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U.S. ARMY MANEUVER CENTER OF EXCELLENCE



MCoE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

Contact: Elsie Jackson – 706-545-6674 / BB 229-314-1540  
Rick Rosado – 706-545-8970 / BB 706-570-3983

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# Training Land Expansion Program continues its current necessary pause

**FORT BENNING, Ga.** (March 14, 2012) - The Training Land Expansion effort at Fort Benning will continue its current pause to allow resolution of pending Army force structure and budgetary decisions in Washington, D.C., that may impact circumstances at the Maneuver Center of Excellence here.

As announced in October 2011, the requirement for training land at Fort Benning has not changed, but the local impact of the DOD budget announced Feb. 13 is not yet known.

“We recognize that folks in the communities around Fort Benning are anxious for a decision and for a resolution, but we owe it to all of them to select the best course of action,” said Col. Jeffrey Fletcher, Fort Benning’s garrison commander. “The reality is that we just don’t have enough information to make a good decision about training land expansion at this time.”

As previously reported to the public, the ultimate decision reached by Fort Benning’s leaders might be acquisition of the entire 82,800 acres indicated in the Environmental Impact Statement or it could be to acquire a smaller number of acres. It could even be to take no action at all to acquire additional land.

“As we continue to move forward, know that we have heard all community concerns and comments, and we have carefully considered all of your feedback,” said Fletcher.

Fort Benning leaders expected to have sufficient information to present a clear timeline for the appropriate next steps in the National Environmental Policy Act Process by the first quarter of calendar year 2012. Unfortunately, national defense circumstances have significantly changed in recent months. For example, the drawdown and ultimate withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from Iraq coupled with the release of a revised national defense strategy may change the circumstances from what existed in October.

Since the need for additional training land at Fort Benning is based on the requirements of the Army to prepare its Soldiers to defend the nation, Army leadership needs to base its decision on whether or not to acquire additional land for training on information about the DOD budget and force structure that is not yet available.

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