

# Draft FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

## *Integrated Wildland Fire Management Plan* Camp Guernsey, Wyoming

### INTRODUCTION

The Wyoming Army National Guard (WYARNG) prepared a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (EA) to identify and evaluate the potential effects from the implementation of an Integrated Wildland Fire Management Plan (IWFMP) at Camp Guernsey, Wyoming. This EA identifies the environmental effects from the Proposed Action, one alternative action (Alternative B), and the No Action Alternative. The EA has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 42 USC 4321-4370e), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (CEQ Regulations, 40 CFR 1500-1508), and Environmental Analysis of Army Actions (32 CFR 651).

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The Proposed Action and alternatives contain fifteen common elements: Safety; Fire Operations Command Philosophy; Fire Leadership; Prevention and Education; Fire Preparedness; Mechanical Fuel Reduction Treatments; Firebreaks; Wildfire Suppression; Prescribed Fire in the Impact Area; Wildland Fire Use in the Impact Area; Minimal Impact Suppression Techniques; Cost Effective Fire Operations; Burned Area Stabilization and Rehabilitation; Reviews, Investigations, Data and Records Management; and Wildland Fire Management Annual Operating Plan.

**Proposed Action.** The Proposed Action is to approve and implement an IWFMP at Camp Guernsey. The Proposed Action would integrate all wildland fire suppression and prescribed fire management tools as well as fire prevention activities within the context of an approved comprehensive plan. It would ensure that all fire management goals and affected resources are considered and coordinated before actions are taken. Beyond the common elements listed above, the Proposed Action specifically includes:

- Preparing and implementing an *Annual Fire Work Plan* that details all fire management projects for the coming year.
- Using prescribed fire to reduce fuel loads in the Impact Area;
- Using prescribed fire to manage fuel loads outside the Impact Area;
- Allowing some naturally ignited wildland fires to burn to accomplish specific resource management objectives (wildland fire use); and
- Using prescribed fire to manage natural resources.

**Alternative B.** Alternative B would also implement an IWFMP at Camp Guernsey. Alternative B incorporates all of the common elements listed above. However, this alternative would not allow wildland fire use or prescribed fire to manage natural resources.

**No Action Alternative.** The No Action Alternative is a continuation of current wildland fire management without the benefit of a written plan that integrates the management of natural and cultural resources. Most of the common elements of wildland fire management plan are currently being implemented, but many of these elements have never been formally agreed upon. Fire management activities under the No Action Alternative would continue without the benefit of an IWFMP to standardize and formalize operating procedures.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS**

Environmental effects associated with the Proposed Action and alternatives are fully described in the EA. The following resources were analyzed in detail because it was determined that they may have potential for significant adverse effects: Land Use; Air Quality; Soils; Biological Resources - Vegetation; Biological Resources - Wildlife; Threatened, Endangered, and Candidate Species; Cultural Resources; Native American Resources; Socioeconomics; and Infrastructure. The following resources were not analyzed in detail because the Proposed Action, the No Action Alternative, and Alternative B would all result in no effects or negligible effects: Noise; Geology and Topography; Prime and Unique Farmland; Water Resources; Wetlands; Floodplains; Environmental Justice; and Hazardous and Toxic Materials and Wastes.

The Proposed Action would result in more frequent, but smaller and less severe fires. Many of these small fires would be prescribed burns purposefully ignited to reduce fuel loads or to manage natural resources. In addition, a few naturally ignited wildfires could be allowed to burn under a set of prescribed conditions (wildland fire use), again to achieve specific management objectives. The coordinated fire suppression activities, the reduction of fuels, and a return to a more natural fire return interval will reduce the likelihood of high-severity fires resulting in long-term benefits to the environment. This analysis concludes that the Proposed Action will have no significant adverse effects on the human environment.

## **MITIGATION MEASURES**

Measures to mitigate effects to below the significance threshold would not be required for the Proposed Action because no significant impacts are projected.

This EA is a programmatic assessment of implementing an IWFMP at Camp Guernsey. The IWFMP is thus the Best Management Practices (BMP) manual that identifies and describes the various management practices and standard operating procedures that will be utilized in wildland fire management by the WYARNG. Included in the Proposed Action of this IWFMP is preparation of an *Annual Fire Mitigation Work Plan*. Camp Guernsey Range Operations staff, Camp Guernsey Department of Public Works, Camp Guernsey Fire Department staff, and the Construction & Facilities Management Office Environmental Management Division will meet quarterly to plan and then implement detailed site specific fire mitigation projects for the coming year (e.g., prescribed burn plans, mechanical fuel reductions, new fire breaks, wildland fire use areas, etc.). The projects detailed within this *Annual Fire Mitigation Work Plan* will then be subject to further NEPA analysis (a Record of Environmental Consideration (REC) for activities adequately assessed as part of this Programmatic EA or for those activities covered by a categorical exclusion; or an EA which tiers off of this Programmatic EA for activities not adequately assessed in the programmatic analysis). The timing of future project-specific environmental analyses will be conducted as close as possible to the point of making real and irrevocable commitments to a project.

## **REGULATIONS**

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

## **COMMITMENT TO IMPLEMENTATION**

The National Guard Bureau and the WYARNG are committed to implement this EA. Implementation is dependent on funding. The WYARNG and the National Guard Bureau's

Installations and Environment Division and Training Division will ensure that adequate funds are requested in future years' budgets to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in this EA.

**PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT**

The Final EA and Draft FNSI will be available for public review and comment for 30 days following publication of a Notice of Availability in the Guernsey newspaper, the *Guernsey Gazette*. These documents will be available for review at the Guernsey Branch Library in Guernsey, the WYARNG website, or a copy may be requested from the WYARNG. Comments regarding these documents should be directed to: Scott Benson, NEPA Program Manager, WYARNG, Construction & Facilities Management Office, 5410 Bishop Boulevard, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 82009; by telephone at 307-772-5219; or by email to [scott.a.benson25.nfg@mail.mil](mailto:scott.a.benson25.nfg@mail.mil). All substantive comments received within thirty (30) days of this published notice will be addressed in the Final FNSI or a revised Programmatic EA.

**DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

After careful review of the EA, I have concluded that implementation of the Proposed Action would not generate significant adverse controversy or have a significant adverse effect on the quality of the human or natural environment. Per 32 CFR Part 651, the Final EA and Draft FNSI will be made available for a 30-day public review and comment period. After any public comments have been addressed, and if a final determination is subsequently made that the Proposed Action will have no significant adverse effect, the FNSI will be signed and the Proposed Action will be implemented. This analysis fulfills the requirements of NEPA and CEQ Regulations. An Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared, and the National Guard Bureau is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impact.

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Date

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