

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

CEMETERY TRANSFER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



**FORT MISSOULA MILITARY CEMETERY
CCC ROAD/GUARDSMAN LANE
MISSOULA, MONTANA
MISSOULA COUNTY**

MARCH 2019

ABSTRACT: The Department of the Army operates the Fort Missoula Military Cemetery, located in Missoula, Montana. The Department of the Army is transferring the military cemetery to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The VA National Cemetery Administration would be responsible for continued maintenance and operation of the cemetery.

The 1-acre Fort Missoula Military Cemetery is located in the southwest section of the city of Missoula, Montana. The cemetery contains 248 occupied gravesites, with 24 reserved gravesites. It was established in 1877. It is a conventional veteran's cemetery with upright headstones. There are industrial areas to the north and west, open farmland to the south, and open farmland and city ball fields to the east.

The cemetery will be supervised by VA's Fort Logan National Cemetery in Denver, Colorado

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires all federal agencies to consider the effect of their actions on human health and the environment. The requirements of VA's NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects (VA 2010) were followed to complete this Environmental Assessment.

Both an Environmental Site Assessment and a Cultural Resource Survey have been completed with no adverse effects identified related to transfer of the cemetery.

Points of Contact:

Mat Williams, Director
Fort Logan National Cemetery
4400 West Kenyon Ave
Denver, Colorado 80236
(303)761-0117
Mat.williams@va.gov

Jill Schattel, Environmental Engineer
Department of Veterans Affairs
National Cemetery Administration
Design and Construction Service
425 Eye Street, NW, 5E425P
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 632-5221
Jill.schattel@va.gov

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE NO.
ABSTRACT	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
1.0 INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 PROJECT BACKGRPOUND	5
1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED	5
2.0 ALTERNATIVES	5
2.1 DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVES	5
2.2 ALTERNATIVES RETAINED FOR ANALYSIS	6
3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS	6
3.1 AESTHETICS	7
3.2 AIR QUALITY	7
3.3 COMMUNITY SERVICES	8
3.4 CULTURAL RESOURCES	8
3.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS	9
3.6 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE	9
3.7 FLOODPLAINS, WETLANDS, COASTAL MANAGEMENT ZONE	10
3.8 GEOLOGY AND SOILS	11
3.9 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY	11
3.10 LAND USE	11
3.11 NOISE	12
3.12 POTENTIAL FOR GENERATING CONTROVERSY	12
3.13 SOCIOECONOMICS	12
3.14 SOLID/HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	13
3.15 TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING	13
3.16 UTILITIES	14
3.17 WILDLIFE AND HABITAT	14
4.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	14
5.0 MITIGATION	15
6..0 CONCLUSIONS	15
7.0 PREPARERS	15
8.0 POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS	15
APPENDICES	16
APPENDIX A	NATIVE AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT
APPENDIX B	AGENCY CONTACTS
APPENDIX C	ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITS
APPENDIX D	PHOTOGRAPHS AND DIAGRAMS
APPENDIX E	ENVIRONMENTAL DATA REPORTS (NETR)
APPENDIX F	REFERENCES
APPENDIX G	CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY
APPENDIX H	ASTM PHASE 1 ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Executive Order 13781, Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the Executive Branch, focused on the need to reduce “duplication and redundancy,” and improving “efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the executive branch.”

The guidance document for this Executive Order, *Delivering Government Solutions in the 21st Century: Reform Plan and Reorganization Recommendations* included a proposal to consolidate federal veteran’s cemeteries. It recommended transferring 11 Department of the Army military cemeteries to the VA’s National Cemetery Administration.

The 1-acre Fort Missoula Military Cemetery is located in the southwest section of the city of Missoula, Montana. The cemetery contains 248 occupied gravesites, with 24 reserved gravesites. It was established in 1877. It is a conventional veteran’s cemetery with upright headstones. There are industrial areas to the north and west, open farmland to the south, and open farmland and city ball fields to the east.

The cemetery will be supervised by Fort Logan National Cemetery in Denver, Colorado.

The Department of Defense operates 43 military cemeteries. Under this proposal, 11 of the Department of the Army military cemeteries would be transferred to VA. The VA National Cemetery Administration operates 135 national veterans’ cemeteries and 33 cemetery installations, to very high standards. This transfer would increase efficiency, limit mission overlap, and ensure that these cemeteries are maintained to VA’s national cemetery standards to continue the recognition of service of those interred therein.

Proposed Action

The proposed action is to transfer ownership and responsibilities for operations and maintenance of the Ft. Missoula Military Cemetery, Missoula, Montana, from the Department of the Army to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The initial action would include evaluation of the cemetery to meet National Environmental Policy Act requirements and to determine what activities will be necessary to bring the cemetery up to the VA’s National Cemetery Standards, then creating a Scope of Work to bring the cemetery up to these standards.

Environmental Evaluation

This Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed to evaluate the effect of the transfer of the Ft. Missoula Military Cemetery from the Department of the Army to the Department of Veterans Affairs on human health and the environment.

The VA identified, analyzed, and documented the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and economic impacts associated with the transfer of ownership and responsibilities for operations and maintenance of the Ft. Missoula Military Cemetery, Missoula, Montana.

Considerations included: aesthetics, air quality, community services, cultural resources, cumulative impacts, environmental justice, flood plains, wetlands, and coastal zone management,

geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, land use, noise, potential for generating controversy, socioeconomics, solid and hazardous materials, transportation and parking, utilities, and wildlife and habitat.

Transfer of ownership and responsibilities for operations and maintenance of the Ft. Missoula Military Cemetery, Missoula, Montana, from the Department of the Army to the Department of Veterans Affairs would have no significant effect in these areas.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

Executive Order 13781, Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the Executive Branch, focused on the need to reduce “duplication and redundancy,” and improving “efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the executive branch.”

The guidance document for this Executive Order, *Delivering Government Solutions in the 21st Century: Reform Plan and Reorganization Recommendations* included a proposal to consolidate federal veteran’s cemeteries. It recommended transferring responsibility for 11 Department of the Army military cemeteries to the VA’s National Cemetery Administration.

The VA National Cemetery Administration operates 135 national veterans’ cemeteries and 33 smaller cemetery installations, to very high standards.

Location

The 1-acre Fort Missoula Military Cemetery is located in the southwest section of the city of Missoula, Montana. The cemetery contains 248 occupied gravesites, with 24 reserved gravesites. It was established in 1877. It is a conventional veteran’s cemetery with upright headstones. There are industrial areas to the north and west, open farmland to the south, and open farmland and city ball fields to the east.

See Appendix D.

1.2 Purpose and Need

Purpose

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to transfer ownership and responsibilities for operations and maintenance of the Ft. Missoula Military Cemetery, Missoula, Montana, from the Department of the Army to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Need

Executive Order 13781, Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the Executive Branch, focused on the need to reduce “duplication and redundancy,” and improving “efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the executive branch.”

The guidance document for this Executive Order, *Delivering Government Solutions in the 21st Century: Reform Plan and Reorganization Recommendations* includes a proposal to consolidate federal veteran’s cemeteries. It recommended transferring responsibility for 11 Department of the

Army military cemeteries to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), National Cemetery Administration.

The VA operates 135 national veteran's cemeteries and has 44 years' experience operating and maintaining national veteran's cemeteries

This action meets the Executive Order for consolidating operation and maintenance of federal activities (veteran's cemeteries) by one organization. The Department of Veterans Affairs meets this requirement.

2.0 ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Development of Alternatives

Executive Order 13781, Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the Executive Branch, focused on the need to reduce "duplication and redundancy," and improving "efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the executive branch," and its associated guidance document recommend transfer of 11 of the Department of the Army cemeteries to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Department of Defense operates 43 military cemeteries. Under this proposal, 11 of the Department of the Army military cemeteries would be transferred to VA. The VA National Cemetery Administration operates 135 national veterans' cemeteries and 33 smaller cemetery installations, to very high standards.

This transfer would increase efficiency, limit mission overlap, and ensure that these cemeteries are maintained to national shrine standards to continue the recognition of service of those interred therein.

Only two alternatives were identified. One alternative (No Action Alternative) would allow the cemeteries to remain with the Department of the Army. The other alternative (Preferred Alternative) would transfer the ownership, operations, and maintenance to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

2.2 Alternatives Retained for Analysis

No-Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative serves as a benchmark against which the effects of the Proposed Action can be evaluated.

Fort Missoula Military Cemetery would remain the property of the Department of the Army. The Department of the Army will continue to operate and maintain the cemetery in its current state and conditions.

This alternative does not meet Executive Order 13781 requirements of increasing federal government efficiency by consolidating similar operation and maintenance of federal activities (veteran's cemeteries) by one organization.

Preferred Alternative/Proposed Action: Accept the Transfer of the Fort Missoula Military Cemetery to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

VA proposes to accept transfer of the cemetery from the Department of the Army. VA would incorporate the cemetery, with associated operation and maintenance, into the VA's National Cemetery Administration's system of 135 national veteran's cemeteries. This will enable the cemetery to be improved and then perpetually maintained to the same National Shrine Status as the other NCA National Cemeteries.

The transfer of ownership and responsibilities for operations and maintenance of the Ft. Missoula Military Cemetery, Missoula, Montana, from the Department of the Army to the Department of Veterans Affairs would meet the requirements of Executive Order 13781. It would reduce duplication and redundancy, and increase efficiency and effectiveness in accordance with Executive Order 13781.

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Procedures

The requirements of VA's NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects (VA 2010), are followed. The Environmental Effects areas of concern listed in the VA NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects, includes 17 specific areas of concern, including: aesthetics, air quality, community services, cultural resources, cumulative impacts, environmental justice, flood plains, wetlands, and coastal zone management, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, land use, noise, potential for generating controversy, socioeconomics, solid and hazardous materials, transportation and parking, utilities, and wildlife and habitat. These were all evaluated. Coordination with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office was also completed.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires all federal agencies to consider the effect of their actions on human health and the environment. The requirements of VA's NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects (VA 2010) were followed to complete this Environmental Assessment.

The decision for this proposed federal undertaking identifies the actions to which VA would commit to minimize environmental effects, if any, as required under NEPA, its implementing regulations from CEQ (40 CFR 1500-1508) and VA (38 CFR Part 26), and VA's NEPA guidance (VA 2010).

3.1 Aesthetics

Aesthetics refers to the visual resources including natural and man-made features that gives property its aesthetic properties.

Existing Environment

The 1-acre Fort Missoula Military Cemetery is located in the southwest section of the city of Missoula, Montana. The cemetery contains 248 occupied gravesites, with 24 reserved gravesites. It was established in 1877. It is a conventional veteran's cemetery with upright headstones. There are industrial areas to the north and west, open farmland to the south, and open farmland and city ball fields to the east.

Environmental Effects

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no visual changes would occur, and there would be no impact to aesthetics. The cemetery would not be transferred, and continued to be operated and maintained by the Department of the Army.

Proposed Action – Transfer of Property

Under the Proposed Action, there will be no impacts to the cemetery except to improve its appearance and maintenance through the VA National Veterans Cemetery Standards.

3.2 Air Quality

Air quality refers to the concentration of air contaminants in a specific location. Air quality is determined by the type and amount of pollutants emitted into the atmosphere, the size and topography of the air basin, and the prevailing meteorological conditions. Impacts refer to changes in the air quality related to conditions caused by an action.

Existing Environment

The 1-acre Fort Missoula Military Cemetery is located in the southwest section of the city of Missoula, Montana. The cemetery contains 248 occupied gravesites, with 24 reserved gravesites. It was established in 1877. It is a conventional veteran's cemetery with upright headstones. There are industrial areas to the north and west, open farmland to the south, and open farmland and city ball fields to the east.

Air quality impacts are related to the existing use of gas-powered turf maintenance equipment.

Missoula County is currently listed as an attainment area for air quality by the United States Environment Protection Agency.

Environmental Effects

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative there will be no impacts on air quality. The cemetery would not be transferred, and would continue to be operated and maintained by the Department of the Army. There will continue to be limited impacts on air quality due to the existing use of gas-powered turf maintenance equipment.

Proposed Action – Transfer of Property

Under the Proposed Action, there will be no changes in air quality from its current operation and maintenance, as it would continue to be maintained as in the past.

3.3 Community Services

Community services refer to services provided by surrounding communities such as police, fire, and ambulance services, schools, health care, and parks and recreation.

Existing Environment

The City of Missoula currently provides the cemetery with police and fire protection, and emergency services.

Environmental Effects

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, there will be no additional impacts on community services. Existing services would continue to be provided.

Proposed Action – Transfer of Property

Under the Proposed Action, no additional services are expected to be needed beyond what is currently provided.

3.4 Cultural Resources

Cultural resources include both historic and prehistoric archaeological resources, as well as historic structures. This impact analysis focuses on sites and structures listed in, or eligible for nomination to, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and the regulations (36 CFR Part 800) for implementing Section 106 of the *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966*. The Montana State Historic Preservation Office is responsible for cultural and historic preservation on federal properties through the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Existing Environment

The 1-acre Fort Missoula Military Cemetery is located in the southwest section of the city of Missoula, Montana. The cemetery contains 248 occupied gravesites, with 24 reserved gravesites. It was established in 1877. It is a conventional veteran's cemetery with upright headstones. There are industrial areas to the north and west, open farmland to the south, and open farmland and city ball fields to the east. The cemetery is listed in the 1987 National Register of Historic Places nomination.

The cemetery will be supervised by Fort Logan National Cemetery in Laurel, Montana

Environmental Effects

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, there no impact to cultural resources.

Proposed Action – Transfer of Property

Under the Proposed Action, a Cultural Resource Survey meeting the Montana Historic Preservation Office requirements was completed in August 2017. It evaluated cultural, historic, and archaeological aspects of the property. Based on the background research and a reconnaissance survey, no adverse effects would occur as a result of the transfer of ownership and operations. See Appendix G.

A letter of concurrence has been requested from the Montana State Historic Preservation Office,

State Historic Preservation Officer.

3.5 Cumulative Impacts

The Federal Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA define cumulative effects as “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonable foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions.

Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time” (40 CFR 1508.7).

This Environmental Assessment considers past, present, and reasonable foreseeable short-term and long-term future effects from implementing the Proposed Action and other projects that coincide with the location and timetable of the Proposed Action.

Findings

There are no known projects and activities in the vicinity of the property to be acquired.

3.6 Environmental Justice

Environmental justice refers to fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. It often relates to locating projects in lower socioeconomic areas that might adversely affect the health of local residents.

Existing Environment

The 1-acre Fort Missoula Military Cemetery is located in the southwest section of the city of Missoula, Montana. The cemetery contains 248 occupied gravesites, with 24 reserved gravesites. It was established in 1877. It is a conventional veteran’s cemetery with upright headstones. There are industrial areas to the north and west, open farmland to the south, and open farmland and city ball fields to the east.

The cemetery will be supervised by Fort Logan National Cemetery in Denver, Colorado.

Environmental Effects

No-Action

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no effect on the area.

Proposed Action – Transfer of Property

Under the Proposed Action, there would be no effect on nearby populations. The cemetery would continue as in the past with contracted operations.

3.7 Floodplains, Wetlands, and Coastal Zone Management Areas

Existing Environment

A review of the current National Wetlands Inventory indicated that no National Wetlands were present. There are no floodplains or wetlands. on the property. The cemetery is outside of the 500-year floodplain

The cemetery is not located in a Coastal Zone Management Area.

Environmental Effects

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the cemetery would remain with the Department of the Army and there would be no impact on floodplains or wetlands.

Proposed Action – Transfer of Property

Under the Proposed Action, the transfer of the property will have no impact to floodplains or wetlands.

3.8 Geology and Soils

Geology and soils refers to the potential for loss of soils and changes in geological conditions due to rock excavation, soil erosion and compaction, soil horizon removal, grading, and cutting and filling operations.

Existing Environment

The property is a 1-acre military cemetery established at Ft. Missoula in 1877.

The 1-acre Fort Missoula Military Cemetery is located in the southwest section of the city of Missoula, Montana. The cemetery contains 248 occupied gravesites, with 24 reserved gravesites. It was established in 1877. It is a conventional veteran's cemetery with upright headstones. There are industrial areas to the north and west, open farmland to the south, and open farmland and city ball fields to the east.

The site is generally flat with minimal slope.

Environmental Effects

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no impacts to geology and soils would result.

Proposed Action – Transfer of Property

Under the Proposed Action, there would be no effect on soils or geology.

3.9 Hydrology and Water Quality

Hydrology and Water Quality refers to the effect of the action on surface water and groundwater.

Existing Environment

The 1-acre Fort Missoula Military Cemetery is located in the southwest section of the city of Missoula, Montana. The cemetery contains 248 occupied gravesites, with 24 reserved gravesites. It was established in 1877. It is a conventional veteran's cemetery with upright headstones. There are industrial areas to the north and west, open farmland to the south, and open farmland and city ball fields to the east. The cemetery is listed in the 1987 National Register of Historic Places nomination.

No surface waters are present. No groundwater is utilized.

Environmental Effects

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no impacts to hydrology and water quality would result.

Proposed Action – Transfer of Property

Under the Proposed Action, no impacts to hydrology and water quality would result

3.10 Land Use

Land Use refers to the impact of the project on existing land use and changes in land use. It includes the potential of the project to effect land on tax rolls, changes in land values, encroachment on critical areas, changes in boundaries, rights-of-way, and easements.

Existing Environment

Ft. Missoula Military Cemetery had been a military cemetery on the Ft. Missoula Military Reservation since 1877. It is carried on the tax rolls as Federal Property.

Environmental Effects

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the cemetery would remain with the Department of the Army and would continue as Federal property as a cemetery.

Proposed Action – Transfer of Property

Under the Proposed Action, the cemetery would become property of the Department of the Veterans Affairs and would continue as Federal property used as a cemetery.

3.11 Noise

Noise refers to the generation of noise by normal operations on the property.

Existing Environment

The 1-acre Fort Missoula Military Cemetery is located in the southwest section of the city of Missoula, Montana. The cemetery contains 248 occupied gravesites, with 24 reserved gravesites. It was established in 1877. It is a conventional veteran's cemetery with upright headstones. There are industrial areas to the north and west, open farmland to the south, and open farmland and city ball fields to the east.

The existing cemetery generates noise due to turf and landscape management, and infrequent burials.

The area surrounding the cemetery contains no sensitive receptors.

Environmental Effects

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, noise levels at the existing cemetery would not change.

Proposed Action – Transfer of Property

Under the Proposed Action, the cemetery would become property of the Department of the Veterans Affairs and would continue as before.

3.12 Potential for Generating Substantial Controversy (Community Concerns)

Existing Environment

This is an existing military cemetery dating to 1877. Burials still occur on an infrequent basis.

Environmental Effects

No-Action

Under the No Action Alternative, the cemetery would continue to be operated by the Department of the Army and no potential for controversy would occur.

Proposed Action – Transfer of Property

Under the Proposed Action, the cemetery would become property of the Department of the Veterans Affairs and would continue operations as in the past.

3.13 Socioeconomic

Socioeconomic refers to the effect the Proposed Action would have on staffing, altering the demographic nature of the area, and changes in the neighborhood characteristics. Economic Activity includes the effect that the project would have on local wages, employment, and local purchases of goods and services.

Existing Environment

Ft. Missoula Post Cemetery had been a military cemetery on the Ft. Missoula Military Reservation since 1877. It is carried on the tax rolls as Federal Property. It is operated and maintained by

contractors. There are no permanent staff assigned to the cemetery.

Environmental Effects

No-Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no changes related to socioeconomics would occur.

Proposed Action – Transfer of Property

Under the Proposed Action, the cemetery would be evaluated and turf and landscape improvements may be made with resulting short term increased economic activity. The cemetery would remain unstaffed.

3.14 Solid and Hazardous Materials

The Solid and Hazardous Materials category refers to changes in the proper management of solid waste and hazardous materials in compliance with local, state, and Federal regulations

Existing Environment

Small amounts of solid waste related to turf and landscape maintenance and gravesite visitation is normally generated at this site.

Environmental Effects

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, minimal solid waste is generated. Any solid waste is disposed of through a commercial disposal firm. Flowers and evergreen materials left as grave decorations and tree trimmings will be mulched or disposed of.

Proposed Action – Transfer of Property

Under the Proposed Action, minimal solid waste will be generated as in the past. Any solid waste will be disposed of through a commercial disposal firm. Flowers and evergreen materials left as grave decorations and tree trimmings will be mulched or disposed of. There will be no change in generation or disposal of solid or hazardous waste as a result of the transfer of the cemetery.

3.15 Transportation and Parking

Existing Environment

The 1-acre Fort Missoula Military Cemetery is located in the southwest section of the city of Missoula, Montana. The cemetery contains 248 occupied gravesites, with 24 reserved gravesites. It was established in 1877. It is a conventional veteran's cemetery with upright headstones. There are industrial areas to the north and west, open farmland to the south, and open farmland and city ball fields to the east.

Environmental Effects

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, cemetery operation would occur as before with low levels of visitation.

Proposed Action – Transfer of Property

Under the Proposed Action, no additional traffic or parking would occur.

3.16 Utilities

The Utilities category refers to changes in the site use of public utilities.

Existing Conditions

The existing cemetery uses public water and electricity.

Environmental Effects

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, existing cemetery use of public utilities would continue as before.

Proposed Action – Transfer of Property

Under the Proposed Action, no increase in public utility use is expected.

3.17 Wildlife and Habitat

Existing Environment

The existing cemetery has developed burial areas with headstones and turf with some trees. No federally listed or proposed endangered or threatened species are known to exist in the project impact area according to the US Fish and Wildlife Service database.

Environmental Effects

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative there will be no change to wildlife and habitat.

Proposed Action – Transfer of Property

Under the Proposed Action, there will be no changes to wildlife and habitat.

4.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Under the VA's NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects (VA 2010), public involvement for an EA may include public engagement during scoping, and drafting, and finalizing the EA through publications of notices or public meetings.

The public involvement process will consist of the publication of a Notice of Availability of this Draft EA. Any public comments from the 30-day comment period will be addressed and included in the Final EA.

Public Review of Draft Environmental Assessment

The VA's NEPA guidance states that the EA process must include at least a 30-day public comment period on the Draft EA, which starts with the publication of a Notice of Availability (NOA). The NOA for this Draft EA will be published when approved by VA.

5.0 MITIGATION

No mitigation is required.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The proposed transfer of ownership and responsibilities for operations and maintenance of the Ft. Missoula Military Cemetery, Missoula, Montana, from the Department of the Army to the Department of Veterans Affairs would have no significant effect on human health or the environment.

The transfer of ownership and responsibilities for operations and maintenance of the Ft. Missoula Military Cemetery, Missoula, Montana, from the Department of the Army to the Department of Veterans Affairs would meet the requirements of Executive Order 13781. It would reduce duplication and redundancy, and increase efficiency and effectiveness in accordance with Executive Order 13781.

A Cultural Resource Survey meeting the Montana Historic Preservation Office requirements was completed in August 2017 (Appendix G). It evaluated cultural, historic, and archaeological aspects of the property. Based on the background research and a reconnaissance survey, no adverse effects would occur as a result of the transfer of ownership and operations.

A letter of concurrence has been requested from the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, State Historic Preservation Officer.

An ASTM Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (Appendix H) was completed in September 2017. The site assessment did not identify any areas of environmental concerns. A regulatory check of federal, state, and local records did not identify any environmental concerns.

7.0 PREPARERS

US Department of Veterans Affairs, National Cemetery Administration

Jill Schattel, Environmental Engineer, NCA, Office of Design and Construction
BS, Chemistry, MS, Environmental Engineering

Donald Campbell, Environmental Engineer, NCA, Office of Design and Construction,
BS, Industrial Engineering, MS, Occupational and Environmental Safety.

8.0 POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS

Potential stake holders include the US Army, the City of Missoula, and the Montana State Historic Preservation Office,

APPENDICES:

APPENDIX A

NATIVE AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT

No tribal coordination is required at this time as this is an intergovernmental transfer of property. Tribal notifications will occur once a transfer date is determined. A tribal list has been determined.

APPENDIX B

AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE

APPENDIX C

ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITS

No environmental permits are required.

APPENDIX D

PHOTOGRAPHS AND DIAGRAMS

APPENDIX E

ENVIRONMENTAL DATA REPORTS (NETR)

APPENDIX F

REFERENCES

APPENDIX G

CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY

APPENDIX H

ASTM PHASE 1 ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX A NATIVE AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT

No tribal coordination is required at this time as this is an intergovernmental transfer of property. Tribal notifications will occur once a transfer date is determined. A tribal list has been determined.

APPENDIX B**AGENCY CONTACT**

During development and review of the EA for the transfer of the Ft. Missoula Military Cemetery, NCA contacted federal state, and local agencies with oversight responsibilities related to this project. Table 1 lists Agency coordination and consultation activities conducted in support of this EA.

Table 1 Agency Coordination for transfer of Ft. Missoula Military Cemetery

Entity	Coordination and Input
Montana State Historic Preservation Office P.O. Box 201202 1301 East Lockey Avenue Helena MT 59620 406) 444-7715 mtshpo@mt.gov	Section 106 Coordinator Baseline Cultural Resource Survey completed August 2017.
US Army Corps of Engineers Regional Office Omaha District 10 West 15 th Street Suite 2200 Helena, Montana 59626	Wetland maps. Delineation. Request made to Corps of Engineers to perform wetland determination on the property.
US Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Office 505 Airport Rd Lewistown, Montana 59457	Threatened and Endangered Species determination list was utilized. Letter sent to US Fish and Wildlife Service requesting concurrence on finding of no endangered or threatened species identified at site.
Tribal Various	A list of tribal contacts was developed as part of the Cultural Resource Survey. They will be contacted once a transfer date has been determined.
City of Missoula, Montana	Emy Scherrer Historic Preservation Officer 435 Ryman Street Missoula, Montana 59802

APPENDIX C ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITS
No environmental permits are required

APPENDIX D PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Site location map in Missoula, Montana city map.
2. Aerial photograph of Ft. Missoula Military Cemetery and surrounding neighborhood
3. Aerial photograph of cemetery
4. Photograph of entrance to cemetery
5. Tract 101C Acquisition

APPENDIX E

ENVIRONMENTAL DATA REPORTS (NETR)

Pages 1-113

APPENDIX F REFERENCES

- Environmental Laboratory. 1987. *Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual*. Technical Report Y-87-1, US Army Engineer Waterways Experiment Station, Vicksburg, MS.
- FEMA 2015. FEMA GeoPlatform. Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. <http://fema.maps.arcgis.com/home/index.html>. Accessed May 2017.
- USACE. 2010. *Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Midwest Region Version 2.0*. United States Army Engineer Research and Development Center. Vicksburg, MS. August 2010.
- USDA, NRCS. 2018. Web Soil Survey Geographic Database. US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. Montana, DC. <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/homepage.htm>, access in June 2018.
- USFWS 2018. Endangered species: Species search. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Accessed June 2018: <https://www.fws.gov/endangered/>, <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp0/reports/species-by-current-range-county?fips=48141>
- VA 2010. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Interim NEPA Guidance for Projects, PG- 18-17 (Rev.) September 30, 2010.

APPENDIX G

CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY

A Cultural Resource Survey meeting the Montana Historic Preservation Office requirements was completed in August 2017. It evaluated cultural, historic, and archaeological aspects of the property. Based on the background research and a reconnaissance survey, no adverse effects would occur as a result of the transfer of ownership and operations.

A letter of concurrence has been requested from the Montana Historic Preservation Office, State Historic Preservation Officer

NRNM

<https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/e0c30d1d-90bb-44cc-950a-ebbfbcf218ca/>

ASSINIBOINE & SIOUX TRIBES CULTURAL RESOURCE COMMITTEE

Dyan Youpee, THPO
PO Box 1027
Fort Peck Agency
Poplar, MT 59255
Phone: (406) 768-2382
d.youpee@fortpecktribes.net

BLACKFEET NATION TRIBE

John Murray, THPO
PO Box 850
Browning, MT 59417
Phone: (406) 338-7522
jmflysdown@gmail.com

FORT BELKNAP INDIAN COMMUNITY

Michael J. Black Wolf, THPO
656 Agency Main Street
Harlem MT 59526
Phone: (406) 353-2295
mblackwolf@ftbelknap.org

THE CROW TRIBE OF INDIANS

William Big Day, THPO
PO Box 159
Crow Agency, MT 59022
Phone: (406) 638-1010
William.BigDay@crow-nsn.gov

NORTHERN CHEYENNE TRIBE

Teanna Limpy, THPO
PO Box 128- N. Cheyenne Agency

Lame Deer, MT 59043
Phone: (406) 477-4839

Andrew J. Richard
Northern Cheyenne Tribal Archaeologist
Lame Deer, MT 59043
Cell: 406-548-4841 andrew.richard@cheyennenation.com

CHIPPEWA CREE CULTURAL RESOURCES PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT

Alvin Windy Boy, THPO
PO Box 230
Box Elder, MT 59521
Phone: (406) 395-4700
Alvin@nei-yahw.com
[Chippewa Cree Cultural Resources Preservation Department](#)

Karly Law
Tribal Archaeologist
Chippewa Cree Cultural Resources Protection Department
9740 Upper Box Elder Rd.
Box Elder, MT 59521
(406) 375-4700

CONFEDERATED SALISH & KOOTENAI TRIBES PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT

Kyle Felsman, THPO
PO Box 278
Pablo, MT 59855
406-675-2700 x1075
kyle.felsman@cskt.org

LITTLE SHELL CULTURE COMMITTEE

Gerald Grey
625 Central Ave West Suite 100
Great Falls MT 59404
Phone: 406-315-2400
ggray@gng.net

APPENDIX H

ASTM PHASE 1 ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT

An ASTM Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment was completed in August 2017. The site assessment did not identify any areas of environmental concerns. A regulatory check (EDR) of federal, state, and local records did not identify any environmental concerns.