

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. 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. An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared to evaluate 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 and Alternatives

The Department of the Army (Army) proposes to construct a new access control point that would accommodate traffic traveling to 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)

The preferred alternative would locate a new ACP facility at the intersection of Wharf Road and Steilacoom DuPont Road. This ACP would replace the current “I” Street ACP which is located just south of the proposed ACP location. This alternative was compared against the no action alternative, which served as a baseline for evaluating environmental impacts.

During the project’s scoping, several alternatives were considered, but eliminated from detailed analysis because they did not sufficiently meet the project’s purpose and need. The installation considered adding another ACP at Main (Liberty) Gate. This option was eliminated because it does not provide direct access to Lewis North. The installation considered adding another ACP at the intersection of Steilacoom DuPont Road and 7th Street, but this option was excluded due to safety concerns (lack of “line-of-sight”). Adding another ACP north of the 7th Street ACP was also considered, but was excluded because it was too close to the “D” Street ACP and would not reduce traffic flows at or near the existing ACPs.

Summary of Anticipated Environmental Effects Associated with the Proposed Project

During the 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, which are discussed in Table 1 of the EA.

Although, the initial evaluation of hazardous materials did not identify impacts from the proposed action, an Environmental Survey was completed and was made available to the public during this process. The construction related to this project is in the vicinity of Landfill #5 and but will not disturb any soils at this site. Work overlapping the historic Range B requires contractors to have ordnance awareness during construction activities. Contractor project managers shall obtain a copy of the “Construction Industry 3Rs Explosives Safety Guide” when obtaining digging permits. Two groundwater monitoring wells and the stormwater outfall point within the project construction area will need to be addressed in the project specifications and potentially relocated. All the standard precautions and land use controls associated with these Category III sites will be utilized during the construction and later during the operation of the new gate.

The analyses in the EA of the possible impacts to other resources are discussed in the table below.

Environmental Effects to Resources in the Proposed Project Area

Resource	Preferred Alternative	No Action Alternative
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	The No Action Alternative serves as the status quo. Under this alternative there

	Oregon white oak will be removed. Oregon white oaks will be mitigated at a ratio 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.	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 as foreseeable future industrial and manufacturing uses in the area will also contribute to this changing landscape. The Army also has several projects occurring in Lewis North vicinity, including the construction of Battalion and Company Operation Facilities, road alignment projects, and a 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 project's 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.

Public Comment

The Army published a Notice of Availability (NOA) for the EA and draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) on 30 Mar 12, in the Tacoma News Tribune (TNT). An online NOA was also published in South Puget Sound News (which serves the DuPont and Steilacoom communities) from 30 Mar 12 to 1

Apr 12. NOA post cards were mailed to all entities within the EA's distribution list 30 Mar 12. The NOA that was sent and published 30 Mar 12 had a public comment closing period of 30 Apr 12.

Due to concerns over the distribution of the EA, the Army extended the public comment period to 31 May 12. The Notice of Extension was mailed to the distribution list 25 Apr 12.

On 11 May 12, the Army published a notice in the TNT advertising that a Public Meeting would be held 17 May 12 for the Lewis North ACP and NOA. The meeting was initiated to serve as a question and answer forum for the community, as well as a place for the public to submit comments and/or concerns regarding the project. The public meeting was held 17 May 12 at the Dupont City Hall from 6:00-8:00 PM. The public meeting was attended by two individuals with no written comments being received. Other verbal comments were similar to those covered in the response to comment document.

Throughout the public comment period, three comments were received (Appendix A). Although one comment discussed recommendations for waste reduction, comments largely focused on traffic and transportation concerns and requested information to be provided regarding traffic determinations.

Although there were no comments received regarding the project related to substantial impacts or impacts not considered in the EA, JBML has addressed comments individually (Appendix A), including the sources of reference that support the Agency's position (Appendix B-E). The supporting technical analyses (Appendix B-E), which include traffic determinations, address all the comments that were received during the public comment period.

In addition, a factual correction was made within the 'Distribution List' of the EA, where City of Dupont's mailing address was corrected to 1700 Civic Drive. No other changes were made to the document.

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

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 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. Based on this documentation, which has incorporated or referenced the best information available, I have taken a hard look at known impacts and determined that the implementation of the proposed action, with the mitigation referenced above, will not significantly affect the environment and therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not needed.



Thomas H. Brittain
Colonel, US Army
Commanding

7/2/2012

Date