



US Army Garrison Alaska Public Law 106-65 Land Withdrawal Extension Legislative Environmental Impact Statement

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Army proposing to do?

The Department of the Army (Army) is proposing to formally request that Congress extend the current withdrawal of 869,862 acres of public land and water area from public use for 25 years or more, or assign control of the lands to the Secretary of the Army until such time as the Army determines it no longer needs them for military purposes. The current withdrawal expires in 2026. The Army has determined that there is a continuing military need for these lands and is requesting to extend its use of the three training areas. Congressional approval of a legislative proposal is required to extend the withdrawal.

What Lands are Withdrawn?

1. Yukon Training Area
2. Donnelly Training Area East
3. Donnelly Training Area West

What is an LEIS and why does the Army need to prepare one?

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and the Army's implementing NEPA regulations require the Army to provide an analysis of the environmental impacts that could result from implementing a proposed action or any reasonable alternatives, solicit relevant input from all interested parties, and make this information available to all stakeholders. Since the proposed action potentially results in significant impacts to the environment, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is the appropriate level of NEPA analysis to evaluate potential impacts and identify appropriate mitigation measures. Because the decision-maker will be the U.S. Congress through legislation, this is a Legislative EIS and will be part of the formal transmittal of the legislative proposal to Congress.

What is the Army's purpose and need for extending the withdrawal?



A CH-47 Chinook helicopter delivers a vehicle across the Donnelly Training Area during a joint training exercise.

The land withdrawal extension is needed to ensure that the Army will retain full and continued use of the training areas to successfully execute and fulfill its mission in Alaska. Access to the withdrawn lands enables the Army to:

- Produce a force trained to mobilize, deploy, fight and win anywhere in the world,
- Train in conditions that match or closely resemble all possible environments throughout the world, including arctic and subarctic conditions, and
- Coordinate and conduct air-to-air and air-to-ground operations with the U.S. Air Force to ensure the effectiveness of this training.

What alternatives is the Army considering for the lands withdrawal?

Alternatives to be considered include 1) extending the lands withdrawal for 25 years or more, or assigning control of the lands to the Secretary of the Army, and 2) the No Action alternative, which would return uncontaminated portions of the withdrawn lands to management under the Department of the Interior. Other reasonable alternatives raised during the scoping process that can meet the project purpose and need will be considered for evaluation in the LEIS.

What is the schedule for completion of the LEIS and the withdrawal extension?

The entire LEIS process is expected to take approximately two years. A Draft LEIS will be published in the fall of 2022. In accordance with 40 CFR § 1506.8 a final LEIS is not required for the legislative EIS process. Public comments on the Draft LEIS will be incorporated and submitted as part of the legislative proposal. Opportunities for public participation are described below.



How can the public get involved?

After the Notice of Intent is published in the *Federal Register*, a 30-day scoping period will begin for the public to learn about the proposed action and provide comments. The Army will host virtual public scoping meetings during the scoping period and will advertise them in area newspapers. Comments received during the scoping period will help inform and develop the LEIS analysis.

The second opportunity for public comment comes when the Draft LEIS is published. Notices announcing the availability of the Draft LEIS will be published in the *Federal Register* and in local newspapers. An additional set of public meetings will be publicized and, if feasible, held in person. If in-person meetings are not possible due to public health concerns, the meetings will be held in a virtual setting.

Will the Army coordinate with other agencies on this project?

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is a cooperating agency for the LEIS and is actively participating in its development and review. Throughout development of the LEIS, the Army will coordinate with appropriate federal, state, and local agencies, Alaska Native tribes, and other members of the public about the proposed land withdrawal extension.

Will the land withdrawal extension affect access to the lands?

Subsistence uses are allowed under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act as well as the Sikes Act. The proposed extension of the lands withdrawal will not change access to the lands; access will be the same as it is under current management.



Winter Trail in Donnelly Training Area West

Is project information available online?

Yes. You can learn more about the project by visiting the Army’s NEPA website at <https://home.army.mil/alaska/index.php/fort-wainwright/NEPA>. The website provides links to project materials, the project schedule, and project updates, and provides methods of submitting comments during the scoping and public comment period.

Can I access information about the project if I don’t have a computer?

Yes. Project information and LEIS documents will be available at the following information repositories:

<p>FAIRBANKS</p> <p>Noel Wien Public Library</p> <p>1215 Cowles St.</p> <p>Fairbanks, AK</p>	<p>DELTA JUNCTION</p> <p>Delta Community Library</p> <p>2291 Deborah St.</p> <p>Delta Junction, AK</p>	<p>NORTH POLE</p> <p>North Pole Branch Library</p> <p>656 NPHS Blvd.</p> <p>North Pole, AK</p>	<p>ANCHORAGE</p> <p>Anchorage Public Library</p> <p>3600 Denali St.</p> <p>Anchorage, AK</p>
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In the event the repositories are closed, copies of the Draft LEIS will be provided upon request.

How do I submit comments or who can I contact if I have additional questions?

Comments can be submitted on the project website at <https://home.army.mil/alaska/index.php/fort-wainwright/NEPA> or by email at: usarmy.wainwright.id-pacific.mbx.lwe-leis@mail.mil.

Comments can also be mailed to the following address:

Directorate of Public Works
ATTN: AMIM-AKP-E (L. Sample)
1046 Marks Road #4500
Fort Wainwright, AK 99703-4500

Questions or requests for further information may be directed to the Public Affairs Office at:

Grant Sattler
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Fort Wainwright, AK 99703-5900
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