

1 **4.1 FORT BENNING, GEORGIA**

2 **4.1.1 Introduction**

3 Fort Benning is located in west Georgia and east Alabama, and consists of approximately
4 182,000 acres (Figure 4.1-1). Fort Benning land is used for a variety of military training and
5 garrison support activities. Of the currently-owned property, approximately 141,500 acres are
6 primarily designated for training and maneuver areas. Fort Benning is immediately adjacent to
7 the communities of Columbus and Cusseta, Georgia and Phenix City, Alabama.

8 Fort Benning is home to the Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE). As part of the 2005 BRAC
9 actions, the Armor School was relocated from Fort Knox, Kentucky to Fort Benning. This
10 relocation consolidated the Infantry and Armor Centers and Schools to create the MCoE for
11 ground forces training at Fort Benning.

12 Fort Benning conducts Professional Military Education courses for Armor and Infantry officer
13 and non-commissioned officer educational development, Infantry, Armor and Cavalry Soldier
14 Basic Combat and Advanced Individual Training (AIT), Airborne (parachute) Training, Ranger
15 Training as well as 25 functional Training Courses. Fort Benning's major tenant units are the 3rd
16 ABCT 3rd Infantry Division (3-3rd ABCT) and two battalions, and the Regimental Headquarters of
17 the 75th Ranger Regiment. The units of the Armor School include the 194th Armor Training
18 Brigade and the 316th Cavalry Brigade.

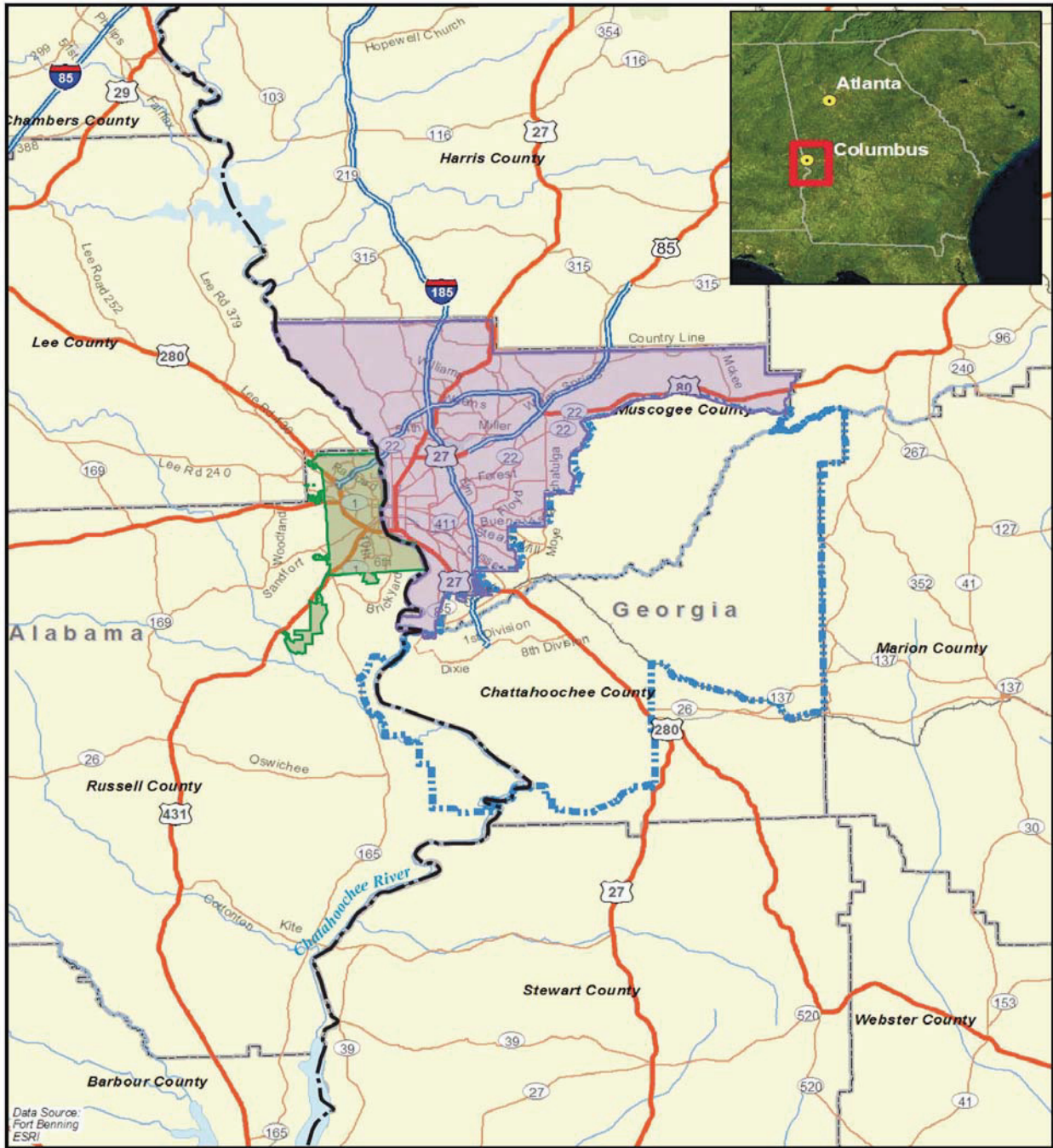
19 Fort Benning has a well developed and highly used range infrastructure with several unique
20 ranges supporting Special Operations Command units. Overall units training on Fort Benning
21 conduct an average of 117 daily training missions. The construction and operation of numerous
22 new ranges and training facilities were required to support the arrival of the Armor School and
23 associated training requirements. Fort Benning has a total of 86 live-fire and 9 non-live-fire
24 ranges with the surface danger zone acreage of over 15,800 acres. The arrival of the Armor
25 School has increased the already high demand for new and existing ranges and maneuver
26 lands as over 50 percent of TRADOCs institutional training requirements in 19 MCoE, 86
27 Infantry, and 53 Armor training programs that occur 5-6 days per week for 50 weeks annually.
28 Fort Benning is also facing challenges from growing adjacent urbanization, and from federal and
29 state environmental regulations.

30 The competition for training lands and compliance with environmental regulations have
31 increased the utilization of limited range and training areas. At the current operational tempo,
32 the 3-3rd ABCT and its supporting units represent about 35 percent of Fort Benning's annual
33 requirement for live-fire and maneuver training requirements. The 3-3rd ABCT requires the use
34 of the Digital MPRC and various other heavy ranges about 240 days and 180 nights annually.
35 The usage competes with newly assigned Armor School training for both live-fire and maneuver
36 training.

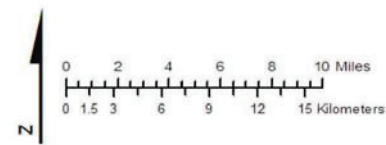
37 Currently, the Army is undergoing a study to assess environmental and socioeconomic impacts
38 of the acquisition of additional training lands in proximity to Fort Benning. *The Training Land*
39 *Expansion Program (TLEP) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)* was published in
40 May 2011 for comment per the requirements of the NEPA. The TLEP Final EIS and final
41 decision on land purchase is deferred until more information is available on Army fiscal and
42 force realignments. This PEA assumes that only current Fort Benning land would be available
43 for Army 2020 alternatives.

44 In May of 2009, during consultation with the USFWS on the MCoE Proposed Action, Fort
45 Benning received a Jeopardy Biological Opinion from the USFWS. A requirement of the
46 Jeopardy Biological Opinion was the relocation of the Army Reconnaissance Course (ARC) field

- 1 training off of Fort Benning within 5 years of its first training iteration to reduce potential impacts
- 2 from heavy maneuver training.



FBGAEIS-005-050806



Legend

- Fort Benning
- Phenix City, AL
- Columbus, GA
- State Line

3

4

Figure 4.1-1. Fort Benning

1 The first iteration of ARC training occurred in October of 2011. The Armor School is working
 2 closely with Fort Benning biologists to assess potential impacts of training exercises on the red-
 3 cockaded woodpecker (RCW) population. If Fort Benning loses units with substantial maneuver
 4 land requirements as a result of the implementation of Alternative 1, training activities
 5 associated with the ARC could conceivably remain on the installation pending further
 6 consultation with the USFWS.

7 **4.1.1.1 Valued Environmental Components**

8 For alternatives the Army is considering as part of Army 2020 force structure realignments, Fort
 9 Benning does not anticipate any significant adverse environmental impacts; however, significant
 10 socioeconomic impacts are anticipated as a result of the implementation of Alternative 1 (Force
 11 reduction of up to approximately 7,100 Soldiers and civilians). Table 4.1-1 summarizes the
 12 anticipated impacts to VECs from each alternative.

13 Fort Benning is not being considered under Alternative 2 for the potential stationing of additional
 14 Soldiers that would result in a net increase for the installation as there is a lack of capacity and
 15 facilities to accommodate additional Soldiers and training requirements in a cost effective
 16 manner. It is possible, however, that the BCT stationed at Fort Benning could be restructured.
 17 This would be done in a way that would result in no net gain of Soldiers at Fort Benning.

18 **Table 4.1-1. Fort Benning Valued Environmental Component Impact Ratings**

Valued Environmental Component	No Action Alternative	Alternative 1: Force Reduction of up to 7,100
Air Quality	Minor	Beneficial
Airspace	Minor	Minor
Cultural Resources	Minor	Minor
Noise	Less than Significant	Minor
Soil Erosion	Less than Significant	Minor
Biological Resources	Less than Significant	Minor
Wetlands	Less than Significant	Minor
Water Resources	Less than Significant	Minor
Facilities	Minor	Beneficial
Socioeconomics	Beneficial	Significant
Energy Demand and Generation	Minor	Beneficial
Land Use Conflict and Compatibility	Less than Significant	Minor
Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste	Minor	Minor
Traffic and Transportation	Minor	Beneficial

1 **4.1.2 Air Quality**

2 **4.1.2.1 Affected Environment**

3 The installation's cantonment areas, training areas, and maneuver areas are included in the
4 project area. The air emission's ROI at Fort Benning is the multi-county airshed to include
5 Muscogee, Chattahoochee, Russell, Lee, Harris, Talbot, and Marion counties. These counties
6 are presently designated by the EPA as in attainment for all required standards for criteria
7 pollutants (except lead in a limited area off post in Muscogee County around a battery plant
8 [USACE, 2009]).

9 At this time, the region is considered to be in attainment for ozone (O₃), based on the 2008
10 primary and secondary standards. Motor vehicles (mobile sources) are a primary contributor to
11 ground-level O₃ levels in Georgia.

12 Per the provisions of the CAA, the EPA is required to review the standards every 5 years (next
13 review slated for 2013) and both the primary and secondary standards for O₃ are anticipated to
14 be revised down to levels that may lead the EPA to designate parts or all of the ROI/airshed as
15 nonattainment. This area designation will likely include at least a part of Fort Benning. Because
16 of this growing concern, further efforts at the state and local level, including reduction planning,
17 may be required to reverse the trend ahead of the EPA's data analysis for designating O₃
18 nonattainment. Fort Benning would be required to assess actions for general conformity should
19 the area be designated nonattainment for O₃.

20 Fort Benning also generates area emissions from prescribed fire activities as part of their
21 ongoing ecosystem management program (USACE, 2009). Prescribed burning is the largest
22 single source of criteria pollutant emissions on the installation (Fort Benning 2010); however, it
23 is a critical management tool for fire-dependent natural communities, RCW habitat and training
24 area management. Prescribed burning events on the installation would continue based on a 3
25 year rotational schedule across the installation (Fort Benning, 2001).

26 The Georgia and Alabama Forestry Commissions administer each state's Smoke Management
27 Plans, which detail the states' basic frameworks of procedures and requirements for managing
28 smoke from prescribed fires. The purpose of each Smoke Management Plan is to minimize the
29 public health and environmental impacts of smoke intrusion into populated areas from fires; to
30 avoid significant deterioration of air quality and potential CAA violations; and to avoid visibility
31 impacts in Class I PSD areas (GFC, 2008). The closest Class I PSD areas are the Sipsey
32 Wilderness Area, Alabama and Okefenokee Wilderness areas, Georgia, both of which are over
33 150 miles away from the installation. Fort Benning's prescribed burning activities are conducted
34 in full compliance with these plans.

35 **4.1.2.2 Environmental Consequences**

36 **No Action Alternative**

37 Fort Benning anticipates a minor adverse impact to air quality. The Fort Benning ROI is
38 currently in attainment for all criteria pollutants. Any new construction with the potential for
39 emission sources would be required to be included on the installation's Title V permit. If Fort
40 Benning is within a county designated as nonattainment after the 2013 standard review by the
41 EPA, future projects beyond that date would need General Conformity analysis and revision to
42 the Title V permit.

43 **Alternative 1: Force Reduction (up to 7,100 Soldiers and Army Civilians)**

44 Fort Benning anticipates a minor beneficial environmental impact on air quality for the
45 installation and surrounding communities. A decrease in operations and maintenance activities

1 would be a minor beneficial impact, and would likely have a beneficial impact to regional air
2 quality. The anticipated decrease in operations and maintenance activities would most likely
3 have no effect on Class I PSD areas. Since more than 50 percent of ground level O₃ in the
4 State of Georgia comes from vehicle exhaust, it is reasonable to suggest that a reduction in the
5 number of vehicles associated with the loss of approximately 7,100 Soldiers, civilians, and their
6 Families would reduce the local levels of O₃ somewhat, although emission levels are dependant
7 not only upon reduction in number of vehicles but also upon the miles driven and vehicle type.

8 Demolition of facilities may have short-term, minor adverse air impacts, but would result in long-
9 term, reduced combustion emissions, also reducing O₃ precursors. It is anticipated that
10 combustion emissions from stationary sources would decrease with the relocation of units into
11 newer facilities and the demolition of older facilities.

12 **4.1.3 Airspace**

13 **4.1.3.1 Affected Environment**

14 Lawson Army Airfield is the hub for all military aircraft operations in and around Fort Benning,
15 with an average of 35,000 take-off and landing operations per year (ATSCOM DA FORM 3479-
16 6-R). Fort Benning units train with helicopters, fixed wing aircraft and UASs throughout the year
17 at varying frequency and complexity. Most fixed- and rotary-wing tactical aircraft operate out of
18 Lawson Army Airfield, a designated Force Projection Platform. A major portion of the aircraft
19 operations out of Lawson Army Airfield, located at the Southwest corner of Fort Benning,
20 involves airborne jump training. Ranger training uses a combination of both fixed-wing and
21 rotary wing aircraft. Other training events involve small to large scale military training exercises
22 which bring in large and medium size fixed wing cargo aircraft, high performance jets,
23 helicopters, UAS, and other special purpose aircraft throughout the year.

24 All of these aircraft operations use different classes of airspace designated by the FAA. The
25 classes of airspace designated for Fort Benning are described briefly below.

- 26 • **Lawson Class D Airspace:** controlled airspace to terminal visual and instrument flight
27 routes at airports that have a control tower;
- 28 • **ASO GA E2 Class E Airspace:** the surface area designated for an airport;
- 29 • **Regulatory Special Use Airspace – Restricted Area (R) 3002A through G:**
30 designated to contain artillery, mortars, missiles, and rockets;
- 31 • **Non-regulatory Special Use Airspace – Benning MOA:** airspace area designated air
32 combat maneuvers, air intercepts, acrobatics, etc.; and
- 33 • **Military Training Routes – Slow Routes 38 and 39:** visual flight routes that are
34 designated for low-altitude tactical training.

35 The FAA is the controlling agency charged by Congress to administer in the public interest as
36 necessary to ensure the safety of aircraft and its efficient use. Although the FAA must protect
37 the public's right of freedom of transit through the airspace, full consideration shall be given to
38 all airspace users, to include national defense; commercial and general aviation; and space
39 operations. Overall, Fort Benning is responsible for approximately 768 cubic nautical miles of
40 airspace in and around the designated military installation. Currently, the 3-3rd ABCT operates
41 Shadow Tactical Unmanned Aircraft System (RQ-7B) in the SUA.

42 There are also several commercial and small private airports in the area surrounding Fort
43 Benning that are published in the FAA Airport Registry under the Airport Master Record and
44 Reports. These include the following airports: Columbus Metropolitan, Raju, Jones Light
45 Aviation, Peterson Field, Weedon Field, Sehoy, Flying C's Plantation, and Finkley Farm just to

1 name a few. The region surrounding Fort Benning contains federal airways as this location is
2 near many major regional and international air carrier hubs, including Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta
3 International, Macon Middle Georgia Regional, and Albany Southwest Regional. Fort Benning's
4 designated SUA reduces the likelihood of interaction between military aircraft and public,
5 private, or commercial aircraft. UAS vehicles are not allowed to operate outside restricted
6 airspace because they do not have "see and avoid" capability. Training is currently conducted
7 within designated SUA and is conducted within a restricted operating zone which allows
8 unencumbered training flights to meet mission essential training goals.

9 4.1.3.2 Environmental Consequences

10 No Action Alternative

11 Minor adverse impacts to airspace use are anticipated under the No Action Alternative. There is
12 the potential for airspace use conflicts between military and private pilots. UASs would continue
13 to be used at the current operational tempo. Use of airspace would continue to be managed
14 through scheduling and balancing needs with airspace availability.

15 Alternative 1: Force Reduction (up to 7,100 Soldiers and Army Civilians)

16 Minor adverse impacts to airspace use are anticipated as a result of the implementation of
17 Alternative 1. There is the potential for airspace use conflicts between military and private
18 pilots. Loss of a ABCT could potentially reduce the number of UASs in operation at Fort
19 Benning. There would be no change in SUA requirements.

20 4.1.4 Cultural Resources

21 4.1.4.1 Affected Environment

22 Cultural resources found within the boundaries of Fort Benning include: archaeological
23 resources, architectural resources and historic districts, and Native American resources. There
24 are 13 federally recognized Tribes affiliated with the Fort Benning area, of which 10 participate
25 in consultation on a bi-annual basis. Management of cultural resources on Fort Benning is
26 accomplished through the installation's Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan (Fort
27 Benning, 2008). Fort Benning has adopted the Army Alternate Procedures for implementing
28 Section 106 of the NHPA in an effort to improve efficiency in the installation's cultural resources
29 management. The Historic Properties Component established procedures for evaluation of
30 potential effect on historic properties and combining Section 106 consultation with the NEPA
31 process.

32 Most cultural resources on Fort Benning have been evaluated for eligibility on the NRHP.
33 Those that have not yet been evaluated are considered eligible until they can be evaluated. No
34 properties of religious or cultural significance to the Tribes have been identified on the
35 installation.

36 4.1.4.2 Environmental Consequences

37 No Action Alternative

38 Minor adverse impacts are anticipated on cultural resources under the No Action Alternative.
39 Heavy equipment and tracked vehicles used for off-road maneuvers, and other training could
40 potentially have adverse impacts on archaeological resources. Fort Benning personnel provide
41 maps demarcating cultural resource locations in the training areas for Soldier informational
42 awareness and avoidance. There are also training restrictions and guidelines within these areas
43 to minimize impacts in these areas, (e.g., no digging). Building demolition and renovation are
44 not part of the No Action Alternative; therefore, there would be no adverse impacts from those
45 actions.

1 **Alternative 1: Force Reduction (up to 7,100 Soldiers and Army Civilians)**

2 Minor adverse impacts are anticipated on cultural resources as a result of implementation of
3 Alternative 1. With a decrease of Soldiers and civilians and the potential for units to be relocated
4 to newly vacated facilities, some older buildings on the installation may be programmed for
5 demolition. The adverse impacts from demolition of buildings that are eligible for the NRHP
6 would be mitigated, in accordance with the ICRMP and Army Alternate Procedures. At this time,
7 it is unknown what buildings would be identified for demolition.

8 Fort Benning anticipates that a decrease in Soldier strength would decrease the training
9 operational tempo and Soldier traffic near archaeological sites; this would reduce potential
10 impacts to those resources within the training and range areas.

11 **4.1.5 Noise**

12 **4.1.5.1 Affected Environment**

13 The greatest amount of noise disturbance from Fort Benning is generated from large caliber
14 weapons firing mainly from M1 tank, M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles, 120mm (millimeter) mortars
15 and 155mm howitzers. Noise is also generated from fixed- and rotary-winged aircraft
16 maneuvers, artillery, various pyrotechnic devices and specialized combat vehicles. Currently,
17 an incompatible NZ III extends into Muscogee and Marion counties where rural residences and
18 communities are located on the northern and eastern boundaries of the installation. Additionally,
19 NZ II extends off post to include Muscogee, Marion, and Talbot counties.

20 On-post noise impacts have been identified primarily with Family housing. Family housing areas
21 are affected by both NZ II and III noise levels for both small and large caliber weapons.
22 Currently, there are approximately 96 installation housing units within the NZ III noise contour.

23 In 2003, Fort Benning installed a Blast Analysis and Measurement monitoring sensor site
24 system along the installation boundary. The eight noise monitors are used to verify noise levels
25 when complaints have been received from the public. Data from these monitors can help the
26 installation plan, schedule, and effectively adjust military training exercises to reduce impacts to
27 the community's noise sensitive receptors. The installation's Public Affairs Office notifies the
28 public of training activities involving firing events through public notices issued to local media
29 outlets, local governments, and the Fort Benning public website.

30 Noise from training activities also has the potential to affect wildlife and threatened and
31 endangered species. For example, some training restrictions and conditions are required to
32 minimize adverse impacts to the RCW population (Fort Benning, 2001). Some noise generating
33 training activities, (e.g., artillery and hand grenade simulators and firing of small caliber
34 weapons), are limited by scheduling restrictions when occurring within RCW cluster boundaries.
35 Other training activities, (e.g., live-fire and incendiary devices), are prohibited altogether within
36 RCW cluster boundaries. Over the past 30 years, several research projects have assessed the
37 potential effects of military noise, primarily from large-caliber ranges and artillery simulators, on
38 certain elements of RCW fitness (USACE, 2008). Generally, the results of these works have
39 demonstrated that noise events (particularly those historic and relatively constant) from military
40 activities have little to no effect on RCW reproductive success.

41 **4.1.5.2 Environmental Consequences**

42 **No Action Alternative**

43 Less than significant (moderate adverse) impacts are anticipated due to NZ II and III from
44 operational noise overlapping areas with sensitive noise receptors on and off post. As a result of
45 BRAC/Transformation actions, a number of new small and large arms ranges were constructed

1 to meet mission training requirements. Current NZ II and III noise contours for small and large
2 caliber weapons are not anticipated to change. Mitigation measures in place to minimize
3 operational noise impacts include noise complaint reporting procedures for the public and
4 posting training schedules for the public when large caliber and/or night-time training events
5 occur.

6 **Alternative 1: Force Reduction (up to 7,100 Soldiers and Army Civilians)**

7 Short-term, minor adverse noise impacts could result from renovation, and or demolition
8 activities that would be identified for the relocation of units on the installation. Impacts from
9 these activities would be localized and would dissipate after renovation or demolition is
10 complete.

11 Long-term, minor adverse noise impacts would still be associated with training activities on the
12 installation. Noise generated from firing ranges and maneuver areas is not anticipated to
13 change current NZ contours; however, the anticipated decrease in operational tempo would
14 result in less frequent large caliber weapons fire associated with heavy brigade training
15 activities, and may decrease the frequency of night-time training exercises.

16 Potential noise impacts to the natural environment would also decrease with a reduction of
17 Soldier strength. The anticipated decrease in operational tempo would reduce the number of
18 wheeled and heavy vehicles, Soldier foot-traffic, and use of other military equipment within
19 RCW cluster boundaries.

20 **4.1.6 Soil Erosion**

21 **4.1.6.1 Affected Environment**

22 Most of Fort Benning is located south of the Fall Line, which is defined by the overlap of Coastal
23 Plain strata on top of Piedmont rocks. Along the Fall Line Sandhills, crystalline rocks of the
24 Piedmont are overlain by marine or fluvial sediments, resulting in varied topography. The
25 topography across the installation is variable, with generally flat areas along the Chattahoochee
26 River and steeper upland slopes farther inland. Elevations on Fort Benning range from about
27 170 to 750 feet above MSL.

28 The six soil associations found at Fort Benning are highly weathered Ultisols of Coastal Plain
29 origin. All soils in the north have a sandy surface and loamy subsoil, and are highly permeable
30 and droughty. The soils in the southwestern part of the installation have a higher water holding
31 capacity, and are loamy sand and clay loam sands. Many soils also have a clayey subsoil. The
32 majority of Fort Benning soils have been identified as highly erodible (USACE, 2009).

33 Projects involving land disturbance over 1 acre require a stormwater construction permit which
34 would include Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce and minimize impacts associated
35 with stormwater runoff, erosion, sedimentation and pollutants. Other projects less than 1 acre
36 may fall under construction BMPs required under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination
37 System (NPDES) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit.

38 Approximately 300 new water crossings, culverts and bridges for military vehicles have been
39 constructed as a result of the BRAC/Transformation construction program. The crossings have
40 been established along range and training area roads and include concrete-reinforced tank trail
41 beds through streams and wetlands to minimize impacts to water resources. Additional
42 minimization measures include the design and construction of sediment basins to prevent
43 sedimentation impacts to surface waters and wetlands within heavy maneuver training areas.
44 There is a potential for adverse impacts to water resources due to increased sedimentation
45 directly related to heavy maneuver training.

1 4.1.6.2 **Environmental Consequences**

2 **No Action Alternative**

3 Fort Benning anticipates less than significant (moderate adverse) impacts in training areas due
4 to the number of tracked and wheeled vehicles that are currently on the installation. Off-road
5 heavy maneuver training exercises are anticipated to cause the most adverse impact due to the
6 use of tracked vehicles in areas with highly erodible soils. Fort Benning anticipates that the high
7 utilization of maneuver lands by the Armor School and the 3-3rd ABCT could adversely impact
8 soils and increase soil erosion rates. Fort Benning also anticipates that road networks would be
9 susceptible to increased erosion rates due to high traffic volumes of wheeled, heavy, and
10 tracked vehicles traveling to and from training areas.

11 With the current operational tempo, both on and off-road maneuver areas have less time to
12 naturally recover from training activities. Consequently, training areas could exhibit more soil
13 and vegetation disturbance and become more degraded. This degradation of maneuver areas
14 and road networks would incur high maintenance costs, and could potentially render some
15 training areas unusable for periods of time until training area maintenance activities could be
16 completed.

17 Erosion and sedimentation concerns represent a substantial threat to long-term viable usage of
18 Good Hope Maneuver Training Area (GHMTA), where the Armor Basic Officer Leaders Course
19 mounted maneuver training is conducted. Highly erodible soil and steep slopes provide
20 indications of potentially serious runoff issues that left unmitigated, would jeopardize training in
21 the maneuver boxes established within the GHMTA.

22 Fort Benning and the MCoE are aggressively pursuing proactive, preemptive actions to mitigate
23 the risks to the GHMTA to include programming of projects for sedimentation basins, check
24 dams, and rip rap swales in and along stream buffer zones to prevent surface runoff
25 sedimentation into streams. Several low water crossings have inadequate approaches on steep
26 slopes and require supplemental upgrades. Without the upgrades (i.e., extended approaches
27 with articulated concrete “rumble strips”), tracks would not discard soils prior to entering the
28 stream and maneuver damage, with increased erosion, would occur requiring maintenance and
29 repairs based on the extent and location of the damage.

30 **Alternative 1: Force Reduction (up to 7,100 Soldiers and Army Civilians)**

31 Fort Benning anticipates a minor adverse impact to soils with the loss of up to 7,100 Soldiers
32 and civilians. The loss of a ABCT and other Combat Support units would be anticipated to
33 lessen soil erosion and sedimentation potential, but there remains the potential for soil erosion
34 impacts even if these force structure decisions were made. The reduction in wheeled and
35 tracked vehicles, and other heavy equipment traffic on- and off-road, could reduce the impacts
36 on soils and erosion with an anticipated decrease in frequency of training activities. The terrain
37 could show reduced impacts from the vehicle maneuvers, turns and traction from mechanized
38 maneuvering on the installation. These maneuver areas would still be prone to soil erosion
39 depending on the training mission and primary training locations of those remaining units.

40 A reduction in Soldier strength could result in more effective maintenance operations due to a
41 decrease in training intensity and more access to training lands for repair and maintenance
42 activities. This would be anticipated to enhance the sustainability of training lands throughout
43 Fort Benning. Areas designated specifically for off-road, heavy maneuvers with tracked vehicles
44 (e.g., Armor School), would still experience adverse impacts to soils. When adequately funded,
45 the ITAM program helps sustain training lands via maintenance projects to correct soil erosion
46 problems in heavy maneuver areas.

1 **4.1.7 Biological Resources (Vegetation, Wildlife, Threatened and Endangered**
2 **Species)**

3 4.1.7.1 **Affected Environment**

4 Federal and state threatened and endangered species are known to occur at Fort Benning. Four
5 federally-listed species within the boundaries of Fort Benning and include the RCW
6 (endangered), Wood Stork (endangered), American Alligator (threatened – similarity of
7 appearance), and Relict Trillium (endangered). While the Bald Eagle has been delisted, it is still
8 protected under other federal laws, and has been known to nest along the Chattahoochee River
9 on Fort Benning. State-listed species include the Gopher Tortoise (threatened and proposed for
10 federal listing), Barbour's Map Turtle (threatened), Alligator Snapping Turtle (threatened), and
11 the Blue Stripe Shiner (threatened). In addition, there are 11 state-listed plant species present
12 within the boundaries of Fort Benning (USACE, 2009).

13 In May 2009, Fort Benning received a Jeopardy Biological Opinion from the USFWS related to
14 the MCoE Biological Assessment. The Jeopardy Biological Opinion outlines specific criteria that
15 must be met in order for the installation to proceed with the actions associated with BRAC and
16 MCoE, including RCW impact minimization measures.

17 One criterion outlined in the Jeopardy Biological Opinion was the relocation of the ARC field
18 training off the Fort Benning footprint within 5 years of its first training iteration. The
19 requirements to move the ARC was based on the heavy maneuver training initially proposed by
20 the Armor School and the associated potential impacts to RCWs from heavy mechanized
21 training. The ARC training plans have changed substantially from what had originally been
22 proposed and analyzed in the Jeopardy Biological Opinion, to involve fewer days in the training
23 areas and limited use of tracked vehicles.

24 The first iteration of ARC training occurred in October 2011. The Armor School is working
25 closely with Fort Benning biologists to monitor potential impacts of training exercises on the
26 RCW population. If Fort Benning force structure is reduced as a result of the implementation of
27 Alternative 1; thereby, potentially reducing impacts to the RCW population, training activities
28 associated with the ARC could possibly remain on the installation after reinitiating consultation
29 with USFWS.

30 The threatened and endangered species recorded on the installation are managed in
31 accordance with the installation Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) and
32 Endangered Species Management Components; and with the requirements identified within
33 Biological Opinions issued by the USFWS.

34 All birds on Fort Benning except pigeons, starlings and English sparrows (non-native species)
35 are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA); however, state regulations allow
36 hunting of certain game species. Fort Benning manages and conserves migratory bird species
37 through its INRMP. There are approximately 150 species of birds protected under the MBTA
38 present on the installation either seasonally or year round. Most of these species are breeding
39 residents or neo-tropical migrants for which the typical breeding season is spring through
40 summer. There are potentially 16 species occurring on Fort Benning considered Species of
41 Concern based on Partners in Flight and Landbird Population Estimates. Fort Benning is
42 currently cooperating with federal, state, and private organizations in gathering information on
43 many migratory bird species in this region. There would be negligible impacts to migratory bird
44 species as a result of either alternative.

1 4.1.7.2 Environmental Consequences

2 No Action Alternative

3 Fort Benning anticipates less than significant (moderate adverse) impacts to threatened and
4 endangered species, particularly the RCW. Although there are specific mitigation criteria for
5 training events, (e.g., no live-fire or heavy mechanized training within RCW cluster boundaries),
6 it has yet to be determined if current training loads would incur any additional impacts to
7 threatened and endangered species, especially by harassment. It is also possible that training
8 impacts may be less than previously anticipated, which could lead to fewer restrictions on
9 training in the future. There would also a potential for moderate adverse effects to vegetation
10 and wildlife. Continued adherence to the INRMP, Biological Opinions and regulatory
11 requirements would minimize impacts.

12 Alternative 1: Force Reduction (up to 7,100 Soldiers and Army Civilians)

13 Minor adverse impacts are anticipated as a result of the implementation of Alternative 1. Fort
14 Benning anticipates that the loss of a ABCT would decrease the frequency and intensity of
15 heavy mechanized training on the installation, and reduce potential impacts to vegetation,
16 wildlife, and threatened and endangered species.

17 Generally, a training reduction could result in reduced impacts to the RCW and its habitat. Fort
18 Benning anticipates that a reduction in the frequency of heavy mechanized training in RCW
19 habitat would decrease the potential for adverse effects to the RCW population due to
20 harassment. This determination would require a more in-depth analysis, however, as it is highly
21 dependent upon the type, location and operational tempo of training. Reorganization of units
22 and their training areas would undergo evaluation to identify any potentially new or reduced
23 impacts to the RCW population and other threatened and endangered species. If additional
24 impacts to federal threatened and endangered species are identified, an issuance of an
25 incidental take permit may be warranted, while reduced impacts may warrant fewer incidental
26 takes than previously determined. This would require further consultation with USFWS.

27 4.1.8 Wetlands

28 4.1.8.1 Affected Environment

29 Fort Benning contains approximately 17,000 acres wetlands based on NWI and jurisdictional
30 wetland delineation. Wetlands on Fort Benning include cypress-tupelo, wood stream swamps,
31 and gum-oak dominated wetlands (USACE, 2009). Currently, all heavy maneuver training
32 activities on Fort Benning avoid wetlands to the degree possible. Additionally, Fort Benning
33 personnel have demarcated buffer zones adjacent to delineated wetlands in some heavy
34 maneuver training areas for Soldier awareness and avoidance.

35 Wetlands identified as jurisdictional are specifically protected under Section 404 of the CWA.
36 Section 404 permits would be required for construction-related unavoidable impacts to
37 jurisdictional wetlands.

38 4.1.8.2 Environmental Consequences

39 No Action Alternative

40 Less than significant (moderate adverse) impacts to wetlands are anticipated under the No
41 Action Alternative due to the ABCT and the Armor School operational tempo including use of
42 heavy equipment and tracked vehicles. Ranges and training areas are monitored to ensure that
43 there are no significant impacts to wetlands.

Alternative 1: Force Reduction (up to 7,100 Soldiers and Army Civilians)

Minor adverse impacts to installation wetlands are anticipated as a result of the implementation of Alternative 1. As discussed in Section 4.1.6., any reduction in Soldier strength would decrease the number of tracked and wheeled vehicles in areas that may have wetlands and the potential impacts of increased sedimentation caused by training. The frequency of dismounted training activities in wetland areas would be anticipated to decrease.

Fort Benning anticipates that the reduction of heavy mechanized training events would reduce the potential for adverse impacts to wetlands. Specific wetland impacts cannot be determined because it is dependent upon location, type and operational tempo of remaining training after any reduction. Generally, wetland areas are not preferred for heavy maneuver training, but it is likely that rearrangement of remaining units to the training areas would reduce potential impacts to wetlands.

How the Armor School and other tenant units on Fort Benning would utilize current training areas after a force reduction would require further analysis to assess any potentially new impacts to wetlands. It is unlikely that there would be any wetland impacts from renovation or demolition; however, Fort Benning would identify any wetland impacts and would obtain appropriate wetland permits where applicable.

4.1.9 Water Resources

4.1.9.1 Affected Environment

Groundwater. Fort Benning is located within the Coastal Plain hydrogeologic province. The principal groundwater source for Fort Benning is the Cretaceous aquifer system. The recharge area for this aquifer is the Sand Hill cantonment area (Fort Benning, 2004). Aquifers in this area typically have the capacity to yield about 50 gallons per minute (gpm) of water near the Fall Line, but yields increase to approximately 700 gpm near the southern installation boundary (USACE, 2009).

Water Supply. Fort Benning receives the majority of its potable water supply from surface water sources, primarily the Chattahoochee River. The installation's potable water supply system was privatized in September 2004 and is owned and operated by Columbus Water Works (CWW). As a result of BRAC, water infrastructure has been expanded and upgraded throughout the installation. For the more remote training areas, potable water is supplied by a number of drilled wells or transported via transport trailers.

Wastewater. Fort Benning's wastewater system was privatized in September 2004. The ownership, operation, system, and facilities are the responsibility of CWW. As a result of BRAC, sewer infrastructure across the installation has undergone extensive expansion and upgrades. Fort Benning's two wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) have been replaced with comparable service from CWW. The CWW WWTP has been replaced and expanded to handle a maximum of 17.3 million gallons per day (mgd) (USACE, 2009).

Stormwater. Stormwater discharge in main post drains directly into the Chattahoochee River through a storm drain system. Stormwater from the satellite cantonment areas of Harmony Church, Kelley Hill and Sand Hill, as well as the training compartments, drain directly or indirectly into nearby surface water bodies. Other stormwater on the installation drains via culverts, ditches, swales, and natural seepage and overland flow.

Surface water resources on the installation are subject to contamination from soil sedimentation, oil spills, pesticide residue, and untreated sewage bypasses. These potential pollution sources are controlled and minimized by implementation of installation spill contingency plans,

1 stormwater pollution control plans, and adherence to applicable laws and regulations. There are
2 several impaired streams located near or on Fort Benning.

3 4.1.9.2 Environmental Consequences

4 No Action Alternative

5 Less than significant (moderate adverse) impacts to water resources are anticipated under the
6 No Action Alternative. As discussed in Section 4.1.6, the installation anticipates some
7 sedimentation impacts to surface waters due to the heavy maneuver training activities of the 3-
8 3rd ABCT and the Armor School. As the majority of Fort Benning is characterized as having
9 highly erodible soils, the frequency of training activities reduces the maintenance and recovery
10 times for heavy maneuver areas. This lack of recovery time increases the potential for sediment
11 to impact water resources. Although minimization measures have been implemented in heavy
12 maneuver areas, the current operational tempo increases the need for maintenance of the
13 training areas, water crossings, and sediment basins. Effective maintenance of maneuver areas
14 and the minimization of impacts to water resources would be a long-term issue at Fort Benning.
15 Negligible impacts are anticipated to groundwater, water supply and wastewater.

16 Alternative 1: Force Reduction (up to 7,100 Soldiers and Army Civilians)

17 Minor adverse impacts to water resources are anticipated as a result of the implementation of
18 Alternative 1. With force reduction and associated heavy equipment and other vehicles of the
19 ABCT, Fort Benning anticipates a reduction in off-road heavy maneuver training events. This
20 reduction in training intensity and frequency would allow more recovery time and maintenance
21 functions to be performed. In turn, maneuver training areas would be more sustainable, which
22 would decrease the potential for sedimentation. Due to the high erosion potential of Fort
23 Benning soils, there still exists the potential for impacts from sedimentation from training
24 activities, especially off-road heavy maneuver training. Ranges and training areas are monitored
25 to ensure that there are no significant impacts to wetlands.

26 There would be a minor beneficial impact to groundwater, water supply and wastewater. A
27 reduction in Soldiers, civilians and their Families would lessen the demand for potable water
28 and reduce the amount of wastewater to be processed.

29 4.1.10 Facilities

30 4.1.10.1 Affected Environment

31 The cantonment areas at Fort Benning have been developed into a wide variety of land uses
32 that comprise the elements necessary for a complete urban-style community. As a result of
33 BRAC Transformation actions and the establishment of the MCoE, a combination of
34 redevelopment (e.g., renovation), development, and expansion has occurred within the four
35 cantonment areas: Main post, Kelley Hill, Sand Hill, and Harmony Church. Training assets, in
36 the form of ranges and maneuver areas, are found throughout the installation.

37 The 400-acre Kelley Hill cantonment area is located 3 miles east of main post. Current land use,
38 which is fairly concentrated, includes unaccompanied personnel housing, community, and
39 maintenance facilities. Kelley Hill is the current command and control center for the 3-3rd ABCT,
40 which is the only ABCT stationed on Fort Benning. Combat/Combat Support Soldiers and
41 civilians are located throughout the installation. Some equipment maintenance facilities are
42 outdated and undersized to accommodate current requirements.

43 There are various indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities across the installation. These
44 facilities include golf courses, campgrounds, a marina, bowling centers, swimming pools, and
45 gymnasiums. Hunting and fishing are common activities on post. Other community support

1 services include Martin Army Hospital, Warrior in Transition facility, child development centers,
2 commissary, and post exchange. Other training and community support facilities are addressed
3 in other sections.

4 4.1.10.2 **Environmental Consequences**

5 **No Action Alternative**

6 Fort Benning anticipates a minor adverse impact for training facilities across the installation.
7 During 2011, Fort Benning estimated a 26 percent increase in Soldier training loads post-BRAC
8 Transformation actions. Scheduling conflicts have been identified for training in range and
9 maneuver areas based on the current operational tempo. Although training requirements are
10 being met, some adjustments in scheduling and facilities use must be made to accommodate all
11 of the units training at Fort Benning. This also impacts Range Operations available manpower in
12 servicing and maintenance of training facilities and the scheduling of required environmental
13 mitigation and checks on adjacent ranges and training areas. The use of borrowed military
14 manpower is required to augment manning shortfalls in the Range Operations further depleting
15 the assigned and available Cadre/Soldier strengths of assigned tenant units.

16 There would be no impacts to support facilities such as training classrooms, motorpools, or
17 equipment maintenance facilities. These facilities would continue to be fully utilized to support
18 the training mission. The demand for recreation, medical, and support facilities would not
19 change.

20 **Alternative 1: Force Reduction (up to 7,100 Soldiers and Army Civilians)**

21 Minor beneficial impacts to training facilities are anticipated as a result of the implementation of
22 Alternative 1. A decrease in Soldier strength would reduce potential conflicts in training
23 scheduling and improve availability of training facilities for remaining units. Additionally, a
24 reduction in the frequency of training exercises would be beneficial for maintaining ranges and
25 training areas and thereby improving sustainability of those facilities. A decrease in training
26 operational tempo and related heavy equipment of a ABCT would be beneficial for the
27 maintenance and sustainability of roadways and off-road maneuver areas.

28 With a decrease of Soldiers and civilians and the potential for units to be relocated to newly
29 vacated facilities, various older buildings on the installation may be programmed for demolition.
30 Demolition of older structures would be a long-term beneficial effect. Many facilities on Fort
31 Benning are energy inefficient and outdated, and do not efficiently support current training
32 mission and equipment (e.g., some maintenance facilities are undersized for current heavy and
33 tracked vehicles.) The demolition of older facilities would result in a reduction of maintenance
34 costs, and a reduction in the number of buildings containing asbestos and LBP.

35 Currently, there is a high demand for recreation, medical, and support facilities. It is anticipated
36 that the demand for these services would be reduced to a more sustainable level as a result of
37 this alternative.

38 **4.1.11 Socioeconomics**

39 4.1.11.1 **Affected Environment**

40 Fort Benning is located in the Columbus Georgia-Alabama (GA-AL) Metropolitan Statistical Area
41 (MSA), which includes Muscogee, Chattahoochee, Harris, and Marion counties in Georgia, and
42 Russell County in Alabama. The ROI evaluated in this socioeconomic analysis consists of the
43 Columbus GA-AL MSA; and for the purposes of this analysis Talbot County, Georgia, and Lee
44 County, Alabama was added. The geographic extent of the ROI for this analysis includes the
45 residential distribution of the installation's military, civilian, and contractor personnel, and their

1 Families; and the locations of businesses that provide goods and services to the installation and
 2 its population. This ROI constitutes the vast majority of potential socioeconomic impacts from
 3 force restructuring proposed for Fort Benning. Data for the Columbus GA-AL MSA is included
 4 in the discussion as this data includes the most recent economic conditions for a vast majority of
 5 the ROI.

6 **Population and Demographics.** This section provides information regarding the installation
 7 and ROI population. Total installation daily population (including Active Army, civilians, PCS
 8 students and trainees) is approximately 39,250 people (HQDA, 2012), though this does not
 9 include military dependents. Fort Benning Soldiers and employee households include another
 10 estimated 40,200 Family members (spouses and dependent children). The total population of
 11 Fort Benning full-time Soldiers, civilians, trainees, and dependents is estimated to be
 12 approximately 79,450 people. This does not include the military retiree population within the
 13 ROI, which is estimated to be 10,900 (USACE, 2011). The military retiree population is not
 14 anticipated to be directly affected by the Proposed Action or alternatives.

15 Of the total military employee population (Soldiers, students, trainees, Army civilian employees)
 16 of approximately 39,250 people, approximately 14,100 of these are full-time uniformed Soldiers
 17 or PCS students and approximately 4,250 are full-time Army civilian employees. The total
 18 working population of daily full-time Army Soldiers and government civilian employees is
 19 18,344. Fort Benning's population of students and trainees fluctuates, but currently averages
 20 approximately 20,900 students.

21 Approximately 12,700 Soldiers and their dependents live on Fort Benning. The rest of the
 22 military personnel that work or train at Fort Benning and their dependents, an estimated 66,700,
 23 live off-post in the surrounding communities within the ROI.

24 The ROI population is 310,000, which does not include the residents of Fort Benning. As Fort
 25 Benning is federal property, its permanent party residents were not included in the 2010 ROI
 26 census data as Muscogee or Chattahoochee county residents, though they technically reside
 27 within the geographic confines of those counties. Compared to 2000, the 2010 population in
 28 Harris and Marion counties increased by more than 20 percent, while the off-post population of
 29 Chattahoochee County decreased by more than 20 percent, mainly attributable to the
 30 continuing trend of relocation of individuals within the county to areas that are closer to the
 31 Atlanta metropolitan area. Table 4.1-2 presents the 2010 census population information for
 32 each county and the percent of population change since 2000. The racial and ethnic
 33 composition of the ROI is presented in Table 4.1-3 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010;
 34 <http://quickfacts.census.gov>).

35 **Table 4.1-2. Population and Demographics**

Region of Influence Counties	Population 2010	Population Change 2000-2010 (Percent)
Georgia	9,687,653	+18.3
Alabama	4,779,736	+7.5
Muscogee, Georgia	189,885	+ 1.9
Chattahoochee, Georgia	11,267	- 24.3
Harris, Georgia	32,024	+35.2
Marion, Georgia	8,742	+22.4
Talbot, Georgia	6,865	- 5.6
Lee, Alabama	6,058	+15.3
Russell, Al	52,947	+ 6.6

1

Table 4.1-3. Racial and Ethnic Composition

State and Region of Influence Counties	Caucasian (Percent)	African American (Percent)	Native American (Percent)	Hispanic (Percent)	Asian (Percent)	Multiracial (Percent)	Other (Percent)
Georgia	56	30	<1	9	3	2	<1
Alabama	67	26	1	4	1	1	<1
Muscogee	44	45	<1	6	2	2	<1
Chattahoochee	63	18	1	12	2	3	1
Harris	78	17	0	3	1	1	0
Marion	58	32	0	7	1	1	0
Talbot	38	59	0	1	0	1	0
Lee	70	23	0	3	3	1	0
Russell	52	41	<1	4	<1	2	<1

2 **Employment, Income, and Housing.** Overall, the largest employment sectors in the ROI
 3 include education, health and social services, manufacturing, and retail trade. Although
 4 substantial acreage in the ROI is devoted to forestry and agriculture, a very small percentage of
 5 the civilian population is employed in those sectors. Private non-farm employment in the ROI
 6 (including the on-post working population of Fort Benning) is 151,441. Compared to 2000, the
 7 2009 employment (private nonfarm) increased in Talbot and Lee counties, and decreased in
 8 Muscogee, Chattahoochee, Harris, Marion, and Russell counties, and the states of Alabama
 9 and Georgia (Table 4.1-4). Fort Benning employs an estimated 18.4 percent of the personnel in
 10 the Columbus MSA when considering (non-farm) employment except the post's training
 11 population. This number is even higher (24.6 percent) if one adds the post's training population
 12 to the total employment numbers. When considering the indirect economic impacts of goods
 13 and service jobs created by the increased regional demand attributable to Fort Benning
 14 employees, not including students and trainees, economic impacts of the installation account for
 15 more than 20 percent of the full-time non-farm jobs in the ROI. If one includes students and
 16 trainees, by the installation is estimated to support more than 25 percent of all jobs within the
 17 ROI.

18 The average unemployment rate as of March 2012 for the Nation was 8.2 percent, compared to
 19 9.0 percent for the State of Georgia, and 7.3 percent for the State of Alabama. As of March
 20 2012, the Columbus MSA unemployment rate was slightly higher than the national average at
 21 8.6 percent. Chattahoochee County has the highest unemployment rate (approximately 15
 22 percent) in the ROI, while Harris County had the lowest (approximately 7 percent).

23 Housing is not available for all active service members on Fort Benning. Off-post housing is
 24 available in the forms of town homes, apartments, and single family homes in the surrounding
 25 counties. With the downturn in the economy, several counties within the ROI have occupancy
 26 rates below 90 percent for rental units (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). As of May, 2012, 12,681
 27 Soldiers, Army civilians, and dependents resided on Fort Benning, with the remainder of
 28 personnel and dependents residing in off-post housing.

29 Employment, median home value and household income, and poverty levels are presented in
 30 Table 4.1-4.

31

1

Table 4.1-4. Housing and Income

State and Region of Influence Counties	2009 Total Nonfarm Employment (Employees)	Employment Change 2000-2009 (Percent)	Median Home Value 2005-2009 (Dollars)	Median Household Income 2009 (Dollars)	Population Below Poverty Level 2009 (Percent)
Georgia	3,410,505	- 2.1	160,100	47,469	16.60
Alabama	1,612,258	- 2.5	111,900	40,547	17.50
Muscogee	78,925	- 8.7	126,100	39,060	17.50
Chattahoochee	644	- 52.2	78,200	40,725	26.50
Harris	3,324	- 22.6	190,500	63,351	8.80
Marion	1,260	- 42.0	75,900	31,581	22.00
Talbot	547	+ 16.1	85,900	33,873	23.50
Lee	37,367	+ 15.8	139,500	40,894	19.20
Russell	11,030	- 1.2	91,300	33,537	19.90

2 Fort Benning serves as a major driver of economic activity regionally, and contributes more than
 3 \$2 billion annually to the local economy through salaries, construction and service contracts,
 4 and direct purchase of goods from the local economy. Local planning authorities estimate that in
 5 2012, direct payroll to Fort Benning’s military personnel could exceed \$1.3 billion annually, while
 6 the civilian and contractor payroll may exceed \$500 million per year (USACE, 2011).

7 **Environmental Justice.** E.O. 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in*
 8 *Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, directs federal agencies to identify and
 9 address as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental
 10 effects of their programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income
 11 populations. Minority and low-income populations within the ROI are presented in Table 4.1-2
 12 and 4.1-3. Compared to the state-wide populations of Alabama and Georgia, Muscogee, Talbot,
 13 and Russell counties have higher populations of minorities, particularly African Americans, that
 14 exceed 40 percent of the counties’ total population. Low income populations are more heavily
 15 represented in Chattahoochee, Marion, and Talbot counties where the population below the
 16 poverty level exceeded 20 percent of the total county population in 2009. Tables 4.1-2 and 4.1-
 17 3 provide additional information. Chattahoochee County includes the highest percentage of
 18 individuals in the ROI (26.5 percent in 2009) that live at or below the poverty line, though it
 19 should be noted that this does not include Fort Benning’s on-post military population.

20 **Schools.** Fort Benning has seven on-post DoD schools, six elementary and one middle school,
 21 and 29,963 students (Fort Benning Staff, May 2012). High school students residing on the
 22 installation (grades 9-12) attend local county high schools (The Valley Partnership Joint
 23 Development Authority, 2009a). Off post, there are a total of 57 elementary schools, 23 middle
 24 schools, 18 high schools, and 1 central elementary/high school within the ROI. Enrollment
 25 capacity varies by county across the ROI. Currently, only Mount Olive Elementary in Russell
 26 County and elementary schools in Phenix City are near or at enrollment capacity; however, if
 27 plans to build additional elementary schools proceed, sufficient capacity for growth is
 28 anticipated. All remaining schools in the ROI have some capacity for growth, to varying
 29 degrees. Certain school districts may approach capacity within the next 3 years. Both Muscogee
 30 and Chattahoochee County school districts are projected to exceed capacity by 2013 if no new
 31 schools are constructed. Harris and Marion County School districts are projected to have
 32 sufficient space for additional students as a result of new facilities opening in 2011. Stewart and
 33 Talbot County School districts are projected to have sufficient capacity due to lack of growth.
 34 Russell County middle and high schools also have sufficient capacity for additional students.

1 Webster County High School has excess capacity, while the elementary/middle school is
2 categorized as just below capacity (USACE, 2011).

3 **Public Safety and Social Services.** The Provost Marshal provides on-post law enforcement
4 services. Off post, there are approximately 1,000 law enforcement officers in the ROI (USACE,
5 2011). Fort Benning's Fire Department provides on-post fire protection. In addition, it has
6 Memoranda of Understanding to provide fire assistance in times of increased need with fire
7 departments in Phenix City, the City of Columbus, and Chattahoochee County. No Memoranda
8 of Understanding exists between Fort Benning and the fire departments in Lee, Marion, Harris,
9 or Talbot counties. Muscogee County and Phenix City Fire departments have 342 and 58 paid
10 fire-fighters, respectively (USACE, 2011). Russell, Chattahoochee, Harris, Marion, and Talbot
11 counties are serviced solely by volunteer fire departments that can experience resource and
12 staffing deficiencies in less populated areas. Lee County is serviced by a combination of
13 volunteer fire departments and municipal fire departments.

14 The U.S. Army Medical Department Activity provides medical care to an eligible patient
15 population in excess of 72,000 beneficiaries (U.S. Army Medical Department, 2010), though
16 many of these potential beneficiaries receive medical treatment through private sources using
17 different military health care options under TRICARE. Medical services are highly concentrated
18 within the Columbus MSA and are notably deficient in rural areas.

19 4.1.11.2 Environmental Consequences

20 No Action Alternative

21 There would be no change to socioeconomic conditions anticipated under the No Action
22 Alternative. Fort Benning would continue to have the same levels of economic and social
23 impacts on employment, housing, schools, and public services. No additional impacts would be
24 anticipated beyond those beneficial and adverse socioeconomic impacts currently being
25 experienced within the ROI.

26 Alternative 1: Force Reduction (up to 7,100¹ Soldiers and Army Civilians)

27 **Economic Impacts.** Alternative 1 would result in the loss of up to 7,100 military employees
28 (Soldier and Army civilian employees), each with an average annual income of \$41,830. In
29 addition, this alternative would affect an estimated 3,950 spouses and 6,791 dependent
30 children, for a total estimated potential impact to 10,741 dependents. The total population of
31 military employees and their dependents directly affected by Alternative 1 would be projected to
32 be 17,815.

33 Based on the EIFS analysis, there would be significant socioeconomic impacts for population
34 loss within the ROI for this alternative. There would be no significant impacts for sales volume,
35 income, or employment, though these values would all experience declines within the ROI. The
36 range of values that would represent a significant economic impact in accordance with the EIFS
37 model are presented in Table 4.1-5, along with the predicted percentages for Alternative 1.
38 Table 4.1-6 presents the projected economic impacts to the region for Alternative 1 as assessed
39 by the Army's EIFS model.

¹ Calculations used a number of 7,074 Soldiers and civilians for estimating socioeconomic impacts. This number was derived by assuming the loss of Fort Benning's ABCT, as well as 30 percent of the installation's non-BCT Soldiers and up to 15 percent of the civilian workforce. As discussed in Chapter 3, this number is rounded to the nearest hundred personnel when discussing impacts of Alternative 1.

1 **Table 4.1-5. Economic Impact Forecast System and Rational Threshold Value Summary**
 2 **of Implementation of Alternative 1**

Region of Influence Economic Impact Significance Thresholds	Sales Volume (Percent)	Income (Percent)	Employment (Percent)	Population (Percent)
Economic Growth Significance Value	10.55	10.01	5.03	2.58
Economic Contraction Significance Value	- 7.34	- 6.01	- 8.29	- 1.56
Forecast Value	- 3.16	- 4.99	- 5.94	- 5.74

3 **Table 4.1-6. Economic Impact Forecast System: Summary of Projected Economic**
 4 **Impacts of Implementation of Alternative 1**

Region of Influence Impact	Sales Volume	Income	Employment	Population
Total	- \$403,706,700	- \$342,170,900	- 7,763 (Direct) - 1,234 (Indirect) - 8,997 (Total)	- 17,815
Percent	- 3.16 (Annual Sales)	- 4.99	- 5.94	- 5.74

5 The total annual loss in volume of direct and secondary sales in the ROI represents an
 6 estimated -3.16 percent reduction. State tax revenues would decrease by approximately \$16.15
 7 million as a result of the decreased sales. Some counties within the ROI supplement the state
 8 sales tax of 4 percent by varying percentages, and these additional local tax revenues would be
 9 lost at the county and local level. Regional income would decrease by an estimated 4.99
 10 percent. While approximately 7,100 direct Soldier and Army civilian positions would be lost
 11 within the ROI, EIFS estimates another 689 military contract service jobs would be lost as a
 12 direct result of the implementation of Alternative 1, and an additional 1,234 job losses would
 13 indirectly occur from a reduction in demand for goods and services in the ROI. The total
 14 estimated reduction in demand for goods and services within the ROI is projected to lead to a
 15 loss of 8,997 non-farm jobs, or a -5.94 percent change in regional non-farm employment. The
 16 total number of employed non-farm positions in the ROI is estimated to be 151,441. A
 17 significant population reduction of -5.74 percent within the ROI is anticipated as a result of this
 18 alternative. Of the approximately 310,000 people (including those residing on Fort Benning)
 19 that live within the ROI, 17,815 military employees and their dependents would be projected to
 20 no longer reside in the area following the implementation of Alternative 1. This would lead to a
 21 decrease in demand for housing, and increased housing availability in the region. This would
 22 lead to a reduction in median home values. It should be noted that this estimate of population
 23 reduction includes Army civilian and military members and their dependents. This number may
 24 overstate potential population impacts, as some of the people no longer employed by the
 25 military would continue to work and reside in the ROI, working in other economic sectors;
 26 however, this would in part be counterbalanced by the fact that some of the indirect impacts
 27 would include the relocation of local service providers and businesses to areas outside the ROI.
 28 Table 4.1-7 shows the total projected economic impacts, based on the RECONS model, that
 29 would occur as a result of the implementation of Alternative 1.

30

Table 4.1-7. Regional Economic System: Summary of Projected Economic Impacts of Implementation of Alternative 1

Region of Influence Impact	Sales Volume	Income	Employment
Total	- \$319,986,654 (Local) - \$521,369,224 (State)	- \$358,886,991	- 7,981 (Direct) - 1,008 (Indirect) - 8,989 (Total)
Percent	- 2.51 (Total Regional)	- 5.23	- 5.93

3 The total annual loss in direct and indirect sales in the region represents an estimated -2.51
 4 percent change in total regional sales volume according to the RECONS model, an impact that
 5 is approximately 0.65 percentage points less than projected by EIFS; however, it is estimated
 6 that gross economic impacts at the state level would be greater. Extrapolating from sales
 7 volume numbers presented in the RECONS model, state tax revenues would decrease by
 8 approximately \$20.86 million as a result of the loss in revenue from sales reductions, which
 9 would be \$4.71 million more in lost state sales tax revenue than projected by the EIFS model.
 10 Regional income is projected by RECONS to decrease by 5.23 percent, slightly more than the
 11 4.99 percent reduction projected by EIFS. While approximately 7,100 direct Soldier and Army
 12 civilian employee positions would be lost within the ROI, RECONS estimates another 907 direct
 13 contract and service jobs would be lost, and an additional 1,008 job losses would occur
 14 indirectly from a reduction in demand for goods and services in the ROI. The total estimated
 15 reduction in demand for goods and services within the ROI is projected to lead to a loss of 8,989
 16 jobs, or a -5.93 percent change in regional non-farm employment, which would be 0.01
 17 percentage points less than projected by the EIFS model.

18 According to the EIFS, significant negative impacts to economics from loss of populations are
 19 anticipated. When assessing the results together, both models indicate that the economic
 20 impacts of the implementation of Alternative 1 would lead to a significant negative economic
 21 impact to the ROI.

22 **Environmental Justice and Protection of Children Impacts.** Force reduction would not
 23 disproportionately impact the ROI, although some population segments may be impacted more
 24 than other segments in terms of overall economic impacts. There would be some
 25 disproportionate impacts projected for minority populations, when the Proposed Action is
 26 examined at different scales. Within each affected county, the economic impacts of the action
 27 would affect all racial and ethnic groups equally. Some of the counties in the ROI, such as
 28 Muscogee, Talbot, and Russell counties have a higher proportion of minorities than the State of
 29 Georgia as a whole; however, none of the actions taken by the Army would be anticipated to
 30 have greater proportionate impacts on minority populations. The ROI has a higher minority
 31 population percentage than the state as a whole. Therefore, the impacts on the minority
 32 residents of the ROI may be disproportionately adverse at this level; however, the impacts are
 33 not expected to be substantially adverse. Low income populations may be disproportionately
 34 impacted across the ROI due to the greater proportion of low income individuals when
 35 compared to the State of Georgia as a whole.

36 Impacts from force reduction could impact children and children's schools depending on the
 37 distribution of students and how losses would impact local schools. Standard safety measures
 38 and applicable requirements would be implemented during demolition and remodeling activities
 39 to ensure the safety of children and prevent exposure to hazardous or toxic substances.

40 **School Impacts.** It is anticipated that there would be moderate adverse effects to school
 41 systems. Schools on-post and off-post would experience losses in enrollment. Currently none

1 of the counties within the ROI are over capacity, although Russell and Harris County public
2 schools are close to their capacity (USACE, 2011). The reduction of Soldiers on Fort Benning
3 would result in a loss of Federal Impact Aid dollars in the ROI; however, actual projected dollar
4 amounts cannot be determined at this time due to the variability of appropriated dollars from
5 year to year, and the actual number of school-age children for military and civilian Families.
6 Schools receiving Federal Impact Aid dollars would be negatively impacted through monies that
7 would no longer be received to supplement costs of schooling military children. The amount of
8 aid a school receives is based on the number of federal students the district supports in relation
9 to the total district student population. Total Federal Impact Aid varies each year depending on
10 congressional appropriations, but in general has ranged from \$250 to \$2,000 per student
11 (USACE, 2007).

12 Alternative 1 may have positive impacts in some of the school systems, particularly in Russell,
13 Muscogee, and Chattahoochee counties where student enrollment is closer to the total schools
14 capacity. Within these counties, implementation of Alternative 1 could lead to a reduction in
15 class sizes and a reduction in student to teacher ratios. Alternative 1 would also reduce student
16 enrollment at Fort Benning's on-post elementary and middle schools. In terms of special needs
17 military children receiving support from the State of Georgia, Federal Impact Aid does not cover
18 the full cost of these students. Alternative 1 would reduce the state economic burden for costs
19 not covered by Federal Impact Aid for these students.

20 **Safety and Public and Social Services Impacts.** There would be no anticipated impacts to
21 public safety resulting from implementation of Alternative 1, as all applicable regulations and
22 Memoranda of Understanding would continue to be implemented.

23 **4.1.12 Energy Demand and Generation**

24 4.1.12.1 **Affected Environment**

25 Fort Benning's energy needs are currently met by a combination of electric power and natural
26 gas. As a result of utility privatization, the electric system is owned and operated by Flint
27 Electric, and the natural gas system is owned and operated by Atmos Energy. The Energy
28 Policy Act of 2005 (EPACT) states that each federal facility has to reduce energy consumption
29 by 2 percent each year. Fort Benning is committed to comply with the EPACT.

30 **Electricity.** Most electric power is supplied to Fort Benning from substations that supply power
31 to cantonment areas, Family housing, and other developed areas of the installation. Low-
32 capacity electrical service is supplied to ranges and training areas in more remote sections of
33 the installation.

34 **Natural Gas.** Natural gas supplies the majority of non-mobile fuel requirements at the
35 installation. Propane is the main energy source for the training areas, and is used as backup to
36 the natural gas supply. A peak shaving plant augments natural gas supply during high
37 demands. Distribution lines serve the cantonment areas and Family housing.

38 4.1.12.2 **Environmental Consequences**

39 **No Action Alternative**

40 Minor adverse impacts are anticipated on energy demand. The continued use of out-dated,
41 energy inefficient facilities could hinder Fort Benning's requirement to reduce energy
42 consumption. Some older facilities may require renovations to improve energy efficiency to
43 achieve EPACT requirements.

44

1 **Alternative 1: Force Reduction (up to 7,100 Soldiers and Army Civilians)**

2 Minor beneficial impacts on energy demand are anticipated as the installation would be better
3 positioned to meet EPACT goals. Fort Benning anticipates an overall reduction in energy
4 consumption with the loss of a ABCT and the realignment of tenant units to occupy recently
5 constructed, energy-efficient facilities. Fort Benning anticipates that older, energy inefficient
6 facilities would be demolished. Some utility infrastructure may be demolished or no longer
7 utilized in association with building demolition.

8 **4.1.13 Land Use Conflicts and Compatibility**

9 **4.1.13.1 Affected Environment**

10 Fort Benning covers approximately 182,000 acres in portions of Muscogee, Chattahoochee, and
11 Russell counties. Fort Benning training lands consist of drop zones, landing zones, duded and
12 non-duded impact areas, ranges, and maneuver areas. Maneuver areas are throughout the
13 installation, and landing and drop zones are scattered throughout.

14 Land use conflicts and compatibility issues result from encroachment by the surrounding
15 communities. Land uses immediately adjacent to the installation consist of residential,
16 agricultural and timber, industrial, and open space. Residential encroachment adjacent to the
17 installation causes concern due to potential incompatibility. Communities near Fort Benning are
18 required by the State of Georgia to coordinate with Fort Benning on any proposed zoning
19 decisions for land that is within 3,000 feet of the installation (Georgia Code 36-66-6). The
20 decision-making process enables zoning changes to be compatible with nearby military land
21 use.

22 Fort Benning produces various impacts that can affect the quality of life in surrounding
23 communities. Examples of these impacts include smoke from prescribed burns, the risk of an
24 aircraft accident, and noise from small and large arms firing. To assist the communities in the
25 land use zoning decisions, the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) describes the land use and NZs
26 that the Army uses to estimate the impacts from encroachment (The Valley Partnership, 2008).
27 Through JLUS, the installation closely works with the community to develop cooperative
28 approaches for reducing adverse impacts of conflicting land uses.

29 The Army also addresses encroachment issues and promotes natural resource conservation
30 through the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program. An implementation strategy of the
31 ACUB program is to acquire conservation easements or other land interests that prohibit
32 incompatible development in perpetuity. While the ACUB program prohibits urban development,
33 it accommodates compatible uses such as farming and forestry that do not pose a risk of
34 encroachment to installation training activities. The ACUB program also expands conservation
35 of natural resources, and management of threatened and endangered species to properties
36 outside of Fort Benning.

37 Lands that are not used for training at Fort Benning are used to support cantonment functions.
38 Approximately 8,850 acres, main post is the largest and most developed of the cantonment
39 areas. It includes the MCoE and Garrison Headquarters, Infantry and Armor Schools, Cuartels
40 barracks complex, Martin Army Community Hospital, Post Exchange, Commissary, and various
41 Family housing areas. Lawson Army Airfield is located in the southernmost portion of main
42 post. The areas of main post adjacent to the Chattahoochee River and Upatoi Creek are largely
43 green space. Family housing and outdoor recreation dominate the northern portion of main
44 post. The densely developed core of main post includes unaccompanied personnel housing,
45 community facilities, training facilities, supply and storage, maintenance, industrial, and medical
46 land uses.

1 There are three additional distinct cantonment areas on Fort Benning as discussed below:

- 2 • **Harmony Church.** The Harmony Church cantonment area lies 5 miles southeast of
3 main post and south of U.S. Highway 27. Harmony Church has seen the greatest
4 change and growth with the establishment of the MCoE. Harmony Church is now the
5 home of the Armor School, Ranger Training Brigade, the 81st Regional Readiness
6 Command Equipment Concentration Site, 197th Infantry Brigade, and the Continental
7 U.S. Replacement Center. The 775-acre Harmony Church cantonment area supports a
8 diverse assortment of facilities including unaccompanied housing, vehicle maintenance
9 shops, training, motor pools, administration buildings, and outdoor recreation land uses.
- 10 • **Kelley Hill.** The 400-acre Kelley Hill cantonment area is located 3 miles east of main
11 post. Current land use, which is fairly concentrated, includes unaccompanied personnel
12 housing, community, and maintenance facilities. Kelley Hill is the current command and
13 control center for the 3-3rd ABCT, which is the only ABCT stationed on Fort Benning. The
14 3-3rd ABCT consists of a Brigade Headquarters and six battalions: two combined arms
15 Battalions, one Reconnaissance Squadron, one Field Artillery Battalion, one Brigade
16 Special Troops Battalion, and one Brigade Support Battalion and is manned with
17 approximately 3,750 Soldiers).
- 18 • **Sand Hill.** The 2,510-acre Sand Hill cantonment area is located 4 miles northeast of
19 main post. Land use in this cantonment area includes Family housing, unaccompanied
20 personnel housing, training, and community facilities.

21 4.1.13.2 Environmental Consequences

22 No Action Alternative

23 Fort Benning anticipates less than significant (moderate adverse) impacts to land use
24 compatibility. With the current operational tempo of live-fire and night-time training events, the
25 encroachment of communities along Fort Benning's boundary could cause conflicts in land use.
26 This conflict is primarily due to noise generated by training exercises and the proximity of
27 sensitive noise receptors as discussed in Section 4.1.5. Land use conflicts also are caused by
28 prescribed burning which can generate smoke and particulate matter that is not compatible with
29 some adjacent land uses. Prescribed burning is required for training area sustainment and to
30 maintain RCW habitat. Fort Benning's ACUB and JLUS programs attempt to mitigate these
31 potential impacts to the surrounding communities.

32 Within the installation boundary, cantonment areas and training lands have been planned in a
33 logistical manner to support the training mission and Soldier needs. With the recent actions of
34 BRAC/Transformation and the establishment of the MCoE, current availability of land for new
35 construction and development of training areas is minimal.

36 Alternative 1: Force Reduction (up to 7,100 Soldiers and Army Civilians)

37 Minor adverse effects to land use are anticipated with a reduction in Soldier strength. A
38 decrease in Soldier strength would not change land use on post. It is anticipated that the
39 frequency of large arms firing event and night-time training exercises would decrease; however,
40 current noise contours would not be expected to change. Fort Benning would continue the JLUS
41 and ACUB programs to minimize potential land use conflicts between training on post and the
42 surrounding community.

1 **4.1.14 Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste**

2 **4.1.14.1 Affected Environment**

3 At Fort Benning, hazardous materials and hazardous waste are subject to applicable RCRA
4 regulations. This includes the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials and
5 wastes. Through the combined efforts of several offices at Fort Benning, programs have been
6 established to control the entry of hazardous substances to the installation; to safely manage
7 their handling and transportation within the installation; to inform military and civilian employees
8 of their dangers; to minimize the risk of human exposure and release to the environment
9 associated with these substances; and to dispose of these substances in an environmentally
10 sound manner when they are no longer useful (USACE, 2007).

11 Routine operations on Fort Benning require the use of a variety of hazardous materials,
12 including petroleum products, solvents, cleaning agents, paints, adhesives, and other products
13 necessary to perform vehicle and equipment maintenance, military training activities, installation
14 upkeep, and administrative and housing functions. Toxic substances commonly occurring on
15 Army installations include asbestos, LBP, PCBs, and radon. Routine operations across the
16 installation generate a variety of hazardous wastes, including various solvents; paints;
17 antifreeze; aerosols; contaminated filters, rags and absorbents; weapon cleaning patches and
18 sludges; and some items managed as universal wastes, such as used batteries and fluorescent
19 light tubes (USACE, 2007). Fort Benning has numerous underground storage tanks (USTs) and
20 above ground storage tanks across the installation, primarily in the cantonment areas.

21 Fort Benning has several plans in place to help manage hazardous materials and waste
22 including an installation Spill Contingency Plan; Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures
23 (SPCC) Plan; Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP); and Hazardous Waste
24 Management Plan (HWMP). Fort Benning has no active municipal solid waste landfills;
25 however, there are several closed landfills on post. There is one inert landfill used for storm
26 generated debris, such as trees and brush.

27 **4.1.14.2 Environmental Consequences**

28 **No Action Alternative**

29 Minor adverse impacts would be anticipated are under the No Action Alternative. The MCoE
30 would continue the use and generation of hazardous materials and wastes on Fort Benning
31 (e.g., motor pools and military equipment requiring maintenance) in accordance with all
32 applicable laws, regulations and plans. Types and quantities of hazardous wastes generated
33 have been accommodated by the existing hazardous waste management system. Due to the
34 higher number of Soldiers and support activities as a result of this alternative, the potential for
35 spills is higher than that of Alternative 1.

36 **Alternative 1: Force Reduction (up to 7,100 Soldiers and Army Civilians)**

37 Minor adverse impacts would be anticipated as a result of the implementation of Alternative 1. It
38 is also anticipated that Fort Benning would decrease its storage and use of hazardous materials
39 that are used during training exercises. Hazardous wastes generated would decrease in
40 volume as vehicle and equipment maintenance activities decrease with a decrease in Soldiers
41 and civilians. Due to the reduced numbers of ABCT Soldiers and support activities, the potential
42 for spills would be somewhat reduced during training and maintenance activities. Waste
43 collection, storage, and disposal processes would remain mostly unchanged, although the
44 quantities may be reduced. There may be the potential for a short-term increase in solid and
45 hazardous waste generation resulting from building renovation or demolition of vacated
46 facilities; this may include removal of above ground storage tanks or USTs. Fort Benning would

1 minimize any negative impacts by following all applicable laws, regulations and Fort Benning
2 plans.

3 **4.1.15 Traffic and Transportation**

4 4.1.15.1 **Affected Environment**

5 Fort Benning is located in the western part of Georgia and the eastern part of Alabama. Local
6 communities include Columbus, Georgia and Phenix City, Alabama. Major road routes in the
7 region include Interstate (I) 185, and U.S. Routes 27, 280, and 431, and Georgia State Routes 1
8 and 26.

9 4.1.15.2 **Environmental Consequences**

10 **No Action Alternative**

11 Minor adverse impacts are anticipated under the No Action Alternative. Traffic studies prepared
12 for analysis in Fort Benning's BRAC and MCoE EIS identified LOS deficiencies within the
13 installation. Mitigation measures to widen roads, improve intersections, and encourage use of
14 travel demand management tools were implemented to minimize significant impacts to traffic
15 and transportation both on and off post. Even with these mitigation measures, the number of
16 personal and work vehicles associated with Fort Benning would continue to cause some traffic
17 congestion.

18 **Alternative 1: Force Reduction (up to 7,100 Soldiers and Army Civilians)**

19 Minor beneficial impacts are anticipated on traffic and transportation systems. With the
20 departure of Soldiers, civilians, and their Family members, Fort Benning anticipates a decrease
21 in traffic congestion and improvements in LOS on the installation and neighboring communities.
22 The population decrease may have a minor reduction of risk to the safety of motorist,
23 pedestrians and bicyclists.

24 **4.1.16 Cumulative Effects**

25 The ROI for the cumulative analysis consists of the Columbus GA-AL MSA; Talbot, Stewart and
26 Webster counties, Georgia, and Lee County, Alabama. The geographic extent of the ROI
27 includes all counties surrounding or nearby Fort Benning that may be impacted by regional
28 projects listed below. Cumulative effects include Army-related activities at Fort Benning and
29 community activities in the ROI. The effects of past and present actions were included in the
30 discussion of the affected environment and their impacts were taken into account under the
31 direct impacts discussion.

32 **Reasonably Foreseeable Future Projects on Fort Benning**

- 33 • Training Land Expansion Program to acquire up to 82,800 acres of additional training
34 lands near Fort Benning (approximately FY 2012 to 2017);
- 35 • Relocation of the ARC field training off the current Fort Benning footprint (planned
36 completion by FY 2016);
- 37 • Construction of a ground-source community loop heat transfer utility system on Sand Hill
38 (proposed for FY 2013);
- 39 • Construction of a new Army Lodge on main post (proposed to begin in FY 2012), and
40 implementation of the Army's Privatization of Army Lodging (PAL) at Fort Benning
41 (proposed for no earlier than FY 2014); and
- 42 • Implementation of maneuver training improvements (low-water crossings, stream bank
43 hardening, and other projects) within the GHMTA.

1 Reasonably Foreseeable Future Projects outside of Fort Benning

- 2 • Columbus and Phenix City Riverwalk Expansion;
- 3 • Benning Technology Park, located adjacent to I-185 and Victory Drive, to provide office
4 space and research and development centers for information technology and defense
5 contractors;
- 6 • 14th Amendment Highway Corridor which is a Department of Transportation Study of a
7 proposed highway to extend from Augusta, Georgia to Natchez, Mississippi, servicing
8 intermediate cities of Macon and Columbus, Georgia, and Montgomery, Alabama.
9 General urban growth; which includes several small housing and strip mall development
10 projects, and rehabilitating existing structures to support expanding surrounding
11 communities; and
- 12 • Various road improvement projects as identified in the Transportation Improvement
13 Program for Columbus and Phenix City.

14 Potential incremental effects from the proposed force realignment and reduction at Fort Benning
15 are anticipated to have a significant cumulative, adverse effect to regional economics, and
16 negligible effects to other socioeconomic factors (including environmental justice and protection
17 of children). The community has planned for growth associated with moving the Armor School
18 to Fort Benning and establishing the MCoE. The adjustment to a substantial loss of personnel
19 likely would involve the re-evaluation of proposed projects. The renovation and demolition of
20 Fort Benning facilities that would no longer be utilized would have only a very minor and
21 temporary beneficial impact on regional economics. No current or future projects for growth
22 have been identified that would off-set the long-term, adverse effects from the partial loss of
23 direct and indirect economic activity that Fort Benning currently provides the entire region.

24 Fort Benning would also re-evaluate the need for land acquisition as proposed in the TLEP.
25 With the loss of an ABCT, the competition for training facilities such as heavy maneuver land
26 would be reduced from current demand. The re-evaluation may indicate that either a smaller
27 TLEP land acquisition of approximately 25,000 acres would be needed, or may result in no land
28 acquisition being pursued under TLEP for the foreseeable future. The TLEP DEIS indicated
29 that there may be a positive regional economic impact from the larger land acquisition due to
30 land purchase and relocation activities over several years. Some comments received on the
31 TLEP DEIS, however, indicate community concerns about significant economic losses for the
32 counties involved. With the information available to date, the Army cannot determine the
33 potential economic impacts related to a reduced or no TLEP land acquisition.

34 The potential cumulative effects on the natural environment resources would be reduced to
35 minor adverse or beneficial as a result of the implementation of Alternative 1. Fort Benning
36 would coordinate with USFWS to determine how the changed impacts to threatened and
37 endangered species, especially the RCW, may result in changes in training and management
38 actions. Fort Benning would re-evaluate the need to relocate the ARC training off post and
39 would coordinate with USFWS on options.

40 If the communities in the Fort Benning region scaled back, fewer environmental impacts may be
41 anticipated. Demolition or renovation of facilities on post and in the community are not
42 anticipated to cause any negative cumulative impacts and instead may result in more energy
43 efficiencies for regional beneficial cumulative impacts.

44 Overall, the potential cumulative impacts of Alternative 1 at Fort Benning is anticipated to be
45 significant adverse for economics, and generally reduced impacts, ranging from minor adverse
46 to beneficial, for natural and cultural resources.