

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT LIVE FIRE RANGE AT THE CENTRAL TRAINING ACADEMY ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact

SUMMARY: The Department of Energy (DOE) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA), DOE/EA-0847, for the proposed construction and operation of an expanded Live Fire Range Facility at the Central Training Academy in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Based on the analysis in the EA, DOE has determined that the proposed action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. Therefore, the preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required and DOE is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

PUBLIC AVAILABILITY:

Copies of the EA and FONSI are available from:

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BACKGROUND: The Central Training Academy (CTA) is a DOE Headquarters Organization located in Albuquerque, New Mexico, with the mission to effectively and efficiently educate and train personnel involved in the protection of vital national security interests of DOE. The CTA Live Fire Range (LFR), where most of the firearms and tactical training occurs, is a complex separate from the main campus. The purpose of the proposed action is to expand the LFR to allow more options of implementing required training.

PROPOSED ACTION: The proposed action involves the construction of certain new facilities and upgrades to existing facilities. The proposal includes 13 separate and discrete projects listed below that contribute to the overall function of the LFR:

- LFR Administration Building
- Indoor Range
- Helicopter Pads
- Indoor Shooting Simulator
- Rappelling Tower Addition
- Additional Bunker Storage
- Pistol Range 3
- Modular Classroom Relocation
- Rifle Range 3
- Armory Addition
- Hostile Environment Training Facility
- Improved Road Access
- Urban Tactical Simulator

These projects would be built on previously disturbed soil or in areas previously identified to be disturbed. New facilities would adjoin the existing LFR facilities on the east and west.

ALTERNATIVES: In addition to the proposed action, the DOE considered the following alternatives: (1) the no action alternative; (2) construction of a portion of the LFR projects; and (3) construction of the necessary LFR additions at another location or in a different configuration.

The no action alternative would require existing LFR facilities to support all required training; however, without the proposed additions, current facilities are unable to support required training needs.

Construction of a portion of the projects, was deemed unacceptable because it would result in limited training capabilities, and adversely affect DOE and the large number of other outside Federal, state, and local users of the range facilities with whom the CTA is trying to build and nurture supportive relations.

Construction in a different configuration or location was considered but deemed unacceptable since other locations would offer no obvious environmental advantage. In addition, the area immediately to the north of the LFR is extremely rugged and would require much site preparation and grading before it could be considered for use as a training range.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS: The proposed action would take place adjacent to an area previously developed. No environmental permits would be required for this action. The LFR currently consists of 39.9 acres of disturbed area. The proposed action would impact 27.12 previously undisturbed acres. Construction of the proposed facilities would result in a minor loss of habitat and displacement of wildlife (e.g., small mammals, birds, and reptiles). Construction would also result in temporary and minor increases in air emissions and noise. Although a survey concluded that there was a large population of *Neolloydia intertexta* (white-flowered *Visnagita*), this species is common in central New Mexico and, according to the State Botanist, is to be removed from the New Mexico Endangered Plant Species List. Training activities would continue as they have in the last eight years, with construction activities planned in accordance with a policy of coexistence with the environment and conservation of the biological diversity in this unique area:

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Operations of the Central Training Academy's LFR would have no adverse impacts to the environment. Small arms ammunition and diversionary devices used at the LFR are stored in Air Force earth-covered igloos located approximately five miles from the LFR. Under normal conditions, no environmental impacts from storage would be expected. In the event of an accidental explosion (probability 10^{-4} to 10^{-6} per year), impacts are expected to be minimal since

there is no permanent work force present.

The only hazardous material involved at the LFR is gun bluing solution. The bluing process is not routine and is estimated to be completed between 18 and 20 times annually, if necessary. The process generates less than 100 kilograms per month of hazardous waste. There are no radioactive materials involved with LFR operations.

DETERMINATION: Based on the information and analysis in the EA, DOE has determined that the proposed construction and operation involving the CTA's LFR does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA. Therefore, an environmental impact statement for the proposed action is not required.

Issued at Washington, D.C., this ____day of July 1993.

Peter Brush
Acting Assistant Secretary
Environment, Safety and Health

Environmental Assessment U.S. Department of Energy Central Training Academy Live Fire Range

1.0 BACKGROUND/HISTORY

The Central Training Academy (CTA) is managed and operated by Wackenhut Services, Incorporated (WSI), for the Department of Energy (DOE). The mission of the CTA is to educate and train personnel effectively and efficiently to protect vital national security interests of the DOE. The CTA provides DOE safeguards and security personnel with standardized training in such disciplines as tactical and firearms training, behavioral sciences, management and instructional training, and safeguards and technical security training. Tactical and firearms training includes firearms instructor training, tactical movement with firearms, understanding and use of basic explosive systems and devices, and sniper training. Rappelling, fastroping and heliborne assault techniques are also