



## Joint News Release

US Army  
Joint Readiness Training Center and Ft Polk  
US Forest Service  
Kisatchie National Forest



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## Army / USFS Announces Availability of Final Environmental Impact Statement

March 16, 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR CORRESPONDENTS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The Department of Army, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and the Department of Transportation's Federal Aviation Administration (as cooperating agencies) announce the availability of a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) to assess the potential impacts associated with implementing force transformation and installation mission support activities at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) and Fort Polk, Louisiana, along with the long-term use of Kisatchie National Forest lands for military training. The FEIS was prepared to analyze the impacts of future training activities for transformed Army units and other units stationed at Fort Polk, as well as proposed Army activities needed to support transformation and ongoing installation missions.**

**The Army's proposed action involves fielding of new vehicles and equipment; construction and improvement of firing ranges, roads, stream crossings, and support facilities; land use agreements and leases; training and deployment of Army troops; and continued environmental stewardship. These decisions support military training on the Vernon Unit. A range of alternatives, including no action, was considered in the FEIS.**

**The JRTC, established at Fort Polk in 1993, is the only Combat Training Center devoted to and capable of supporting Army light infantry brigade-level training. Fort Polk also serves as an Army power projection platform from which forces deploy by air, rail, and sea to areas of operation around the world. It is home to the 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment (2d ACR) and several other rapid deployment and combat service support units.**

**At Fort Polk, the Army has designated the 2d ACR to transform to a new unit design that will employ the Army's new Stryker combat vehicle. Following its transformation, the 2d ACR will become the 2d Cavalry Regiment, which will be a unique unit within the Army due to its mission and organization. In addition to transformation of the 2d ACR, units stationed at other Army installations would participate in periodic rotational exercises at JRTC and Fort Polk. The Army's Intermediate Staging Base for rotational units is located at England Industrial Airpark. Additional facilities would be constructed at the airpark to support rapid deployment of the 2d ACR following its transformation.**

**The decision to be made by the Army is how to provide for military training, readiness, and facilities requirements while ensuring the sustained use of resources entrusted to the stewardship of the Army. The FAA will make decisions with respect to the Alexandria International Airport Layout Plan as influenced by proposed Army projects and activities at England Industrial Airpark.**

**Based on the Final EIS, the Forest Service has decided to authorize certain Army activities and land uses on Kisatchie National Forest lands and to thin, over a 10-year period, approximately 21,500 acres of upland pine stands in the Intensive Use Area to enhance habitat conditions for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker. The Forest Service has also decided to classify as "deleted" red-cockaded woodpecker clusters documented to have been inactive for a five-year period.**

**The Forest Service decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.11. Any appeal must be sent to the Forest Service within 45 days of the date of the legal notice published in the Alexandria Daily Town Talk. Appeals must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14. If no appeal is received, implementation of the Forest Service decision may occur on, but not before, five business days from the close of the appeal filing period. If an appeal is received, implementation may not occur for 15 business days following the date of appeal disposition. (36 CFR 215.9).**

**The FEIS includes a mitigation and monitoring plan developed by the Army and Forest Service to rectify, reduce, or eliminate adverse effects to land cover, soils, water quality, and biological resources. Results of monitoring will be made available to the public and stakeholders on an annual basis and used to inform future management and decision-making by both agencies.**

**The FEIS is available online at <http://notes.tetrattech-ffx.com/PolkEIS.nsf>.  
Requests for copies of the document can be sent to:**

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