



Media Release

Public Affairs Office
U.S. Army Garrison, Hawaii
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“*Malama na Koa*”

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAKUA SUPPLEMENTAL DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii—The Department of the Army announces the availability of the SDEIS for Military Training Activities at Makua Military Reservation (MMR), Hawaii, published in today's *Federal Register*.

The Army is committed to ensuring that its operations respect the environment and cultural resources, while simultaneously maximizing the readiness of its forces. Accordingly, the Army is publishing an SDEIS to ensure the public has an additional opportunity to review and comment on this very important matter.

The original Draft Environmental Impact Statement was issued in 2005 but several developments over the past three years have necessitated a new draft. Public comments to this new draft will be considered in preparing a final statement and decision by the Army on Makua's future use.

The SDEIS includes changes to the 2005 document after receiving public input. These include analyzing the cumulative impact of stationing additional Army units and Stryker combat vehicles in Hawaii; an alternative to use Pohakuloa Training Area on the Big Island; additional clearance of unexploded ordnance and cultural access at Makua; and Army responses to a new 2007-08 biological opinion regarding Makua.

The SDEIS includes a 45-day public comment period and four public hearings, after which the Army will thoroughly review all public comments, and use those to assist in the preparation of a Final EIS. The Army expects to issue the Final EIS in the spring of 2009.

The Army invites the general public, local governments, other federal agencies, and state agencies to submit written comments or suggestions concerning the alternatives and analysis addressed in the SDEIS. An electronic version of the SDEIS is available at the following Web site: <http://www.garrison.hawaii.army.mil/makuaeis>.

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Copies of the SDEIS will be available at the following libraries on the islands of Oahu and Hawaii: Hawaii State Library, 478 South King Street, Honolulu; Wahiawa Public Library, 820 California Avenue, Wahiawa; Waianae Public Library, 85-625 Farrington Highway, Waianae; and the Pearl City Public Library, 1138 Waimano Home Road, Pearl City; Hilo Public Library, 300 Waianuenue Avenue, Hilo; Kailua - Kona Public Library, 75-138 Hualalai Road, Kailua-Kona; Thelma Parker Memorial Public and School Library, 67-1209 Mamalahoa Hwy. Kamuela.

Over the next 45 days, public comments may be submitted online at www.garrison.hawaii.army.mil/makuaeis; by fax to (808)656-3162; by email to usahipaomakuaeis@hawaii.army.mil; or by mail to:

ATTN: Makua SDEIS Public Comments
USAG-HI Public Affairs Office
742 Santos Dumont, WAAF
Schofield Barracks, HI 96857

For questions about submitting public comments, please call (808)656-3152.

Public meetings will also be held, beginning with an open house from 5:30 p.m. – 6:45 p.m. with information provided on the SDEIS, followed by open public comments from 7 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. at the following locations:

October 6, 2008: Nanakuli High School, 89-980 Nanakuli Avenue, Waianae, HI 96792

October 7, 2008: Oahu (location being finalized), HI

October 8, 2008: Aunty Sally Kaleohano's Luau Hale, 799 Piilani Street, Hilo, HI 96720

October 9, 2008: Waimea Community Center, 65-1260 Kawaihae Road, Kamuela, HI 96743

The public comment period for the SDEIS ends November 3, 2008, 45 days after today's Notice of Availability publication in the *Federal Register* by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. A Final EIS will be published following the comment period on the SDEIS and incorporation of public comments.

BACKGROUND:

Located in Makua Valley on the western shore of Oahu, MMR has been used as a live-fire training area for the Army and other military branches since 1943. In 1988, the Army constructed the Company Combined-Arms Assault Course (CCAAC) as its training facility and actively used it for the next 10 years. In 1998, several wildland fires, which were caused by military training, started outside the designated impact areas. The Army then voluntarily suspended all training at MMR to conduct an investigation of the fires and to reevaluate its training and fire management procedures. In 2000, Malama Makua, a non-profit corporation, sued the Army in Hawaii federal district court seeking preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). In July 2001, the judge enjoined the Army from conducting live-fire military training at MMR. In settlement of this litigation, the Army began preparing an EIS to support resumption of live-fire training at MMR in the fall of 2001.

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The Army issued a Draft EIS for public comment in 2005. Since that time, the Army has made several changes to the EIS in response to public comments including the evaluation of an additional training alternative at the Pohakuloa Training Area (PTA). The Army is therefore republishing the EIS as a supplemental draft to seek public comment.

The Army has prepared a SDEIS for its training activities at MMR pursuant to Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Part 1500-1508), and Environmental Analysis of Army Actions (32 CFR Part 651).

The SDEIS analyzes four alternatives to accomplish the proposed training in the State of Hawaii: MMR Alternative 1 (Reduced Capacity Use with Some Weapons Restrictions), MMR Alternative 2 (Full Capacity Use with Some Weapons Restrictions), MMR Alternative 3 (Full Capacity Use with Fewer Restrictions), and PTA Alternative 4 (Full Capacity Use with Fewer Weapons Restrictions). Alternative 3 is the Army's Preferred Alternative. A No Action Alternative, under which no live-fire military training would be conducted at MMR, is also evaluated.

For all alternatives (with the exception of No Action), the range would be used for 242 training days per year. MMR Alternative 1 (Reduced Capacity Use) involves conducting up to 28 company-level combined arms live-fire exercises (CALFEXs) per year and 100 convoy live-fire exercises per year. MMR Alternatives 2, 3 and 4 (Full Capacity Use) involve conducting up to 50 company-level CALFEXs per year and 200 convoy live-fire exercises per year. Weapon systems used for all training alternatives would be similar to those used during past training at MMR. In addition to the current weapons systems, MMR Alternative 2 incorporates the use of small arms tracer ammunition. MMR Alternative 3 (Preferred Alternative) adds tracer ammunition; inert, tube-launched, optically-tracked, wire-guided (TOW) missiles; 2.75-inch rockets; and illumination munitions. PTA Alternative 4 would encompass training similar to that in Alternative 3. The Army would phase in certain training activities and ammunition types as steps are taken to conserve endangered species.

Some of the major potential impacts discussed in the SDEIS are associated with contamination of soil; surface water and groundwater quality; air quality; cultural sites; natural resources; endangered and threatened species; noise; recreational resources; wildfires; and the safety and transport of munitions through the Waianae community.

The U.S. Army will conduct additional studies as part of a Supplemental Marine Resources Study to meet the stipulations in a January 2007 Settlement Agreement between Plaintiff Malama Makua, through their counsel Earthjustice, and the U.S. Army.

This Supplemental Study will expand upon the findings of the 2007 Marine Resources Study by focusing on the sampling and analysis of shellfish. The Army will follow the previously established and agreed upon field sampling protocols for this study. This Supplemental Marine Resources Study will determine whether consumable shellfish resources near Makua Beach and in the Makua *muliwai* are contaminated with constituents associated with training activities at MMR.

A public meeting will also be held at the shellfish study's conclusion to specifically collect public input on its results. The date, time and location of this meeting, anticipated in the December timeframe, will be announced in the future.