

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
INSTALLATION INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM  
AT FORT MEADE, ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND**

**NAME OF ACTION:** Installation Information Infrastructure Modernization Program (I3MP), Fort George G. Meade (FGGM).

**BACKGROUND:** Pursuant to the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations [40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 1500-1508], 32 CFR Part 651, the Department of the Army, has conducted an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed I3MP cable infrastructure upgrades at FGGM.

The EA documents the purpose and need for the Proposed Action, the alternatives eliminated from detailed study, and the analysis of potential environmental impacts for the Proposed Action and the No-Action Alternative. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) summarizes the results of the evaluations of the activities associated with the proposed I3MP cable upgrades.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION:** The Proposed Action is to install a total of 4.45 miles of underground fiber optic cable conduit, 3 handholes, and 31 manholes within the boundaries of FGGM. The upgraded cable will be run into receiving buildings through a below-ground coring to wall mounted cabinets installed in basement utility closets or laundry rooms, as applicable. A total of 4.75 acres of ground will be disturbed during installation. Disturbed areas will be returned to pre-construction conditions and vegetated with native seed mix.

Cable installation will be accomplished by combining trenching, direct burying, and directional boring methods to bury 4-inch polyvinyl chloride conduits. The cable will be placed in or adjacent to roadways and other developed areas whenever possible, and will be installed via directional drilling under Maryland Route 32 to avoid disturbing the road surface. The Proposed Action also includes the placement of excess clean fill on a permitted stockpile within FGGM. Spent clay slurry used to facilitate directional drilling will be dewatered next to the stockpile, dried and then mixed into the same stockpile.

**NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE:** The No-Action alternative reflects the status quo, and serves as a baseline to compare the impacts of the Proposed Action. Under the No Action Alternative, the existing information communications structure would remain in place at Fort Meade and the I3MP utility upgrades would not be executed. Without the capacity improvements and modernization of the I3MP program, connectivity would deteriorate, disabling FGGM from maintaining its ability to communicate with deployed personnel and other installations.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:** Pursuant to the provisions of the regulations issued by CEQ (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and based on the attached Environmental Assessment as incorporated by reference, the Proposed Action, or implementation of the Proposed Action in conjunction with other known projects at FGGM, will not have any significant adverse effects on the human environment.

Minor short-term adverse impacts are associated with cable installation activities occurring in limited areas of floodplains, soils, forest, and landscape trees. These short-term adverse impacts are expected to be managed via ongoing agency coordination, permitting processes, and following FGGM management policies. Short-term adverse impacts associated with air quality and noise during cable installation are expected to be localized and temporary. Beneficial impacts from the Proposed Action to utilities are expected due to improved communications infrastructure. The Proposed Action will be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of the Maryland Coastal Zone Management Program. Required permits include FGGM dig permits, a Maryland Department of Transportation Utility Permit for directional drilling under Maryland Route 32, a Maryland Nontidal Wetlands and Waterways permit for the temporary disturbance of floodplains, and an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP). Prior to the start of construction, all required permits or approvals will be obtained prior to any ground disturbance.

**MITIGATION:** Mitigation measures in association with the Proposed Action include a variety of applicable BMPs to be implemented both during and after construction to avoid and minimize adverse environmental effects. These include:

- Compliance with an Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)-approved stormwater waiver, FGGM's Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, and erosion and sediment control plan, using stormwater management and erosion control best management practices (BMPs) required by MDE.
- Compliance with the Maryland Forest Conservation Act to the maximum extent practical. Impacts will be mitigated on the installation in accordance with the current FGGM Forest Conservation Act and Tree Management Policy. Tree preservation measures will be incorporated into construction plans.
- Compliance with terms of a Maryland Nontidal Wetlands and Waterways permit for the temporary disturbance of floodplains.
- All construction equipment will be treated according to BMPs, in a manner that would minimize the spread of invasive species.
- Compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local air regulations.
- Conducting construction activities during normal weekday work hours (generally 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.) and avoiding conducting construction activities on evenings and weekends to the extent practical.
- Using native vegetation to stabilize soil and preservation of natural areas where possible.

**PUBLIC REVIEW:** Public participation opportunities with respect to this EA and decision making on the Proposed Action are guided by 32 CFR Part 651. The EA along with a draft FNSI will be made available to the public for 30 days from the date of the notice of availability publication. The notice of availability will be published in The Baltimore Sun (Baltimore, Maryland), the Annapolis Capital (Annapolis, Maryland), and The SOUND OFF (FGGM publication) and will be posted on Fort Meade's website under the 'Environmental Programs' tab, to the 'Public Notices' section. Copies of the EA and draft FNSI will be available for review at the West County Area Library, 1325 Annapolis Road, Odenton, MD and the Medal

of Honor Memorial Library, Fort Meade, MD. Copies of the draft EA and draft FNSI are also available online at [www.ftmeade.army.mil](http://www.ftmeade.army.mil) by clicking on the 'Environmental Programs' tab then to 'Public Notices'.

**CONCLUSION/ FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:** I have reviewed the EA and find that the proposed Action for the improvements and modernization of the I3MP program at Fort Meade will have no significant impacts on the natural environment, cultural resources, or the human environment. Based on these findings, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for this project and a Finding of No Significant Impact shall be issued.

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EDWARD C. ROTHSTEIN

Colonel, Military Intelligence  
Commanding

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Date