

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
SCHOFIELD BARRACKS IMPACT AREA PRESCRIBED BURN**

1. NAME OF ACTION: Schofield Barracks Impact Area Prescribed Burn at Schofield Barracks Military Reservation Oahu, Hawaii.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

a. Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would be to conduct a prescribed burn to clear vegetation from approximately 485-607 hectares (1,200-1,500 acres) of the Schofield Barracks West Range impact area. The purpose of the burn is to remove vegetation to improve ground visibility necessary for accomplishing unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance and archaeological surveys of the impact area in support of completing environmental impact analysis studies for the Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) at Schofield Barracks. Additionally, the prescribed burn would help minimize the risk of wildfires by reducing the existing vegetative fuel load in the range impact area. Subsequent annual prescribed burns would be required to help maintain and reduce vegetative hazard fuel loads.

b. No Action Alternative. Under the No-Action Alternative, the U.S. Army would not conduct a prescribed burn to clear vegetation to allow UXO clearance and archaeological surveys of the Schofield Barracks West Range impact area. The existing fuel load would remain and continue to increase as a fuel source for potential accidental ignitions as a result of future military training activities in the area.

c. Alternatives Considered But Not Carried Forward

Chemical Treatment Alternative. This alternative was not considered viable because herbiciding alone would only kill vegetation, but still leave a dead vegetative cover. This would not allow the safe removal of UXO and subsequent archaeological survey. Additionally, vegetative fuel load would still remain, increasing the risk of accidental range fires.

(2) Mechanical Clearing Alternative. This alternative was not considered viable and dismissed from further evaluation because the areas to be cleared have UXO present making it unsafe for personnel to mechanically clear the area.

3. ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: The environmental assessment (EA) analyzed the environmental impacts of each alternative on the affected environment. The following summarizes the anticipated environmental impacts of the Proposed Action:

a. Topography and Soils. It is anticipated that soils would be exposed once vegetative cover is burned off, which would increase the potential for soil erosion to occur. However, based on past observations of accidental burns, new vegetation arises within one month depending on weather conditions. Impacts to topography and soils would be short-term and temporary. Thus, there would be no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to topography and soils.

b. Surface Water Resources. Streams in the area are intermittent and are usually dry during the time the prescribed burn would be conducted. Chemicals proposed for use are considered “environmentally safe” and will not be applied if there is expected heavy rains. No significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on water resources are anticipated.

c. Climatology and Air Quality. Small amounts of fine particulate matter and gases would be released into the atmosphere and visibility in the immediate vicinity may be impaired by smoke or haze for the duration of the burn. Additionally, there is a potential for nearby agricultural field open burns in the general area at the same time as the prescribed burn, which could result in a significant negative impact to air quality. However, due to strong trade winds, location away from populated areas, and short-term nature of the proposed activity, it is not anticipated there would be a cumulative negative impact to air quality. The Army has consulted with the State Department of Health, Clean Air Branch, and received approval for the burn.

d. Noise Environment. It is anticipated that there would be an incremental increase in noise from helicopter operations during aerial herbiciding and fire ignition. However, the noise impacts would be temporary and short in duration and due to separation from noise sensitive activities, would not be expected to have a direct, indirect, or cumulatively significant impact on the noise environment.

e. Access and Traffic. It is anticipated there would be no significant impact on traffic. Traffic along Trimble Road may temporarily be disrupted should smoke from the burn obscure visibility of those portions of the burn area immediately adjacent to the roadway; however, this impact would only occur during the prescribed burn. To reduce potential impacts on traffic, the Army will publicize when prescribed burns will take place and provide notice of when the portion of Trimble Road adjacent to the burn area would be temporarily closed.

f. Hazardous and Toxic Materials. The Proposed Action would not have any significant impacts resulting from the use or handling of hazardous and toxic materials. In addition to following appropriate handling procedures, the materials proposed for use are considered “environmentally safe” or would be consumed in the fire. To minimize the potential for runoff of products being applied during herbiciding and burn activities, the Army will closely monitor weather forecasts and avoid conducting the prescribed burn activities if there is forecasted heavy rains.

g. Vegetation and Fuel Loads. Implementation of the Proposed Action would result in the killing and burning of non-native grasses and other vegetation. This impact would be short-term and temporary as the non-native species have the capability for re-growth as observed from previous fires. There is a potential for drift from aerial application of herbicides to affect vegetation immediately surrounding the designated burn areas. To control this, a drift retardant would be added to the spray and application will only be done when wind speeds are between 2-10 mph and there is no precipitation. Additionally, the helicopter applying the herbicides will be limited to spraying no higher than 10 feet above the top of the largest plants. To control the potential for fire escape from the proposed burn areas, the Army will apply a fire retardant around each burn area to help contain the fire. It is anticipated that there will be no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts with the implementation of the mitigation measures.

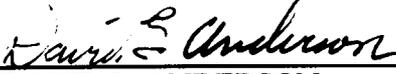
h. Threatened and Endangered Species. Implementation of the Proposed Action would have limited risk to threatened and endangered plants as all are located a significant distance away and outside of the firebreak road, and at elevations where the cooler and wetter environment would inhibit the spread of wildfire. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) concurred that the Proposed Action is not likely to adversely affect federally listed species or adversely modify designated or proposed critical habitat. Implementation of actions described in the Army's Aerial Validation Plan and Prescribed Burn Plan would minimize risk to nearby plant and animal habitats. It is anticipated that there will be no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts with the implementation of the mitigation measures

i. Historic and Archaeological Resources. It is anticipated that the low intensity fire of the prescribed burn would not have an adverse impact on cultural archaeological resources. The burn would aid in the discovery of any undocumented resources once vegetation cover is gone. The Army has consulted with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and other interested parties, and has received concurrence that the Proposed Action will have "no adverse effect" on significant historic sites if the prescribed burn plan is followed, recordation of archaeological sites is completed, and additional consultation is implemented as needed.

j. No short-term or long-term adverse effects are anticipated to land use, socioeconomics, and Environmental Justice and Protection of Children.

4. CONCLUSIONS: The Environmental Assessment concluded that the proposed prescribed burn at Schofield Barracks would not have any unmitigable, significant direct, indirect, or cumulative adverse impacts on the environment. As such, this proposed action does not require the completion of an Environmental Impact Statement, as defined by the Council of Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508) and 32 CFR Part 651.

APPROVED BY:

 16 May '03  
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Commander  
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