

May 1, 2019

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

South Dakota Army National Guard Annual Training Activities
Within the Black Hills National Forest, Custer State Park,
and Belle Fourche Reservoir, South Dakota
2019–2029

Description. Interested parties are hereby notified that the South Dakota Army National Guard (SDARNG) has prepared a final environmental assessment (EA) and draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) regarding the proposed action described below.

Statutory Authority. This notice is being issued to all interested parties in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500–1508) and the Environmental Analysis of Army Actions (32 CFR Part 651).

Proposed Action. The proposed action is to conduct short-term bivouac and tactical training each year at approximately 5 to 7 of the 41 proposed sites within the Black Hills National Forest (BKNF), Custer State Park, and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) Belle Fourche Reservoir during a 2-week period in June each year from 2019–2029 as part of the Golden Coyote annual training exercises. The affected jurisdictions would be Butte, Custer, Lawrence, and Pennington Counties, South Dakota. The exercises are supported by a main operating base (SDARNG Headquarters Camp Rapid) located in Rapid City, South Dakota. Bivouac training is defined as any military encampment area set up with tents, kitchens, showers, and portable toilets with the perimeters surrounded by (temporary and or simulated) fighting positions. All 41 sites have been part of previous exercises.

Training areas are annually selected from the 41 proposed sites, based on specific criteria: proximity to improved roads, distance from areas of environmental concern, or suitability for a particular training event. BKNF and BOR issue special use permits to conduct these training activities on properties under their jurisdiction, which may include restrictions based on current knowledge of the site-specific conditions. SDARNG submits an annual Operations Plan to BKNF, Custer State Park, and BOR each training year.

Public Review. The EA and the draft FNSI will undergo a 15-day public comment period from May 1, 2019, through May 16, 2019, in accordance with 32 CFR Part 651.14, Environmental Analysis of Army Actions. During this period, the public may submit comments on the EA and the draft FNSI. The EA and the draft FNSI can be accessed on SDARNG website at <https://sd.ng.mil/> or at the following address:

Rapid City Public Library
610 Quincy Street
Rapid City, SD 57701
(605) 394-6139
<https://www.rcgov.org/departments/library.html>

Comments. Comments on the EA and the draft FNSI should be submitted during the 15-day comment period via postal mail to Emily Beck, Conservation Manager, South Dakota Army National Guard, 2823 West Main Street, Rapid City, SD 57702; or via e-mail to emily.s.beck.nfg@mail.mil