenser for every 100 vehicles, facilities at Joint Base Lewis-McChord were found to be undersized for the current need. These undersized facilities promote a safety hazard as tactical vehicles block traffic by lining up on adjacent streets while waiting for service. Units are also refueling in their motor pools, which increases environmental risk for Commanders since these facilities are not designed to support those types of operations.

In addition, direct aircraft fueling (hot fueling) is essential for training the Aviation Brigade on safe procedures to refuel aircraft with motors running. A temporary hot refuel system is currently used at Gray Army Airfield to train hot refueling on two existing concrete pads. The temporary system is unsafe and inefficient as well as having increased operational risk and possibility of environmental contamination with continued use of the temporary hot fueling system.

Proposed Action

The U.S. Army and the Defense Logistics Agency proposes to construct three retail fuel facilities on three sites within the boundaries of Joint Base Lewis-McChord. After the new facilities are operational, the three older fuel facilities that are no longer up to standard will be demolished. The proposed action includes three separable construction projects: 1) Lewis Main Retail “Superstation;” 2) Lewis North Retail Station; and 3) Gray Army Airfield Bulk Fuel Storage and Hot Refuel. Construction of fuel depots at the Lewis Main Retail Superstation and Gray Army Airfield hot refuel area will include demolition of the existing infrastructure.

The purpose of this action is to provide dependable and convenient fuel storage and dispensing facilities support to installation and transient tactical and non-tactical vehicles and aircraft. In addition, the Aircraft Direct Refueling System on Gray Army Airfield will allow hot refueling of Army helicopters utilizing the airfield. The goal is to provide an environmentally safe, long-term source for fueling vehicles and aircraft by replacing outdated, undersized, and poorly located facilities.

Facilities will include administrative space, bulk storage tanks, and fueling stations. In addition the Army will construct an aircraft/tactical vehicle refueling facility, with fuel tanker and direct refuel (hot refuel) capability, consisting of bulk fuel storage, in-field tanker dispensers, a fuel hydrant system, pumps and filters, pump house, and an operations building for the Gray Army Airfield helicopter hot refuel points. Supporting facilities in the proposed action include utilities, electric service, paving, storm drainage, oil water separators, on-site subsurface infiltration, and site improvements.

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The three existing fuel facilities, with equipment that is no longer up to modern standards, will be decommissioned and/or demolished. The stations that will be decommissioned/demolished include the Government Owned – Contractor Operated Lewis North Fuel Source Point, the Logistics Center Fuel Source Point, and the Consolidated Fuel Point on 4th Division Drive. The no action alternative was rejected for reasons described in the supporting Environmental Assessment accompanying this Finding of No Significant Impact.

Summary of Impacts

An Environmental Assessment was prepared pursuant the National Environmental Policy Act for the proposed action. This document describes the significant environmental consequences of constructing three retail fuel facilities on three sites within the boundaries of Joint Base Lewis-McChord and decommissioning the three older fuel facilities. The proposed action will not affect wetlands or waters of the United States.

The proposed action may affect and is likely to adversely affect the Streaked Horned Lark protected under the Endangered Species Act. Implementing conservation measures and Best Management Practices will minimize impacts and lessen any take associated with the proposed action. A Supplemental Biological Evaluation for the Gray Army Airfield Hot Refuel Station was submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on 18 November 2015. In a letter dated 23 February 2016, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service considered that the additional loss of suitable nesting habitat associated with the revised project design and longer duration of construction activities (two nesting seasons, rather than one) will result in adverse effects. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined that the adverse effects associated with the revised design for the hot refueling station falls within the scope and extent of effects analyzed in their 2014 Biological Opinion for Gray Army Airfield. As part of the Terms and Conditions within the Biological Opinion, the Army agreed to establish and maintain an 84 acre mitigation site that enhances a nearby area for Streaked Horned Lark habitat.

The new fuel stations will not adversely change air quality attainment status or conflict with attainment and maintenance goals established in the Washington State Implementation Plan. Therefore, this action conforms to the Washington State Air Quality standards, administered locally by the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency. Operation of the proposed new fuel stations will not create long-term air quality impacts as the fuel dispensing equipment will meet current industrial standards to prevent accidental spill and release of volatile organic compound emissions.

The six project sites were surveyed for historic and archeological resources, and a finding of No Adverse Effect was submitted to the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer in a letter dated 16 December 2015. The Washington State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with the findings in a letter dated 11 January 2016.

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Mitigation and Best Management Practices

By implementing conservation measures and developing and maintaining the 84 acre habitat enhancement area on Gray Army Airfield, direct effects to Streaked Horned Lark nests can be avoided and indirect effects will be minimized. Best Management Practices during construction will be used to minimize fugitive dust, noise, water pollution, and negative effects to stormwater management. The above ground fuel tanks will be installed, operated, and maintained in accordance with all regulatory compliance requirements.

If, during construction activities, items that might have historical or archaeological value are discovered, construction will cease until coordinated with the Joint Base Lewis-McChord Cultural Resources Program Manager.

Public Involvement

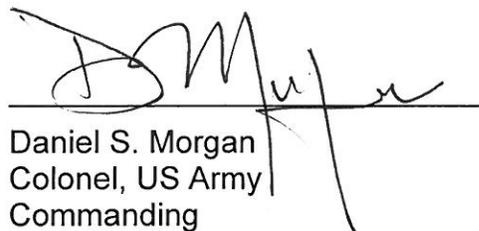
The proposed action was coordinated with appropriate Federal, State, and Local agencies, federally recognized Tribes, organizations, and individuals through distribution of the Fueling Facilities Draft Environmental Assessment for review and comment. The 30-day comment period was January 4th through February 5th, 2016. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Washington State Department of Ecology submitted comments. Neither agency objected to the proposed action. These comments and Joint Base Lewis-McChord's responses to them can be found in Appendix C of the Environmental Assessment.

Finding

I have considered the results of the analysis referenced above, comments received, and Army mission requirements. In review of the resource areas potentially impacted by the proposed action, I find that implementing the Proposed Action will have no significant environmental impacts on the natural or human environment. Based on this documentation, which has incorporated or referenced the best information available, I have taken a thorough look at likely impacts and determined that the implementation of the proposed action will not significantly affect the environment and therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not warranted.

31 Mar 2016

Date


Daniel S. Morgan
Colonel, US Army
Commanding