

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FNSI)  
FINDING OF NO PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE (FONPA)  
ILLINOIS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD  
PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A ZERO RANGE,  
RELOCATION OF THE M203 GRENADE LAUNCHER RANGE, AND IMPLEMENTATION  
OF ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS AT THE  
SPARTA TRAINING AREA, RANDOLPH COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

**1. Introduction**

The Illinois Army National Guard (ILARNG) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to identify and evaluate potential environmental effects from the proposed construction and operation a 10-25 meter (m) Zero Range, the relocation of the existing M203 40-millimeter Training Practice Grenade Launcher Range, and the implementation of roadway improvements at the Sparta Training Area (STA) in Randolph County, Illinois. This EA has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA, 42 US Code § 4321 to 4370e), the *Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA* (CEQ Regulations, 40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508), and 32 CFR Part 651 (*Environmental Analysis of Army Actions*, Final Rule, 29 March 2002). As set forth in Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 5105.77, *National Guard Bureau (NGB)*, the NGB is a joint activity of the DoD and as such must comply with the NEPA.

**2. Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives**

**Proposed Action.** The Proposed Action includes three proposed projects: (1) construction and operation of a 10-25m Zero Range and the connected action of rerouting the existing high voltage power line to accommodate this range, (2) relocation of the existing M203 Grenade Launcher Range, and (3) implementation of roadway improvements. The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide the requisite range and infrastructure improvements at the STA for in-state training for ILARNG units, particularly those located in southern Illinois, as well as other military units. The ILARNG cannot currently meet Standards in Training Commission (STRAC) requirements or mission training objectives using in-state facilities.

Relocation of the M203 Grenade Launcher Range at STA is necessary to accommodate the new Zero Range configuration. Thus, construction of the new Zero Range is dependent on the other range project being implemented. Furthermore, in order to accommodate the proposed Zero Range, the existing aboveground high voltage power line that traverses through the center of STA must be relocated outside the proposed Zero Range Surface Danger Zones (SDZs). The proposed relocated high voltage power line would be rerouted along existing right-of-ways, and would require approximately 3.6 miles (50-foot corridor) of new aboveground power line. Southern Illinois Power Cooperative is the owner of the power line; they will coordinate the relocation of the poles and Egyptian Electric's distribution lines affixed to their poles.

Ranges consist of two primary components: the physical range footprint, consisting of the firing positions, targetry, and support structures (i.e., as specified in Training Circular 25-8); and the SDZ, the area extending from a firing point to a distance downrange based on the projectiles fired and weapon system used. The SDZ has specific dimensions for the

expected caliber or the weapon being fired, so that all projectile fragments are contained in this area. These SDZs have been modeled, tested, and found to include those areas in which projectiles would land, based on the weapon used. Total land disturbance for the range projects would be up to approximately 30 acres, which includes the proposed connected action of rerouting the high voltage power line. No land alterations or disturbance is proposed within the range SDZs.

Road improvements would include the installation of new gravel roads, dirt trails, culverts and low water crossings and maintenance / rehabilitation activities over the next 5 years. This project includes the establishment of approximately 10.2 miles of new gravel roads (24 feet wide) and 6.8 miles of new dirt trails (18 feet wide) to accommodate increased training site use within the non-Cantonment Areas at STA. Total land disturbance associated with new road improvements is estimated to be approximately 40 acres.

For the roadway improvement projects, the ILARNG Construction Facilities Management Office (CFMO) and Environmental Branch will be responsible for coordinating annually on upcoming roadway improvement projects. The Environmental Branch will coordinate with the US Army Corps of Engineers St. Louis District for any required permits prior to the project implementation. For projects requiring a Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 permit, CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification and/or Construction in a Floodplain permit, the ILARNG will follow the Illinois Joint Permit Application process. The ILARNG will be responsible for implementing all permit conditions and any mitigation measures (if deemed necessary) by the agencies during the permitting process.

No streams, wetlands, floodplains or other water bodies occur within the proposed range footprints or relocated power line footprint. However impacts to streams and Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA) 100-year floodplains would occur as a result of some of the roadway improvement projects and a proposed Low Water Crossing (LWC). To comply with Executive Order (EO) 11988 (Floodplain Management) and EO 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), the ILARNG conducted an analysis of alternatives to request approval and a waiver from the Army National Guard (ARNG) Installation Division and the Department of Army (DA) to construct LWC 12 in the 100-year floodplain. Impacts to water resources will be minor adverse impacts through implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and permit conditions.

Operation of the proposed ranges and other facilities would be conducted in accordance with Army Regulation 385-63, *Range Safety* and Illinois Department of Military Affairs Regulation 350-12, *Training at STA*. The new range would be available to all Army National Guard (ARNG) units, as well as other DoD and civilian users as scheduling permits. Approximately 4,567 personnel have been trained at the STA on average per year since 2007. The ILARNG anticipates site usage would increase to approximately 9,000 man-days per year as a result of implementing the Proposed Action.

**Alternatives Considered.** In addition to the Preferred Action Alternative and No Action Alternative, the ILARNG considered the following alternatives: (1) use an existing ILARNG training site, (2) establish a new training site in southern Illinois, (3) implement a reduced-scale alternative, and (4) construct proposed projects in different locations at STA. All alternatives were measured against established acceptability criteria and two alternatives were selected for detailed analysis: Preferred Action Alternative and No Action Alternative. The Preferred Action Alternative provides the best combination of land and resources to sustain quality military training and to maintain and improve the units' readiness postures.

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed range and roadway projects would not be constructed and current installation operations would continue. Required training would continue to be conducted by the ILARNG at out-of-state installations where the necessary ranges and training facilities are available, primarily in the states of Wisconsin, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri. While the No Action Alternative would not satisfy the purpose of or need for the Proposed Action, this alternative was retained to provide a comparative baseline against which to analyze the effects of the Proposed Action, as required in the CEQ Regulations (40 CFR Part 1502.14). The No Action Alternative reflects the status quo and serves as a benchmark against which the effects of the Proposed Action can be evaluated.

### **3. 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 these resources. Based on the EA's analysis, the ILARNG determined that the known and potential adverse impacts from the Proposed Action on land cover, air quality, noise, soils, water resources, biological resources, threatened and endangered species, socioeconomics, infrastructure, transportation, and hazardous and toxic materials and waste would not be significant, provided all BMPs, necessary permits, construction site approvals, and mitigation measures specified in the EA are implemented. The Proposed Action would have no effect on cultural resources.

### **4. Mitigation**

The ILARNG will implement the following mitigation measures to reduce potentially significant adverse effects to soils, water resources, threatened and endangered species, public safety and aviation traffic, and the local economy to *less-than-significant* levels.

**Soils.** To minimize the migration of lead or other constituents from ammunition spent on the proposed ranges from soil erosion and other factors, the ILARNG CFMO and Environmental Branch and STA Training Site Manager will be responsible for ensuring these measures are implemented.

- ✓ The proposed ranges will be designed and operated in accordance with DoD Directive 4715.11, *Environmental and Explosives Safety Management on Operational Ranges within the United States* (2007).
- ✓ BMPs will be selected and implemented in accordance with the Army Small Arms Training Range Environmental Manual (Fabian and Watts 2005) to prevent lead migration and other potential pollution concerns, such as operational methods, vegetation solutions, berm design and structural enhancements, geosynthetic material use, soil amendments, and/or lead removal measures
- ✓ All back and side berms will be constructed to reduce metals migration and projectiles from entering STA lakes.
- ✓ Lead-free ammunition (e.g., M855A1 Enhanced Performance Round) will be utilized on the Zero Range, when feasible.

- ✓ Firing lanes on the Zero Range that have a lower likelihood of projectiles entering waterbodies will be used more regularly, when feasible, to further minimize lead and other constituents from entering waterbodies.
- ✓ All operational ranges at Sparta must be periodically re-evaluated to determine if there is a release or substantial threat of release of munitions constituents of concern from an operational range to an off-range area in accordance with the STA Operational Range Assessment Program. Ranges categorized as “unlikely” are to be re-evaluated at least every 5 years. Re-evaluation may occur sooner if significant changes (e.g., changes in range operations or site conditions, regulatory changes) occur that affect determinations made during the Phase I Assessment.

**Water Resources.** To minimize adverse effects to surface water and groundwater quality from the migration of lead or other constituents from ammunition spent on the proposed ranges, the ILARNG CFMO, Training Site and Environmental Branch will implement the mitigation measures outlined above under Soils in accordance with the Army Small Arms Training Range Environmental Manual (Fabian and Watts 2005) and DoD Directive 4715.11.

***Threatened and Endangered Species.*** To avoid the potential for incidental take of a federal or state-listed species, the following mitigation measures will be implemented by the ILARNG for the Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, bald eagle and state-listed species.

- ✓ **Indiana Bat and Northern Long-Eared Bat:** During informal Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, it was determined the Proposed Action is not likely to adversely affect the Indiana bat or the northern long-eared bat if the following mitigation measures are implemented: (1) tree clearance will be avoided and minimized to the extent possible, and will NOT occur between 1 April and 14 October; (2) artificial light on proposed ranges will be minimized to reduce the potential for light pollution; (3) training activities and vehicle movement will be restricted to existing roads within forested areas at STA; and (4) the use of smoke, CS gas, and pyrotechnics will be prohibited in the Plum Creek corridor between 1 April and 14 October; and (5) an Indiana Bat Monitoring Plan will be developed in close coordination with USFWS that will identify the frequency and type of surveys (i.e., acoustic and/or mist netting surveys) necessary to monitor the Indiana bat colony at STA and any potential effects from the proposed training and range. The ILARNG CFMO and Environmental Branch and STA Range Control will be responsible for implementing these measures.
- ✓ **Bald Eagle:** If a bald eagle is observed flying overhead of the proposed ranges, a cease fire will be implemented by STA Range Control until the bald eagle leaves the area. If a bald eagle nest is found on or near STA in the future, the ILARNG Environmental Branch will initiate consultation in accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and implement the *USFWS National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines*.
- ✓ **State-Listed Species:** The ILARNG Environmental Branch will coordinate with IDNR on a case-by-case basis prior to implementing construction projects (since they will occur over several years) to identify the appropriate conservation measures to be implemented based on the species of priority concern in that given project location and obtain an Incidental Take Authorization pursuant to the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act for projects with the potential to result in incidental take of a state-listed species. As a further protection measure, the

ILARNG Environmental Branch will develop educational materials with identification information, protection status, and notification and relocation protocols for all state-listed species. All personal conducting construction activities at STA will be provided these materials. Should any of these species be observed (alive or dead) during construction activities, the ILARNG Environmental Branch will notify IDNR immediately.

**Public Safety and Aviation Traffic.** The proposed ranges will be designed and operated in accordance with DoD Directive 4715.11 to ensure the protection of human health and safety. In addition, the following mitigation measures will be implemented by the STA Range Control in conjunction with Sparta Community Airport– Hunter Field and Indianapolis Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC):

- ✓ The STA Range Control will adhere to the approved STA Small Arms Range Safety Area (SARSA) requirements which include: (1) the SARSA will be managed in accordance with Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA PAM) 385-63; (2) a red warning streamer will be posted during daylight hours and a red warning light during night fire; (3) Local Notices to Airmen (NOTAM) will be made prior to initiating live firing activities on the Zero Range by STA Range Control and Indianapolis ARTCC; (4) the Local NOTAM will include the location and description of activities to be conducted and the date and times of use; (5) firing will not be conducted when the ceiling (cloud height) is less than 1,000 feet above the vertical hazard of the caliber being utilized; (6) no projectile shall enter a cloud formation; and (7) STA Range Control will provide safety briefings to range operation that includes the proximity of the airport to STA and the Range Officer in Control's (OIC) responsibilities; and (8) the Range OIC will ensure skies are monitored for low flying aircraft in the vicinity of the range area and immediately initiate a "check fire" in the event an aircraft approaches the SARSA.
- ✓ The STA Range Control will integrate with the existing Sparta Community Airport– Hunter Field Automated Weather Observing System Series 3 (AWOS-3) and the Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF). The AWOS-3 will provide the STA Range Control with the specific information required by the SARSA. The STA Range Control will monitor the CTAF, which pilots use to coordinate their arrivals and departures safely by providing positioning reports and acknowledging other aircraft in the airfield pattern.
- ✓ The following eight physical structures will be constructed to accommodate the proposed Zero Range project: (1) range tower, (2) aerated vault latrine, (3) ammunition breakdown building, (4) operations/storage building, (5) bleacher enclosure, (6) covered mess shelter, (7) back berm for the range, and (8) new power lines tower. Prior to constructing these structures, the ILARNG will submit an application to the Federal Aviation Administration for an Obstruction Evaluation/Airport Airspace Analysis in accordance with 14 CFR 77.

**Local Economy.** To minimize the potential for adverse economic impacts to the airport, the ILARNG will prepare a brochure for the Sparta Community Airport – Hunter Field to educate pilots and other concerned public. The brochure will outline the safety precautions that are being implemented and the associated benefits of the proposed range at the STA. Prior to distribution, the ILARNG will provide the Sparta Community Airport – Hunter Field with the opportunity to review and approve the content of this brochure.

## **5. Regulations**

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

## **6. Commitment to Implementation**

The NGB and the ILARNG affirm their commitment to implement this EA in accordance with NEPA. Implementation is dependent on funding. The ILARNG and the NGB's Environmental Programs, Training, and Installations Divisions will ensure that adequate funds are requested in future years' budgets to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in this EA, and to fund the mitigation commitments described above.

## **7. Public Review and Comment**

The draft EA was made available for public review and comment from 25JAN16 to 24FEB16 and no comments were received. The public notice was issued in *The Randolph County Herald Tribune* and *Southern Illinoisan* newspapers. Documents were made available at the Sparta Public Library and the ILARNG's Sparta Armory. The Final EA and draft FNSI are available from 7 March to 22 March 2016. Comments or questions regarding the EA, please contact CW4 Kenneth Barry, Acting Chief Environmental Branch, Department of Military Affairs, 1301 North MacArthur Blvd., Springfield IL, 62702.

## **7. Finding of No Significant Impact**

After careful review of the EA, I have concluded that implementation of the Proposed Action would not generate significant controversy or have a significant impact on the quality of the human or natural environment. Per 32 CFR Part 651, the EA and draft FNSI were available for a 30-day public review and comment period during which no comments were received. A determination has been made that the Proposed Action will have no significant impact, 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 NGB is issuing this FNSI.

## **8. Finding of No Practical Alternative**

Due to the mission requirements of the Proposed Action, the decision was made to build a LWC in a Zone AE floodplain on an existing unimproved trail within the STA to support increased training site foot traffic and vehicle movement along the trail. The LWC would replace the existing structure and would provide for long-term maintenance. No practical alternative exists for locating the Proposed Action outside the floodplain. The ILARNG has obtained a floodplain waiver from Headquarters of the Department of Army (HQDA) in accordance with EO 11988, 24 May 1977, *Floodplain Management*, to execute military construction within a floodplain. The waiver contains information and data confirming the lack of impacts associated with the proposed LWC construction on the neighboring communities. Prior to construction, ILARNG will obtain all necessary approvals and/or authorizations from the National Guard Bureau (NGB) and United States.

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Date

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