



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: January 5, 2012

PROJECT

Travel Camp

Fort Belvoir, South Post

Fairfax County, Virginia

SUBMITTED BY

United States Department of Defense, Department of the Army

NCPC FILE NUMBER

7195

NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER

2204.10(38.00)43496

APPLICANT'S REQUEST

Preliminary approval of site and building plans

PROPOSED ACTION

Approve with comments

REVIEW AUTHORITY

Advisory

per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1)

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Department of the Army has submitted plans for a travel camp on the South Post of Fort Belvoir. The travel camp facility includes the construction of 22 pull-through Recreational Vehicle (RV) sites, 30 back-in RV sites, a check-in building, a shelter, and a bath house / laundry facility. The submission also includes 15 guest cabins, 12 tent sites, 2 shelters, and campfire pits, which will be constructed at a later date.

KEY INFORMATION

- The travel camp will support the current military and Department of Defense civilian employee population residing in and visiting the National Capital Region.
- The project is proposed for the Tompkins Basin Recreational Area of Fort Belvoir and will be in close proximity to Gunston Cove.
- The travel camp plans indicate that a new pier picnic shelter and three RV sites are located within the Resource Protection Area. Fairfax County also noted that the project may impact the Environmental Quality Corridor.
- The project is consistent with the land use designated of the Fort Belvoir 1993 Master Plan

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

Approves the preliminary site and building plans for a travel camp on the South Post of Fort Belvoir, Fairfax County, Virginia.

Supports a travel camp at Fort Belvoir to provide additional recreational facilities at the installation as well as its proposed location in the Tompkins Basin Recreational Area, which is nearby other compatible recreational uses.

Requests for the final submission the applicant:

- Submit a detailed landscape plan that describes the amount of tree loss and the project's conformance to the Fort Belvoir tree replacement policy
- Reconfigure the cabin area to reduce its footprint to avoid any tree loss; and
- Evaluate the relocation of the existing pier parking lot out of the Resource Protection Area.

Recommends that prior to submitting the project for final design review, the Army coordinate with Fairfax County and NCPC staff to address comments received from the County, particularly:

- Determining the affects the project has on the Resource Protection Area and the Environmental Quality Corridor and reevaluating any proposed development within these areas.
- Opportunities to coordinate on stormwater management techniques and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TDMLs) in relationship to the project.

Supports the Northern Virginia Regional Commission's comment that the Army should evaluate the opportunity to retrofit existing stormwater quantity facilities to stormwater quality` facilities where possible and **request** that the Army evaluate its stormwater facilities and potential retrofits as it begins new development proposals.

Requests that as part of the Fort Belvoir Master Plan update, the Army:

- Evaluate, as part of the Reforestation Plan required by the Commission at its May 5, 2011 meeting, the installation's waterfront for potential replanting opportunities.
- Provide information on how it will meet the requirements of Executive Order 13508 - Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration - and all other applicable laws and regulations regarding the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.
- Include information on the Army's short- and long-term plans for the Tompkins Basin Recreational Area

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	None
Remaining actions (anticipated)	Final site and building plans

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I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Site

The proposed travel camp will be located in the southeast section of the South Post of Fort Belvoir in the Tompkins Basin Recreational Area. The site is bordered by Johnston Road on the south, Morrow Road on the east, and vegetative areas to the north and west. The travel camp is separated into two locations, a cabin area and a Recreational Vehicle (RV) area, approximately 500 feet apart (Figure 1). Also located within the Tompkins Basin Recreational Area are: the Fort Belvoir Outdoor Recreation Facility, a dog park, an outdoor Archery Range, and Castle Park. Tompkins Basin Recreational Area also features a pier and boat launch into Gunston Cove, which feeds into the Potomac River and is part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.



Figure 1: Project Location

The RV area's topography currently slopes down from north to south, with an approximately 20-foot elevation change. The RV area is currently a large paved surface that is a remnant from previous uses at the site.

The cabin site is relatively flat with elevation change from east to west approximately 10 foot. The cabin and tent areas are characterized by partially wooded and slightly rolling terrain.

The Army selected the sites in order to reuse a previously disturbed area that consisted largely of impervious materials and to take advantage of the existing recreational amenities at the Tompkins Basin Recreational Area.



Figure 2: Aerial of project site

Proposal

Travel Camp - RV Area (southern site)

As indicated previously, the travel camp is separated into two sites. In addition to the RV parking pads, the RV area will also include a check-in building, a shelter, a Bath House/Laundry facility, and an area for twelve (12) platform tent sites (Figure 5). While most of this site is to be constructed on existing paved area, the Army has indicated that a portion of the proposed

development will require the removal of some wooded areas. The amount of wooded area to be removed was not identified.

The RV area includes 22 pull-through parking spaces and 30 back-in parking spaces. Each back-in space includes a concrete pad that measures 15 feet by 40 feet. These spaces are connected to the internal circulation, via one asphalt paved area. Each pull through space includes the same concrete pad as the back-in with two asphalt paved areas that connect to the internal drives. The distance between the concrete pads vary in the plans, but at a minimum the RV concrete pads are 22 feet apart.

The proposed check-in building (Figure 3) will be located at the west entrance of the southern site, and act as the main entrance for the travel camp. It will be 31 feet by 17 feet and include: a retail area, an office, a restroom, and a mechanical room. The one-story building will be approximately 17 feet tall and will be clad with stained wood log-style siding.

Also included as part of the southern site, is a one-story, approximately 1,070 square foot bath/laundry facility measuring 49 feet by 22 feet (Figure 4). The bath house includes four 60 square-foot shower rooms and two 80 square-foot, handicap-accessible shower rooms. Also included is a laundry room with three washing machines, three dryers, a sink, vending machines, and chairs. The building will be approximately 19 feet tall clad similarly as the check-in building.

The plans for the southern site also include the removal of a portion of Johnston Road. The internal circulation of the travel camp will provide the connection between Marrow Road and Johnston Road on the other side of the travel camp.

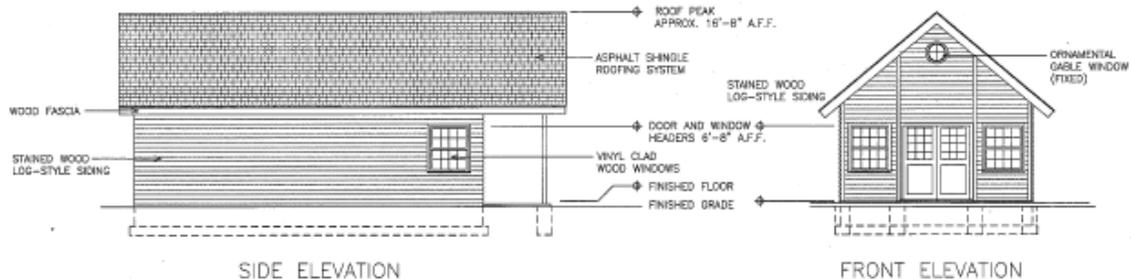


Figure 3: Office Elevation

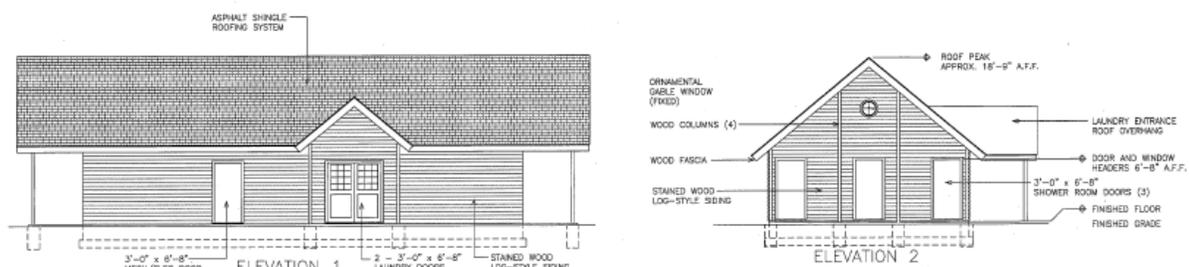


Figure 4: Bath House Elevation

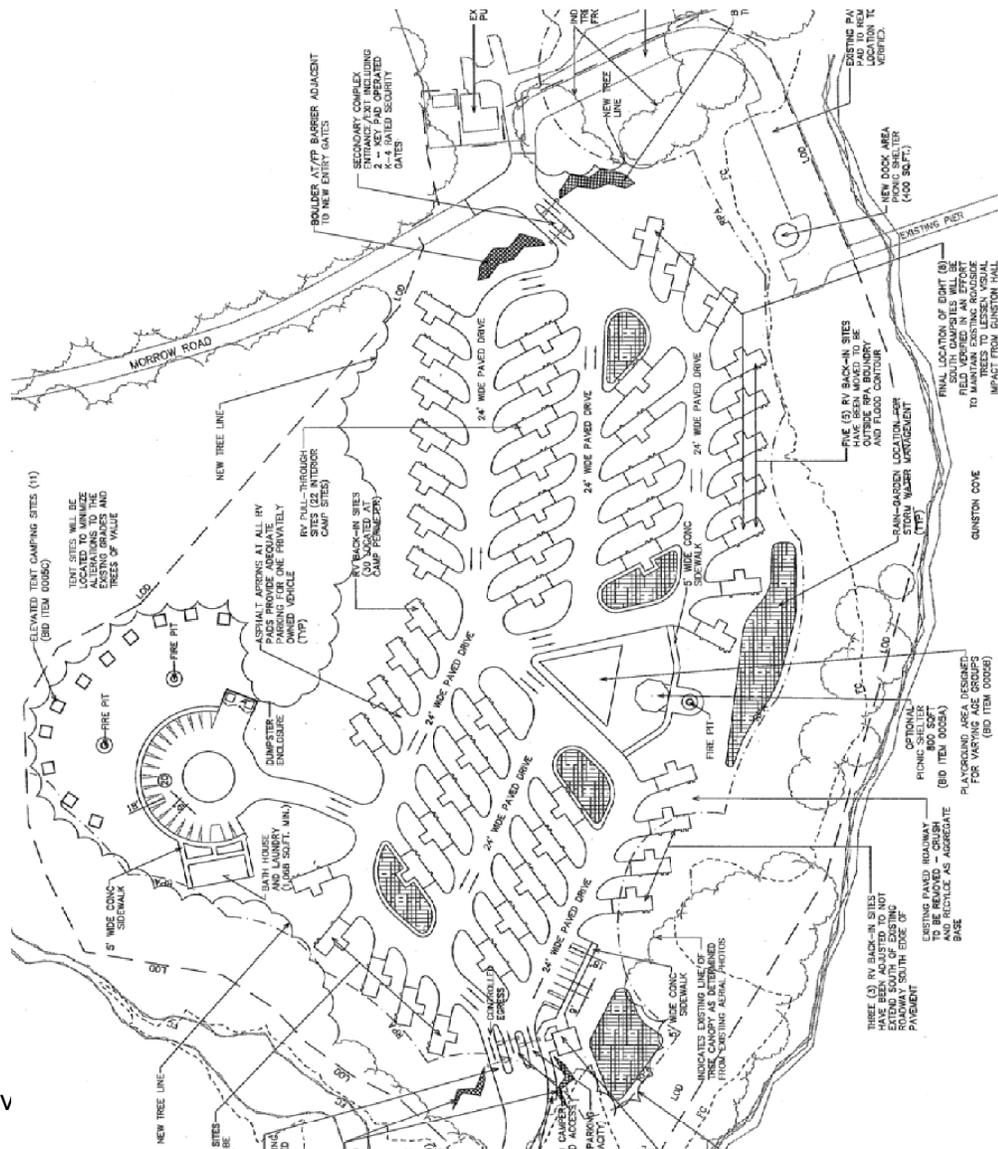


Figure 5: Trav

Travel Camp - Cabin Area (northern site)

The proposed northern site for the travel camp includes fourteen (14) cabins organized around a cul-de-sac. In order to provide spacing for each of the cabins the Army has indicated that some trees along the western portion of the site will need to be removed. The Army did not specify how many trees would need to be removed for the cabins.

Development of this site will include a central picnic shelter with a fire pit and two parking spaces for each cabin. Also included is a circular roadway that connects to the parking spaces for each cabin as well as a sidewalk for pedestrians.

The cabins on the northern site, and the tents on the southern site are phase two of the travel camp, which is not currently funded.

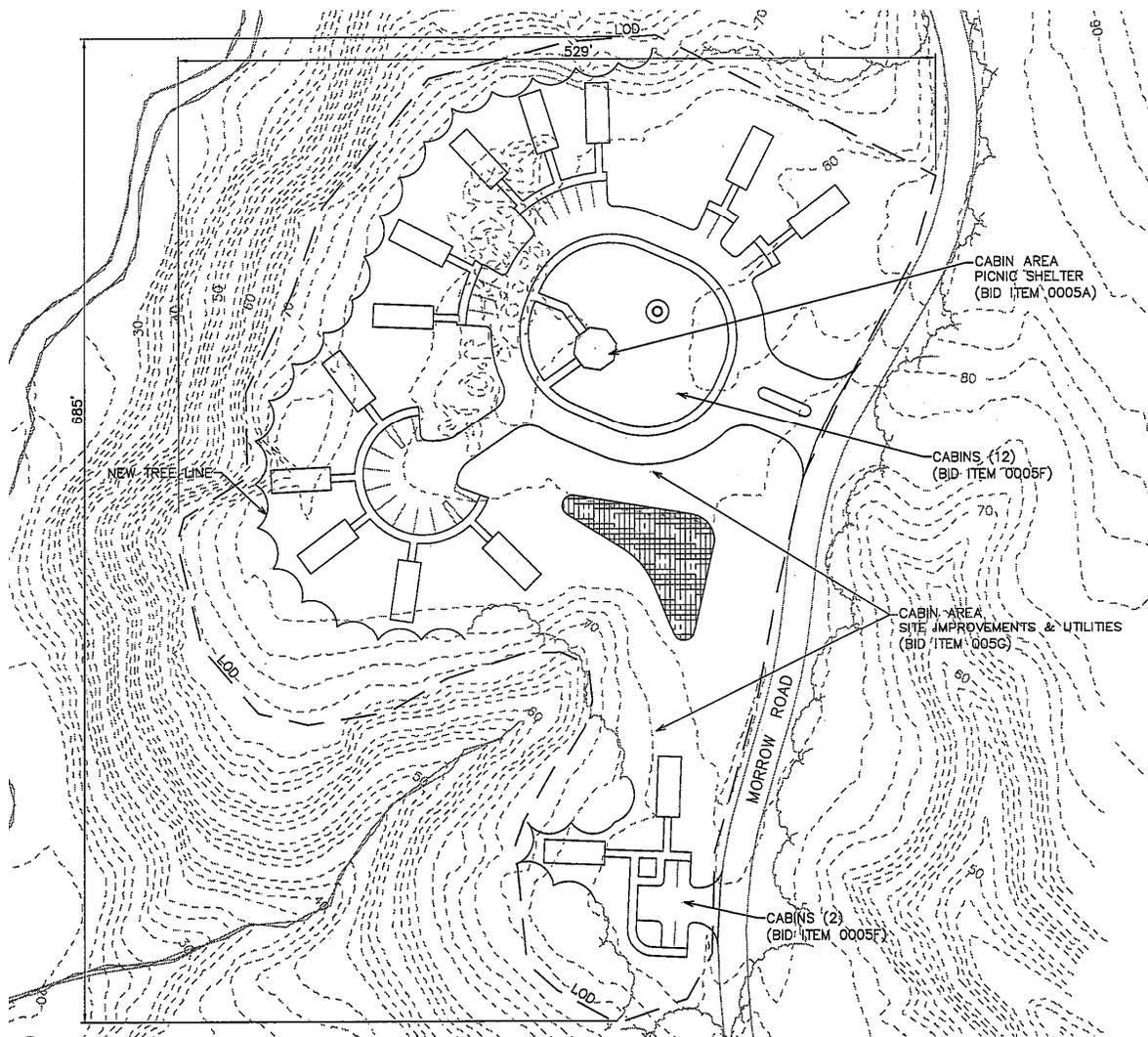


Figure 6: Travel Camp – Cabin site layout

II. PROJECT ANALYSIS/CONFORMANCE

Analysis

Staff supports locating a travel camp at Fort Belvoir to supply additional recreational facilities for current and former DoD personnel visiting the National Capital Region. The proposed travel camp also generally supports the goals of Executive Order 13508 to provide additional opportunities for the American people to experience the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

Staff has reviewed the preliminary plans for the travel camp against the policies of the Comprehensive Plan and finds that the travel camp complies with multiple polices and goals of

the Plan, particularly the intent of the Visitors Element. Staff, however, has identified policies and goals pertaining to tree loss and stormwater management that the applicant should provide additional information on or evaluate further as it progresses with the final design. Comments received by Fairfax County and the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, which have been incorporated into staff's analysis, should also be evaluated by the Army as it moves forward.

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

The Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital provides goals and policies that guide the Commission in evaluating and acting on plans and projects in the National Capital. A more detailed description of the Comp Plan policies that are relevant to this project is as follows:

Visitor Element

The major goal of the Visitor Element is to accommodate visitors in a way that ensures an enjoyable and educational experience, showcases the institutions of American culture and democracy, and supports federal and regional planning goals. The travel camp is consistent with the following policies of the Visitors Element:

1. Support accessible federal visitor attractions on federal property throughout the region
2. Encourage increased use of bicycles to access attractions in the region, and provide bicycle racks, information about rental locations, and maps identifying designated bike path locations

Staff is recommending that the Commission **support a travel camp at Fort Belvoir to provide additional recreational facilities at the installation as well as its proposed location in the Tompkins Basin Recreational Area, which is nearby other compatible recreational uses.** The travel camp will support the current military and Department of Defense civilian employee population residing in and visiting the National Capital Region.

Transportation Element

The Transportation Element provides policies that address parking at federal facilities, impacts to the local and regional traffic/transit networks, and transportation management. The project is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan policies:

1. Outside of the Historic District of Columbia boundaries, the parking ratio should not exceed one space for every 1.5 employees;
2. Provide secure and sheltered bicycle parking spaces or bicycle lockers in close proximity to building entrances at federal buildings and on federal campuses.

Staff finds that the project is consistent with the Transportation Element. The preliminary design submission conforms to the limitations on employee parking of the Comprehensive Plan ratio of 1:1.5; the proposal provides 4 parking spaces for the 8 employees at that camp. The design also includes the location for bicycle racks to discourage the use of vehicles.

Federal Environment Element

The Federal Environment Element promotes the federal government as an environmental steward and identifies the Commission's planning policies related to the maintenance,

protection, and enhancement of the region's natural environment. The project is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan policies:

1. Promote water conservation programs and the use of new water-saving technologies that conserve and monitor water consumption in all federal facilities;
2. Encourage the natural recharge of groundwater and aquifers by limiting the creation of impervious surfaces, avoiding disturbance to wetlands and floodplains, and designing stormwater swales and collection basins on federal installations.

The project identifies preliminary measures for stormwater management techniques to reduce or eliminate runoff; water efficient landscaping, and light pollution reduction.

However, at this time staff is unable to determine if the project conforms to the following policies:

- Maintain and preserve woodlands and vegetated areas on steep slopes and adjacent to waterways, especially to aid in the control of erosion and sediment
- Minimize tree cutting and other vegetation removal to reduce soil disturbance and erosion, particularly in the vicinity of waterways. When tree removal is necessary, trees should be replaced to prevent a net tree loss.
- Discourage development in areas of identified high erosion potential, on slopes with a gradient of 15 percent and above, and on severely eroded soils.

Consequently staff is recommending that the Commission **requests for the final submission the applicant:**

- **Submit a detailed landscape plan that describes the amount of tree loss and the project's conformance to the Fort Belvoir tree replacement policy**
- **Reconfigure the cabin area to reduce its footprint to avoid any tree loss; and**
- **Evaluate the relocation of the existing pier parking lot out of the Resource Protection Area.**

1993 Fort Belvoir Master Plan

The land use designation for the site as outlined in the 1993 Fort Belvoir Master Plan is community. The Army defines community uses as "land use that encourages a mix of uses. Facilities allowed include religious, family support, personnel services, professional services, medical, community, housing, commercial and recreational services. Users live both on- and off-post and may include soldiers, dependents, retirees, and other civilian personnel."

The project is consistent with the land use of the area as designated by the Master Plan update currently being undertaken by the Army. The draft Long Range Component of the Fort Belvoir Master Plan proposes land use in this area would continue to be designated as community. Staff has reviewed the draft Long Range Component of the Fort Belvoir Master Plan and provided comments to the Army on the master plan. The Army has retained a contractor for the master plan, Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and the Transportation Management Plan and will begin the EIS process in January 2012.

As part of the review of the project, staff has identified areas that the Army should evaluate as it moves forward with the master plan update. Consequently, staff recommends the Commission request that as part of its Master Plan update, the Army:

- Evaluate, as part of the Reforestation Plan required by the Commission at its May 5, 2011 meeting, the installation's waterfront for potential replanting opportunities.
- Provide information on how it will meet the requirements of Executive Order 13508 - Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration - and all other applicable laws and regulations regarding the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.
- Include information on the Army's short- and long-term plans for the Tompkins Basin Recreational Area

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the Army conducted an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project. The EA concluded with the Army's issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), dated October 5, 2011. Due to the project's location in the environs, NCPC does not have independent NEPA responsibility.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

Regarding Section 106 of the NHPA, the Army determined, and the VA SHPO concurred, that the project will have "No Adverse Effect" on historic properties. Due to the project's location in the environs, NCPC does not have independent Section 106 responsibility.

III. CONSULTATION

Coordination with local agencies

In accordance with the Commission's Procedures for Intergovernmental Cooperation in Federal Planning in the National Capital Region, the proposed project was referred to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments (WashCOG), the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC), and Fairfax County on April 13, 2011. The comments received from VDOT, NVRC and Fairfax County are attached. No comments were received from DEQ or WashCOG.

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

VDOT indicated that the transportation network improvements constructed to accommodate BRAC should handle the traffic resulting from the proposed travel camp, a low volume, ancillary use.

Fairfax County, Virginia

Fairfax County provided comments on the travel camp project in a letter dated November 28, 2011. The County's comments are attached and we encourage the Army to evaluate all the County's comments as they move forward with the project towards final design.

The County noted that it provided comments on the travel camp during the Environmental Assessment process and that those comments focused on the encroachment into the Resource Protection Area (RPA)¹ and the lack of conceptual stormwater plans. Fairfax County noted that there seemed to be improvement in the design regarding encroachment into the RPA, however still had concerns on the placement of a new dock picnic shelter and three RV back-in pads in the RPA. RPAs provide ecological benefits by providing water quality maintenance and pollution control as well as flood and erosion control. Staff agrees with Fairfax County that development in the RPAs should be minimized to the maximum extent possible in order to protect this ecological benefit.

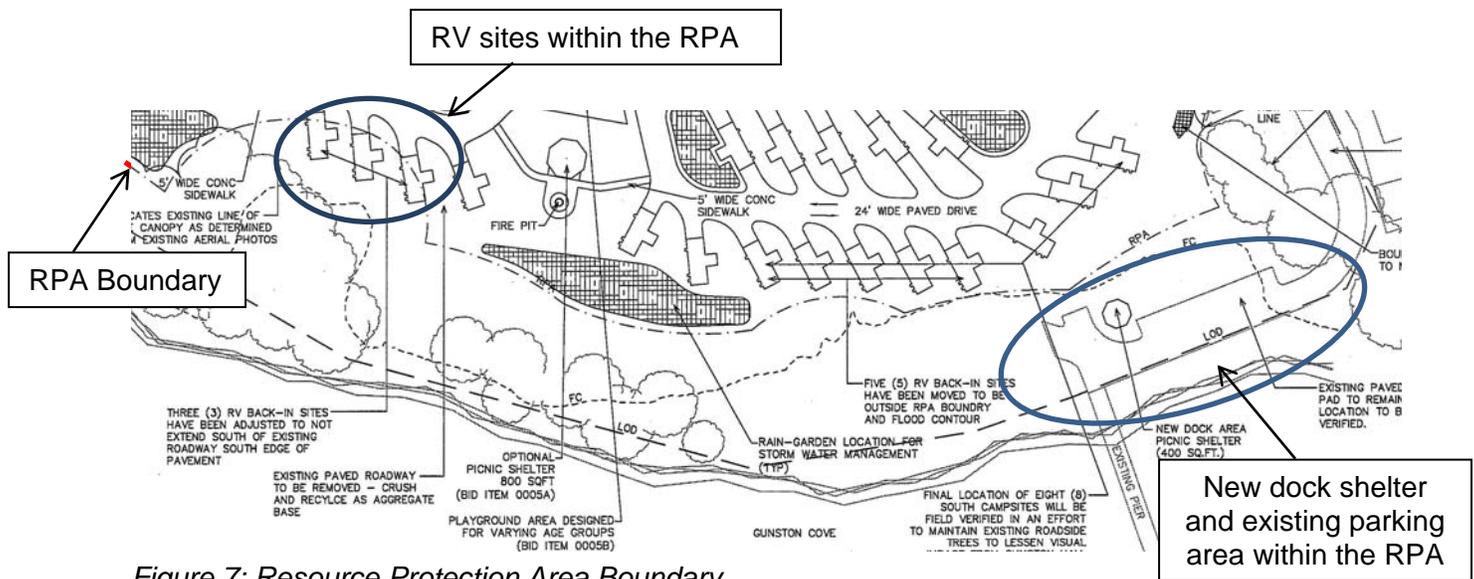


Figure 7: Resource Protection Area Boundary

The Fairfax County letter also noted that the current design submission does not address the County's Environmental Quality Corridor (EQC) policy and the County believes that the proposed design will have an impact on the EQCs. The County again noted that the encroachment into the RPA would be against the EQC policy. The EQC policy is a Fairfax County environmental policy to protect the natural environment of the County. The County defines an EQC as:

- All 100 year flood plains;
- All areas of 15 percent or greater slopes adjacent to the flood plain, or if no flood plain is present, 15 percent or greater slopes that begin within 50 feet of the stream channel;
- All wetlands connected to the stream valleys; and
- All the land within a corridor defined by a boundary line which is 50 feet plus four additional feet for each percent slope measured perpendicular to the stream bank. The percent slope used in the calculation will be the average slope measured within 110 feet of a stream channel or, if a flood plain is present, between the flood plain boundary and a point fifty feet up slope from the flood plain. This measurement should be taken at fifty

¹ Resource Protection Areas (RPAs) are corridors of environmentally sensitive land that lie alongside or near shorelines of streams, rivers, and other waterways. RPAs are land characterized by: a tidal wetland, a tidal shore, or a water body with perennial flow. The RPA also includes any land within a major floodplain or any land within 100 feet of the water body.

foot intervals beginning at the downstream boundary of any stream valley on or adjacent to a property under evaluation.²

The County recommended that clearing for the cabin site should be avoided within areas characterized by slope gradients of 15 percent or greater and it was unable to tell grade with the drawings submitted. A policy of the Comprehensive Plan in the Environmental Element also states that the federal government should “discourage development in areas of identified high erosion potential, on slopes with a gradient of 15 percent and above, and on severely eroded soils.” Therefore, the Army should evaluate the proposed design to ensure that it is not proposing development, grading, or tree cutting, on slopes of 15 percent or greater. While staff notes that the Army is not required to this local policy, we encourage the Army to work with staff and Fairfax County on the proposed impact to the County's EQCs as the EQC policy's goal is to protect ecologically important land for protection and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The County also provided multiple comments on stormwater management and requested that the Army coordinate with the County's Department of Public Works and Environmental Services on the design of the stormwater management facilities. The County noted that design, construction, and maintenance of rain gardens are highly variable and that they may fail; it provided recommendations for the design of the rain gardens. Staff encourages the Army to coordinate with Fairfax County on the stormwater management techniques as the County has multiple recommendations and can offer guidance on how to handle stormwater.

Consequently, staff recommends that the Commission **recommend that prior to submitting the project for final design, the Army coordinate with Fairfax County and NCPC to address comments received from the County, particularly:**

- **Determining the affects the project has on the Resource Protection Area and the Environmental Quality Corridor and reevaluating any proposed development within these areas.**
- **Opportunities to coordinate on stormwater management techniques and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TDMLs) in relationship to the project.**

Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC)

NVRC provided comments on the proposed project in a letter dated October 20, 2011. NVRC noted that Fairfax County, along with other northern Virginia jurisdictions, enacted jurisdiction-wide Chesapeake Bay Resource Management Area (RMA). The RMA designations require that all development result in a no-net-increase standard for phosphorus loading. NVRC also noted that the Army must adhere to the post-development water quality requirements set forth in the Virginia Stormwater Management Regulations.

NVRC also recommended that, where possible, existing stormwater quantity facilities should be converted to stormwater quality facilities. Staff agrees with NVRC's comment that stormwater quantity management facilities be converted to quality facilities when possible in order to

² Fairfax County Policy Plan Volume of the Comprehensive Plan, Environment Section, Objective 9, Policy A

improve stormwater output. Stormwater quality management techniques manage the output of the stormwater and its levels of pollutant, such as phosphorous. Most stormwater quantity management facilities manage an amount of stormwater but do not handle the stormwater pollutant output. Stormwater quality techniques are the current best management practice for managing stormwater. Therefore staff recommends the Commission **support the Northern Virginia Regional Commission's comment that the Army should evaluate the opportunity to retrofit existing stormwater quantity to stormwater quality facilities through new construction activities where possible and request that the Army evaluate its stormwater facilities and potential retrofits as it begins development proposals.**

IV. APPENDIX

Appendix A: Virginia Department of Transportation Comment Response Letter
Appendix B: Northern Virginia Regional Commission Comment Response Letter
Appendix C: Fairfax County, Virginia Comment Response Letter

Appendix A: Virginia Department of Transportation Comment Response Letter



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

4975 Alliance Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030

GREGORY A. WHIRLEY
COMMISSIONER

November 15, 2011

Mr. David W. Levy, RA, AICP
Director, Urban Design and Plan Review
National Capital Planning Commission
401 9th Street NW, North Lobby Suite 500
Washington, DC 20004

Subject: NCPC File No. 7195 - Ft. Belvoir Travel Camp

Dear Mr. Levy:

NOVA District Administrator, Garrett Moore, asked me to thank you for and respond to your letter dated October 13, 2011 requesting VDOT's review of the proposed plans for the construction of a new travel camp on the South Post at Ft. Belvoir.

As you are aware, there is currently a great deal of activity at the post including many transportation improvements to accommodate BRAC changes. These improvements should provide the mitigation needed for the increased traffic from this low-volume, ancillary use. We have completed our cursory review and currently have no objections approving these projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Renée N. Hamilton".

Renée N. Hamilton
Assistant District Administrator
Planning and Investment Management

Copy: Garrett Moore
Paul Kraucunas

Appendix B: Northern Virginia Regional Commission Comment Response Letter

3060 Williams Drive, Suite 510
Fairfax, Virginia 22031
www.novaregion.org



Voice: 703-642-0700
Fax: 703-642-5077

Northern Virginia Regional Commission

October 20, 2011

Chairman
Hon. Martin E. Nohe
Vice Chairman
Hon. Robert W. Lazaro, Jr.
Treasurer
Hon. Redella S. Pepper
Executive Director
G. Mark Gibb

David W. Levy
National Capital Planning Commission
401 9th Street, NW
North Lobby, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20004

County of Arlington
Hon. Barbara A. Favola
Hon. Jay Fisetle

Re: NCPC File No. 7195

County of Fairfax
Hon. Sharon Bulova
Hon. John C. Cook
Hon. Penelope A. Gross
Hon. Pat Herrity
Hon. Catherine M. Hudgins
Hon. Jeffrey C. McKay
Hon. Linda Smyth

Dear Mr. Levy

The Northern Virginia Regional Commission staff has reviewed the document described above and has the following comments.

County of Loudoun
Hon. Scott K. York
County of Prince William
Hon. Michael C. May
Hon. Martin E. Nohe
Hon. Frank J. Principi

Please be advised that the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, and Prince William, the City of Alexandria, and the Town of Herndon, have all enacted jurisdiction-wide Chesapeake Bay Resource Management Area (RMA) designation. This RMA designation requires that all development result in a no-net-increase standard for phosphorus loadings, based on the jurisdiction's average imperviousness.

City of Alexandria
Hon. Redella S. Pepper
Hon. Paul C. Smedberg

Special attention should be given to post-construction stormwater quality management. The developing agency must adhere to the **post-development** water quality requirements set forth by the Virginia Stormwater Management Regulations (VR 215-02-00 Part IV and §2.3). Meeting the Virginia Stormwater Management Regulations should comply with the requirement that state agencies meet the local ordinances pursuant to the Virginia Chesapeake Bay Act.

City of Fairfax
Hon. Joan Cross

City of Falls Church
Hon. Robin Gardner

City of Manassas
Hon. Harry J. Parrish II

Please refer to the *Northern Virginia BMP Handbook* for calculation procedures. A copy of the Handbook is available on NVRC's website, www.novaregion.org.

City of Manassas Park
Hon. Suhas Naddoni

Town of Dumfries
Hon. Nancy West

We would also suggest that, where possible, opportunities for retrofit of existing stormwater quantity facilities to stormwater **quality** facilities through new construction activities should be explored. NVRC's *Guidebook for Maintaining BMPs in Northern Virginia* is available, without charge, should you need it, and can also be downloaded from our website, or call me if you would like to receive a copy to use as a reference.

Town of Herndon
Hon. Steve DeBenedittis

Town of Leesburg
Hon. Kenneth "Ken" Reid

A photocopy of this letter should be included with your submission to indicate that the review by this agency has been completed.

Town of Purcellville
Hon. Robert W. Lazaro, Jr.

Town of Vienna
Hon. M. Jane Seeman

Your cooperation in the intergovernmental review process is appreciated.

(as of July 1, 2011)

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aimee Vosper".

Aimee Vosper
Director, Environmental and Planning Services

Appendix C: Fairfax County, Virginia Comment Response Letter



County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

November 28, 2011

David W. Levy
Director, Urban Design and Plan Review
National Capital Planning Commission
401 9th Street, NW
North Lobby, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mr. Levy:

In collaboration with the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES), the Fairfax County Department of Transportation, and the Fairfax County Park Authority, the Department of Planning and Zoning has reviewed preliminary project plans for the Family Travel Camp (NCPC File Number 7195). Our comments are attached. Please note that these comments reflect the views of county staff and have not been reviewed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

In January 2011, we reviewed and provided comments on the Environmental Assessment and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact for the Fort Belvoir Family Travel Camp. As described in the submission documents, the travel camp will consist of 15 672-square-foot cabins, 22 pull-through RV sites, 30 back-in RV sites, a check-in building, three shelters, 12 tent sites, and a 1,370-square-foot shower/laundry facility. The Travel Camp will be located on a 19.2-acre site, a portion of which is a previously disturbed area consisting largely of impervious materials. Our previous comments focused on encroachment into Resource Protection Areas (RPA) and the lack of conceptual stormwater plans. Staff continues to endorse Fort Belvoir's proposal for the Family Travel Camp facilities in order to provide additional recreational opportunities on the post. This submission shows less development in the RPA; however, some clarification on the exact nature and extent of RPA disturbance is requested. We also recommend additional coordination on the construction of rain gardens with DPWES and the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District to ensure that the rain gardens are appropriately sized and constructed to capture the required amount of runoff from the Travel Camp.

Additional details are included in the attached comments. If you have questions about the comments, please contact Kimberly Rybold at kimberly.rybold@fairfaxcounty.gov or at 703-324-1363.

Sincerely,

Fred R. Selden, Director
Department of Planning and Zoning

FRS: KMR

Attachments: As Stated

Excellence * Innovation * Stewardship
Integrity * Teamwork * Public Service

Department of Planning and Zoning
Director's Office
12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 755
Fairfax, Virginia 22035-5509
Phone 703-324-1380
Fax 703-324-3056
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/



ATTACHMENT

**Fort Belvoir Family Travel Camp
NCPC Preliminary Submission – October 13, 2011
Fairfax County Comments, November 28, 2011**

Environmental Quality Corridors, Floodplains, and Resource Protection Areas

- It is difficult to discern from the materials that have been provided where the boundaries of the 100-year floodplain are located. Is the contour line on sheet C-102 of the submission that is labeled "FC" the floodplain boundary? Clarification is needed. If the "FC" contour is, in fact, the 100-year floodplain boundary, then the only new construction proposed for this area would be the proposed new dock shelter. The existing parking area and pier would remain.
- Ideally, the existing parking area would be removed and this area would be restored. However, it is recognized that access to the water is a component of the proposed plan, that the retention of the existing pier is being proposed as a result, and that parking in proximity to the pier is desired. Ideally, the parking lot would be relocated outside of the floodplain but because this is an existing use, retention of the parking lot is acceptable. Efforts should be taken to provide water quality treatment for the stormwater runoff from this parking lot.
- The purpose of the proposed dock shelter is not discussed in the submission materials. What is the purpose of this shelter? Is its location near the existing pier and parking area essential? If so, the proposed location can be supported. If not, the shelter should be constructed outside of the RPA.
- If the "FC" contour does not reflect the location of the 100-year floodplain, this information should be provided, and Fort Belvoir should ensure that encroachments into this area are minimized.
- With respect to impacts to the Resource Protection Area, the proposal as outlined by the submission is a substantial improvement over what was discussed within the November 2010 Environmental Assessment. The EA identified several RV pads and tent camping sites within the RPA; the more recent submission indicates that there would be far fewer RV pads, and no tent camping platforms, within the RPA. However, the limits of disturbance shown within the submission (and an assumption is being made that the line identified within the submission materials as "LOD" identifies the proposed limits of disturbance) identify substantial areas of disturbance within the RPA. It is unclear what the nature and extent of disturbance would be. Ideally, portions of the RPA that are currently wooded should remain undisturbed, while previously cleared areas within the RPA should be restored. Clarification is needed.
- Three of the RV pads would be located at least partially within the RPA. What is the justification for this encroachment? The RV pads should be relocated such that they would not encroach into the RPA.

Travel Camp – NCPC Preliminary Submission – October 13, 2011
Fairfax County Comments, November 28, 2011
Page 2

ATTACHMENT

- While neither the Environmental Assessment nor the NCPC submission package address the county's Environmental Quality Corridor policy, the proposal as outlined by the submission is more sensitive to EQC areas than was the proposal as presented in the EA. In the southern portion of the project area, the improved sensitivity to RPA encroachments would also serve to reduce conflicts with the EQC policy. In the northern section (along Morrow Road), the proposed locations of several of the cabins appear to have been moved slightly upslope, thereby reducing clearing that would occur in the more steeply-sloping wooded area below the cleared plateau area.
- As recommended earlier, the remaining proposed encroachment into the RPA for the RV pads should be avoided, and the cleared portions of the RPA (which would, in this area, include the EQC) should be restored.
- In the northern portion of the project area, clearing should be avoided within areas characterized by slope gradients of 15% or greater. It is not clear from drawing number C-103 of the submission package if this is intended.
- The Travel Camp plan seems to avoid impacts to the steep ravines east of the limits of disturbance highlighted by Virginia Natural Heritage Program staff as areas of concern. Policies should be put into place to avoid placement of trails in this area that could cause erosion, introduce non-native invasive plant species and otherwise degrade the ravine area.

Vegetation/Habitat

- The submission materials are not clear in regard to the proposed extent of clearing of existing tree cover. On drawings C-102 and C-103, for example, the "new tree line" suggests that clearing and grading would be much less extensive than what may be inferred from the limits of disturbance ("LOD"). Further, on drawing C-102, existing wooded areas are identified within the RPA, but they are inside the area identified as being subject to disturbance (again, based on the "LOD" line) and not shown as being within areas that would be protected by the "new tree line." However, these areas are not near any of the proposed facilities, and it is therefore likely that they could be protected. Will they be protected? Clarification is needed.
- There are also areas that, based on aerial photos, are currently wooded but would need to be cleared. These areas do not appear to be identified within the submission materials. Again, clarification should be provided.
- Tree preservation efforts should be maximized, and clearing should be avoided in the RPA.
- Ft. Belvoir staff seems to have addressed the potential for rare, threatened or endangered species on the project site in addition to complying with recommendations from Virginia Natural Heritage Program staff.

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Stormwater management

- Fort Belvoir should coordinate with DPWES on the design and coverage of stormwater management facilities and strategies. We would like the opportunity to review the stormwater calculations to ensure that the rain gardens are appropriately sized to capture the requirement amount of runoff.
- It is unclear how the Army plans on directing all the stormwater runoff to the six rain gardens throughout the facility. The topography represented on the plans does not inherently lend itself to runoff being directed to the BMPs for treatment. For example, the one rain garden to treat the north area appears to be of higher elevation than the cabins. Will inlets and underground pipes be installed?
- Several of the rain gardens on page C-106 have a second line around the footprint. Is this to suggest that they will be surrounded by a raised curb? The rain gardens will not be able to function as designed if this is the case.
- The design, construction and maintenance of rain gardens is highly variable, and many fail. As a minimum, the following is recommended :
 - Soils in Fairfax County are normally inadequate to allow infiltration from concentrated stormwater. The rain gardens should be designed with underdrain systems with perforated underdrains and an outfall below each rain garden.
 - No filter fabric should be used in the construction of the rain gardens. As a minimum, they SHOULD NOT wrap the underdrains in fabric. This will result in clogging and failure of the underdrains.
 - Vertical overflow and observation well pipes should be solid, NOT perforated.
 - Using equipment in the bottoms of rain gardens during construction should be avoided to minimize soil compaction.
 - The Park Authority recommends that the Army consult with staff from the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District for the design and construction of the rain gardens. NVSWCD staff have extensive knowledge in the design, construction, monitoring and maintenance of rain gardens in our region.
- There is a potential for the release of fluids from leaking vehicles and it will be necessary to capture any such releases before they enter nearby water resources. Will drainage from all areas within which vehicles will be parked be conveyed to one or more stormwater management facilities prior to discharge into Gunston Cove or one of its tributaries?

Gunston Cove

- Gunston Cove is an important estuary and sub-watershed to the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay. The Army should take measures to:
 - Avoid negative impacts to water quality in Gunston Cove.

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- Seek to enhance shoreline vegetation and prevent clearing and tramping by staff and visitors.
- Seek to enhance aquatic vegetation on and near shore to improve water quality and wildlife habitat in Gunston Cove.
- Participate in efforts to minimize shoreline erosion through monitoring, enforcement of no-wake areas, construction of structures to prevent erosion and promote deposition as appropriate, etc.
- Coordinate with the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, the state of Virginia and George Mason University for the long-term management of Gunston Cove to promote water quality and habitat for the numerous native species that live there or visit seasonally.
- Promote environmental education through the Accotink Bay Wildlife Refuge, interpretive signage, programs, emphasis on non-motorized access to the surrounding water resources, etc.
- Work with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and others to provide designed access points for fishing to minimize shoreline vegetation trampling and enhance visitor experiences.
- Monitor shoreline areas to identify important nesting habitat and vegetation and take measures to avoid and minimize impacts to those areas and enhance them where possible.

Transportation

- Travel Camp patrons who choose to commute either by bus, bicycle or foot (trips that primarily originate within the Base) will require adequate pedestrian facilities that ensure safety. The site plan shows numerous sidewalks have been provided at the facility. However, the plan lacks details pertaining to how these sidewalks connect to the existing roadway network (along Warren Road, Johnson Road and Morrow Road).
- Additional detail regarding bus stop locations (if any) should be provided.
- If Fort Belvoir anticipates providing bus service to this area, routes leading to the area must be evaluated and improved as necessary to accommodate a 40' bus, the standard in the Connector and Metro fleets.