

# Chapter 1. Introduction

## Army Environmental Vision Statement

*The Army will be a national leader in environmental and natural resource stewardship for present and future generations as an integral part of our mission.<sup>1</sup>*

The Army's commitment to natural resources management is reflected in the U.S. Army Environmental Strategy for the 21st century. The Army Environmental Strategy is depicted as a building established on a solid foundation with four pillars supporting the environmental stewardship vision and the Army mission. The four pillars symbolize the Army environmental program and represent the four major areas of activity: compliance, restoration, pollution prevention, and conservation. The conservation pillar focuses on responsibly managing Army lands to ensure long-term natural resources productivity, enabling the Army to achieve its mission.

The Army is required by Army Regulation 200-3 (*Natural Resources—Land, Forest, and Wildlife Management*) and the Sikes Act Improvement Act (SAIA) of 1997, Public Law 105-85, Section 670a(a)(3) to develop and maintain Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans (INRMPs) for all Army installations. Each plan must be consistent with the use of military lands to ensure military preparedness and cannot result in any net loss in the capability of the installation to support the military mission.

This INRMP is a tool to help natural resources personnel implement ecosystem management at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. The INRMP looks at how Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's natural resources program fits within the framework of the military mission and integrates with other programs such as the environmental program as a whole, outdoor recreation, the National Environmental Policy Act, cultural resources, surrounding communities, and neighboring lands. It is also a source of information for responsible or interested parties who are not directly managing Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's natural resources.

## 1.1 Goals and Objectives

### 1.1.1 Goals

Over the next five years this document and the programs outlined here will be refined as the situation warrants. Ecosystem management is still an evolving management scheme. As new information and ideas are gleaned from current research, Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's management will also change to reflect the best information available. However, the main goal of this INRMP is to support USARAK military and nonmilitary activities while maintaining a functional, healthy ecosystem.

The following general goals represent U.S. Army Alaska's commitment to manage natural resources at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. All five goals not only support excellent management of natural resources, but also support the overall military mission.

### Military Readiness

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<sup>1</sup> Army Environmental Policy Institute. 1992. *U.S. Army Environmental Strategy into the 21st Century*. U.S. Government Printing Office 1993-747-677, 38 p.

- Provide quality natural resources, as they are critical training assets for accomplishing the military mission of USARAK at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.

### **Stewardship**

- Manage natural resources at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area to ensure good stewardship of the public lands entrusted to the Army's care.

### **Quality of Life**

- Improve the quality of life for the Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area community and the general public through development of high quality natural resources-based recreational opportunities.

### **Compliance**

- Comply with laws and regulations that pertain to management of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's natural resources.

### **Integration**

- Integrate elements of natural resources management into a single program that, in turn, is integrated into Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's environmental and military training programs.

## **1.1.2 Objectives**

Statements listed below represent general USARAK objectives for attaining goals presented in Section 1.1.1 above. These statements will serve as a checklist for monitoring the plan's success. More specific objectives and tasks are proposed in Chapters 3-7.

### **Military Readiness**

- Ensure no net loss in the capability of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's lands to support existing and projected military missions.
- Maintain quality training lands through damage minimization, mitigation, and restoration.

### **Stewardship**

- Use ecosystem management philosophies to protect, conserve, and restore native fauna and flora with an emphasis on biodiversity enhancement.
- Monitor and manage soils, water, vegetation, and wildlife on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area with a consideration for all biological communities and human values associated with these resources.
- Provide economic and other human-valued products of renewable natural resources when such products can be produced in a sustainable fashion without significant negative impacts on the military training mission.
- Provide professional enforcement of natural resources laws.
- Involve the surrounding community in Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's natural resources program.

- Ensure that the Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area natural resources program is coordinated with other agencies and conservation organizations with similar interests.

### **Quality of Life**

- Provide opportunities for consumptive uses of natural resources within the biological and recreational carrying capacities.
- Provide natural resources-based opportunities for other outdoor recreation, such as hiking, snowmobiling, rafting, birding, etc.
- Provide conservation education opportunities to the military and civilian community.
- Establish and maintain an environmental setting conducive to a healthy and satisfying lifestyle for the military community.

### **Compliance**

- Manage natural resources within the spirit and letter of environmental laws, particularly the Sikes Act, upon which this INRMP is predicated.
- Manage to protect, restore, maintain or enhance sensitive species, wetlands, and unique areas.
- Use the NEPA process to make informed decisions that include natural resources considerations, mitigation, and agency and public involvement.
- Ensure that Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's natural resources program is consistent with the protection of cultural and historic resources.
- Implement this INRMP within the framework of Army policies and regulations.

### **Integration**

- Ensure the integration of, and consistency among, the various activities identified within this INRMP.
- Ensure that natural resources management is consistent with principles of Integrated Pest Management at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area .
- Ensure the integration of new military infrastructure development with the principles and guidelines of this plan.
- Coordinate the implementation of natural resources management with the overall Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area Environmental Program.
- Use the natural resources program to support and enhance other elements within the Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area Environmental Program.
- Provide the command with information needed to make decisions, which include natural resources related values.

## **1.2 The Plan**

The Sikes Act Improvement Act of 1997 (SAIA), Public Law 105-85, Section 670a(a)(3), states:

*Consistent with the use of military installations to ensure the preparedness of the Armed Forces, the Secretaries of the military departments shall carry out the program required by this subsection to provide for the conservation and rehabilitation of natural resources on military installations; the sustainable multipurpose use of the resources, which shall include hunting, fishing, trapping, and non-consumptive uses; and subject to safety requirements and military security, public access to military installations to facilitate the use.*

To facilitate the program, the law requires that Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans (INRMP) be prepared and implemented for each military installation, including withdrawn public lands. Each plan must be consistent with the use of military lands to ensure military preparedness and cannot result in any net loss in the capability of the installation to support the military mission. In accordance with Section 670a(b) of the Act, to the extent appropriate and applicable, an INRMP should provide for the following:

- Fish and wildlife management, land management, forest management, and fish- and wildlife-oriented recreation.
- Fish and wildlife habitat enhancement or modifications.
- Wetland protection, enhancement, and restoration where necessary for support of fish, wildlife, or plants.
- Integration of, and consistency among, the various activities conducted under the plan.
- Establishment of specific natural resources management goals and objectives and time frames for proposed actions.
- Sustainable use by the public of natural resources to the extent that the use is not inconsistent with the needs of fish and wildlife resources.
- Public access to the military installation that is necessary or appropriate for the use described above, subject to requirements necessary to ensure safety and military security.
- Enforcement of applicable natural resources laws (including regulations).
- No net loss in the capability of military installation lands to support the military mission of the installation.
- Such other activities as the Secretary of the Army determines appropriate.

An INRMP guides the natural resources management programs at each installation. Implementation of the INRMP management measures will enable USARAK to maintain, protect, and enhance the ecological integrity of the training lands and the biological communities inhabiting them. USARAK prepares its INRMP in cooperation with Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Alaska Department of Fish and Game. This continuous interagency participation results in a document that reflects the mutual agreement of the Department of Defense, Department of the Interior, and the state of Alaska concerning conservation, protection, and management of natural resources on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. USARAK also provides an opportunity for the public to review and comment on the INRMP.

### **1.2.1 Purpose of the Plan**

The primary purpose of this INRMP is to present natural resources goals, objectives, and policy that USARAK and BLM will use to manage military and nonmilitary use of lands in Alaska. It is the intent of DOD, DOI, and the state of Alaska to clearly and openly express these goals, objectives and policies to the public through this INRMP.

The secondary purpose of this INRMP is to guide natural resources managers and personnel in USARAK and BLM in their decision-making actions regarding management of military land in Alaska and the implementation of the proposed natural resources projects.

Implementing this INRMP would provide a sound land management program that conserves land as an essential asset for training, provides excellent stewardship, complies with environmental laws, and provides recreation opportunities that contribute to the quality of life.

A further purpose of this INRMP is to serve as a funding identification document for the management of natural resources on military lands. All of the projects listed in this INRMP are also used to meet the requirements of the Environmental Program Report (EPR). Projects are identified as high, medium, and low priority within the INRMP, which relate to the Class 1, 2, and 3 funding priority definitions in the EPR. USARAK must fund all high priority (Class 1) projects listed in this INRMP, and will fund all medium (Class 2) and low priority (Class 3) projects if funding is available.

## **1.2.2 Scope of the Plan**

The focus of this INRMP will be on the management of natural resources on the military installation. The management measures have been developed based on the current conditions of the resources, and the military mission and activities as they are anticipated. This INRMP will guide natural resources management of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area for the next five years (2002-2006) and provide a solid foundation from which to build and continue the program beyond the year 2006.

USARAK recognizes that the release of contaminants into the environment and response actions to clean up those contaminants may result in adverse impacts to natural resources. However, the Restoration Branch within the Environmental Resources Department is responsible for identifying such releases, considering risks and assessing impacts to the environment (including impacts to endangered species, migratory birds and biotic communities), and developing and selecting response actions when unacceptable risk to ecological receptors from the release is likely. As a result, contaminant release, clean up actions and potential ecological impacts are discussed in the Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area Installation Restoration Plan and are not included within the scope of the plan.

## **1.2.3 Structure of the Plan**

This INRMP is organized as follows:

**Chapter 1: Introduction** describes the overall natural resources goals and objectives, gives a brief review of past natural resources management actions, defines joint management and stewardship of USARAK lands, and states the military mission. Specific INRMP objectives and military, federal, state, and local responsibilities and partnerships are also explained. The integration of NEPA compliance within this INRMP is also discussed, including defining alternatives.

**Chapter 2: Affected Environment** describes the relevant environmental resources of USARAK lands.

**Chapter 3: Ecosystem Management** describes the ecosystem management program goals, objectives, planning, inventory and monitoring. Various components of the program are explained, and proposed management alternatives are listed.

**Chapter 4: Physical Resources Management Alternatives** describes land, watershed and minerals management programs. Goals, objectives, planning, inventory, monitoring and responsibilities are discussed, and proposed management alternatives are listed.

**Chapter 5: Biological Resources Management** describes wetlands, forest, fire, fish and wildlife, endangered species, special interest areas, and pest management programs. Goals, objectives, planning, inventory, monitoring and responsibilities are discussed, and proposed management alternatives are listed.

**Chapter 6: Social Resources Management** describes education, awareness and public outreach; outdoor recreation; conservation enforcement; and cultural resources management programs. Goals, objectives,

planning, inventory, monitoring and responsibilities are discussed, and proposed management alternatives are listed.

**Chapter 7: Support Resources Management** describes the NEPA program, decision support systems, and other programs affecting natural resources management. Goals, objectives, planning, inventory, monitoring and responsibilities are discussed, and proposed management alternatives are listed.

**Chapter 8: Natural Resources Implementation** outlines procedures to implement the INRMP and its associated actions. These include funding mechanisms, priorities, staffing requirements, planning methods, and command support.

**Chapter 9: Environmental Consequences** determines the impacts of each alternative on the relevant environmental resources and are presented in matrix form. Cumulative impacts are considered for each resource.

Sections at the end of the document list preparers and contributors of this document, sources referenced in this document, and agencies and individuals who were contacted during preparation of this document for consultation of their expertise. Eight appendices are also included.

This INRMP is an umbrella document for a number of more detailed action plans. While the INRMP is more general, describing projects to be implemented, the action plans have information detailed enough to prepare a scope of work for each project. Each action plan will have separate NEPA documentation in the form of an Environmental Assessment (EA) and can be found under separate cover. The action plans, summarized in Appendix D, are as follows:

- Forest Management Action Plan
- Habitat Management Action Plan
- Wetlands Management Action Plan
- Soil Resources Action Plan
- Fire Management Action Plan
- Outdoor Recreation Management Action Plan
- Aviation Management Plan
- Special Interest Areas Management Plan
- Ecosystem Management Action Plan.

The Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan and Integrated Pest Management Plan are written as separate plans.

## **1.2.4 Resource Management Plan**

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 requires BLM to develop, maintain, and, when appropriate, revise land use plans. Public Law 106-65, which withdrew most of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area lands for 25 years, requires BLM to prepare a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the military withdrawal. The objective of BLM's land use planning is to ensure that public lands are managed under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield by:

- Providing a process for evaluating resource information, which includes consideration of social and economic factors, to decide appropriate public land uses.
- Ensuring participation by the public, state and local governments, Indian tribes, and appropriate federal agencies.

- Using collaborative and multi-jurisdictional approaches to ensure consistent decision-making across different land ownerships and jurisdictions.
- Providing a documented record of land allocations and permissible resource uses and constraints that are available to the public.
- Providing a framework to guide subsequent implementation decisions.

BLM has developed a comprehensive land use planning base consisting of decisions reached in its resource management plans. BLM land management is an ongoing process of decision-making, implementation, monitoring and assessment, and adjustment that allows for continuous corrections and reduces the need for major plan revisions. New information or proposals might necessitate a plan revision or an update to a plan's associated National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis. BLM's nine-step planning process, in 43 CFR Part 1600, integrates the NEPA decision-making process. New RMPs and RMP revisions require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

This INRMP does not conflict with the BLM RMP for Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. Until the BLM RMP is in place, this plan acts as the RMP.

### **1.2.5 Section 106, National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)**

In the past, natural resources management projects were overlooked as potential causes of adverse impacts to archeological sites. Activities such as tree removal and training land restoration are all potentially damaging. In order to reduce negative impacts to cultural resources, projects that involve ground-disturbing activities will be processed through the USARAK Natural Resources Cultural Resources Manager (CRM). Furthermore, the CRM will be consulted in areas of long-range planning (such as the INRMP) that define policy.

Determination of effect and consultation guidelines provided in implementing regulations for the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (36 CFR 800) will be followed during review of projects. Any project assessed as having an effect on a cultural resource site or historic property at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area will be coordinated with the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Natural resources-related law enforcement actions also have the potential to beneficially impact preservation of cultural resources. If natural resources enforcement officers are added to the Natural Resources Branch staff, they will also be trained in enforcement of various cultural resources laws, especially the Archeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA).

Natural and cultural resources are not mutually exclusive. Personnel involved in both of these programs at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area will work closely with one another to insure their successful integration.

Section 106, NHPA has been considered in the preparation of this plan and it has been determined that there are no significant issues associated with the implementation of this plan.

## **1.3 Background**

### **1.3.1 Location and Neighbors**

Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area is located 107 road miles southeast of Fairbanks and six road miles south of the junction of the Alaska and Richardson highways. The post lies within the central valley

and hill area, bordered by the Brooks Mountain Range to the north and the Alaska Range to the south (Anonymous 1995a). The entire region lies within the Tanana River Valley. Figure 1-1 shows the general location of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.

Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area consists of the Main Post (13,399 acres); two large training areas, Donnelly West Training Area (approximately 531,000 acres) and Donnelly East Training Area (approximately 93,000 acres); and three outlying sites, Gerstle River Training Area (20,580 acres), Black Rapids Training Site (4,112 acres), and Whistler Creek Rock Climbing Area (542 acres).

Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area is a satellite installation of Fort Richardson, the headquarters of USARAK. The Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area natural resources program is managed in conjunction with Fort Wainwright's program, and all three installations are the responsibility of USARAK. Fort Richardson and Fort Wainwright each have their own INRMPs.

Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area is separated from Delta Junction by Jarvis Creek. Delta Junction is the largest community in the area, with 840 residents in 2000 (compared to 703 in 1970) (BLM and U.S. Army 1994; U.S. Census Bureau 2001). In spite of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), the overall population of the region had remained relatively stable through 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2001). However, it is expected that with the final actions associated with BRAC, the area population will experience decline. The chances of development approaching the Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area boundaries are remote. Most of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area, except for the Main Post, is isolated from encroachment, except for remote homesteads.

Other developed areas include Big Delta to the north and the Clearwater farming and ranching area to the east. The Alaska and Richardson highways and the Trans-Alaska Pipeline cross Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. The pipeline generally parallels the Richardson Highway, with above and below ground sections located within the Donnelly East Training Area.

Neighboring Tribes include the Healy Lake Traditional Council, Dot Lake village Council, and the Tanacross Village Council. These represent the nearest federally recognized Indian Tribes that have ties to the Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area-associated lands. Other Upper Tanana Tribes are also affiliated with the area through familial relationships (Jim Simon pers. com. 2001).

### **1.3.2 Acreage, Acquisition, and Land Status**

Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area comprises approximately 662,000 acres. Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area land acquisitions are shown in Figure 1-2.

#### **1.3.2.1 Land Acquisition for Military Use**

Most of the Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area land is withdrawn from public use by stipulations that vary with each withdrawal document. Some stipulations are consistent throughout all withdrawals and Executive Orders. Withdrawn lands are not available for disposal, including state or native selection, sales under FLPMA or the Recreation and Public Purposes Act, or exchanges. In addition, no rights-of-way are allowed on withdrawn lands that are closed for public access. However, there is a process identified to determine the validity of rights-of-way claims for administrative purposes only.

##### **1.3.2.1.1 PL106-65 Land Withdrawal**

**Donnelly West Training Area:** In 1950, the Army obtained a Special Land Use permit from the Department of the Interior for use of 572,000 acres known then as the West Training Area. The permit

was granted in six-month extensions until passage of legislation in 1961 granted withdrawal for a ten year term. The withdrawal was renewed in 1971 for five years, excluding a five acre trade and manufacturing site near the western edge of the West Training Area. In 1976, the West Training Area was segregated from public use pending renewal of the existing withdrawal legislation by Congress. Congress renewed the withdrawal in 1986 for a fifteen-year term with the passage of the Military Lands Withdrawal Act (Public Law 99-606). These lands were withdrawn again in 2001 for a period of 25 years for military use by Public Law 106-65. With the finalization of BRAC, the boundary has shifted to the east bank of the Delta River, making it about 531,000 acres, and the name is now the Donnelly West Training Area.

The Donnelly West Training Area lies between the east bank of the Delta River and east bank of the Little Delta River. Northern and southern boundaries are two northwest-southeast diagonal lines varying from a little over twenty miles apart in the east to about thirty-five miles apart in the west. The Delta River flows northward along the eastern boundary of the Donnelly West Training Area.

***Donnelly East Training Area:*** The Army obtained permanent use of a 160 acre tract called the East Training Area by a Public Land Order. In late 1958, the Army obtained the use of 51,750 acres of the East Training Area by a permit from the Department of the Interior (including the 160 acre tract). The permit was granted six-month extensions until passage of Congressional legislation. The legislation passed in 1961, granting the Army use of 51,590 acres of the East Training Area for a ten-year term. That legislation excluded the 160 acre tract, which was returned to the Bureau of Land Management. The withdrawal was renewed in 1971 for five years. In 1976, the East Training Area was segregated from public use pending renewal of the existing withdrawal by Congress. Congress renewed the withdrawal in 1986 for a fifteen-year term with the passage of the Military Lands Withdrawal Act (Public Law 99-606). These lands were withdrawn again in 2001 for a period of 25 years for military use by Public Law 106-65. Due to final BRAC actions, the name has changed to Donnelly East Training Area, and the west boundary has shifted to the Delta River, enlarging it to approximately 93,000 acres.

The Donnelly East Training Area is located from the eastern bank of the Delta River to Granite Creek on the west. The northern boundary roughly parallels the Alaska Highway, and the southern boundary is in the foothills of the Alaska Range, on a line between Granite Mountain and Donnelly Dome.

#### ***1.3.2.1.2 Other Withdrawals***

***Main Post:*** Main Post totals 18,740 acres, consisting of two non-expiring withdrawals. Allen Army Airfield, formerly known as the Big Delta Airfield, was last withdrawn in 1963 under PLO 3216. The remainder of Main Post was withdrawn under PLO 255 in 1944 and changed to a permanent withdrawal in 1952. This Main Post withdrawal is the portion that retains the name Fort Greely. Approximately 7,000 acres may be transferred from USARAK to Space and Missile Defense Command, and only that portion will retain the Fort Greely name. In either case, the remainder of the Main Post Withdrawal remains a vital part of USARAK and is managed together with the Donnelly East Training Area.

The Main Post is south of Delta Junction, along the Richardson Highway.

***Gerstle River Training Area:*** Gerstle River Training Area, formerly known as Gerstle River Test Site, was withdrawn by PLO 910 in 1962. PLO 910 totals 19,000 acres and is a non-expiring withdrawal.

The Gerstle River Training Area (GRTA) lies between Granite Mountain and Gerstle River, about three miles south of the Alaska Highway; the rectangular area is oriented northwest to southeast and measures about five miles, north to south, and nine miles, east to west.

***Black Rapids and Whistler Creek:*** Black Rapids Training Site totals 2,299 acres and was permanently withdrawn under PLO 2622. Whistler Creek Rock Climbing Area and Black Rapids Rock Climbing Training Area totals 532 acres and were permanently withdrawn by PLO 794 in 1958 and PLO 1804 in 1959.

The Black Rapids Training Site and Whistler Creek Rock Climbing Area are south of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area along the east side of the Richardson Highway.

#### ***1.3.2.1.3 Existing Rights-of-Way***

The Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) transports crude oil from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez, Alaska. The Pipeline System right-of-way extends through the Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. The right-of-way was authorized by the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Authorization Act of 1973. Its width is 50 feet plus the ground area occupied by the pipeline, which is approximately four feet.

An additional right-of-way for the Alaska Natural Gas Transportation System lies adjacent to the TAPS right-of-way. The width for the natural gas pipeline is 50 feet.

A right-of-way has been approved by the Army and Bureau of Land Management for the proposed Trans-Alaska Gas System, which runs roughly parallel with the TAPS and Natural Gas Transportation System, through Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Areas (U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Dept. of Defense 1994a and 1994b).

Per the *YTA Resource Management Plan* (BLM and U.S. Army, 1994), withdrawn lands are not available for disposal, including state or native selection, sales under FLPMA or the Recreation and Public Purposes Act, or exchanges. No rights-of-way are allowed in those portions of withdrawn lands that are closed to public access. However, there is a process identified to determine the validity of rights-of-way claims for administrative purposes only.

#### **1.3.2.2 Base Realignment and Closure**

A portion of the Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area was designated by Congress to be realigned under Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) of 1995. About 1,800 acres of Main Post was transferred when BRAC became final in July 2001. This acreage contains most of the buildings on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. BRAC relocated administrative functions of the Cold Region Test Center and the Northern Warfare Training Center to Fort Wainwright, reducing the number of civilian employees at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area from about 300 to 57 and the number of military personnel from about 400 to 11 (HQ, USARPAC 1996).

#### **1.3.2.3 National Missile Defense**

The National Missile Defense Organization (NMDO), under the Space and Missile Defense Command (SMDC), may choose Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area as the location to field the ground based interceptor component of its missile defense system. If that occurs, approximately 7,000 acres will be transferred to the SMDC. This will include most of the Main Post BRAC lands and portions of Training Areas 20-27 in Donnelly East Training Area. The 7,000 acres transferred to SMDC will retain the title Fort Greely. The remaining portion (including the majority of training lands) will become a non-contiguous training area of Fort Wainwright and will be named Donnelly Training Area.

The remaining 655,000 acres of maneuver training land on Donnelly Training Area continue to be a vital part of USARAK. The US Army continues to retain Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area for military purposes and USARAK remains responsible for natural and cultural resources management on both Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.

### **1.3.3 Installation History**

Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area originated as Station 17, Alaskan Wing, Air Transport Command, later known as Allen Army Airfield. The first Army units set up camp in June 1942. Throughout World War II, it served as a rest and refueling stop for American pilots on their way to Ladd Army Airfield (now Fort Wainwright) when transporting air freight and ferrying Lend-Lease planes to Russia (Anonymous 1995a).

In 1945, Station 17 was put on the inactive status list and was maintained by the Civil Aeronautics Authority with a skeleton crew of Army personnel. During the winter of 1947-1948, the installation was selected for the first post-war, cold weather maneuver known as "Exercise Yukon." This led to reactivation of the installation in May 1948 and its designation as United States Troops, Big Delta, Alaska (Anonymous 1995a).

In 1949, the installation became the site of the Arctic Training Center (HQ, USARPAC 1996) because of its extreme winter conditions in interior Alaska and varied terrain, including rivers, lakes, swamps, and open plains. Personnel were assigned to post headquarters and three subdivisions of the Arctic Test Center: the Army Arctic Indoctrination School, Army Training Company (School Troops), and Test and Development Section.

The Army Chemical Corps Arctic Test Team was established on the installation in 1950. In 1952, the post was renamed the Army Arctic Center, and in 1953, permanent buildings, now known as the Main Post, were constructed. Original temporary buildings at the airfield are now called the Old Post. Expansion of the permanent facilities began in 1954 with construction of the post headquarters, post engineer facilities, auditorium, fire station, power plant, and other buildings.

The post was designated as Fort Greely on August 6, 1955. In 1956, the Chemical Corps Arctic Test Team was redesignated as a Class II activity, and it was renamed the U.S. Army Chemical Corps-Arctic Test Activity in 1957. The Arctic Test Group was renamed the Arctic Test Board, and the Arctic Indoctrination School became the Army Cold Weather and Mountain School when the Mountain Training Center at Fort Carson, Colorado, was deactivated.

In 1963, the Army redesignated the Cold Weather and Mountain School as the Northern Warfare Training Center, the mission of which was to train units in the conduct of warfare in northern areas of operation. The Arctic Test Board became the Arctic Test Center in 1964. In the 1970s, the Arctic Test Center became the Cold Regions Test Center.

Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area became part of the 172nd Infantry Brigade in 1974, when U.S. Army Alaska was restructured. In 1986, the newly reactivated 6th Infantry Division (Light) replaced the 172nd Infantry Brigade. The 6th Infantry Division, which had been deactivated in Korea after distinguished service in two world wars, was recalled as a specialized Arctic/mountain light contingency force under U.S. Army Pacific Command (USARPAC). Headquarters was established on Fort Richardson and remained there until 1990 when it was transferred to Fort Wainwright (Higginbotham/Briggs and Associates 1991).

Following deactivation of Headquarters, 1st Brigade, 6th Infantry Division (Light) in 1994, Headquarters U.S. Army Alaska (USARAK) became the active Army component at Fort Richardson. In 1998, the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (Light) was deactivated, and the 172<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade was reactivated.

### **1.3.4 Historic Natural Resources Program Development**

#### **1.3.4.1 Fish and Wildlife Management 1963-1986**

Early fish and wildlife management concerned education and enforcement using noncommissioned officers as Army wildlife agents. In 1963, conservation activities became a staff responsibility of the Provost Marshal. However, most of the wildlife conservation effort was on Fort Richardson.

Early projects on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area (Fort Richardson 1963) included:

- Clearing streams blocked by winter military exercises.
- Bison management, including construction of a corral for transplanting, assistance with bison hunts, keeping bison off the Big Delta runway, aerial census, salt block placement, and use of a wrecker to rescue a bison trapped in a well.
- Use of Army helicopters to stock lakes.
- Assistance with enforcement checkpoints along the Denali Highway.
- Stocking Bolio Lake with 10,000 rainbow fingerlings.

In 1972, the Alaska Command (ALCOM) awarded Fort Greely the Outstanding Conservation Award. ALCOM also recognized the individual accomplishments of an enlisted soldier at Fort Greely in the natural resources program (Quirk et al. 1978).

In 1978, natural resources specialists from the three Alaska Command installations combined to draft a *Natural Resources Conservation Program* (Quirk et al. 1978). Spiers (1982) completed the first wildlife management plan for Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. The Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area program operated under a statewide Cooperative Agreement between 172<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade, the USFWS, and ADF&G. It was signed in 1960 and has been updated regularly.

The 1982 Fish and Wildlife Management Plan for Fort Greely (Spiers 1982) outlined the following objectives:

- Maximize the opportunity to hunt, fish, and trap on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.
- Provide a quality experience of hunting, fishing, or trapping.
- Ensure, wherever possible, that optimum numbers of managed species are maintained.
- Maximize opportunities for the public to view, photograph, and enjoy wildlife for recreational and educational purposes.
- Eliminate or mitigate conflicts between wildlife resources and the military mission or human's use of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.
- Preserve wetlands and other areas critical to survival of certain species.
- Establish annual work plans to accomplish the above objectives.

The Gerstle River Test Site (GRTS) and Main Post were not open to public hunting. GRTS was considered to have potential for management as a refuge.

The post was divided into eight units by natural and man-made features for management purposes. ADF&G had sole responsibility for managing fish and game on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area

prior to completion of the plan. Their efforts were largely stocking and monitoring of fish, wolf control, and big game census.

According to the 1982 Fish and Wildlife Plan, wildlife law enforcement was the responsibility of Military Police game wardens and wildlife enforcement officers within the Alaska Department of Public Safety. Military Police game wardens maintained records on individually claimed trapping areas and gave safety lectures to those who hunted on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. While the 172nd Infantry Brigade was responsible for publishing general regulations governing hunting, fishing, and trapping on Army lands in Alaska, the Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area Military Police published a supplement specific to Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.

Lack of data prompted biologists to recommend preservation of habitats. As important wildlife use areas were identified, they were protected from Army actions. Limited harvests targeted surplus populations. Bison and moose were the only game species for which habitat manipulation was planned. An appendix to this plan included *A Bison Management Plan for Fort Greely, Alaska* (Kiker and Fielder 1980) with two supplements, *A Management Plan to Reroute the Migration Pattern of the Delta Bison Herd* (Fielder 1980) and *A General Plan for Expanding and Rehabilitating the Summer Range of the Delta Bison Herd* (Spiers 1981).

The 1982 plan stated there were seven fishable lakes between Meadows Road and Old Richardson Highway. Many lakes on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area were shallow enough to freeze solid in the winter. Natural reproduction of fish was negligible, and ADF&G stocked lakes when fish were available. Three other ponds were used by the state to rear grayling for stocking in other state waters. The 1982 plan included a creel census on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area lakes to determine the amount of fishing pressure. Some lakes to the west of the Delta River contained natural populations of longnose suckers and northern pike.

In July 1986, USARAK entered into a Cooperative Agreement with USFWS and ADF&G (U.S. Army 1986). The main goal of the Cooperative Agreement was to develop fish and wildlife management programs. The parties defined certain unique or sensitive habitats, including those for the Delta bison herd, calving and post-calving caribou, and roosting sandhill cranes. The Cooperative Agreement called for the parties to cooperatively inventory fish and wildlife on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. Under the agreement, the Army committed to:

- Monitoring radio-collared moose by helicopter to better understand seasonal movements, contingent upon ADF&G's purchase and emplacement of collars.
- Assisting ADF&G in monitoring radio-collared bison by helicopter to locate distinct herds for enumeration.
- Conducting a study of the grizzly bear population on the north face of the Alaska Range, including Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area in cooperation with the ADF&G.

#### **1.3.4.2 The 1994 Fort Greely Proposed Resource Management Plan– Final Environmental Impact Statement**

The Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement was written to fulfill the mandate of the Military Lands Withdrawals Act of 1986. The document was the result of work by a joint BLM-USARAK planning team that consulted with the public throughout the process. The plan proposed a variety of nonmilitary uses, while recognizing the primary military purpose of the withdrawn lands. The 1998-2002 INRMP used the 1994 Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement as a base upon which proposed management activities were built.

### **1.3.4.3 Land Management**

In 1996, the Integrated Training Area Management (ITAM) program was initiated on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. The ITAM program is centrally coordinated for USARAK, using assistance by representatives of both Natural Resources and Range Control at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. The Land Condition-Trend Analysis (LCTA) program was implemented in 1997. Geographic Information System (GIS) database development began the same year. Chapter 4 provides descriptions of the ITAM program and summarizes planned actions of individual ITAM components.

### **1.3.4.4 Fort Greely 1998 – 2002 Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan**

The 2002-2006 INRMP is an update of the 1998-2002 Fort Greely INRMP. Many of the proposed projects in the 1998-2002 plan were funded and implemented on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. However, not all projects were completed. This INRMP continues to carry out many natural resource projects and programs initiated by the 1998-2002 plan for the enhancement of natural resources on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.

- Staff salaries, equipment, and supplies
- Cultural resources studies
- LCTA Program
- Forest Management Plan and Commercial Feasibility Study
- Range improvement activities
- Conduct moose and caribou censuses
- Develop Cross Cultural Communication Steering Committee
- Develop recreational computerized check-in/check-out system
- Repair wetland crossings on 33-Mile Loop Road
- Develop fog oil monitoring protocol
- Obtain new digital ortho-photos
- Improve wildlife habitat
- Control erosion on three access sites

### **1.3.4.5 Organizational Status**

In 1972, Fort Richardson's Commander delegated responsibility for environmental and natural resources management to a new Environmental Office within the Directorate of Engineering and Housing (now DPW) (Quirk et al., 1978). A Sanitary Engineer (GS-12) was hired to head the office with a staff including an Environmental Specialist (GS-09) and a Clerk/Typist (GS-04). As the office was also responsible for Fort Wainwright and Fort Greely, Natural Resources Specialists (GS-11) were hired on each of the three posts (Quirk et al., 1978). Fort Greely hired its first civilian natural resources specialist in 1977 and its first wildlife biologist in 1981. In the 1980s, the Environmental Resources Office expanded to become a division within DPW, and USARAK Natural Resources was granted Branch status. Current and projected staffing of the Natural Resources Branch is discussed in Chapter 8.

## **1.4 Military Mission**

The United States has adopted an international political and military strategy that requires the nation's military forces to be ready to deploy on short notice for engagement anywhere in the world. The American people rightly expect these forces to be highly trained and equipped with the highest-

performance materiel and technology available. Ready, capable forces result from constant training, and new or modified weaponry and other equipment must be field-tested before being placed with the using units.

Because of the speed and maneuverability of modern armaments, today's and tomorrow's armed forces require large tracts of land for training and weapons testing. Changes in tactical doctrine and weapons technology designed to dissuade any would-be aggressor, to win battles, and to minimize casualties to American and allied forces in the event of armed conflict are increasing the need for such land despite reductions in the size of the U.S. military since the Cold War and the closure of some military installations.

The United States (US) Army must maintain the capability, through a total force effort, to put overwhelming land combat power on any future battlefield and defeat any potential enemies. A decisive victory depends on the ability to deploy rapidly, fight, self-sustain, and win quickly with minimum casualties.

In the 21st century, the Army faces unprecedented challenges to its ability to train. Increased environmental regulation of training lands and ranges coupled with increased economic development around Army installations contribute to a more challenging training climate. A sound land management program that provides economical and acceptable planning and execution is mandatory to protect that land as an essential asset for training.

Implementing this INRMP provides a sound land management program that conserves land as an essential asset for training, provides excellent stewardship, complies with environmental laws and provides recreation opportunities that contribute to quality of life.

## **1.4.1 Overview**

### **1.4.1.1 USARAK Mission**

#### The Spirit of the "Arctic Light"

*"We train to the highest standards in the toughest environment in the world—we are ready to go anywhere in the world within 18 hours—there is nothing that we cannot handle when we get there—we are up to it."*<sup>2</sup>

The primary military mission of USARAK after the Cold War has been peacetime deployment to support U.S. interests worldwide, the defense of Alaska, and the coordination of Army National Guard and Reserve activities in the state. Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's lands are used for testing and evaluating weapons and equipment under conditions of extreme cold, training forces for action in Arctic and subarctic regions in the event of war, and for training by the 172<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade (Separate).

The Cold Regions Test Center (CRTC) is responsible for testing troops, materiel, and equipment under conditions of extreme cold. The CRTC is charged with planning, conducting, and reporting on environmental phases of development tests and providing advice and guidance on test and evaluation matters to materiel producers, the other armed services, and private industry.

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<sup>2</sup> Lt. Gen. L.E. Boese

The Northern Warfare Training Center (NWTC) is responsible for training forces for action in Arctic and sub-arctic regions. The NWTC trains Arctic and mountaineering units in winter and summer conditions, and maintains and improves state-of-the-art mountain and northern operations for U.S. Army. The NWTC conducts high-altitude search and rescue missions, tests and evaluates mountaineering techniques and equipment, and trains and equips the Military Mountaineering Team.

The U.S. Air Force (USAF) is a major user of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area for routine training and Major Flying Exercises (MFE). The USAF uses the Oklahoma and Delta Creek Impact Areas as a tactical air-to-ground weapons range, and for low and high altitude bombing by B1 and B52 aircraft. The Yukon Measurement and Debriefing System, a computerized system that can create “air wars” of up to 36 aircraft simultaneously, has been installed on Donnelly Training Area (DTA). USAF pilots are debriefed to show how they reacted to enemy aircraft and various other simulated conditions. The Oklahoma Impact Area is equipped with USAF targets, manned radar emitters, anti-aircraft threat simulators, and electronic scoring sensors.

Typically one MFE is conducted between February and April, four exercises between May and August, and one exercise between October and November. This results in USAF total use of DTA for about two or three hours each morning and afternoon during the two-week exercises. COPE Thunder, a USAF MFE formerly conducted at Clark AFB in the Philippines, is now conducted at Donnelly Training Area and other areas.

#### **1.4.1.2 USARAK Population and Major Troop Units**

Most USARAK combat forces, 172<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade (Separate), are at Fort Wainwright, with Fort Richardson as the primary support base. Upon completion of realignment of Fort Greely in July 2001, 57 civilian employees and 11 active duty soldiers were stationed at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.

Subordinate commands to the brigade include the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry; 172<sup>nd</sup> Support Battalion; 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 11<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery; 562<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Company; 507<sup>th</sup> Signal Company; 572<sup>nd</sup> Military Intelligence Company; 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry; and E Troop, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry. The Arctic Support Brigade also has units at Fort Wainwright, including C Company, Special Troops Battalion; 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 123<sup>rd</sup> Theater Aviation; 203<sup>rd</sup> Personnel Service Battalion; 267<sup>th</sup> Finance Support Battalion; 98<sup>th</sup> Direct Support Maintenance Company; and Law Enforcement Command. U.S. Marines have been using Fort Wainwright in recent years for annual training.

Fiscal Year 2001 Demographics indicate that 80 active duty soldiers were stationed on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area, including tenant organizations. About 93 active Army family members and 213 Army retiree family members are part of the Delta-Greely community, as are 154 civilian employees.

#### **1.4.1.3 Anticipated Changes in Military Mission**

While many aspects of the military mission are discussed in the INRMP, only the impacts of the natural resource management alternatives are considered. The impacts of the continued withdrawal for military use of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area were analyzed in the *Alaska Army Lands Withdrawal Renewal Final Legislative Environmental Impacts Statement*.

Future Army force restructuring may bring about changes to the military mission in Alaska. Impacts of on-going and future training activities would be considered in separate environmental documents.

Changes in facilities that would affect natural resources will be determined by changes in the military mission. If USARAK were to be tasked with alternate missions, additional ranges may be needed. Such new missions have not been identified. Facility development that would likely affect natural resources include new ranges, impact and target areas, and buildings in areas that are now undisturbed. All would require completion of appropriate NEPA documentation.

## **1.4.2 Relationships Between Natural Resources and the Military Mission**

Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's missions have included a variety of uses on its lands. Over the years, light infantry, mechanized infantry, artillery, special forces, and assault aircraft have used the post for training.

As a part of the master plan, the land has been separated into three general land uses types: urban areas, training areas, and impact areas. Military use differs within these areas. This in turn, affects public access, and determines the natural resource management activities that can occur in each general land use type.

Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area is fully capable of supporting its military mission. The military mission is natural resources dependent, and it affects some of these resources. The LRAM program mitigates some damage caused by this mission, and other ITAM programs within this INRMP will reduce future damage.

There is no evidence to suggest that the military mission is jeopardized on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area due to the capability of the land to support that mission. In fact, the land could support additional training as has been proven in the past when training levels were higher.

### **1.4.2.1 Effects of the Military Mission on Natural Resources**

*The conservation of natural resources and the military mission will not be mutually exclusive.*<sup>3</sup>

Past mission activities on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area were mostly localized. Among the most extensive impacts was the construction of the original landing strip and associated buildings. This involved removing soil and native vegetation and replacing them with gravel. Most land outside the cantonment area remains undeveloped, affected only by localized training.

Impacts to natural resources on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area have been consistent with trends at other DOD holdings. The *Unit Leader's Handbook for Environmental Stewardship* (Department of Army 1994) lists six primary consequences of intensive and continuous use of Army training lands. On Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area, none of these effects have been significant.

- Loss of historical sites, vegetation, water resources, and wildlife
- Diminished quality of available realistic training areas
- Diminished operational security
- Ineffective tactical operations
- Creation of safety hazards to personnel and equipment
- An increase in training, maintenance, and/or litigation costs

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<sup>3</sup> AR 200-3, Natural Resources-Land, Forest, and Wildlife Management, para 2-11.

Damaging effects of military missions are primarily from two sources: projectile impact and maneuver. Approximately 63,138 acres of land on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area have been designated as high hazard impact areas. Munitions can damage soil, vegetation, and wildlife upon impact. For example, in the late 1980s, mortar rounds killed some bison at Fort Greely. Other sources of damage from impact include proliferation of shrapnel and release of toxic residues. Other impact area types are small arms (9760 acres), in which only non-dud producing rounds are fired. The Lakes Impact Area is a maneuver impact area that acts as a buffer to the high hazard areas during firing. It is 74,565 acres, and is open to maneuver training when firing is not occurring. Impacts to soil, vegetation and wildlife are minimal in the maneuver impact area. The potential munitions damage in the small arms impact area is limited to concentrated locations on the ranges themselves.

The Air Force conducts decontamination operations on the Oklahoma/Delta Creek Impact Areas in the Donnelly West Training Area. Each year all unexploded ordnance, inert residue, and targetry debris are cleared to a radius of at least 1,000 feet from each of the Air Force's tactical targets. Additionally, access ways into the tactical targets and 100 feet on either side of the access ways are cleared annually.

Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area contains 501,022 acres suitable for vehicle or foot maneuver (totaling 575,587 acres when including the Lakes Impact Area). Maneuver impacts are minimal when previously cleared sites are used for summer training activities. However, maneuvering can have negative impacts to the environment when trails are created in places that become boggy. Clearing sites underlain by permafrost can have a greater impact on the military mission if the site becomes boggy, rendering it unusable for military training. Eventually, large areas of open water can form, and most vehicles will not be able to navigate through the area during warmer times of the year.

Impacts at firing points vary according to the type of improvements at each location. Improvements can include gravel pads, bear-proof trash containers, and permanent or portable latrines. Areas with these modifications tend to stay in good condition. Firing points that are simply large clearings or areas of low vegetation can be impacted in ways similar to maneuver areas.

Most winter military training causes minimal damage. Mechanical snow removal can damage the vegetative mat if care is not taken to keep the blade above the ground level.

Ranges, drop zones, and airstrips are generally able to withstand the activities that take place on them. However, the high usage of the Donnelly Assault Strip during the summer causes the dirt surface to break down, creating thick dust and requiring more frequent maintenance.

Noise from military training potentially affects natural resources by disturbing wildlife. Noise sources include munitions firing and impact, low flying aircraft, and general troop maneuvers (both mechanized and pedestrian). Munitions produce the greatest noise levels, ranging from 112 to 190 dB (C). C-weighted (artillery fire, sonic booms, and explosions) and small arms sound levels have not been calculated for Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. However, no adverse effects to wildlife from noise have been observed on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area (Anonymous 1979).

Potential impacts of military training on wildlife include: becoming entangled in concertina wire, drinking anti-freeze, and falling into unfilled holes. USARAK Regulation 350-2 requires all soldiers to remove concertina wire and trash, fill holes, and specifically restricts harassing wildlife. USARAK Pamphlet 200-1 sets forth requirements, restrictions and guidance on hazardous materials and regulated waste management, which minimizes those hazards in the training areas.

Removal or alteration of wildlife habitat has occurred along roads and trails, within drop zones, firing ranges, and impact areas. Construction of roads and trails has impacted about 884 acres. Trails kept open

by regular use are considered permanent, and most remain in an early successional stage of vegetation, consisting of grasses and alders. Temporary trails may scar areas of permafrost, causing disturbance that can take 50 years or more to recover. Similar direct effects result from construction of drop zones and firing ranges, impacting about 1,900 acres and 330 acres respectively.

Aquatic ecosystems also have been subjected to direct and indirect impacts of military activities. Stream crossings by wheeled or tracked vehicles during summer result in loss of some aquatic life, primarily benthic organisms. Indirect impacts have likely resulted from stream crossings and artillery explosions near water. These secondary effects include increased sedimentation, increased biological and chemical oxygen demand, and slight decreases in dissolved oxygen concentration (Anonymous 1979).

Military activities have increased the number of wildfires. Fire results in altered vegetation and can contribute to increased erosion and siltation. However, there are many positive effects of wildfires on ecosystem functionality in interior Alaska, including the ability to use fire to accomplish ecosystem management goals. There are also numerous positive effects of the military mission on natural resources. The most significant is USARAK's commitment to natural resources management, including minimization and mitigation of military mission damage. This commitment is beneficial for natural resources and the people who use them.

Both unintentional and intentional military activities may provide short-term benefits to wildlife and recreational users. For example, wildfires and construction activities that remove mature forest cover result in growth of early successional vegetation, which is preferred forage or habitat for moose, sharptail grouse, and other species. Roads and trails provide increased access for recreational users. Diversity in forest and vegetation age structure is beneficial for overall biodiversity.

Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area preserves native ecosystems by excluding development and ensuring that competing land uses are conducted in a manner that protects the environment. Natural resources management considerations and safety demands associated with military activities limit the extent of other potentially damaging land uses. Damage from training activities will be repaired under the Land Rehabilitation and Maintenance (LRAM) component of the ITAM program.

#### **1.4.2.2 Effects of Natural Resources or Their Management on the Military Mission**

Military training is affected by limitations imposed by natural resources management on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. Most limitations involve the protection of wetlands under various executive orders, federal and state laws, and Army policies. A five-year Section 404 Wetland Permit was obtained in 2000 that allows maneuver training in over 500,000 acres of low function wetlands, while protecting high function wetlands and sensitive habitat for many important wildlife species.

The elimination of all white phosphorous munitions use was imposed on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area in 1991. White phosphorus is commonly used to mark targets for air strikes. Without its use, the Army and Air Force must rely on lasers. Another impact to Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area is artillery units that normally trained at Eagle River Flats have had to travel to Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area for training now restricted on Fort Richardson.

On occasion, big game (moose, caribou and bison) must be moved off the ranges prior to firing. The U.S. Air Force is required to stop exercises on the Oklahoma/Delta Creek Impact Area if large numbers of the Delta caribou herd are using the impact areas for calving. Historically, neither of these animal/military conflicts has negatively impacted the military mission.

Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area is minimizing the potential for additional environmental damage by implementing restrictions on firing and seasonal use as listed below. Few of these restrictions cause major impacts on the military mission.

- Use the summer and winter environmental limitations overlays that protect high function wetlands and sensitive wildlife habitat.
- Avoid potential peregrine falcon nesting areas and caribou calving areas during spring and summer.
- Restrict helicopter flight zones to a minimum 500-foot flight level to avoid inadvertent harassment of wildlife.
- Restrict winter firing in the Lakes Impact Area to avoid caribou herds.
- Restrict spring use of the southern boundary of the Mississippi/Washington Impact Areas to avoid conflicts with bison calving and grizzly bear use.
- Restrict Washington and Texas ranges to small arms fire in spring and summer, allowing heavy weapons use only during winter.

Other limitations on training are imposed by terrain characteristics. Dense black spruce forests and wetlands, such as those found in the Donnelly West Training Area, are difficult barriers around which to maneuver.

### **1.4.3 Future Military Mission Impacts on Natural Resources**

It is difficult to quantify effects of future military activities on natural resources at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area due to the uncertainty involved in military training. If the mission remains unchanged, impacts on natural resources will remain similar to those today.

If large force-on-force military maneuvers were re-instituted on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area, impacts to resources, would be similar to those in the past. Restricting such training to times when fgdaga is frozen minimized effects. Again, there are no plans for large scale operations at this time. Future impact to natural resources would be addressed by separate NEPA documentation.

## **1.5 Joint Management and Stewardship**

*Joint management* refers to a Congressionally-directed, shared responsibility by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Department of Defense (DOD) for organizing, controlling, and supervising activities on certain withdrawn federal lands. *Joint stewardship* refers to the working relationship entered into between USARAK and BLM for the care of withdrawn federal lands in Alaska and associated resources used by USARAK for military mission requirements. Joint use may, or may not involve joint management. However, both joint use and joint management require joint stewardship.

The majority of the land currently used by USARAK is on long-term withdrawal from public domain lands originally assigned to the Department of the Interior's (DOI) Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Provisions for management of these lands are generally specified in each of the Public Laws, Public Land Orders, Executive Orders, and other enabling documents.

Whenever the military uses a tract of public land originally assigned to another agency, it incurs legal and moral responsibilities for the stewardship of the land and its resources. Residual responsibility for USARAK withdrawn lands remains with BLM, which retains interest in the stewardship of the transferred parcel, even though the land is under DOD's long-term management.

The reason USARAK land is withdrawn from the military from other public uses is to enhance military readiness in the interest of national defense. If the land were intended to be managed for multiple uses, it would not be managed by a military service. Under USARAK management, land is used primarily for national security purposes (e.g., training and testing), but will also be managed to accommodate additional uses as long as they do not impinge on the primary military readiness mission.

Multiple use of the lands it manages is an integral part of the mission of the BLM. As defined by FLPMA, multiple use implies that each authorized use of the land has an equal level of priority. DOD, on the other hand, is a single-mission agency. As such, it has a single, mission-oriented use for the land it manages: military readiness for national defense. The quality of life of DOD's personnel is also an important component of DOD's national defense mission. In support of its specific missions, DOD's services and agencies implement a variety of land management practices on its installations that support military readiness and quality of life programs. For DOD, therefore, multiple use is *an approach to land management* rather than an element of its mission. A variety of land management tools such as hunting, fishing, nature trail maintenance, watchable wildlife programs, and the maintenance of groomed open spaces may be used in the INRMP in support of both quality of life programs and military training and testing requirements. By using a mix of these land management tools, DOD undertakes a multiple use approach to land management while still meeting the single mission use of the land (military readiness for national defense). An important aspect of this particular multiple-use approach to land management, however, is that it is employed only to the extent that it does not conflict with the military training and testing components of the overall national defense/readiness mission of the agency.

As noted earlier, where withdrawal legislation specifies joint management, collaboration between BLM and DOD is essential. Stewardship, however, is an inherent responsibility of anyone who has activities on the land regardless of legislated land management responsibilities. Stewardship implies acting responsibly in the public interest in the use and, as appropriate, restoration, improvement, preservation, and protection of federal lands and their associated resources. Good stewardship is a fundamental policy of all land management agencies and a mandate for all users of the land.

## 1.6 Responsibilities

USARAK has primary management responsibility for military uses of the withdrawn lands in Alaska. Under the Sikes Act, USARAK is responsible for preparing, updating, and implementing this INRMP. Implementation of this plan is defined as a *military* use since all uses and projects described therein support the overall military mission. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) retains stewardship responsibilities and is responsible for all *nonmilitary* uses on withdrawn military lands in Alaska. BLM acts as the public interface for all resource use requests on withdrawn lands. In addition, the BLM – Alaska Fire Service (AFS) is responsible for fire suppression on USARAK lands. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) are responsible for the management of fish and wildlife populations on military lands in Alaska.

The Specific Items of Cooperation (Appendix B) between USARAK, USFWS, ADF&G and BLM details responsibilities and facilitates management of lands withdrawn for Fort Wainwright. These items of specific cooperation includes the following stipulations:

- All agencies will implement the *Fort Wainwright Resource Management Plan and the INRMP*

- USARAK and BLM will coordinate with each other on military and nonmilitary activities on Fort Wainwright, with the Army responsible for NEPA documentation for military activities, and the BLM responsible for NEPA documentation for nonmilitary activities
- USARAK and BLM have responsibilities for controlling public access; USARAK will coordinate with BLM to enforce public access restrictions
- Studies conducted on Fort Wainwright by agencies other than USARAK will be coordinated with BLM
- Fire management will be conducted in accordance with the *Fort Wainwright Resources Management Plan* and the *Interagency Fire Management Plan*

Within DOD, many individuals and organizations are responsible for the overall implementation of this INRMP. Responsibilities for each program are listed in greater detail in Chapters 3-7. The Commanding General, USARAK, is directly responsible for operation and maintenance of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area, including implementation and enforcement of this INRMP. He is personally liable for compliance with laws pertaining to implementation of this plan. The USARAK Environmental Resources Department (ERD), Directorate of Public Works (DPW), Fort Richardson, is the office through which the Commanding General, USARAK, manages natural resources at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. The Natural Resources Branch is the primary organization directly responsible for implementation of this INRMP.

The USARAK Directorate of Plans, Training, Security, and Mobilization (DPTSM) is the organization through which the Commanding General, USARAK, manages ranges at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. DPTSM manages range complexes; coordinates military training; and releases training areas for forestry, land rehabilitation, and recreational use. The Directorate of Personnel and Community Activities (DPCA) promotes organization and development of recreational opportunities and facilities. DPCA manages most outdoor recreation with the exception of hunting, fishing, and trapping. The Provost Marshal Office (PMO) is responsible for law enforcement on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. Implementation of this plan also requires the assistance of other USARAK directorates and organizations, including Directorate of Logistics (supply and transportation), Directorate of Resource Management (budget, personnel, and equipment authorizations), Directorate of Contracting (purchasing), Public Affairs (public awareness programs), and Staff Judge Advocate (legal assistance).

USARAK's higher headquarters, U.S. Army Pacific Command (USARPAC) located at Fort Shafter, Hawaii, assists USARAK with development and implementation of conservation programs. USARPAC has review and approval authority for this INRMP and provides funding for implementation. The Army Environmental Center (AEC), located at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, provides oversight, centralized management, and execution of Army environmental programs and projects. It has support capabilities in the areas of NEPA, endangered species, cultural resources, the Integrated Training Area Management (ITAM) program, forestry, environmental compliance, and other related areas. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), Alaska District, assists Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area by administering contracts for outside or other agency support. It also is responsible for issuing wetland permits in accordance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Waterways Experiment Station (WES) assists USARAK with wetlands management. The Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory (CRREL) supports northern military installations and has an interest in natural resources management on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.

## 1.7 Partnerships

Partnership is defined as a process by which two or more organizations with shared interests act as a team to achieve mutually beneficial goals. USARAK undertakes management of its lands with a number of federal, state, local, and public partners. Land management issues do not stop at property boundaries, but instead have an ecosystem or watershed dimension. All agencies are tied by policy to an ecosystem management approach to land management. Cooperative relations among the military services and other land management agencies foster regional approaches to dealing with stewardship issues that provide benefits beyond what could be achieved if each agency approached the issue separately.

## **1.7.1 Federal Agencies**

### **1.7.1.1 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

In accordance with the Sikes Act Improvement Act, the USFWS is a signatory and cooperating agency in implementation of this plan. *The Cooperative Agreement for Management of Fish and Wildlife Resources on Army Installations in Alaska* (U.S. Army 1986) directs the USFWS, the Army, and ADF&G in the management of fish and wildlife on the installation. However, this INRMP supersedes that agreement and will serve as the cooperative document outlining specific items of cooperation.

The USFWS is interested in the effects of erosion on wetlands; environmental contamination; nonpoint discharge permits; cumulative effects of forest cutting on wildlife, especially in riparian areas; and overall habitat conservation. Neotropical migratory birds are also of special interest. The USFWS is available for reimbursable work on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area, especially involving migratory birds, wetlands, and fisheries.

Appendix B includes specific items of cooperation between the USFWS, BLM, ADF&G, and UWARAK as required by the Sikes Act.

### **1.7.1.2 U.S. Bureau of Land Management**

The BLM is a signatory and a cooperating agency in implementation of this INRMP. BLM retains jurisdiction of timber and mineral rights on PL106-65 withdrawn lands, with the Army having right of non-concurrence. The Defense Appropriations Act of 2000 (PL106-65) stipulates that BLM is responsible for developing a Resource Management Plan for military withdrawals in Alaska. A Resource Management Plan and associated Final Environmental Impact Statement have been developed in accordance with the previous withdrawal legislation (PL99-606) (BLM and U.S. Army 1994). Many items within the RMP are included within this INRMP.

Appendix B includes specific items of cooperation between the USFWS, BLM, ADF&G, and UWARAK as required by the Sikes Act.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was developed and entered into by the BLM and USARAK to establish cooperative efforts for the management of public lands withdrawn for military use. This MOU expires November 6, 2001. This INRMP supersedes that agreement and will serve as the cooperative document outlining specific items of cooperation between the BLM and USARAK for Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.

The Alaska Fire Service provides fire suppression, prescribed burning, and fire planning support to Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. BLM also has a strong interest in the protection of cultural resources on withdrawn lands.

### **1.7.1.3 U.S. Forest Service**

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) provides technical assistance for forest management on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. The USFS has particular interest in forest pests and forest inventory. In addition, they provide training and consulting services regarding forest inventory techniques. Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area has no lands owned or controlled by the USFS.

### **1.7.1.4 Natural Resources Conservation Service**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) cooperates in land management and soil conservation on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. NRCS has a special interest in the development of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's ITAM program due to its assessment and treatment of soil erosion, and is available for limited, reimbursable engineering support for the Land Rehabilitation and Maintenance (LRAM) program. NRCS is also conducting a soil survey of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.

The Delta-Clearwater watershed project, located near the eastern boundary of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area, is the premier NRCS erosion prevention project in the nation. The NRCS is concerned with erosion occurring north of the Alaska Highway, which is partly due to runoff from Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. The NRCS is constructing water bars on Army lands to divert this runoff to avoid any potential adverse affects. They have a strong interest in the Army maintaining these structures and minimizing any military or recreational damage.

### **1.7.1.5 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 10 is involved in numerous environmental compliance, restoration, and pollution prevention actions at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. Currently, cooperation between the conservation branch and the EPA is not required.

### **1.7.1.6 Office of Aircraft Services**

The Office of Aircraft Services (OAS) provides reimbursable contract aircraft for implementation of this INRMP. The OAS has been used for natural resources management on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. USARAK will continue to request support from OAS in the form of helicopter missions and the lease agreement for the fixed wing aircraft (N4OHU), maintenance of that aircraft, and training of USARAK staff pilots.

## **1.7.2 State Agencies**

### **1.7.2.1 Alaska Department of Fish and Game**

As required by the Sikes Act Improvement Act, ADF&G is a signatory and cooperating agency in implementation of this plan. ADF&G assists in fish and wildlife management on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area in accordance with a *Cooperative Agreement for Management of Fish and Wildlife Resources on Army Installations in Alaska* (U.S. Army 1986). However, this INRMP supersedes that agreement and will serve as the cooperative document outlining specific items of cooperation as required by the Sikes Act Improvement Act.

Appendix B includes specific items of cooperation between the USFWS, BLM, ADF&G, and UWARAK as required by the Sikes Act.

The ADF&G manage wildlife populations on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area overlap parts of ADF&G's Fairbanks and Delta Junction fish management areas, and encompasses parts of Hunting Units 20A and 20D. The regional ADF&G office is in Fairbanks, although there are ADF&G wildlife and fisheries personnel stationed in Delta Junction.

ADF&G stocks fish in 15 lakes on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area and monitors angler use. It is interested in increasing angler use of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area, especially at lakes along Meadows Road. ADF&G is also enhancing bison habitat off-post to move the herd off of Texas and Washington ranges, which are used heavily for munitions testing and training by the Army. ADF&G monitors moose and assists with habitat improvement on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. The agency is also interested in monitoring sharptail grouse and hares. ADF&G is conducting statewide research on the effects of large-scale logging on game and nongame species and is interested in plans for timber harvesting on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.

### **1.7.2.2 Alaska Department of Natural Resources**

#### *1.7.2.2.1 Division of Forestry*

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR), Division of Forestry, is a cooperating agency for forest management on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. ADNR's specific concerns include prescribed burns and fire suppression; forest pest management; and forest inventory, harvesting, and regeneration. ADNR is interested in developing commercial timber sources in the Delta Junction area to attract a pulp mill.

#### *1.7.2.2.2 Plant Materials Center*

USARAK has entered into a cooperative agreement with ADNR, Plant Materials Center (PMC) for enhancing, rehabilitating, and maintaining USARAK training lands to ensure their continued long-term use and effectiveness. The center will partner with USARAK to conduct revegetation projects and provide plant materials advice.

#### *1.7.2.2.2 Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation*

The ADNR, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation manages the -acre Donnelly State Recreation Area which borders Donnelly Training Area at the southernmost tip along the Delta River. No active cooperation occurs between USARAK and ADNR Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

### **1.7.2.3 Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation**

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) is responsible for air and water quality in Alaska. Air quality permits are required for prescribed burning on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. The relationship between ADEC and Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area is primarily regulatory.

### **1.7.2.4 Alaska Soil and Water Conservation Districts**

#### *1.7.2.4.1 Salcha-Delta Soil and Water Conservation District*

USARAK recently entered into a cooperative agreement with the Salcha-Delta Soil and Water Conservation District (SDSWCD) for enhancing, rehabilitating, and maintaining USARAK training lands

to ensure their continued long-term use and effectiveness. The district will partner with USARAK to conduct LRAM, erosion control, and habitat management projects.

#### **1.7.2.4.2 Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District**

USARAK entered into a cooperative agreement with the Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District (PSWCD) in 1998 for enhancing, rehabilitating, and maintaining USARAK training lands to ensure their continued long-term use and effectiveness. The Palmer district historically partnered with USARAK to conduct LRAM, erosion control, and habitat management projects and will continue to back up the SDSWCD for these type of projects, if needed.

#### **1.7.2.5 Universities**

Universities provide specialized expertise to assist in effectively managing natural resources on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. The University of Alaska, Fairbanks (UAF), is the installation's nearest resource for academic research. Specifically, the university has assisted with a graduate study of food habits of the Delta bison herd. The Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands (CEMML) at Colorado State University (CSU) supports ITAM, GIS, NEPA, and general natural resources inventory and management programs on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. CEMML has also been a resource for graduate-level research on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.

#### **1.7.3 Tanana Chiefs Conference**

The Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc. (TCC), also known as Dena' Nena' Henash, with offices in Fairbanks, Tok, and elsewhere in Interior Alaska, is a Tribal consortium of 42 member Tribes and Alaska Native organizations, 37 of which are federally recognized Tribal governments. The TCC region approximates the size of Texas at 235,000 square miles, or a third of Alaska. TCC is the largest non-profit Tribal consortium in Alaska and contracts a wide variety of services from federal, state, and private sectors. TCC operates more than 200 service programs to benefit more than 17,000 Athabascan and other Alaska Natives and stateside Native Americans living in Interior Alaska. These services include reality functions of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) on more than 260,000 acres of restricted status lands (Native allotments and restricted town sites) pursuant to PL 93-638, as well as a technical assistance and facilitation program for federally recognized Tribal governments in dealing with military-related government-to-government consultation and environmental restoration activities. This program may facilitate consultation between the Army and federally recognized Tribes in Interior Alaska if requested to do so by the Tribal government.

#### **1.7.4 Other Partners**

Both local and private partners are involved in the management of USARAK lands. The public is a very important partner in the preparation of this plan. A public Restoration Advisory Board meeting was held on January 23, 2001, in Fairbanks to explain the INRMP planning process and invite public comment. A public Fort Greely RAB meeting was also held on March 7, 2001, in Delta Junction. As a portion of the meeting, the INRMP planning process was explained and public comment was invited. A notice of intent to update the INRMP was published in the both the *Fairbanks Daily News Miner* and the *Delta Wind*. This notice invited the public to provide their comments and concerns in the form of a survey, available by mail or on the USARAK natural resources web site. The public was also invited to review the draft INRMP and the FONSI, as a part of the public review period for the INRMP Environmental Assessment (EA).

## 1.8 National Environmental Policy Act Compliance and Integration

In addition to guiding the natural resource management program at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area from 2002-2006, this plan also contains the associated documentation necessary for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires federal agencies to consider environmental consequences of major proposed actions. This NEPA documentation is in the form of an Environmental Assessment (EA), which analyzes the potential consequences of the proposed action to implement the Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area INRMP.

### 1.8.1 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to consider the environmental consequences of proposed major federal actions. The premise of NEPA is to provide environmental information to public officials and citizens before decisions are made and actions are taken. The NEPA process is intended to help public officials and citizens make decisions that are based on timely and scientifically accurate information. The analysis must fully disclose the environmental effects of the action and demonstrate that the project proponent and the decision maker have taken an interdisciplinary "hard look" at the environmental consequences of implementing the action. Ultimately, federal agencies must use all practicable means to restore and enhance the quality of the human environment and avoid or minimize any possible adverse effects of their actions upon the quality of the human environment.

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) was established under NEPA to implement and oversee federal policy in this decision-making process. The CEQ uses the *Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act* (40 CFR 1500-1508) for this function. The CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1508.9) specify that an Environmental Assessment be prepared to:

- Briefly provide evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).
- Aid in an agency's compliance with NEPA when no EIS is necessary.
- Facilitate preparation of an EIS when one is necessary.

In addition, according to CEQ Regulations (40 CFR 1500.2(c)), NEPA's requirements should be integrated "with other planning and environmental review procedures required by law or by agency practice so that all such procedures run concurrently rather than consecutively."

### 1.8.2 Army Regulations 200-2 and 200-3

AR 200-2, *Environmental Effects of Army Actions*, sets forth policies, responsibilities, and procedures for integrating environmental considerations into Army planning and decision-making. It implements the CEQ's NEPA Regulations and directs installations to integrate environmental analysis as much as practicable with other environmental reviews, laws, directives, and executive orders. This regulation requires natural resources management plans be evaluated for environmental impacts (AR 200-2 Chapter 5, Section 5-3(k)). The requirements of AR 200-2 will be addressed through the preparation of an Environmental Assessment on the potential effects of implementing an Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan on USARAK lands.

AR 200-3, *Natural Resources - Land, Forest and Wildlife Management*, outlines policy, procedures, and responsibilities for the conservation, management, and restoration of land and the natural resources, consistent with the military mission and other applicable national policies. AR 200-3 states that "INRMPs require appropriate environmental review according to the NEPA and AR 200-2...appropriate level of

documentation will be determined on an installation by installation basis." AR 200-3 further states, "It is Army policy to integrate environmental reviews concurrently with other Army planning and decision-making actions to avoid delays in mission accomplishments."

### 1.8.3 INRMP and NEPA Integration

AR 200-2 (Chapter 2, Section 2-6(e)) states that "Environmental analysis and documentation required by this regulation will be integrated as much as practicable with other environmental reviews (40 CFR 1502.25)" Section 2-6 (e)(5) identifies the following category components, "Installation management plans, particularly those that deal directly with the environment. These include the Natural Resource Management Plans (Fish and Wildlife Management plan, Forest Management Plan, and Range Improvement or Maintenance Plan)."

CEQ regulations suggest NEPA documents be combined with other agency documents to reduce duplication and paperwork (40 CFR 1506.4) so that agencies can focus on the real purpose of the NEPA analysis, which is making better decisions. In an effort to follow Army guidelines recommending concurrent preparation of the INRMP and its associated NEPA analysis, USARAK has prepared a single document. The resulting "planning assessment" includes a comprehensive description, analysis, and evaluation of all environmental components at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. Additionally, it formalizes existing natural resource practices and can be used as an effective tool for future planning and decision-making purposes.

As proposed projects within this INRMP are implemented, appropriate required NEPA documentation will be prepared. Projects will be evaluated to determine the need for and appropriate level of NEPA documentation such as a Record of Environmental Consideration (REC), EA with a FONSI, or an EIS with a Record of Decision (ROD).

In order to easily locate elements required for NEPA analysis, which are woven throughout the INRMP, the following table has been prepared. The NEPA requirements have been listed with their corresponding locations within the document. The remaining sections of this document relate specifically to the INRMP.

**Table 1-1. Location of NEPA Analysis Sections within the INRMP**

<i>EA Requirements</i>	<i>Sections within the INRMP</i>
Purpose of and Need for Action	Section 1.8.4
Alternatives Including the Proposed Action	Chapters 3,4,5,6, and 7
Affected Environment	Chapter 2
Environmental Consequences	Chapter 9
List of Agencies and Persons Consulted	Agencies and Individuals Contacted Section
Conclusion on Whether Environmental Impacts are Significant	Section 9.4 and Appendix A
References	Reference Section
List of Preparers	Preparers Section

### 1.8.4 Purpose of and Need for the Proposed Action

The U.S. Army Alaska proposes to implement an Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area to support the management of natural resources using the methods

described within the plan itself. The purpose of the plan is to support the military mission; to provide for USARAK's continuing need to train in a realistic environment; to maintain local community needs; and to comply with other laws and regulations, including the Sikes Act Improvement Act. This plan is needed to set forth a natural resources management philosophy to guide decisions made over the next five years (2002-2006) at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.

## **1.8.5 Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives**

### **1.8.5.1 Proposed Action**

The proposed action is to implement the INRMP for Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area, Alaska, over the 2002-2006 planning period. Implementation of this proposal would meet the Army's need to present natural resources management goals, objectives, and policy on military lands in Alaska and to guide natural resources managers in making decision regarding management of military land and proposed management projects concurrent with the military mission. The development of selected management measures for the INRMP involved a screening analysis of resource-specific alternatives during the development of individual resource management plans. The screening process involved the use of accepted criteria, standards, and guidelines, when available, and best professional judgment to identify management practices for achieving Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area natural resources objectives. The proposed action involves the implementation of the management objectives listed in chapters 3-7 for each resource at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. The five-year planning period (2002-2006) allows for natural resources to be adaptively managed over time. Thus, projects and management schemes are structured to support this time frame. Additional environmental analysis may be required with the development of new management schemes.

### **1.8.5.2 Current Management / No Action Alternative**

Under the current management / no action alternative, the management objectives set forth in the INRMP would not be implemented. Current management policies would remain in effect as described for each resource in chapters 3-7. The existing conditions at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area would continue as the status quo under the no action alternative. This state is defined as those conditions described in Chapter 2, Affected Environment, without implementation of the proposed action objectives listed in chapters 3-7. Development and consideration of a no action alternative is required by CEQ regulation (40 CFR 1502.14(d)) and serves as a benchmark against which proposed federal actions can be evaluated.

This current 2002-2006 INRMP is an update of the 1998-2002 Fort Greely INRMP. Many of the proposed projects in the 1998-2002 plan were funded and implemented on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. However, some projects were not completed. Funds have been obligated towards completion of the following projects and are considered part of the current management:

- Staff salaries, equipment, and supplies
- Cultural resources studies
- LCTA Program
- Forest Management Plan and Commercial Feasibility Study
- Range improvement activities
- Conduct moose and caribou censuses
- Develop Cross Cultural Communication Steering Committee
- Develop recreational computerized check-in/check-out system
- Repair wetland crossings on 33-Mile Loop Road

- Develop fog oil monitoring protocol
- Obtain new digital ortho-photos
- Improve wildlife habitat
- Control erosion on three access sites

### **1.8.5.3 Alternatives Considered and Eliminated**

Additional alternatives considered for the management of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's natural resources are described and evaluated within the sections of Chapters 3-7 that discuss the management of each resource. During the development of these various management alternatives, it was determined that an infinite number of management schemes are possible. Consistent with the intent of NEPA, this process focused on considering a reasonable range of resource-specific management alternatives and, from those, developing a plan that could be implemented, as a whole, in the foreseeable future. Management alternatives were considered during the above mentioned screening process, but not analyzed in detail, are discussed within chapters 3-7 as is the rationale for their non-selection. Application of this screening process in developing the proposed action (implementation of the management options listed in chapters 3-7 of this INRMP) eliminated the need to define and evaluate hypothetical alternatives to plan implementation. As a result, the EA (which is an integral part of this document) formally addresses only two alternatives, the proposed action and the no action alternative (current management).

### **1.8.6 Scope of Analysis**

The potential environmental effects associated with the proposed action are assessed in compliance with NEPA, regulations of the CEQ and AR 200-2. The EA component of this INRMP identifies, documents, and evaluates the effects of implementing the document at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. The INRMP addresses the geographical area associated with the contiguous properties of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area, Alaska. As discussed, the EA component examines the Army's preferred alternative (i.e., the proposed action as described in Chapter 1.8.5.1 and the objectives listed in chapters 3-7) and a no action alternative (i.e., as described in Chapter 1.8.5.2) and their potential environmental effects. In addition, the existing environment is described and used as a measure against which to analyze the proposed action. Thus, the potential beneficial and adverse effects associated with the proposal are determined and listed in Chapter 9.

While many aspects of the military mission are discussed in this INRMP, only the impacts of the natural resources alternatives are considered. The impacts of the continued withdrawal for military use of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area were considered in the Alaska Army Lands Renewal Final Legislative Environmental Impact Statement. Impacts of the ongoing and future training activities would be considered in a separate environmental document.

### **1.8.7 Interagency Coordination and Review**

Interagency participation is invited throughout the process for developing the INRMP. Once the INRMP has been drafted, the EA may be used as a tool to inform decision makers and the public of the likely environmental consequences of implementing the proposed action and alternatives. In addition, USARAK provides for public participation in the NEPA process to promote open communication and better decision-making. Public participation is invited throughout the NEPA process for developing the EA portion of the document. The following discussion describes agency and public involvement for this project.

(Discussion of agency meetings; newsletter; questionnaire results; notice of intent publications; etc. to be updated in time.)

**Interagency Coordination.** On December 28, 2000, a formal agency consultation letter was mailed to the state and regional directors of the three agencies declaring USARAK's intent to update the INRMPs for the 2002-2006 planning period. Meetings and document review sessions were scheduled between USARAK and the partnering agencies to be held in Fairbanks and Anchorage.

On February 21 and 22, 2001, an agency introduction meeting was held at Fort Richardson in Anchorage, Alaska and at Fort Wainwright in Fairbanks, Alaska, respectively. The purpose of the meeting was to enable representatives from BLM, USFWS, ADF&G, and USARAK to establish formal communications and address any initial concerns regarding the preparation of the INRMP and EA. Attendees discussed the INRMP review and meeting schedule; agency coordination; the approach for conducting the INRMP and NEPA analysis; and objectives and scope of the INRMP and NEPA analysis. The first draft of the Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area INRMP was distributed.

**Project Review and Comment.** The primary responsible agencies were provided an opportunity to review and comment on three separate drafts of the INRMP as listed below.

**Table 1-2. INRMP Review Schedule.**

<i>Meetings</i>	<i>Meeting Function</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>
Agency Introduction Meeting	Distribute First Draft	February 21, 2001	Anchorage
		February 22, 2001	Fairbanks
Agency Comment Meeting	First Draft Comments Due	March 28, 2001	Anchorage
		March 29, 2001	Fairbanks
Agency Update Meeting	Distribute Second Draft	April 25, 2001	Anchorage
		April 26, 2001	Fairbanks
Agency Comment Meeting	Second Draft Comments Due	May 23, 2001	Anchorage
		May 24, 2001	Fairbanks
Agency Update Meeting	Distribute Final Draft	June 20, 2001	Anchorage
		June 21, 2001	Fairbanks
30-day Public Review Begins	Distribute for Public Review	June 20, 2001	Local newspapers, libraries, website
Agency Update Meeting	Discuss Public Comments	July 25, 2001	Anchorage
		July 26, 2001	Fairbanks
30-day Public Review Ends	Collect Public Comments	July 25, 2001	Local newspapers, libraries, website
Final Agency Meeting	Final Draft Comments Due	August 15, 2001	Anchorage
		August 16, 2001	Fairbanks
Final Plans Distributed to Agencies for Signature Approval		September 5, 2001	Anchorage
		September 6, 2001	Fairbanks
Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) Prepared		September 6, 2001	
Original Signature Pages Due		September 26, 2001	

Comments were incorporated into the document and the final draft was distributed to these agencies for final signatory approval on September 5-6, 2001. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) was prepared for the final version of the INRMP/EA.

**Public Participation.** The public and concerned organizations were notified of USARAK's intent to update the existing INRMPs for the 2002-2006 planning period. Requests for public input to assist the Army in determining local relevant issues were published in the Fairbanks *Daily-News Miner*, the Anchorage *Daily News*, and the Delta Junction *Delta Wind*. Individuals were asked to fill out a Public Issues Questionnaire, which was used to gather information regarding natural and land use issues and concerns. Two editions of an Environmental Resources Newsletter were published and distributed to interested parties including those listed on the USARAK mailing list and to individuals registering for a USARAK Hunting, Trapping, and Fishing permit. The USARAK Conservation Website was also utilized as a public participation interface. The website offered the public and concerned organizations the ability to review the Draft INRMP; submit comments; request additional information; and obtain additional copies of the newsletters. In addition, presentations were given at the Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Delta Junction Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meetings requesting public participation.

An announcement of the availability of a FNSI and the INRMP/EA for public review for 30 days before USARAK initiated the proposed action.

**Figure 1-1. General Location of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.**

**Figure 1-2. Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area Land Acquisition**