

EXECUTIVE REPORT

We do not own this land; we are caretakers of the land and the plant and animal species that inhabit it. The American people entrust the land to our care, and we shall fulfill their trust. We shall conserve and protect these resources for the future.¹

This Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) will guide implementation of the natural resources program on Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area, Alaska, from 2002 through 2006. The INRMP is designed to conserve Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's land and natural resources and ensure compliance with related environmental laws and regulations. The plan also ensures the maintenance of high quality training lands to accomplish U.S. Army Alaska's critical military mission.

Scope

This plan applies to organizations internal and external to Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area that are involved with, or interested in, the management or use of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's lands and natural resources for military and non-military purposes. These organizations include active duty units, National Guard and Reserve Components, directorates, private groups, and individuals. This INRMP falls within the framework of the US Army Alaska (USARAK) Range Development Plan and is an integral part of the Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area Installation Master Plan. This INRMP will guide the natural resource management of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area for the next five years (2002-2006) and will provide a solid foundation from which to build and continue the program beyond 2006.

Relationship To The Military

Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area is responsible for the combat training of U.S. Army soldiers in Alaska. These soldiers are among the most specialized military professionals in the world, and they train in some of the world's harshest environments. Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area hosts training for other members of the United States Department of Defense team, from Air Force bases across the nation, to Marines stationed in Hawaii and Okinawa, to Navy Seals. Members of other nations' armed forces, including Canadians, British Special Air Services, and Russians, also undergo training at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.

This INRMP supports the military mission by protecting and enhancing the training lands upon which the mission is critically dependent. The INRMP also describes recreational opportunities associated with natural resources, thus supporting the USARAK commitment to both the Quality of Life and the Communities of Excellence programs.

This INRMP describes impacts of military activities upon natural resources and means to mitigate these impacts. However, this INRMP does not evaluate Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's military mission, nor does it replace the requirement for environmental documentation of the military mission at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.

Environmental Compliance

¹ Robert M. Walker, Assistant Secretary of the Army, Testimony before Congress, July 11, 1995.

This INRMP is required by the Sikes Act (16 U.S.C. 670a *et seq.*), Department of Defense Directive 4715.3 (*Environmental Conservation Program*), and Army Regulation (AR) 200-3 (*Natural Resources - Land, Forest, and Wildlife Management*). This INRMP helps USARAK comply with other federal and state laws, most notably laws associated with environmental documentation, wetlands, endangered species, water quality, and wildlife management in general. This plan describes how USARAK will implement provisions of AR 200-3 and local regulations, most notably AR 190-13 (*Enforcement of Hunting, Trapping and Fishing on Army Lands in Alaska*) (U.S. Army, Alaska 1994) and AR 350-2 (*Range Regulation*) (U.S. Army, Alaska 1995).

This INRMP has the signatory approval of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), which acknowledges that the INRMP complies with the Endangered Species Act. Review of the INRMP is considered informal consultation with regard to the Endangered Species Act.

The Sikes Act, as amended in November 1997, requires that an INRMP include:

- 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.
- 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.
- Regular review of this INRMP and its effects, not less often than every five years.
- Provisions for spending hunting and fishing permit fees exclusively for the protection, conservation, and the management of fish and wildlife, including habitat improvement, and related activities in accordance with the INRMP.
- Exemption from procurement of services under Office of Management and Budget Circular A-76 and any of its successor circulars.
- Priority for contracts involving implementation of this INRMP to state and federal agencies having responsibility for conservation of fish and wildlife.
- Public access to the military installation for sustainable use of natural resources, subject to safety requirements and military security.

The *Fort Greely Resource Management Plan* (Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Army 1994) requires that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will participate with the Army, USFWS, and Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) in developing a Habitat Management Plan, and that it will be a signatory agency in any revision of the Cooperative Agreement (required by the Sikes Act). This document also requires the Army to develop a Forest Management Plan and Recreation Activity Management Plan for withdrawn lands. This INRMP and corresponding activity plans satisfy the above BLM requirements.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to consider the environmental consequences of proposed major federal actions. Installations are directed by Army Regulation 200-2 (Environmental Effects of Army Actions) and NEPA to integrate environmental analysis as much as practicable with other environmental reviews, laws, directives, and executive orders. USARAK has met

this requirement by preparing a single environmental document; an Environmental Assessment has been integrated into this INRMP. This includes a comprehensive description, analysis, and evaluation of all environmental components proposed in the Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area INRMP.

Ecosystem Status

Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area has five recognized vegetation cover types: ice and snow; alpine tundra; moist tundra; open, low growing spruce forests; and closed spruce-hardwood forests (Viereck and Little 1972). The installation has a wide variety of flora and fauna, none of which are classified as threatened or endangered. Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area also provides habitat for the largest number of game species found on any military installation in the United States (BLM and U.S. Army 1994). Although the natural resources program affects many species, moose (*Alces alces*), sharptail grouse (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*), black bear (*Ursus americanus*), and bison (*Bison bison*) are the most intensively managed.

The quality of both surface and groundwater is presumed to be good. There have been no indications of changes in the quality of surface water since Army occupation of the land, and there has been only minor pollution of groundwater in localized areas, none of which are thought to affect human health. Significant effects of military use on soils are evident primarily in the cantonment (built-up) area. Trends in biological diversity are not documented. There is no reason to suggest that Army activity on the land has adversely affected biological diversity.

The installation's capability to support its current military mission is stable. The capability of the land to produce forest products has steadily improved since significant timber removal has not occurred. The post can clearly continue to support its small fuel wood program. The capability of the ecosystem to support hunting, fishing, and trapping continues to be good. Fishing opportunities have increased in some areas due to stocking. Agriculture is not a viable option on Fort Greely or Donnelly Training Area.

Partnerships

This INRMP cannot be implemented by USARAK alone. In accordance with land withdrawal legislation and the ecosystem management philosophy, USARAK is currently partnering with various agencies to manage its natural resources. Major partners in the implementation of this plan are the BLM, USFWS, and ADF&G. Other partners in this effort include the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR), universities, other federal and state agencies, native groups, contractors, and private citizens.

Plan Components

This INRMP guides the natural resources management program at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area, and consists of several components. Within the first chapter, the plan describes the overall goals and objectives in five general areas: stewardship, military readiness, quality of life, compliance, and program integration. It describes Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's military mission in general terms. The integration of NEPA throughout this document is also described. Descriptions of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's climate, land base, facilities, and natural resources, including a brief history of natural resources management on the installation are found in Chapter 2 of the plan. Internal and external parties involved in implementation of this INRMP are also listed.

The plan emphasizes ecosystem management, which is a departure from USARAK's traditional multiple-use approach. This new approach is consistent with recent changes in laws and Department of Army policies. Ecosystem management will continue to allow for the use of natural resources on Fort Greely

and Donnelly Training Area for both military and other human-related values and purposes. Ecosystem management has an overriding goal of protecting the properties and functions of natural ecosystems. Since these ecosystems often extend beyond installation boundaries, management of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's natural resources will include more emphasis on partnerships with its neighbors. Ultimately, the INRMP will serve as a tool to help natural resources personnel implement ecosystem management philosophies at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.

This INRMP is organized to promote management of lands and natural resources in an integrated manner. The Ecosystem Management chapter (Chapter 3) deals with aspects of overall natural resources management: Inventory and Monitoring, Protection and Damage Prevention, Natural Resources Management, Awareness, and Enforcement.

Within the remaining resource management chapters (Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7) are programs involving Integrated Training Area Management (ITAM), fish and wildlife management, integrated pest control, natural resources law enforcement, research programs, and conservation education. Additional chapters involve outdoor recreation associated with natural resources, protection of cultural resources during natural resources management activities, and the use of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to conserve natural resources. Chapter 8 discusses specific measures to implement this plan. The environmental consequences of implementing each resource management alternative are discussed in Chapter 9.

Planned Major New Initiatives

Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's INRMP includes a description of ongoing natural resources programs and projects. Most of these will either be continued or completed. There are important new initiatives within this INRMP, including the following:

- Implement an ecosystem management philosophy.
- Complete an ecological land evaluation of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.
- Develop and implement a cultural resources management inventory and monitoring program.
- Implement Conservation Law Enforcement.

Ongoing Planning Activities

USARAK recognizes that this INRMP is not all encompassing. In response, UWARAK will, in coordination with other agencies, develop specific management action plans to be incorporated into this INRMP as they are completed. Descriptions of these plans (listed below), their compliance authorities, and budget priorities can be found in Appendix D.

- Ecosystem Management Action Plan
- Habitat Management Action Plan
- Wetlands Management Action Plan
- Forest Management Action Plan
- Special Interest Areas Conservation Action Plan
- Outdoor Recreation Management Action Plan
- ITAM Action Plan
- Fire Management Action Plan
- Soil Resources Management Action Plan
- Conservation Enforcement Management Action Plan

- Aerial Monitoring Management Action Plan

While work on specific action plans remains to be completed, this INRMP uses existing information as a basis to continue and improve natural resources management concurrent with planning activities. Preparation and implementation of an INRMP, including updates to occur every five years, is required by law regardless of the stage of program development. The INRMP is not a final product. Rather, it is a dynamic mechanism to guide program operation for the next five years (2002-2006).

Benefits And Costs

Military Mission Benefits: Implementation of this plan will improve the quality of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's training lands. It will enhance mission realism by providing more options for training as well as more intensive planning of missions. It will improve the ability for long-range planning at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area.

Environmental Benefits: The plan establishes a basis for the conservation and protection of natural resources. It will help reduce vegetation loss and soil erosion due to military activities, and reduce the potential for environmental pollution. Water quality in riparian and aquatic ecosystems will be protected. The plan will provide for biodiversity conservation. Certain sensitive areas and species will be protected from unacceptable damage or degradation. Plan implementation will increase knowledge of Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area ecosystems through surveys and research.

Other Benefits: Troop environmental awareness will be enhanced while training at Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area. Both community relations and Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's environmental image, internal and external to the Department of Defense, will be enhanced. Quality of life for the Delta-Greely community will be improved. Plan implementation will decrease long-term environmental costs and reduce personal and installation liabilities from noncompliance with environmental laws.

Costs: It will cost about \$2,291,850 per year during 2002-2006 to implement this INRMP, or about \$3.46 per acre per year. The majority of funding will be provided from either environmental monies or training monies that are designated for implementing the ITAM program. Plan implementation will require staffing at the same level as in recent years, with exception of additional personnel to implement conservation enforcement and other new programs.

SUMMARY

The actions within this INRMP will comply with environmental laws, conserve and protect Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's natural resources, improve Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area's relationship with the public, and enhance the military mission. This plan will not resolve all existing and/or future environmental issues. It does, however, provide the guiding philosophy and means for working towards a resolution of such issues.

