

1 **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**
2 **PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION, AND MAINTENANCE OF A DIGITAL AIR-**
3 **GROUND INTEGRATION RANGE (DAGIR) INSIDE THE ORCHARD COMBAT**
4 **TRAINING CENTER (OCTC) IMPACT AREA**

5 **Introduction**

6 The Idaho Army National Guard (IDARNG) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to
7 identify and evaluate potential environmental impacts from the proposed construction, operation,
8 and maintenance of a Digital Air-Ground Integration Range (DAGIR) within the Impact Area of
9 the Orchard Combat Training Center (OCTC). The OCTC is located in southwestern Idaho,
10 approximately 25 miles south of Boise, and is found completely within the boundaries of the
11 Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA). The IDARNG
12 prepared this EA in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 42 USC §
13 4321 to 4370e), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the
14 Procedural Provisions of NEPA (CEQ Regulations, 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and
15 *Environmental Analysis of Army Actions* (32 CFR 651).

16 **1. Description of Proposed Action and Alternative**

17 **Proposed Action:** The IDARNG proposes to construct, operate, and maintain a DAGIR within
18 the OCTC's Impact Area in order to meet the Department of Army (DA) training standards
19 outlined in TC 25-8 (DA 2016). In order to meet TC 25-8 standards, the IDARNG requires a
20 14,507-acre Right of Way (ROW) from the BLM. The construction, operation, and maintenance
21 of the DAGIR would fall within the boundaries of the OCTC Impact Area and would be situated
22 to avoid placement of instrumented targets in the roughly 4,000-acre Core Impact Area.

23 Construction activities within the BLM ROW (permanent and temporary) would require usage of
24 approximately 60 acres of land within the OCTC Impact Area. Thirty acres (30) of the affected
25 60 acres will be rehabilitated on-site with native species with the remaining thirty (30) acres of
26 land to be permanently converted to training lanes, targets, and support infrastructure, and used
27 for training operations. To comply with the BLM/IDARNG ROW authorization SOP, 60 acres of
28 off-site lands will be enhanced.

29 Development of the DAGIR would meet existing DA training requirements and create a
30 centralized training location; thereby, reducing land usage, maintenance costs, and unit overhead
31 requirements. In addition, it minimizes the environmental impact and provides training
32 opportunities that may otherwise be impractical due to Surface Danger Zone (SDZ) constraints
33 or limited availability of land. More detailed information concerning the Proposed Action may
34 be found in the EA.

35 **Alternative Considered:** The IDARNG considered the following alternatives for construction,
36 operation, and maintenance of a DAGIR at OCTC: Range 1 (COA-1), Range 8 (COA-2), Range
37 10 (COA-3), Range 22 (COA-4), and Range 8/10 (COA-5, the Proposed Action/Preferred Action
38 Alternative). All alternatives were measured against established acceptability criteria and two
39 alternatives were selected for detailed analysis: Preferred Action Alternative and No Action
40 Alternative (COA-6). The Preferred Action Alternative provides the best combination of land

41 and resources to sustain quality military training and to maintain and improve the units'
42 readiness postures.

43 Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed DAGIR would not be established at OCTC and
44 current operations would continue. The IDARNG and other military units would still be required
45 to meet DoD training requirements associated with CLF, CALFEX, MOUT, and tactical live fire
46 operations. Without the development of a single range (the Proposed Action), use of multiple
47 ranges and facilities would continue. While the No Action Alternative would not satisfy the
48 purpose of or need for the Proposed Action, this alternative was retained to provide a
49 comparative baseline against which to analyze the effects of the Proposed Action, as required in
50 the CEQ Regulations (40 CFR Part 1502.14). The No Action Alternative reflects the status quo
51 and serves as a benchmark against which the effects of the Proposed Action can be evaluated.

52 **2. Environmental Analysis**

53 The potential environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action are fully described in
54 the EA. The EA identifies the environmental resources that could be affected by the Proposed
55 Action, and determines the significance of the impacts, if any, to each of these resources. Based
56 on the EA's analysis, the IDARNG determined that the known and potential adverse impacts
57 from the Proposed Action on land use, air quality, noise, geology and soils, biological resources,
58 cultural, socioeconomics and infrastructure would not be significant. Water resources,
59 environmental justice, and hazardous/toxic materials and waste were not analyzed. See Section
60 1.6 and 3.0 of the EA for further explanation.

61 **3. Mitigation**

62 No mitigation measures will be necessary to reduce potential adverse environmental impacts to
63 below significant levels. The IDARNG will implement appropriate Best Management Practices
64 (BMPs) and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in the construction, operation, and
65 maintenance of the DAGIR.

66 As part of the BLM's ROW authorization process and enabling legislation, the IDARNG is
67 required to have a net benefit on the resources of the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey
68 National Conservation Area (NCA). This requirement is defined under the Public Law 103-64
69 and the 2017 BLM/Idaho Military Department Memorandum of Understanding. To address this
70 BLM requirement, the IDARNG and BLM have developed a SOP to quantitatively assess the
71 amount of enhancement required at a designated site to have a net benefit for the NCA for
72 issuance of a ROW (Appendix L of the EA). Based on this standardized process, the IDARNG
73 must enhance the structural and functional components of the designated site (within the NCA)
74 to a pre-defined level, as defined by the BLM and IDARNG. As a model based-approach, it is
75 assumed that enhancement would be successful over time, resulting in a net benefit for the NCA
76 (i.e., greater than a 1:1 ratio).

77 As the enhancement SOP is a part of a standardized process for all BLM ROW authorization for
78 the IDARNG, is not a project-specific action, and thus is not required to reduce the proposal's

79 environmental effects that exceed the level of significance, this action is considered a SOP, not a
80 mitigation action.

81 **4. Regulations**

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

84 **5. Commitment to Implementation**

85 The National Guard Bureau (NGB) and IDARNG affirm their commitment to implement this EA
86 in accordance with NEPA. Implementation is dependent on funding. The IDARNG and the
87 NGB’s Army National Guard Installation and Environmental Directorate (ARNG-I&E) and
88 Training Division will ensure that adequate funds are requested in future years’ budgets to
89 achieve the goals and objectives set forth in the EA.

90 **6. Public Review and Comment**

91 This EA and draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) was made available for public
92 review and comment from August 8, 2018 to August 24, 2018 at locations listed in the EA’s
93 public Notice of Availability (NOA). The NOA was published in the *Idaho Statesman* and
94 *Mountain Home News*, on August 08, 2018. To date, no comments were received from the
95 Tribes, agencies, or the public. Any comments received in the 15-day period will be reviewed
96 and included in the Final FNSI.

97 The BLM finalized a BLM EA for the issuance of a ROW regarding the proposed DAGIR at
98 OCTC (DOI-BLM-ID-B011-2016-0001-EA) in 2016. The final document was available for a 30
99 day review and appeal period from April 20th to May 26th, 2016. No public or agency comments
100 were received.

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

102 After careful review of the EA, I have concluded that implementation of the Proposed Action
103 would not generate significant controversy or have a significant impact on the quality of the
104 human or natural environment. The FNSI will be signed and the action implemented. The
105 analysis fulfills the requirements of NEPA and the CEQ Regulations. An Environmental Impact
106 Statement will not be prepared, and the NGB is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impact.

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Date

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