

**DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)**  
**FLORIDA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD**  
**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE GAINESVILLE**  
**READINESS CENTER ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**1. Introduction**

The Florida Army National Guard (FLARNG) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to identify and evaluate potential environmental effects from the proposed construction and operation of a new Readiness Center (RC) in Alachua County, Florida. This EA has been prepared in accordance with the *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969* (NEPA, 42 US Code § 4321 to 4370e), the *Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA* (CEQ Regulations, 40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508), and 32 CFR Part 651 (*Environmental Analysis of Army Actions*, Final Rule, 29 March 2002). As set forth in Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 5105.77, *National Guard Bureau* (NGB), the NGB is a joint activity of the DoD and as such must comply with the NEPA.

**2. Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives**

**Proposed Action:** The Proposed Action includes two primary elements: 1.) the construction of a RC adequate to support FLARNG units in the vicinity of Alachua County/Gainesville; FL, 2.) the operation of the constructed RC. The Action would include: RC Main Building (59,149 square-foot [ft<sup>2</sup>] initially) with potential future additions (19,200 ft<sup>2</sup> and 17,665 ft<sup>2</sup>) for a total of 96,014 ft<sup>2</sup>; General Purpose Training Bay (~5,298 ft<sup>2</sup>); Waste Handling Building (~330 ft<sup>2</sup>); Flammable Materials Storage Building (~110 ft<sup>2</sup>); Field Maintenance Shop [(~30,000 ft<sup>2</sup> (potential future addition)]; Privately-Owned Vehicle Parking Area (~62,271 ft<sup>2</sup>); Military-Owned Vehicle Parking Area (~40,950 ft<sup>2</sup>); Physical Running Track (~2-mile); Physical Fitness Field (~1,700 ft<sup>2</sup>). The completed RC would support administrative functions, equipment storage, and training operations. The RC would support up to 31 permanent staff and four assigned units with three units consisting of approximately 48 individuals and one unit consisting of approximately 31 individuals. Assigned units may drill collectively once per month or separately over the course of the month. The facility would be authorized to support up to 48 wheeled vehicles and up to 34 trailers. The Preferred Action Alternative would construct and operate the proposed RC at 3221 NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Gainesville, Florida.

The current facility is located on a leased facility which is undersized, insufficient for assigned unit's missions and needs, and is not cost efficient for the FLARNG to operate. The **purpose** of the Proposed Action is to provide a functional RC to support the mission and needs of the FLARNG units assigned to the City of Gainesville/Alachua County area, specifically the 3/54<sup>th</sup> Security Forces Assistance Brigade. The Preferred Action Alternative is **needed** to support the FLARNG's mission to provide trained and ready units and individuals to mobilize and deploy in support of the Federal and State military strategies. More specifically, the Preferred Action Alternative is needed in order to: (1) ensure the effective training and mission readiness of units, (2) ensure the safety of unit personnel and equipment, (3) improve degraded maintenance support and unit accessibility to requisite equipment, (4) allow units to stand ready to assist with regional, state and local crisis management and emergency/ disaster response, and (5) allow the FLARNG to own its facilities rather than continue on with a costly privately-owned leased facility.

**Alternatives Considered:** The FLARNG evaluated two alternatives: 1) the Preferred Action Alternative, which would implement the Proposed Action, as described above, at 3221 NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Gainesville, Florida; and 2) the No Action Alternative. In addition to the Preferred Action Alternative and No Action Alternative, the FLARNG considered, but dismissed, the following alternatives: (1) construct and operate of an RC at a different site in the vicinity of Gainesville, Florida (700 NE 55<sup>th</sup> Boulevard), (2) utilize existing buildings at the Preferred Action Alternative location (3221 NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue). Through application of five (5) screening criteria, it became apparent to the FLARNG that 3221 NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Preferred Site) was the only location capable of satisfying the requirements of the Proposed Action. The alternative site at 700 NE 55<sup>th</sup> Boulevard contains sensitive archaeological resources as well as sloping topography that would limit constructability and increase the cost of construction. The No Action Alternative (i.e., existing leased facility located at 505 NW 53<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Gainesville, Florida), was dismissed due to insufficient size and cost constraints. The Preferred Action Alternative provides the best combination of land and resources to sustain quality military training and to maintain and improve the units' readiness postures. FLARNG considered utilizing the existing buildings at this site as part of the RC

facility. Following investigation of the existing structures, the FLARNG determined that they would not be suitable, in their current condition, for supporting the RC mission.

Under the No Action Alternative, the units assigned to the Gainesville/Alachua County area would continue to utilize the temporary private lease facility located at the Existing Site. This facility contains one large building, paved parking areas, maintained areas of landscaping, areas of natural vegetation, and a stormwater management pond. The property is undersized, insufficient for assigned unit's mission and need, and is not cost efficient for the FLARNG to operate. While the No Action Alternative would not satisfy the purpose or need for the Proposed Action, this alternative was retained to provide a comparative baseline against which to analyze the effects of the Proposed Action, as required in the CEQ Regulations (40 CFR Part 1502.14).

### **3. Environmental Analysis**

The potential environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action are fully described in the EA. The EA identifies the environmental resources that could be affected by the Proposed Action, and determines the significance of the impacts, if any, to each of these resources. Based on the EA's analysis, the FLARNG determined that the known and potential adverse impacts from the Proposed Action on land cover, air quality, noise, soils, topography, geology, water resources, biological resources, infrastructure or utilities, and hazardous and toxic materials and waste would not be significant.

### **4. Mitigation**

All resource categories evaluated in the EA resulted in a finding of "minor", "negligible", or "no impact"; therefore, additional mitigation measures are not required.

### **5. Regulations**

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

### **6. Commitment to Implementation**

The NGB and the FLARNG affirm their commitment to implement this EA in accordance with NEPA. Implementation is dependent on funding, and this project will be a Military Construction (MILCON) funded project. The FLARNG and the NGB will ensure that adequate funds are provided to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in this EA.

### **7. Public Review and Comment**

The EA and this draft FONSI are available for public review and comment for 30 days following publication of a public notice in the *Gainesville Sun*. Copies of the EA and draft FONSI are available for review at the Alachua County District-Headquarters Library and online at [dma.myflorida.com](http://dma.myflorida.com). The public may submit written comments on the EA and draft FONSI anytime through December 5, 2023 via US postal mail to Ms. Jacqueline Kelly, Conservation Program Manager, Construction and Facilities Management Office, Florida Army National Guard, 2305 State Road 207, Saint Augustine, FL 32086; or by e-mail: [Jacqueline.d.kelly6.nfg@army.mil](mailto:Jacqueline.d.kelly6.nfg@army.mil).

### **8. Finding of No Significant Impact**

Once any public comments have been received and addressed, and if a determination is made that the Proposed Action will have no significant impact, this draft FONSI will be updated to reflect any changes, signed and the action will be implemented.

After careful review of the EA and public comments, I have concluded that implementation of the Proposed Action does not have a significant impact on the quality of the human or natural environment. This analysis fulfills the requirements of NEPA and the CEQ Regulations. An Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared, and the NGB is issuing this FONSI and implementing the Proposed Action.

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Date

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