

DRAFT
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FNSI)

**CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A WASHINGTON ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
TUMWATER READINESS CENTER FACILITY
TUMWATER, THURSTON COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

Introduction

The Washington Army National Guard (WAARNG) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to identify and evaluate potential adverse environmental effects associated with the construction and operation of a WAARNG Tumwater Readiness Center (TRC) facility in Tumwater, Thurston County, Washington. This EA has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 USC 4321-4360e), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Environmental Analysis of Army Actions (32 CFR Part 651).

1. Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives

Proposed Action: The WAARNG proposes to construct an approximately 82,000-square foot readiness center; a 29,701-square foot unheated vehicle storage building; a 220-square foot flammable materials building; a 300-square foot controlled waste storage facility; about 26,992 square yards of pavement/sidewalks/curbing, and stormwater basins. This facility will cover approximately 12 acres in the northern portion of the 53-acre property acquired in April 2015 by the Washington Military Department (WMD).

The Proposed Action would provide for a new Tumwater Readiness Center facility, replacing the Puyallup and Olympia Armories, which are old, deteriorating, and inadequate buildings. The new facility would allow the units to continue to meet the required mobilization readiness, recruiting, retention, training, disaster/emergency response, and maintenance objectives. The new TRC facility would meet modern ARNG building space requirements, and would comply with Department of Defense anti-terrorism force protection standards. Detailed information about the Proposed Action may be found in the EA (separate document).

Alternatives Considered:

The WAARNG initially considered eight alternatives to the Proposed Action: the No Action Alternative and seven alternative locations for the Proposed Action (Kimmie St. property in Tumwater, Port of Olympia property in Tumwater, Kaufman property in Grand Mound, Elderberry St. property in Grand Mound, Highway 9 and Highway 99 property in Grand Mound, Recycling property in Grand Mound, and Tumwater Commercial Place in Tumwater). Except for the Kimmie St. property (the Proposed Action), none of the other six alternative locations considered met all of the thirteen screening criteria, nor were any of those accessible through a mutual property transfer agreement.

The WAARNG examined in-depth two alternatives, summarized as follows:

Preferred Action Alternative (Proposed Action) - Construct the TRC facility at a WMD-acquired property located along Kimmie St., SW, in Tumwater, Washington, and subsequently conduct weekend drill trainings, vehicle maintenance, and other readiness center operations at that site. This site supports the mission of the units by giving them enough space to effectively conduct their training and allowing for possible future development as well. The proposed TRC facility will provide a modern regional training center that meets the multi-level training and operational requirements for the assigned WAARNG units (Headquarters and Headquarters Battery [HHB] 2-146 FA; Det-1 C Battery, 2-146 FA; Troop A, 1-303 CAV; and Det-1 F Company, 181 BSB). It will be designed to be an efficient, technology-driven training facility that affords highly standardized and cost-effective training for the WAARNG units. Consolidation of the two armories will improve the communication between units, enhance operational efficiencies, and increase the utilization of common equipment and resources. It also will relieve crowding in the existing, aging, and inflexible facilities, and it will allow for greater quantities, types, and sizes of supporting equipment. The TRC facility project is part of WAARNG efforts to consolidate smaller, inefficient, deteriorating facilities into larger modernized ones, which are strategically located in the region for efficiency, promoting a sense of unity, and better coordination of operations in training and in action. The TRC facility will serve as the regional readiness center in the South Puget Sound Region.

No Action Alternative - Continue with operations as currently conducted and do not implement the Proposed Action. The No Action Alternative serves as a benchmark from which to compare the Proposed Action. Under this alternative, the construction and operation of a TRC facility would not occur, and the operations of the units still would take place at the Puyallup and Olympia Armories. Instead, the WAARNG would continue to operate out of substandard facilities that do not meet current mission requirements.

2. Environmental Analysis

The potential environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action are fully described in the EA. The EA identifies the environmental resources that could be affected by the Proposed Action, and determines the significance of the impacts, if any, to each of those resources. Based on the EA's analysis, the WAARNG determined that the TRC facility project would have less-than-significant adverse impacts to air quality, noise, soils, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, socio-economic resources (including environmental justice and protection of children), infrastructure, and hazardous and toxic materials/wastes. The Proposed Action would have no adverse impacts on climate, land use, topography, and geology. Foreseeable future actions expected to take place on or around the proposed TRC facility site, or to affect the Proposed Action, would have no significant cumulative impacts. In addition, the WAARNG determined, and the USFWS concurred, that the Proposed Action would affect, but would not likely to adversely affect, the Mazama pocket gopher (*Olympia* subspecies) and its habitat.

3. Mitigation

No mitigation measures are necessary to reduce potential adverse environmental impacts to less-than-significant levels. The WAARNG will implement appropriate Best Management Practices and

applicable WAARNG construction guidelines for new facilities. Additionally, the WAARNG will obtain all necessary permits and construction site approvals prior to implementation of this action.

4. Regulations

The Proposed Action will not violate NEPA, the CEQ Regulations, 32 CFR 651, or other Federal, state, or local environmental regulations.

5. Commitment to Implementation

The National Guard Bureau (NGB) and WAARNG affirm their commitment to implementing the EA in accordance with NEPA. Implementation is dependent on funding. The WAARNG and the NGB's Installations & Environment (I&E) and Training Directorates will ensure that adequate funds are requested in future years' budgets to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in this EA.

6. Public Review and Comment

A public scoping meeting was held on June 30, 2015. The WAARNG addressed comments received during the public scoping meeting and comment period. The draft EA and draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) were made available for public review and comment from April 14 to May 13, 2017. Documents were made available at the locations listed in the draft EA's public notice.

7. Finding of No Significant Impact

After careful review of the EA, I have concluded that implementation of the Proposed Action would not generate controversy or have a significant impact on the quality of the human or natural environment. The FNSI will be signed and the action will be implemented. This analysis fulfills the requirements of the NEPA and the CEQ Regulations. An Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared, and the National Guard Bureau will issue this Finding of No Significant Impact.

Date

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