

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)

Q-1. What is the basis for the Proposed Action at Fort Lewis and the Yakima Training Center?

A-1. The Army has determined that its operational requirements are out of balance with the number and types of Soldiers and units that constitute its forces. The January 2008 Army Record of Decision (ROD) for Army Growth and Force Structure Realignment determined that the Army would increase by 74,200 Soldiers. This decision followed an Army-wide assessment of environmental impacts in the 2007 Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Army Growth and Force Structure Realignment ("Grow the Army" Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement [GTA PEIS]) that considered a number of alternate stationing scenarios for the additional units and Soldiers. The ROD identified the Army growth and realignment that would be occurring at 17 different Army installations, including Fort Lewis, Washington. The Army also has a separate initiative to add additional Combat Aviation Brigades (CABs).

Q-2. What is the Proposed Action and what alternatives are assessed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement?

A-2. The Proposed Action would implement the Army decisions in the GTA ROD and ongoing Army initiatives that pertain to Fort Lewis and Yakima Training Center (YTC) as described in the following alternatives:

(1) The No Action alternative assumes that the Army GTA and separate CAB growth and realignment decisions would not be implemented. Analysis of the No Action alternative serves as a baseline for comparison of the other alternatives. Under this alternative, planned construction that is not part of the GTA decisions includes troop barracks, recreational facilities, traffic flow improvements, and other infrastructure upgrades at Fort Lewis.

(2) The GTA alternative implements the Army GTA decisions affecting Fort Lewis and YTC. Maneuver and live-fire training of an additional 1,900 Soldiers will occur at Fort Lewis and YTC. This alternative also includes the training of three Stryker Brigade Combat Teams (SBCTs) simultaneously at Fort Lewis and YTC. Planned new construction includes brigade barracks complexes, the upgrade of sub-standard SBCT facilities to meet Army standards, and additional firing ranges at Fort Lewis and YTC.

(3) The Combat Service Support (CSS) alternative represents the potential stationing at Fort Lewis of up to 1,000 CSS Soldiers in addition to Alternative 2. Maneuver and live-fire training of up to 2,900 new Soldiers would occur at Fort Lewis and YTC. Specific construction projects cannot be identified until the types and numbers of CSS units are known, but new construction would include barracks, motor pools, classrooms, and administrative facilities.

(4) The CAB alternative represents the potential stationing at Fort Lewis of a

CAB in addition to Alternative 3. Maneuver and live-fire training of up to 5,700 new Soldiers would occur at Fort Lewis and YTC. This maneuver would include the air and ground assets of the CAB. New construction facilities to support the CAB would be similar to those required for Alternative 3.

Q-3. What is the Army's preferred alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Statement?

A-3. The Army has identified Alternative 4 (the CAB alternative), which includes all components of the GTA, CSS, and CAB alternatives, as its preferred alternative (up to a total of 5,700 Soldiers and 8,260 family members).

Q-4. What is the purpose of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Grow the Army actions at Fort Lewis and the Yakima Training Center?

A-4. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) provides an analysis of the environmental impacts that would potentially result from implementing the site-specific actions associated with each of the alternatives for the Proposed Action, and makes this information available to all stakeholders. The FEIS insures that government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and members of the public are aware of the Army's proposal and have an opportunity to provide input into the Federal decision-making process.

Q-5. What site-specific actions are assessed in the Fort Lewis and Yakima Training Center Final Environmental Impact Statement?

A-5. The site-specific actions required to implement the alternatives for the Proposed Action at Fort Lewis and YTC would include stationing and unit restructuring, increased maneuver and live-fire training, demolition of outdated facilities, and construction activity. New construction would be required for training facilities and ranges, cantonment area development projects such as troop and family housing, administrative facilities, motor pools, child development centers, and infrastructure upgrades.

Q-6. Why has the Army considered the potential stationing of a medium Combat Aviation Brigade in the Final Environmental Impact Statement?

A-6. The Army is in the process of making decisions for aviation unit growth and realignment. As part of this process, the Army is considering stationing additional CABs, or components of CABs, at Fort Lewis. No final decisions have been made at the Headquarters, Department of the Army level on a CAB at this time.

Q-7. Why has the Army considered the potential stationing of up to 1,000 combat service support Soldiers in the Final Environmental Impact Statement?

A-7. The growth that would occur at Fort Lewis from implementing the Proposed Action, as well as growth from past Army decisions such as Global Defense Posture

Realignment, may require the stationing of additional logistical support units. The transportation, medical, supply, headquarters or other CSS units would be stationed as needed to provide specific logistics support for the increased training and operational activities at Fort Lewis and YTC.

Q-8. Why does the Environmental Impact Statement analyze more Stryker Brigade Combat Team training?

A-8. Although three SBCTs have been assigned at Fort Lewis since April 2007, this EIS covers the cumulative impact of those and other separate stationing actions. Part of the purpose of the Proposed Action is to support the simultaneous presence and full training requirements of all three SBCTs, in addition to the other stationing actions mentioned in the document.

Q-9. What environmental resources are analyzed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement?

A-9. The FEIS analyzes the potential impacts to a number of environmental resource areas that include, but are not limited to, biological resources (including special status species), water resources, traffic and transportation, historic and cultural resources, land use, air quality, noise, wetlands, wildfire management, solid and hazardous materials/waste, energy, environmental justice. The FEIS evaluates the potential direct, indirect and cumulative impacts to these resource areas and relates them to training mission and long-term sustainability goals at Fort Lewis. The FEIS also identifies mitigation measures to address potential adverse impacts from implementation of the alternatives for the Proposed Action.

Q-10. What are the major impacts?

A-10. At Fort Lewis, peak noise from demolitions and live-fire training would not increase, but the frequency and duration (annual cumulative noise) would. With the projected additional troop strength, local school districts that support Fort Lewis would experience an increase in the number of school-aged children. There would be increased delays and congestion at key Fort Lewis intersections during peak traffic hours. Vegetation and habitat degradation are expected with the additional maneuver training. Wildlife may experience some minor population reductions with the increased training tempo from both ground and aviation activities. At YTC, there may be more wildland fires with the increase in maneuver and live-fire training. The additional maneuver training would cause vegetation and habitat degradation. The increased training tempo from both ground and aviation activities may cause some minor reductions to wildlife populations. The FEIS identifies mitigation measures to reduce and, in some cases, avoid potential adverse impacts. For example, proposed mitigation includes continued enhanced outreach and coordination with surrounding school districts regarding near- and long-term potential stationing actions, which would help these districts plan for changes in enrollment; installation of traffic signals and traffic island and turn lane construction; additional wildfire management actions, etc.

Q-11. What opportunities has the public had for involvement in this process?

A-11. In January 2009, the Army held three public scoping meetings to hear the public's concerns associated with the GTA EIS process. The Draft EIS (DEIS) was available for public review and comment during a 45-day period that began when the EPA announced the availability of the DEIS in the Federal Register on September 11, 2009, and ended on October 26, 2009. The public was able to comment by a variety of means including mail and e-mail. In addition, the Army held three public meetings in September and October 2009 to receive comments on the DEIS. Public service announcements; advertisements in local newspapers and other publications; and notification of interested groups, individuals and agencies through letters and emails were used to give as much advance notice as possible of the time and location of public meetings, document review periods, and availability and location of documents for review.

Q-12. What opportunities are available for public review of the Final Environmental Impact Statement?

A-12. The public is invited to review the FEIS during the 30-day waiting period which begins after the publishing of a notice of availability in the Federal Register by the Environmental Protection Agency. The document may be accessed at http://www.lewis.army.mil/publicworks/sites/envir/EIA_2.htm. Hard copies of the FEIS documents are also available at local libraries near Fort Lewis and YTC.