

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is prepared after reviewing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for an action which does not require an Environmental Impact Statement per Army Regulation 200-2, Chapter 5, Environmental Effects of Army Actions.

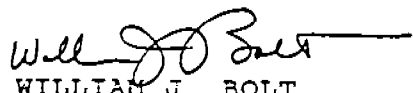
1. ACTION TITLE: Resumption of Firing into the Eagle River Flats
2. REPORTING INSTALLATION: Fort Richardson, Alaska
3. EA DATE: December 31, 1991
4. ACTION LOCATION: Eagle River Flats; 9 miles northeast of downtown Anchorage, 4 miles north of the Fort Richardson Cantonment Area and 5 miles west of the community of Eagle River, Alaska.
5. ACTION DESCRIPTION: The Winter Firing Alternative (Alternative C) was selected as the Army's preferred alternative to the proposed action of resuming live-fire training in the Eagle River Flats. Firing in the Eagle River Flats was temporarily suspended in February 1990 while researchers attempted to identify the cause of the waterfowl die-off in the flats. In January 1991, scientists identified white phosphorus (WP) as the most likely causative agent responsible for the waterfowl mortality problem. The Army has a continuing need to resume firing into the Eagle River Flats as part of their mission essential training program on Fort Richardson.
6. DISCUSSION OF ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES: The environmental effects of this action which potentially could cause adverse impacts include soil and water contamination, impacts on the wildlife using the flats and noise in civilian communities near the Impact Area. Soil and water contamination will be eliminated by not using WP in munition rounds fired into the flats and by conducting exercises in the Eagle River Flats only in the winter when sufficient ice cover is present to protect the underlying sediments. Waterfowl and other birds using the flats will not be disrupted during migration periods or during nesting since firing will occur in the winter months when the birds have already departed the area and are on their wintering grounds. Noise impacts will be greatly reduced as exercises will be limited to a five (5) month period on a yearly basis. The Army will continue to make public service announcements in local newspapers of all large scale artillery and mortar exercises scheduled for the Eagle River Flats prior to firing.

7. DECISION NOTICE AND CONCLUSIONS LEADING TO THE FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR RESUMPTION OF FIRING INTO THE EAGLE RIVER FLATS IMPACT AREA: Based on the analysis discussed in the EA for this action, it is the decision of the Commander, 6th Infantry Division (Light) and U.S. Army Garrison, Alaska to proceed with the preferred alternative (Alternative C, Winter Firing Alternative) of resuming firing in the Eagle River Flats Impact Area on Fort Richardson, Alaska. This alternative will enable the Army to complete a large part of its artillery and mortar training mission on Fort Richardson. It has been determined that the activity will not cause significant harmful effects on the environment, the wildlife, or the local civilian communities near the Eagle River Flats. This propose action will not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the environment and, therefore, does not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

8. DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS: 20 December 1991

9. CHANGES RESULTING FROM COMMENTS: Major changes to the draft EA, as a result of comments received from the public, have not been necessary as the concerns raised were adequately addressed in the original draft EA.

10. COMPLETION OF THE FONSI: The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires federal agencies to prepare an environmental assessment for federal actions, to obtain public input, to update and revise the draft EA as appropriate, and to complete a decision making statement determining whether or not the proposed action will constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the environment. The Army's Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) accomplishes this requirement.


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for Support