Appendix F: Summary of Environmental Assessment for the Disposal and Reuse of the BRAC Property at Fort Hunter Liggett, California

Final

Environmental Assessment for the Disposal and Reuse of the BRAC Property at Fort Hunter Liggett, California

Prepared for:

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By

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Under provisions of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-510), the 1995 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC Commission) recommended on July 1, 1995, realignment and closure actions for selected military installations. On July 13, 1995, the president approved the BRAC Commission's recommendations. Congress reviewed the recommendations, and they became law on September 28, 1995. Some of the BRAC Commission's recommendations were to realign Fort Hunter Liggett by relocating the US Army Test and Experimentation Center (TEC) missions and functions to Fort Bliss, Texas, to eliminate the Active Component mission, and to retain minimum essential facilities and training area as an enclave to support the Reserve Components. Pursuant to the BRAC Commission's recommendations, the Army has determined that approximately 325,800 square feet of Army facilities on approximately 110 acres of property are no longer needed to accomplish the installation's remaining missions and that the property is excess to Army requirements. The Army has also inactivated the TEC.

This environmental assessment has been prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), in accordance with the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations and Army Regulation 200-2, Environmental Effects of Army Actions. One disposal alternative and two reuse scenarios are described and analyzed for environmental and socioeconomic effects. The no action alternative, under which the property would remain in Army ownership and would be maintained in caretaker status, also is analyzed.

BACKGROUND AND SETTING

Fort Hunter Liggett in Monterey County, in west-central California, is approximately 70 miles southeast of Monterey and 23 miles southwest of King City. The installation covers approximately 164,760 acres in the San Antonio Valley and the Santa Lucia Mountains. The buildings proposed for disposal, referred to as the BRAC property, lie within four areas: the North Cantonment Geographic Area, the South Cantonment Geographic Area, the Jolon Geographic Area, and the Miller Ranch Geographic Area.

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action is the disposal of property made excess to the Army's needs by the realignment of Fort Hunter Liggett, as recommended by the BRAC Commission. The Army would transfer all of the BRAC property to the National Park Service and the US Navy. The purpose of the proposed action is to dispose of property made available by the realignment of Fort Hunter Liggett. The proposed action would support the Army's need to dispose of the property.

DISPOSAL PROCESS

The disposal process consists of predisposal actions and the steps required to accomplish disposal. Predisposal actions include caretaker operations after closure but prior to transfer or conveyance and cleanup of hazardous waste-contaminated sites.

Steps to dispose of the property included a screening process to determine whether any Department of Defense or other federal agencies have an interest in using the property. As a result of federal screening, the National Park Service and the US Navy requested transfer of the BRAC property; therefore, the property is excess to the Army but not surplus to the federal government's needs.

ALTERNATIVES

This environmental assessment analyzes the following disposal alternative and reuse scenarios for their potential environmental and socioeconomic effects: no action, encumbered disposal, National Park Service reuse, and US Navy reuse.

No Action Alternative. Implementing the no action alternative would mean that disposal would not occur, and the property would be placed into caretaker status for an indefinite period. Minimal maintenance activities would be conducted during this time. Inclusion of the no action alternative is prescribed by the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations and serves as a benchmark against which federal actions can be evaluated.

Encumbered Disposal. The Army's proposed action is to dispose of all excess property made available by the BRAC Commission's recommendation for Fort Hunter Liggett. Encumbered disposal involves transferring the property to others with constraints on future use. For the BRAC property at Fort Hunter Liggett, the following encumbrances could be expected to apply at the time of transfer of the property:

- The US Army Defense Logistics Agency is undertaking a utility privatization study for Fort Hunter Liggett that will not be completed until sometime in 2000. Depending on the results of this study, applicable existing Army easements and rights-of-way burdening the BRAC property at Fort Hunter Liggett for utilities such as the water and wastewater systems and other infrastructure-related purposes may need to continue after transfer. The BRAC property would also be subject to pre-existing utility easements, although some easements may need to be renegotiated as circumstances warrant.

- With respect to environmental contamination, the Army would retain access to the BRAC property to conduct investigations and surveys, to have government personnel and contractors conduct field activities, and to construct, operate, maintain, or undertake any other response to remedial action, as required.

- The Army would include notice in transfer documents to the new owners of the property that those new owners would be responsible for any future remediation of asbestos found to be necessary.

- The Army would provide notice in transfer documents that buildings containing lead-based paint would be restricted from residential use unless the recipient of the property abated any lead-based paint hazards.

National Park Service Reuse. The following portions of BRAC property will be transferred to the National Park Service:

- North Cantonment Geographic Area;

- Milpitas Housing Area, Barracks/Directorate of Personnel and Community Activities (DPCA) Area, and Buildings P-191, S-198, P-209, and P-287 in the South Cantonment Geographic Area;

- Buildings T-630 and T-640 in the Miller Ranch Geographic Area; and
- Jolon Geographic Area.

This EA assumes that future reuses will be similar to existing uses (i.e., residential, recreation, administration, storage, and commercial). For example, the National Park Service would operate the Hacienda, Building P-101, in the North Cantonment Geographic Area for public use, such as a restaurant and overnight accommodations, which is similar to its current function. The National Park Service would be responsible for determining and conducting the appropriate level of NEPA documentation, should its mission or activities change after transfer.

US Navy Reuse. Buildings S-698, T-699, and S-700 in the Miller Ranch Geographic Area and all buildings in the Old US Army TEC Storage Area in the South Cantonment Geographic Area will be transferred to the US Navy for use by the Navy Reserves. US Navy reuse would consist of storage, administration, and maintenance, similar to current and past uses in the Miller Ranch and Old TEC Storage Areas. The US Navy would be responsible for determining and conducting the appropriate level of NEPA documentation, should its mission or activities change after transfer.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This environmental assessment analyzes the environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with disposal of the BRAC property. Baseline environmental and socioeconomic conditions for the installation and the region of influence are described, and the environmental and socioeconomic consequences of implementing the proposed action are identified. Resource areas evaluated are land use, air quality, noise, geology, water resources, traffic and transportation, infrastructure, hazardous and toxic materials, permits and regulatory authorizations, biological resources and ecosystems, cultural resources, economic development, sociological environment, quality of life, and installation agreements.

This environmental assessment identifies potential direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental and socioeconomic effects of the no action and encumbered disposal alternatives, and the reuse scenarios. Table ES-1 summarizes the effects that have been identified.

No Action Alternative. Under this alternative, the BRAC property would be maintained in caretaker status. Because the no action alternative involves no physical actions and is essentially a continuation of existing conditions, many resources would not be affected by implementing this alternative. Resources that would experience no direct or indirect effects of the no action alternative are geology, permits and regulatory authorizations, biological resources and ecosystems, and installation agreements.

Minor indirect environmental land use effects could be expected if the property and facilities receive limited maintenance and are allowed to deteriorate. Air pollutants and noise levels would decrease as a result of the decrease in activity. Utilities and utility systems would be used at minimum levels, prolonging the utility system life and consuming fewer nonrenewable resources, which would make these resources available for other users in the region. The use of hazardous materials and the generation of hazardous wastes would decline. The decrease in human activity would have minor beneficial effects on water quality, and there would be an overall decrease in traffic on the installation. No direct impact would be expected to cultural resources; however, minor indirect impacts may result from historic properties deteriorating from lessened maintenance levels. Long-term minor adverse effects to economic development would be expected from the decrease in employment on the BRAC property. There would be a minor decrease in housing availability on the BRAC property, and there would be a reduction in the

number of shops and services on the installation. Implementing the no action alternative would not result in any significant adverse impacts.

Encumbered Disposal. Because encumbered disposal is essentially a transfer of title and involves no physical actions, many resources would not be affected by implementing this alternative. Furthermore, all federal laws and regulations governing such resources as historic properties and threatened and endangered species would continue to apply to the two acquiring federal agencies, the National Park Service and US Navy. The following resources would experience no direct or indirect effects of encumbered disposal: land use, air quality, noise, geology, water resources, traffic and transportation, infrastructure, permits and regulatory authorizations, biological resources and ecosystems, cultural resources, sociological environment, quality of life, and installation agreements.

Predisposal caretaker activities would use and generate fewer hazardous materials and less waste than during operational conditions; the transfer of title would not affect hazardous materials usage or hazardous waste generation. Asbestos, lead-based paint, and radon inspection and survey results and descriptions of abatement measures taken will be provided to the National Park Service and US Navy. Consistent with the Residential Lead-based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-550), the Army would provide notice in transfer documents that buildings containing lead-based paint would be restricted from residential use unless the recipient of the property abates any hazards. Contamination from leaking underground storage tanks would be investigated and remediated prior to property disposal. All tanks would be brought into compliance with federal, state, and local regulations or would be removed prior to property disposal. Disposal also would allow for potential redevelopment of the BRAC property, which would generate revenue and employment opportunities.

National Park Service and US Navy Reuse. National Park Service and US Navy reuse assumes no change in the level or type of activity at the BRAC property, compared to baseline conditions. Therefore, there would be no direct or indirect environmental effects associated with reuse on the following resources: land use, air quality, noise, geology, water resources, traffic and transportation, infrastructure, hazardous and toxic materials, permits and regulatory authorizations, cultural resources, sociological environment, quality of life, and installation agreements.

The employees under National Park Service and US Navy reuse might be drawn from a larger region than that currently drawn from, which could slightly increase population in Monterey County, in turn increasing regional spending. If National Park Service or US Navy reuse involves renovating existing buildings, this would generate short-term employment for construction workers, which would increase regional economic activity.

CONCLUSIONS

Implementing the proposed action would not result in significant environmental or socioeconomic impacts. An environmental impact statement, therefore, is not required, and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) may be published, in accordance with Army Regulation 200-2. The public will be notified of the availability of the environmental assessment.

Table ES-1
Summary of Environmental Effects

Resource Area	No Action			Encumbered Disposal			Reuse					
	Direct	Indirect	Cumulative	Direct	Indirect	Cumulative	National Park Service Direct	National Park Service Indirect	National Park Service Cumulative	US Navy Direct	US Navy Indirect	US Navy Cumulative
Land Use	○	⊖	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Air Quality	⊕	⊕	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Noise	⊕	⊕	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Geology	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Water Resources	⊕	⊕	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Traffic and Transportation	⊕	⊕	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Infrastructure	⊕	⊕	⊕	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hazardous and Toxic Materials	⊕	○	○	○	⊕	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Permits and Regulatory Authorizations	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Biological Resources and Ecosystems	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Cultural Resources	○	⊖	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Economic Development	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	⊕	○	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕
Sociological Environment	⊖	⊕	⊕	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Quality of Life	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Installation Agreements	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

LEGEND:

● = Significant Adverse
⊖ = Minor Adverse
⊕ = Minor Beneficial
○ = None