

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Environmental Assessment for Fire Mitigation at Fort Sill, Oklahoma

1 FORT SILL, OKLAHOMA

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires federal agencies to consider the potential environmental impacts prior to undertaking a course of action. Within the Department of the Army, NEPA is implemented through regulations promulgated by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508), with supplemental requirements provided under 32 CFR Part 651, *Environmental Analysis of Army Actions*. In accordance with NEPA, CEQ regulations, and 32 CFR Part 651, Fort Sill prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the environmental effects that could result from the implementation of expanded fire mitigation practices.

2 TITLE OF THE ACTION

Environmental Assessment for Fire Mitigation at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

United States (U.S.) Army Garrison Fort Sill (or the Installation) operates several training ranges for small arms, artillery, live aircraft bombing, and laser targeting. Fort Sill is located in Comanche County in southwestern Oklahoma. The U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy, and other aircraft use the airspace around Fort Sill and the ranges at Fort Sill for training. The Quanah Range is used by the U.S. Army, Air Force, Marines, and Euro-North Atlantic Treaty Organization nations to train pilots and ground forces in the use of tactical aircraft. Fort Sill's training exercises can leave unexploded ordnance (UXO) from explosives (e.g., bombs, bullets, shells, and grenades) that pose a threat of future detonation.

The Installation's mission is to train soldiers and develop U.S. Army and Marine Corps Field Artillery and U.S. Army Air Defense Artillery leaders, design and develop fire support for the Force, support unit training and readiness, mobilize and deploy operating forces, and maintain the Installation's infrastructure and services.

4 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to control the risk of wildfires caused by conditions and activities at the Installation for the 10-year implementation period. The need is demonstrated by the number, location, and extent of previous wildfires, including fires that have adversely affected nearby communities. Between March 2012 and July 2013, 148 documented fires due to existing natural conditions and/or training exercises occurred within the Installation. Between 2009 and 2011, four began on the Installation and then proceeded to areas outside of the Installation. Of these, two occurred along the border between the Installation and Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), one within the Town of Medicine Park, and another on the eastern edge of the Installation. The 2011 fire in Medicine Park burned 4,000 acres within the Installation and 1,500 acres within and adjacent to Medicine Park. The fire required evacuation of approximately 1,500 residents and destroyed 13 homes. Conditions and activities at Fort Sill generate a very high or extreme wildfire probability. Fort Sill actively mitigates fire risks by constructing firebreaks and reducing or removing fuel loads through deadfall and woody vegetation removal, agricultural leases, prescribed burns, and fire wood/timber sales.

The current fire management techniques have not fully controlled wildfire risk, especially fast-moving wildfires. An analysis by the Installation concluded that the higher risks of wildfires exist in the central and eastern portions of the Installation. This analysis evaluated prevailing wind data and types of fire fuel, including trees, grasses, and leaf litter, using the best available information. The analysis identified the following Areas of Concern (AOC) or areas of fast-moving fire risk: North Arbuckle to Elgin; Brush Canyon to Medicine Park; and Tracer Round Risk Areas, including the Kerr Hill Machine Gun Range and Night Infiltration Course.

The presence of UXO limits fire management responses in these and other areas because UXO poses an unacceptable risk to fire and emergency personnel during wildfires, as well as during mechanical removal of fire fuel. During Spring 2013, a firefighter was injured by UXO when the wildfire spread to such an area. The EA analyzes and documents the potential environmental consequences of fire mitigation strategies proposed for the Installation.

5 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The Proposed Action would supplement existing fire mitigation activities performed at the Installation. It would use additional, enhanced methods and techniques specifically developed for site conditions to further mitigate the risk of wildfires caused by natural or man-induced conditions.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Fort Sill initially considered a number of alternatives for fire hazard mitigation involving chemical application (aerial and manual), physical, mechanical, and avoidance techniques and methods. Some alternatives for proposed woody vegetation removal areas (WVRAs) and firebreaks were eliminated to avoid endangered species habitat, wetlands, and perennial streams. Others were eliminated to reduce safety risks and avoid access restrictions for municipal easements at the Installation. Locations of proposed WVRAs and firebreaks were selected to avoid sensitive features. They were also selected to connect to existing firebreaks and provide further control of fast-moving fires, based on the wildfire probability analysis. Removal of deadfall in Training Area 39 was not considered as removal of deadfall and vegetation along Deer Creek Canyon Road with a nearby proposed firebreak was determined to be a more effective measure.

Two alternatives were carried forward for consideration in the EA. The anticipated implementation period for both alternatives is 10 years. These alternatives include:

No Action Alternative: Fort Sill would continue to implement existing fire hazard mitigation. Current mitigation measures include prescribed burns and mechanical methods for the invasive Eastern Red Cedar (annually, every 2 years, or as mitigation during wildfire events); and mechanical and chemical removal of honey mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) and Johnson grass (*Sorghum halepense*). In addition, where feasible, the Installation will continue to apply herbicides to control noxious weeds in compliance with laws and Best Management Practices (BMPs); out lease agricultural lands to reduce fire fuel; remove woody vegetation, including canopy, for 30 feet (ft) on either side of roadways and fence lines, with the exception of old growth areas where only deadfall and underbrush would be removed; and maintain existing firebreaks with a 30-ft buffer.

To remove woody vegetation under current practices, contractors develop and implement a fuel removal plan that includes but is not limited to underbrush clearing and/or tree thinning, slash removal, vertical removal of tree branches, and down trees. As necessary, mechanical treatments, such as mulching, grinding, mowing, chopping, and removal of such materials, would comply with required BMPs. Manual treatments, such as thinning of vegetation with chainsaws and hand tools, would be used in areas with high levels of fuel and cultural resources and/or other resources that would be adversely affected by prescribed burns or wildfire events.

Proposed Action: The Proposed Action includes existing fire hazard mitigation methods and techniques; construction of six new, interior firebreaks over six miles; removal of 340 acres of woody vegetation; and, where mechanical removal or ground-level spraying is impracticable due to UXO and severe undergrowth, programmatically evaluate and implement aerial spraying of noxious weeds and other fuel sources to reduce fuel for wildfires. Old growth forests would be avoided during woody vegetation removal. All of these activities would be coordinated with the Fort Sill Fire Department and Directorate of Public Works (DPW) in compliance with the Firebreak/Fuel Removal Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and Maintenance SOP and in agreement with (IAW) Task Element (TE) 5.7-002, while maintaining the drainage between April and November, or as instructed by the Contracting Officer or Contracting Officer's Representative.

Where practical and environmental conditions permit, the firebreaks would be constructed by clearing all vegetation in a corridor with a total 40-ft width (20 ft on either side of centerline). Following construction, firebreaks and WVRAs would be regularly maintained.

Aerial spraying would target areas with high concentrations of noxious weed species, with limited access throughout the Installation and especially in areas with potential for fast-moving wildfires. Each aerial application would be reviewed and approved by the Fort Sill Environmental Quality Division (EQD), the Fort Sill Pest Management Office (PMO), and the U.S. Army Environmental Command (USAEC) Entomologist and documented using Department of Defense (DoD) Form 1532-1. No off-label uses of herbicides (grouped under pesticides by the DoD) would be allowed, and the application would comply with federal, state, and local standards, including local standards for honey mesquite control.

To obtain approval of aerial spraying, requestors would prepare an Aerial Spray Statement of Need (ASSON) and submit it for review and consideration in compliance with Army Regulation (AR) 200-1 Environmental Protection and Enhancement. AR 200-1 Environmental Protection and Enhancement allows aerial application of chemicals to control overgrowth in ranges where the presence of UXO prevents normal Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices, but requires an ASSON within an installation's *Integrated Pest Management Plan* (IPMP).

All work would comply with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA), and the Installation's *Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan* (INRMP), IPMP, and associated BMPs.

In summary, under the No Action Alternative, Fort Sill would not implement any components of the Proposed Action. The Fort Sill mission and the management of Fort Sill ranges would continue under the status quo. The Proposed Action includes actions described in the No Action Alternative, in addition to those described in the Proposed Action. As mentioned above, the EA considered two separate alternatives, i.e., the No Action Alternative and Proposed Action. Any combination of the two could be incorporated in the final decision.

6 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

This analysis of the potential impacts to the human and ecological environment is documented in the EA for Fire Mitigation at Fort Sill which is hereby incorporated by reference. Based on the analysis conducted, no potential significant effects on human health or the environment would occur as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Action.

Potential direct and indirect effects of the No Action Alternative and Proposed Action, and the cumulative effects of the Proposed Action were identified in the analysis performed during development of the EA. Direct effects are "...caused by the action and occur at the same time and place" (40 CFR §1508.8). Indirect effects are caused by the action, but are later in time and further removed in distance from the action. Cumulative effects are the result of "...the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or persons undertakes the actions" (40 CFR §1508.7). Under NEPA, the terms "effects" and "impacts" are synonymous.

The following terminology has been used to characterize the level of an effect:

- No impact, no measurable or other effect is expected to occur;
- Negligible, an effect is expected to occur at a level that is not measurable and these negligible effects can be short-term or long-term;
- Less than significant, the resource is expected to incur greater than a negligible effect but the effects would not be significant with or without mitigation based upon the resource and context (extent of effects and duration) and intensity (severity); and
- Significant, where the resource is expected to experience an irretrievable effect or one that exceeds allowed impacts under regulations, including beneficial and adverse effects, considering context, duration, and intensity.

The analysis of the effects of the Proposed Action for each of the resources is discussed in more detail below. The analysis is typically based upon a Region of Influence (ROI) extending 1,000 ft beyond the Installation's boundary. More information on the impact analysis is provided by the EA that is incorporated by reference.

Airspace Use: Negligible effects on airspace use are anticipated. Aerial spraying would increase flights from existing airports; however, the Proposed Action would not alter air space designations or navigable airspace.

Air Quality: Less than significant effects on air quality are anticipated. Short-term, minimal, localized effects on air quality would result from construction, maintenance, aerial spraying, and prescribed burns. Aerial spraying would occur when wind speeds are below 5 miles per hour to minimize the drift of herbicides, and prescribed burns would comply with the Oklahoma Open Burn Rule.

Biological Resources (Terrestrial): Less than significant effects on terrestrial biological resources (vegetation, threatened and endangered plant species, terrestrial wildlife, threatened and endangered terrestrial species, and natural resource areas) are anticipated. No threatened and endangered plants species are present at the Installation. The Installation will continue to coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding three non-listed plant species of concern including dodder (*Cuscuta spp.*), Oklahoma beardtongue (*Penstemon oklahomensis*), and Hall's bulrush (*Schoenoplectus hallii*) to avoid impacts to these species.

Short-term, less than significant decreases in air quality and less than significant increases in noise levels would affect terrestrial habitat. Accidental releases of herbicide would be managed by Fort Sill's IPMP and the Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plans (SPCCP). The amount of habitat and number of terrestrial individuals impacted is expected to be small and not anticipated to have an effect on population viability and diversity.

The Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and migratory birds have the potential to occur in the ROI. Of the five federally listed terrestrial species with potential to occur in Comanche County, the Black-Capped Vireo (BCVI) is the only species documented to occur on the Installation. No candidate species are listed for Comanche County. Approximately 16,000 acres of potential BCVI habitat are present on the Installation, but no critical habitat for this species is designated within the Installation. A Biological Opinion (BO), Number 2-4-96-F-57, was issued by USFWS on March 16, 1998 stating that the effects of military-associated activities at Fort Sill are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the BCVI. The Proposed Action is not anticipated to result in long-term, direct effects on population viability and diversity of the BCVI as it would comply with the BO.

Natural resource areas in proximity to the Installation include the Wichita Mountains NWR and James A. Manning Fish Hatchery; however, the construction and maintenance of the fire breaks and WVRAs would not take place in the Wichita Mountains NWR or hatchery, and these resources would not be measurably affected by the Proposed Action.

Biological Resources (Aquatic): Based on field work conducted by Fort Sill, the Proposed Action is not anticipated to impact potentially jurisdictional streams or wetlands and removal of vegetation associated with these features would be avoided. Therefore, the Proposed Action would have a less than significant impact on streams, wetlands, and aquatic habitat.

The Installation manages the existing aquatic wildlife and habitat to prevent adverse effects. Where required, the use of Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPPs), SPCCPs, and other industry standard BMPs would minimize the likelihood of erosion and chemical spills as well as define emergency response requirements for accidental releases.

Cultural and Historic Resources: There would be less than significant, direct and indirect effects on cultural and historic resources as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Action. A letter from the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Officer, issued on October 22, 2015, found that no historic properties would be affected by the Proposed Action. A response letter dated October 15, 2015 from the Oklahoma Archeological Survey indicated an archaeological field inspection would be necessary due to one cultural resource site, 34CM102, within the Area of Potential Effect (APE). A follow-up letter from the Oklahoma Archeological Survey, dated October 27, 2015, indicated the requested inspection should be disregarded as 34CM102 is not located within the APE; however, monitoring of cultural resources should be conducted once clearing of ordinances is complete in areas of UXO.

Hazardous Materials and Waste: A less than significant effect on Hazardous Materials (HM) use and management and Hazardous Waste (HW) generation and management is expected. Federal laws, including ARs, restrict the use, transport, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and wastes (HM and HW, respectively). These regulations, as well as Oklahoma's Combined Pesticide Laws and Rules, require licensing, certification and permitting for use of pesticides. Under the Proposed Action, aerial spraying would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis under existing policies. The Proposed Action would not generate HM that would exceed existing HW facilities' capacity and would comply with state and federal laws.

Health and Safety: The Proposed Action provides greater fire protection and would result in a beneficial, less than significant effect on health and safety. In compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 and ARs, Fort Sill has established requirements for the safety of its employees, civilian contractors, and others on and surrounding the Installation. The IPMP also complies with Executive Order (EO) 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks (Office of the President 1997, 19885-19888), which outlines the safety protocol for safe-guarding of children.

Hydrology and Hydrogeology: The Proposed Action would result in a less than significant effect on hydrology, including base floodplain elevations, and hydrogeology. Components of the Proposed Action would cross the base (or regulatory) floodplain for 3.98 miles (2 miles along FBWR56 and 1.98 miles of WVRAs). The Proposed Action would not introduce new impervious area or permanently alter stream conveyance capacity, as all low water crossings would be restored to pre-construction contours. Temporary, construction crossings would allow flows during wet weather, including maintenance of flows between April and November. Vegetation removal would prevent some percolation of water into the soil and increase runoff velocity; however, the removal of vegetation would also create additional storage within the floodplain and offset minor increases in surface runoff velocity. Slight changes in nutrient loading would occur as a result of vegetation removal near riparian corridors. The Proposed Action would not substantially alter surface water contributions to alluvial aquifers.

Land Use and Land Cover: The Proposed Action would have a less than significant effect on land cover and land use. The Proposed Action would reduce herbaceous cover temporarily for construction access and permanently for maintenance of firebreaks and WVRAs. It would not result in new development or an increase in impervious cover. The resulting firebreaks and WVRAs would not result in incompatible, permanent land use impacts or effects. Temporary and localized effects on air quality and noise would occur during construction and maintenance. The Proposed Action does not conflict with the land use plans of the Town of Medicine Park or the City of Lawton. It would not develop land or contribute to urban sprawl and secondary (or induced) growth. Agricultural lands outside of the Installation would not be directly converted. Current agricultural leases within the Installation would be largely buffered by WVRAs, and changes in agricultural lands within the Installation would be offset by modifications to leases. The Proposed Action would reduce the probability of a wildfire leaving the Installation which would provide greater fire protection for existing developed properties, both on and off the Installation.

Noise: A less than significant effect on noise would occur under the Proposed Action. Temporary increases in noise due to construction and maintenance would be minimized to the extent practicable by:

- Construction during normal weekday business hours (730 to 1600 or 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) in areas adjacent to sensitive receptors and any off-Installation areas;
- Maintaining construction equipment mufflers to the manufacturer's standards;
- Notifying occupants adjacent to construction areas in advance of construction and its duration; and
- Avoiding breeding seasons of the BCVI.

Aerial spraying would also generate noise from fixed-wing (piston-powered) and rotary-wing (helicopter) aircraft. Noise impacts associated with take-off and landing would have a negligible effect on existing aviation noise contours due to the minimal number of anticipated flights that would occur during daylight hours.

Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice: The Proposed Action would have a less than significant, beneficial effect on socioeconomics. Temporary increases in population and temporary housing needs would occur, but are not expected to induce permanent changes in population (including immigration), employment, or income, because construction, maintenance, and the programmatic aerial spraying would be periodic rather than ongoing activities.

Temporary increase in expenditures and potential hiring that could modestly improve the local tax base may occur, but would not exceed the capacity of existing education, medical, and other community services.

Minority populations would not incur a disparate impact compared to other communities and a less than significant effect on environmental justice would occur under the Proposed Action. Based upon a screening analysis of demographic data, meaningfully-greater minority and low-income populations are located within the Environmental Justice ROI. These minority communities would also incur temporary, less than significant effects on air quality, health and safety, noise, and transportation which are similar to effects in residential areas with lower minority populations.

Soils and Topography: The Proposed Action would generate less than significant effects on soils, including prime farmland, and topography. Soils would not be removed, and no fill would be used during construction or maintenance activities. Under the Proposed Action, short- and long-term, direct effects on soils associated with construction, including compaction, would be expected due to firebreak and WVRA construction.

The Proposed Action would not affect agricultural out lease areas and would likely improve future harvest accessibility and harvest acreage. The effects of additional aerial spraying would be temporary and would not convert soils to non-agricultural uses.

No permanent changes in slope would occur during construction or maintenance of the Proposed Action. The potential for erosion following wildfires would be reduced, and erosion associated with construction would be minimized by BMPs.

Transportation: The Proposed Action would have a less than significant effect on transportation. Construction of new permanent transportation routes is not anticipated. Temporary decreases to level of service (LOS), e.g. increased delays on roadways near the entrance and exit of the Installation would be minimized by scheduling the daily start and end of construction work during off-peak traffic times. Construction vehicles would be located to avoid conflicts with traffic, and construction sites would be well signed. Where necessary, traffic would be directed by construction workers. To prevent damage from heavy vehicles on roads, traffic would be routed on roads designed for heavy vehicles.

Utilities and Infrastructure: The Proposed Action would have a less than significant effect on natural gas, electrical, and potable water infrastructure; it would have a negligible effect on wastewater infrastructure. The Proposed Action would not require new infrastructure or alter existing natural gas or electrical, potable water, or wastewater infrastructure. Care would be taken to avoid accidental damage, including compaction, to existing infrastructure. Any damage would be reported to the appropriate utility immediately. Available groundwater and surface water would be negligibly affected. Construction and maintenance activities would take place outside of Wellhead Protection Areas (WHPAs) and the permitting boundaries of wastewater facilities. Herbicide application would not occur within WHPAs, Public Water Supply (PWS) areas (e.g. lakes), or lagoons.

Solid Waste: The Proposed Action would have a less than significant effect on solid waste. Vegetation removed during the construction and maintenance of firebreaks and WVRAs would be reused as wood chips, potentially composted with the reopening of the permitted composting facility or leasing additional equipment, or disposed of within the C&D landfill. Fort Sill and the City of Lawton have adequate capacity to collect, transport, and store Municipal Solid Waste generated by workers at the Dodge Hill and City of Lawton landfills, respectively.

Visual and Aesthetic Resources: Impacts to visual and aesthetic resources under the Proposed Action would be less than significant. The construction of firebreaks would not alter vegetation within the viewsheds of the Cantonment Area. Three firebreaks are located near Medicine Park; area topography would obstruct much of the view of the firebreaks. WVRAs have been designed to avoid and minimize effects on Lake Elmer Thomas' viewshed. The most prevalent areas with a direct line-of-site to the Proposed Action WVRAs are where the City of Lawton, Cache, and Elgin are adjacent to Fort Sill. Viewsheds of the Installation from surrounding residences are currently disturbed by ongoing Installation activities and fragmented vegetation. WVRAs would further remove vegetation from these viewsheds. WVRAs along the perimeter of Fort Sill would not affect viewsheds from and of major recreational areas within nearby cities, because topography obstructs views of the WVRAs.

Two viewsheds of the Wichita Mountain Scenic Byway are located close to proposed WVRAs. The Proposed Action would not affect the viewshed to the north. While WVRAs would affect the viewshed to the south, this area is already disturbed by fencing, transmission lines, and existing firebreaks.

Water Resources: The Proposed Action would have a less than significant effect on surface water quality, groundwater quality, and PWS infrastructure. The construction of firebreaks and WVRAs would remove riparian vegetative corridors along streams. WVRAs and firebreaks would cross streams at an angle to minimize potential thermal loading. Minor increases in thermal loading of a few stream segments would not affect any 303(d) listed streams. Potential increases in turbidity and dissolved solid concentrations caused by bank or stream erosion would be minimized by implementation of BMPs as described in the IPMP, SWPPPs, as required, and soil erosion and the restoration procedures in the INRMP. Minor amounts of additional runoff would be managed by BMPs, including the SWPPP, as required, certification of personnel using herbicides, and compliance with the IPMP to control any accidental spills or releases of chemicals into the aquifer or WHPAs. The Proposed Action would not directly or indirectly affect wellhead protection areas and the capacity or operations of PWS infrastructure.

Cumulative Impact: Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects were identified during the impact analysis. All of the aforementioned activities are subject to their own permitting processes that are designed to reduce overall environmental impact. When taken together, it is likely the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities have the potential to result in a less than significant, cumulative impact on the environment, including minor degradations of water quality, minor effects on hydrology, minor decreases in habitat for fauna, less than significant effects on BCVI and migratory bird habitat, and temporary changes in traffic patterns.

The Proposed Action does not result in significant impacts to hydrology or geohydrology and would not decrease the amount of available habitat for fauna; change or result in adverse effects on BCVI or migratory bird habitat; and would cause only limited and temporary changes in traffic patterns during the construction period. Strict adherence to existing regulations, guidance documents, or BMPs reduces impacts below the level of significance. The Installation's impact on the environmental resources that is attributable to the Proposed Action is limited to aquatic biological resources (e.g. wetland vegetation and streams). Implementation of BMPs would protect aquatic biological resources from construction and maintenance activities. For the purposes of this analysis, the Proposed Action's contribution to a cumulative impact is not significant.

7 MITIGATION MEASURES AND PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

The Army and Fort Sill are committed to sustaining and preserving the environment and as such would employ a number of BMPs to reduce or minimize potential impacts of the Proposed Action. These would include:

- Installation EQD and DPW requirements for herbicide application (described in Section 2.2.1 of the EA);
- Firebreak/Fuel Removal and Maintenance SOPs (Section 2.2.2);
- Restrictions for contractors constructing and maintaining firebreaks (Section 2.2.2);
- Individual review of each aerial spraying operation using the ASSON (Section 2.2);
- Established operational and location restrictions under established airspace restrictions (Section 3.2);
- Avoidance of aerial spraying during high wind conditions (Sections 3.3 and 3.13);
- Limited, on-label use of acceptable herbicides (Section 3.3);
- Limitations on construction and other activities to protect migratory birds, eagles, and other protected species and comply with the MBTA and BGEPA (Section 3.4);
- Permanent and temporary stormwater BMPs from individual SWPPPs, as required, to comply with the Surface Water Management Plan, as needed (Sections 3.5.2 and 3.9.1);
- Avoidance of construction buffers to protect cultural resources and compliance with other cultural resource SOPs (Section 3.6);
- Restrictions on the use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials, including use of certified herbicide applicators and accidental spill response (Section 3.7);
- Avoidance of soil and rock removal during construction (Section 3.9.2);
- Construction during normal weekday business hours (Section 3.11);

- Use of construction mufflers (Section 3.11);
- Notifications of construction activities to nearby sensitive receptors (Section 3.11);
- Avoiding construction during BCVI breeding season to reduce noise impacts (Section 3.11);
- Tree removal followed by restoration per procedures included in the DPW SOPs (Section 3.13);
- Controls to prevent soil erosion and compaction (Section 3.13.1);
- Queuing of construction traffic to avoid reduction in LOS, and posting safety warnings for construction near roads (Section 3.14);
- Avoidance of overhead and underground utility lines, including the City of Lawton underground, 42-inch water line (Section 3.15);
- Restrictions to prevent herbicide applications in playgrounds, WHPAs, and other PWS sources (Sections 3.8 and 3.17); and
- Avoidance of habitat fragmentation in riparian corridors (Section 3.17).

Many of the actions are approved under individual Installation programs, including the ASSON; however, some activities would require permits if existing exemptions are exceeded. These include:

- Construction over an area greater than one acre requires a General Permit for Stormwater Discharges on Construction sites, which is typically a responsibility of the Contractor; and
- Alteration of potentially jurisdictional waters requires compliance with the Clean Water Act and may require a General Permit or Individual Permit from the Tulsa District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

8 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT <<PENDING FINAL APPROACH>>

In accordance with these public notification requirements, the Army published the Notice of Availability for the Draft EA and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) in the Lawton Constitution of <<Insert Date>> and provided copies of the document to the Lawton Public Library, as well as local governing officials and other interested parties. This includes a notice to demonstrate compliance with EO 11988, Floodplain Management. The Draft EA and Draft FNSI public comment period lasted 30 days and ended on <<Insert Date>>. All comments received from the draft review were considered and incorporated into the final document.

On <<Insert Date>>, the Army announced the availability of the Final EA at the same locations as the Draft EA prior to signing of the FNSI. The public comment period for the Final EA will last 15 days but could be extended to 30 days if major changes to the document occur. If no comments are received, the second review period may be omitted.

9 CONCLUSION

The Proposed Action represents the most practicable alternative for fire mitigation. The anticipated components would have less than significant effects on drainages, and the stream beds or major conduits for floodplains would be restored to pre-construction contours after construction and no loss of the flood carrying capacity of the existing floodplains would occur. By this analysis and incorporating the floodplain considerations into the public notice, the Installation would meet its responsibilities under EO 11988.

The EA for Fire Mitigation was prepared pursuant to the Army's NEPA regulation, Title 32 CFR Part 651, and U.S. CEQ regulations (Title 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) for implementing the procedural requirements of NEPA. Based on the analysis contained in the EA and the Army's intent to follow prescribed regulations, acquire required permits, and implement the mitigation measures identified previously, the Army has determined that implementation of the Proposed Action will have no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative adverse impacts on the human or ecological environment.

Based on my review of the EA, I conclude that the Proposed Action does not constitute a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the environment under Section 102(2) (c) of NEPA. Accordingly, no Environmental Impact Statement is required. I have reviewed the mitigation measures identified above, and I adopt and incorporate such measures into my decision here. Based on my review of the EA, I have decided to implement

the Preferred Alternative (implementation of the Proposed Action and the corresponding BMPs and mitigation measures).

Signature: _____

Glenn A. Waters
Colonel, FA
Garrison Commander
Fires Center of Excellence and Fort Sill

Date: _____