

DRAFT

Finding of No Significant Impact

Environmental Assessment of the Construction and Operation of a new Access Control Point at Lewis North, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington

Introduction

Continuing facility development at Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) Lewis North has contributed to significant increases in day time employees and the local resident population. With this growth, the infrastructure systems at Lewis North have been and will continue to be strained in areas such as traffic and transportation, housing, and utilities, among others. With the increases in population, vehicle traffic will increase proportionally and the existing road network will be strained. New and revised Access Control Points (ACPs) (ingress and egress gates) will be required at key locations to facilitate traffic flow, and reduce congestion. An ACP is a corridor at an installation entrance through which all vehicles and pedestrians must pass when entering or exiting the installation. This Environmental Assessment evaluates the proposed ACP at Lewis North in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), 40 CFR Part 1500-1508; and the Army's implementing procedures published in 32 CFR 651, *Environmental Analysis of Army Actions*.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed action is to construct an additional ACP entrance to serve Lewis North. This project is needed to reduce traffic flows at existing ACPs; to provide an alternative entrance for truck traffic; and to provide an alternative entrance for drivers to avoid delays during road and ACP maintenance interruptions.

Description of the Proposed Action

The Department of the Army proposes to construct a new access control point off the Steilacoom-Dupont Road into Lewis North. The proposed ACP will comply with Army design criteria, focusing on safety and efficiency through the gates. Construction will impact less than 20 acres and is proposed to include the following features:

New Access Control Point	Overwatch Position
Search Building (650 SF)	Active Vehicle Barriers
Search Area Canopy for Trucks (4,240 SF)	Passive Vehicle Barricade (5,822 LF)
4 Guard booths (50sf/ea)	ACP Traffic Lanes (254,997 SF)
Search Area Canopy for Cars (1,950 SF)	Earthwork (238,302 SF)
ID Check Area Canopy (7,475 SF)	Sidewalk (1,953 SF)
Gatehouse (840 SF)	Fencing (200 LF)

Summary of Anticipated Environmental Effects Associated with the Proposed Project

During scoping process, several resource areas were identified for analysis due to their potential for environmental impacts. This scoping period also identified resource areas that would not be impacted by the proposed action and were eliminated from further analysis. These resources include: land use, soil erosion, cultural resources, air quality, socioeconomic resources, environmental justice, hazardous materials and waste, and noise.

Table 1: Environmental Effects to Resources in the Proposed Project Area

Traffic and Transportation	Moderate, long-term, beneficial effects would be expected with the construction of a new ACP at Lewis North by relieving overcrowding at existing gates. Implementation of the proposed action will impact traffic on the Dupont-Steilacoom Road by encouraging some of Lewis North’s commuting traffic to divert from the North Gate and Dupont Gate to access JBLM at the new ACP location, increasing vehicles on this roadway. This impact is not expected to be significant because the increase in cars is not expected to be substantially more than the vehicles already utilizing the I Street Gate and would not cause traffic or back-ups to occur along this roadway as vehicles would quickly turn off of the shared road, and onto JBLM property through the new ACP.	The No Action Alternative serves as the status quo. Under this alternative traffic will continue to be strained at existing installation ingress and egress gates. Moderate, long-term adverse impacts are expected from this alternative as JBLM would not be addressing traffic concerns due to increases in population.
Biological Resources	Minor, long-term impacts would be expected with construction of a new ACP at Lewis North. Approximately 18 acres of trees will be removed. The majority of tree species are evergreens, but some Oregon white oak will be removed. Oregon white oaks will be mitigated at ration of 5:1. Wildlife species that can be found in the project area are common throughout the Puget Sound lowlands. Species may be displaced as part of this action, but the action would not result in decreases of populations. There are no State or Federally listed species known to occur in the project area.	The No Action Alternative serves as the status quo. Under this alternative there would be no change to the biological resources in the area.
Water Quality	Minor, long-term impacts would be expected with the construction of a new ACP at Lewis North. Ground disturbing construction and excavation activities associated with the proposed action have the potential to impact water resources due to sediment run-off which can flow into nearby streams and surface water bodies. In addition to ground disturbing construction activities, the proposed action would increase impervious surface from the construction of new roadways and building structures. The proposed project would require a NPDES permit and a SWPPP which imposes construction best management practices (BMPs) such as sediment fencing around disturbed areas to prevent turbidity to waterways (due to erosion caused by construction activities). BMPs including the use of flumes and swales will allow stormwater to infiltrate onsite. Because of the implementation of these BMPs and the erosion control measures utilized throughout construction, the impacts of the proposed action will not significantly impact water quality within the project vicinity.	The No Action Alternative serves as the status quo. Under this alternative there would be no change to the water quality in the area.

Cumulative Effects

The proposed action is not expected to have any significant cumulative impacts. Approximately 18 acres of forested vegetation will be cleared as part of this project. Vegetation and wildlife habitat on JBLM North have been impacted in the past, and continue to be impacted due to construction and military training activities. As JBLM grows, mimicking the general growth of the south Puget Sound; lowland forested habitat have been and will continue to be converted into developed lands which impact native flora and fauna communities. Past development, as well foreseeable future industrial and manufacturing uses in the area will also contribute to this changing landscape. The Department of Army also has several projects occurring in Lewis North vicinity, including the construction of Battalion and Company Operation Facilities, road alignments projects, and new water treatment plant with an associated water reclamation system. There are no known local or state projects planned in the project vicinity. The City of Dupont has zoned the area next to this project for commercial and industrial uses, and new facilities for such purposes could be developed in the future, which would also contribute to the projects cumulative impacts.

The proposed action is not expected to cause significant cumulative impacts to biological resources including forested habitats and wildlife because of retained openspace within JBLM, near Puget Sound and Sequelitchew Lake. The proposed action area is adjacent to land that has already been subject to development and is consistent with past uses and future planning. The location of this site protects the highest quality wildlife habitats from development, and still maintains large natural openspace areas for habitat.

Mitigation

Any Oregon white oak that are damaged and/or removed as part of this project will be replaced at a ratio of 5:1. In addition to the required replanting of Oregon white oak, the replacement of native vegetation should be encouraged during construction of the proposed ACP.

Conclusion

In review of the resource areas potentially impacted by the proposed action of implementing the construction and operation of a new ACP at Lewis North, it was found that the preferred alternative would have no significant environmental impacts on the natural or human environment. The preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is unwarranted, and a Finding of No Significant Impacts is appropriate for the proposed action.

Thomas H. Brittain
Colonel, US Army
Commanding

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