



August 2022

Temporary Pasture Space for Army Caisson Platoon Horses at Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA)

Determination of NEPA Adequacy

DOI-BLM-Eastern States-M000-2022-0011-DNA

Meadowood SRMA, Lorton, Virginia

**Lower Potomac Field Station
10406 Gunston Rd.
Lorton, VA 22079**

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

Lower Potomac Field Station

10406 Gunston Rd.

Lorton, VA 22079

DETERMINATION OF NEPA ADEQUACY WORKSHEET

DOI-BLM-Eastern States-M000-2022-0011-DNA

Proposed Action Title/Type: Temporary Pasture Space for Army Caisson Platoon Horses at Meadowood SRMA

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: N/A

Location of Proposed Action: Meadowood SRMA, Lorton, Virginia

Applicant: United States Army Military District of Washington (USAMDW)

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The USAMDW Caisson Platoon has an immediate need for interim pasture space for approximately 8 to 12 horses that perform funeral duties at Arlington National Cemetery. The current facilities that house the Caisson Platoon horses at Fort Belvoir, Virginia will undergo renovations, including pasture rehabilitation, that will take approximately 3 to 5 years to complete. The USAMDW proposes to temporarily house 8 to 12 Caisson Platoon horses weekly for 3 to 5 years at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Meadowood SRMA and more specifically, off Belmont Road on approximately 14 acres of pasture lands near where the Belmont House is currently located (Attachment 1). The purpose of this Proposed Action is to allow the Caisson horses a designated pasture space to rest them before going back on funeral duty at Arlington National Cemetery. Design features of the Proposed Action can be found in Attachment 2.

A right-of-way (ROW) grant authorizes rights and privileges for a specific use of the land for a specified period of time appropriate for the life of the project. The BLM has discretion to grant a ROW if doing so is in the public interest. If the Proposed Action is approved by decision of the BLM Northeastern States District Manager, a short-term non-linear right-of-way (ROW) grant would be issued to the USAMDW for temporary use of the pasture area, which is compatible with current management objectives for the Meadowood SRMA (see Section B).

B. LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE

LUP Name: Meadowood Farm Planning Analysis

Date Approved: March 2003

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s):

“Meadowood SRMA Decisions: Equine Partnerships: The Meadowood SRMA will be available for developing both public and federal equine partnerships” (Ch. 2-4).

“Meadowood SRMA Land-Use Decisions: Standard Management: 15. Meadowood SRMA will not be available for disposal through sale or exchange, and it is a Right-of-way avoidance area. Meadowood SRMA is being designated a right-of-way avoidance area because of its designation as a SRMA. In most cases, granting of rights-of-way for projects such as powerlines and pipelines, or county or state road projects, would not be compatible with current or future management objectives” (Ch. 2-2).

The BLM understands that the SRMA is considered a ROW avoidance area in most cases, but that this Proposed Action would require a non-linear ROW to be granted to the USAMDW. This type of ROW is not related to installation of powerlines, pipelines, road construction, or similar type of project

LUP Name: Meadowood SRMA Integrated Activity Management Plan

Date Approved: May 2004

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s):

“Section III. Allowable Uses. Equestrian Partnerships. BLM will enter into partnerships with Federal, State, county, and non-profit organizations at Meadowood SRMA. These partnerships may include providing stabling, facilities and pastures for Federal and other public service or non-profit organizations’ horses as well as providing a location for training” (p. 14).

“Additional stabling, pastures and other facilities may be constructed at Meadowood SRMA” (p. 14).

C. NEPA AND OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS

Meadowood Farm Proposed Planning Analysis/Environmental Assessment (PA/EA) (November 6, 2002, Decision signed March 25, 2003)

The original planning document for the Meadowood Farm acquisition. This environmental assessment describes the range of alternatives for the management of Meadowood SRMA.

Meadowood SRMA Integrated Activity Management Plan/Environmental Assessment (IAMP/EA) (Decision signed May 28, 2004)

The IAMP/EA authorized specific activities for the Meadowood SRMA in accordance with the Meadowood Farm PA/EA, and further expanded on the allowable uses in that Plan.

Vegetation Management Activities at Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area (DOI-BLM-Eastern States-0030-2016-0006-EA) (Decision signed June 14, 2016)

The BLM approved utilizing a suite of standard methods for performing control of invasive species to improve habitat, increase plant diversity and make the Meadowood SRMA more suitable for public, nature-based recreation and to allow the BLM to manage

the SRMA within existing laws and policies. Approved vegetation management activities at Meadowood SRMA include the following integrated pest management (IPM) methods: herbicide use, manual control, prescribed fire, and biological control.

Meadowood Belmont House Demolition Categorical Exclusion (Decision signed January 24, 2022)

The Belmont House is a structure located within the 14-acre pasture area being considered in the Proposed Action. The Belmont House was deemed unsafe and no longer needed for office space and for hosting environmental education events at the Meadowood SRMA and was approved for demolition. Demolition of the structure would not affect implementation of the Proposed Action.

U.S. Army "Belmont Property Concept for Use" (August 10, 2022)

This document describes how the Proposed Action would be carried out by the USAMDW and is included as Attachment 2.

D. NEPA ADEQUACY CRITERIA

1. Is the new proposed action a feature of, or essentially similar to, an alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? Is the project within the same analysis area, or if the project location is different, are the geographic and resource conditions sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial?

Yes, equine partnerships with other Federal agencies were considered in the Meadowood Farm PA/EA (chapter 2-4) and further addressed in the subsequent Meadowood SRMA IAMP/EA to potentially include providing stabling, facilities and pastures for Federal organizations' horses at the Meadowood SRMA (page 14). Additionally, the potential to specifically house U.S. Army Caisson Platoon horses and train new soldiers at Meadowood SRMA was mentioned in the IAMP/EA (page 36).

2. Is the *range* of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the new proposed action (or existing proposed action), given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?

Yes, equine partnerships were adequately analyzed over the range of the proposed alternatives for management of Meadowood SRMA in the Meadowood Farm PA/EA. Alternative #1 (No Action) was a continuation of existing management after the property was acquired by the BLM in 2001 and did not include equine partnerships, only private horse boarding. Alternative #2 did provide for equine programs, including partnerships, but prioritized natural and cultural resource management objectives. Alternative #3 was the Proposed Action, approved by decision in 2003, that included management of natural and cultural resources balanced with recreation, environmental education and equine use of Meadowood Farm. Alternative #4 emphasized that management of recreation and environmental education programs and activities would guide natural and cultural resources management goals and objectives on Meadowood Farm.

The BLM is not aware of any changes in conditions, environmental concerns, policies, interests, or resource values that would warrant analyzing different alternatives with respect to the current proposed action.

3. Is existing analysis adequate in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, rangeland health standards assessment; recent endangered species listings, updated list of BLM sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action?

Yes, the interdisciplinary team planning and overseeing the implementation of this site-specific project considered whether any new species listings, new resource data, new scientific research, or other new information exists, and found none that would change the analytical conclusions in the Meadowood Farm PA/EA. Therefore, the existing analysis for developing equine partnerships and pasture areas for Federal horses remains valid. Also, the resource issues addressed in the Meadowood Farm PA/EA are the same that would be analyzed in a new NEPA document. No new information would substantially change the conclusions of this document and are therefore adequate for the proposed action.

4. Are the effects that would result from implementation of the new proposed action similar (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document?

Yes, the effects of implementing the new Proposed Action were adequately analyzed in the Meadowood Farm PA/EA. The PA/EA looked at a Reasonably Foreseeable Development Scenario (RFDS) for the Preferred Alternative (Proposed Action) that included potential equine partnerships for federal horses and use of the facilities at the Meadowood SRMA. Effects to resources from implementing the range of alternatives, including the Proposed Action, were analyzed in the PA/EA. Resources analyzed in detail were Air Quality and Climate, Coastal Zone Management, Cultural Resources, Minerals, Recreation Resources, Visual Resource Management, Socioeconomics, Soils, Traffic/Transportation, Surface and Groundwater Quality, Riparian/Wetlands/Ponds, Wildlife, Fisheries, Federal and State Listed Species, and Vegetation.

The effects of using various pasture maintenance and management actions would be similar to those described in the *Vegetation Management Activities at Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area*. To mitigate the effects of mowing and removing existing native vegetation species on these pasture lands, as described in the “Belmont Property Concept of Use,” the BLM has dedicated funding this fiscal year to restore approximately 30 acres of meadows at the Giles Run Trailhead on the Meadowood property. This work will start in September 2022 and will take multiple years, but the reseeded with native species seed mixture, including milkweed, will increase the habitat for the monarch butterfly and other native species. Additionally, the USAMDW would restore the pasture lands at the end of use to native meadow. Eventually, the BLM plans to rehabilitate approximately 108 acres of meadows at Meadowood SRMA and restore them with the native seed mixture over the next ten years.

5. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action?

Yes, public comment periods were provided during development of the land use plans directing allowable activities at the Meadowood SRMA, the Meadowood Farm PA/EA and the Meadowood SRMA IAMP/EA. Equine partnerships and utilization of pasture lands for Federal

horses were included in the Preferred Alternatives for these planning analyses. Comments were received specifically on equine partnerships and documented in the Meadowood Farm PA/EA (Ch. 5-19).

Chapter 5 of the Meadowood Farm PA/EA describes the various Federal, State, County and Regional agencies that were consulted and a summary of comments received on the draft EA.

Federal, State, County and Regional agencies that were consulted in developing the current Proposed Action are listed in Section E.

E. PERSONS, AGENCIES, AND BLM STAFF CONSULTED

A list of team members who participated in the preparation of this DNA worksheet is provided below.

Name	Title	Area(s) of Participation
Danielle Donkersloot	Natural Resource Specialist	Threatened and Endangered Species, Groundwater, Surface Water
Wes Willoughby	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources, Tribal Consultation
Sam Cox	Natural Resource Specialist (Detail)	Threatened and Endangered Species, Invasive Species, Vegetation
Jessie Roper	Natural Resource Specialist (Detail)	Vegetation
Kurt Wadzinski	Planning & Environmental Coordinator	Document Preparation

Federal Agencies

U.S. Army Military District of Washington

- Provided the “Belmont Property Concept for Use”

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- Consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act
 - BLM notified the USFWS of the Proposed Action on August 22, 2022

Tribal Governments

By letter dated July 27, 2022, the following Federally-Recognized Tribes were invited to consult pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended

- Upper Mattaponi Tribe
- Chickahominy Indian Tribe

- Nansemond Tribe
- Monacan Nation
- Delaware Nation
- Pamunkey Indian Tribe
- Delaware Tribe of Indians
- Rappahannock Tribe
- Chickahominy Indians Eastern Division

As of August 29, 2022, only the Delaware Nation has responded to the BLM, indicating that the proposed project should have no adverse effect on any known cultural or religious sites of interest to the Delaware Nation.

State Agencies

Virginia Department of Historic Resources, State Historic Preservation Office

- Consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
 - VDHR provided a “conditional no adverse effect on historic properties” determination for the project on August 11, 2022

County Agencies

Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District, Fairfax County, Virginia

- Provided the Soil and Water Quality Conservation Plan, Nutrient Management Plan and Soil Test Report

***Note:** Refer to the EA or EIS for a complete list of the team members that participate in the preparation of the original environmental analysis or planning documents.*

F. CONCLUSION

(If you found that one or more of these criteria is not met, then you cannot conclude that the NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action).

Determination of NEPA Adequacy:

- ☒ Based on the review documented above, I conclude that the NEPA documentation fully covers this proposal and constitutes BLM’s compliance with the requirements of the NEPA.
- ☐ The existing NEPA documentation does not fully cover the proposed action. Additional NEPA documentation is needed if the project is to be further considered.

Decision Documentation:

- ☒ A new decision will be prepared.
- ☐ The proposed action is a subset of an existing decision signed on [insert date the existing decision was signed]; therefore, no new decision needs to be prepared.

Project Lead: Kurt Wadzinski Date: August 29, 2022

NEPA Coordinator: Kurt Wadzinski Date: August 29, 2022

Authorized Officer: _____ Date: _____

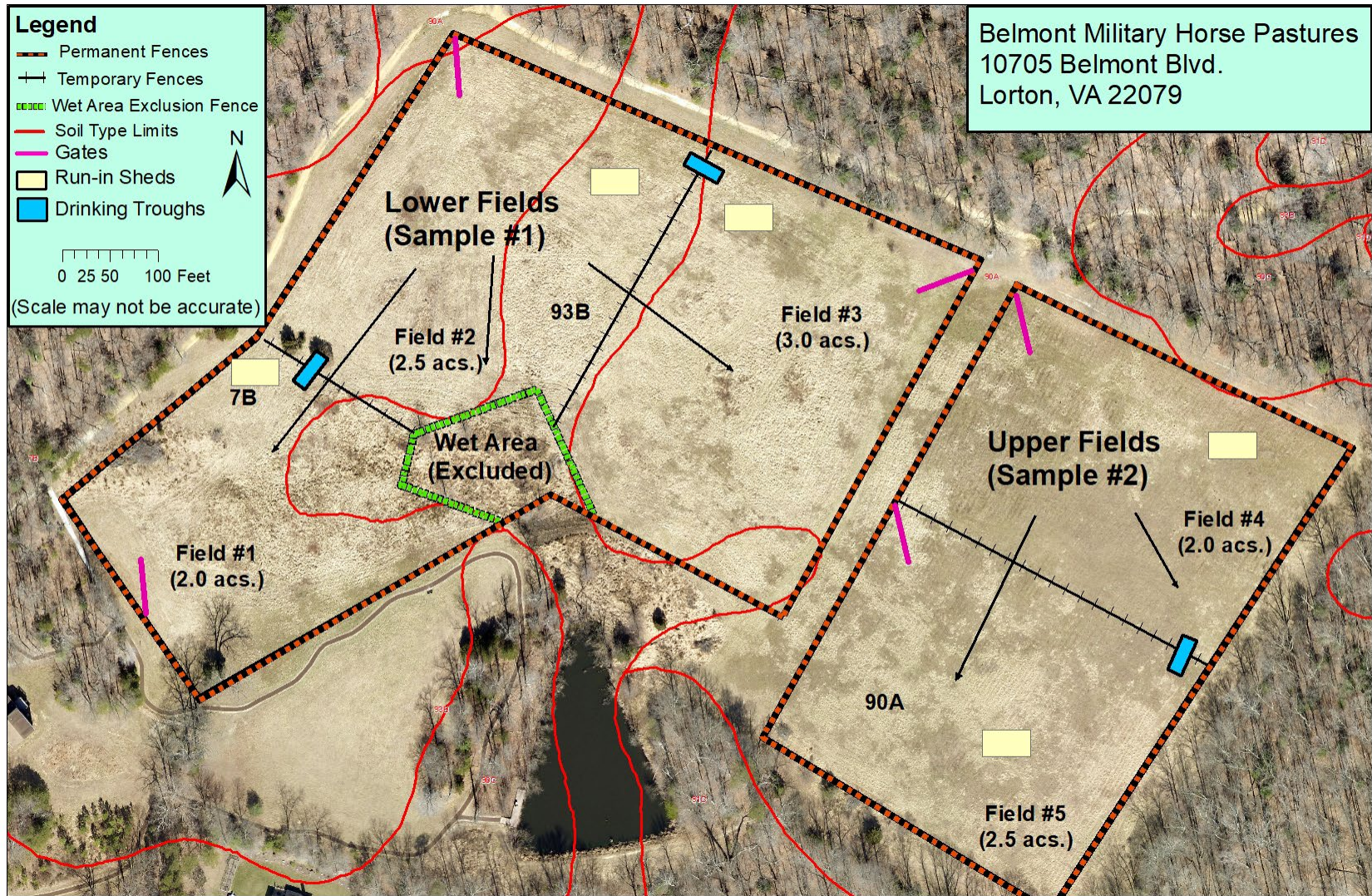
Note: *The signed CONCLUSION on this worksheet is part of an interim step in the BLM's internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision. However, the lease, permit, or other authorization based on this DNA may be subject to protest and/or appeal under 43 CFR Part 4 or program-specific regulations.*

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Proposed Pastures Map for Caisson Platoon Horses

Attachment 2 – Design Features of Proposed Action (Belmont Concept of Use)

Attachment 1. Proposed Pastures Map for Caisson Platoon Horses



Attachment 2. Design Features of Proposed Action (Belmont Concept of Use)

Belmont Property Concept for Use – August 25, 2022

General

Joint Task Force-National Capital Region/US Army, Military District of Washington/ (JTF-NCR/USAMDW) and more specifically, the Caisson Platoon of the Old Guard require interim pasture space for approximately 8-12 horses weekly. The current facility at Fort Belvoir is in need of repairs and pasture rehabilitation will take approximately 2 years once renovations are complete. The property at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Lower Potomac Field Station, Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area along Belmont Road (Belmont property) will allow horses to be turned out in a pasture with grass they can graze and rest before going back on duty at Arlington National Cemetery (see attached map). If required, horses can be stabled in the event of adverse weather at the nearby Fort Belvoir facility, which is 4-5 miles away from the Belmont property. USAMDW will not establish fixed structures such as stables on the property.

USAMDW is proposing to use approximately 14 acres available at the Belmont property for approximately 3 to 5 years. USAMDW estimates it is possible to establish 5 paddocks of 2 to 2.5 acres each (see attached sketch). The layout of the paddocks has been approved by Army Veterinarians, as well as the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District. The design will allow the active use of two paddocks at a given time, resting two paddocks and leaving one paddock as swing space. The amenities in each paddock will be temporary. Run-in shelters will be relocatable and tied down using spiral ground anchors in case of high winds. Water troughs will be relocatable and will hold approximately 150 gallons each. These fixtures can be relocated if the ground begins to show excessive wear. The initial set up of the shelter and water troughs will be to place them on high ground to keep damage to the paddock down to a minimum. A high use area on the Belmont property will not be established to decrease environmental impacts to the property.

USAMDW will rotate paddocks every 2-3 months to prevent overuse of any one area on the Belmont property and minimize impacts on the soil and pasture (see Pasture Maintenance and Management). Two paddocks will be utilized with 4-6 horses in each paddock weekly. Water will be replenished daily by the Soldiers on site using a small utility vehicle with a 275-gallon water tank. A small centrifugal pump will be used to fill and or replenish water daily in the paddocks that are actively being used. The small utility vehicles will also be used to move hay/feed, equipment and supplies to accommodate the daily needs of the horses. The vehicle will be light enough not to disturb the ground with regular use. Water tanks, run-in shelters, equipment or other structures will be moved or rotated within the paddocks to avoid excessive wear or negative impact to pastures. Army Veterinarians will visit the Belmont property on a weekly basis to ensure the facility provides adequate and safe turn out area. Soldiers

will maintain a 24-hour presence on the property while horses are on site and will report any medical concerns with the horses to the veterinarian on duty.

Pasture Maintenance and Management

In order to maintain viable and sustainable paddocks, USAMDW will work with the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District to develop a conservation plan which will ensure healthy and viable pastures that is valid for 3-5 years. USAMDW will obtain a pasture maintenance contract for the Belmont property that includes the best management practices described above. The pasture maintenance contract that will include actions such as mowing, seeding, fertilizing, weed management, as well as liming or other soil treatment as needed. This contract will follow the recommendations of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District to ensure that USAMDW activities avoid, minimize and mitigate potential impacts to BLM land and resources. USAMDW will consult as needed with the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District to maintain the condition of the paddocks.

Paddock rotation will occur every 2-4 months based on conditions described in the pasture Conservation Plan. On at least a monthly basis, USAMDW will review the area for compaction, ruts, or hummocking and immediately remediate any issues. USAMDW will coordinate with the BLM prior to hardening any areas. USAMDW will comply with the integrated pest management plan described in the "Vegetation Management Activities Meadowood SRMA" from 2016 and ensure that the contractor adheres to the integrated pest management plan and any other treatment requirements established by BLM. BLM will conduct quarterly inspections of the property, as well as random and as needed inspections, to ensure it is being maintained to standard.

Manure Management/Raking

Army Veterinarians and the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District have determined that raking the paddocks in active use once every week or two as a best management practice. If raking proves to be insufficient in addressing manure management, USAMDW will set up a contract have manure in the paddocks removed on a regular basis. USAMDW will take a soil sample from each paddock every six months in order to monitor the PH level of the soil and ensure that the pasture management plan is on track. USAMDW will test water quality at Hidden Pond on a quarterly basis to ensure and assure the public that the fishing area is not being negatively impacted by the use of the paddocks.

Seeding

Seeding of pasture grasses will be conducted annually, usually in late summer/early fall. The type and amount per acre will be based on recommendations from the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (Orchard grass and Fescue-clover). Clover may be planted as part of the annual seeding if it is determined the nitrogen content of the soil is lower than recommended. Best management practice will utilize a no-till

seeding method, where the ground will not be plowed prior to seeding. Aeration of the paddocks is acceptable prior to seeding if a seed drill is not available. Major adjustments to the seeding requirements will be reported to the BLM station manager to ensure the seed choice is not in conflict with BLMs charter for Meadowood.

Liming

Liming will be required in order to increase the PH level of the current fields at Belmont. Soil samples taken on 30 June 2022 registered an average PH level of 5.3 and it was recommended to add 2.25 tons of lime per acre to reach the optimum PH of 6.0 to 6.2 which is optimal for pasture grasses. Best management practice is for the lime to be applied in 6-month intervals to allow for PH level to slowly increase versus applying 2.25 tons per acre all at once. A no-till methodology will be used in application of the lime. Aeration may be performed to allow the lime better penetration into the soil.

Mowing

Regular mowing of pastures is recognized best management practice for pastures, especially in managing weeds that compete with pasture grasses. All paddocks will be mowed on a regular basis to a height of approximately 4-6 inches. The interval at which the paddocks are mowed will be adjusted based on the time of year as appropriate. Mowing will be included in USAMDW's pasture management plan.

Fertilizing

Fertilizing may be required in order to optimize the yield of grass in the paddocks. Soil samples taken on 30 June 2022 provide a baseline of elements found in the soil at Belmont. This information will be shared with the contractor responsible for executing the pasture management plan in order to determine the appropriate time of year to apply fertilizer. A no-till methodology will be used in application of the fertilizer. Aeration may be performed to allow the fertilizer better penetration into the soil.

Weed Management/Spraying

USAMDW will seek hay free of invasive species. Pre-emergent and post emergent herbicide application will adhere to the BLM list of approved herbicides and vegetation management program. Mowing will be the primary means of weed management, but pre-emergent application may be required to manage new weed growth ahead of the spring and summer. USAMDW will ensure the spraying/application of herbicides in accordance with pre-established BLM policies and procedures. USAMDW will have the paddocks inspected by a veterinarian monthly to ensure plants that prove hazardous to the health of horses are identified and property reduced or mitigated.

Milkweed is of particular concern due to the toxicity it presents to horses. USAMDW will work closely with the Army Veterinary Corps, Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District and the local agricultural extension to ensure mitigation to Milkweed is effective and the threat to horses is minimal. Army Veterinarians will

provide an assessment on the appropriateness and safety of the pastures at Belmont. This assessment will include any additional mitigation measures that will reduce the risk to the horses and may include temporary relocation until the risk is mitigated to an acceptable level of risk.

Fencing

Fencing will be pressure treated wood posts and rails at a height of approximately 54-60 inches. The post will need to be buried at least 2 feet into the ground by either auguring or using a pile driver. Installation of the post is the only anticipated ground disturbance associated with use of the property. BLM will complete surveys under the National Historic Preservation Act and mark areas what need to be protected. USAMDW will avoid any areas identified for avoidance and immediately contact the BLM if artifacts are located during fence installation or other use at the Belmont property. At 2 to 2.5 acres per paddock, 1200-1400 linear feet of fencing will be required per paddock. The fencing material will pressure treated post and oak boards. Each paddock will have a metal swinging gate with the location of the gate off the riding or walking trails as much as possible. The corners of each paddock will be rounded as a safety measure of the horses. Signs warning the public not to climb the fence, feed the horses, etc. will be posted on the exterior of the fence for the protection of the horses as well as the general public.

Support Structures

USAMDW will need to place a mobile office/housing unit near the location of the existing home on the property (Belmont House). This unit can be easily removed and will be temporary in nature. The housing unit will be approximately 300 square feet (SF) in size, with a bathroom/shower, kitchenette, and office with berthing for two. The unit will be similar to mobile offices you often see on construction sites and installation and removal of the structure will be contracted by USAMDW. The existing electric, water and septic connections on site will be used to support the mobile unit. The Caisson Platoon will have two soldiers on site while horse are on the property and the mobile office allows the soldiers life support while at that location. Due to the active use of both riding and hiking trails surrounding the Belmont Property, Soldiers will maintain watch over the horses and the property while in use. The current driveway and parking area at the Belmont House will be used by personnel while conducting their duties. A prefabricated storage shed (hay storage) will be located on the paved surface in vicinity of the mobile office. If a requirement for additional structures arises, USAMDW will request permission from BLM prior to the installation of any new structures. Temporary housing grounds and areas visible to the public will be kept neat, clean, and tidy. Meadowood is closed to the public after hours and assigned Army personnel will adhere to these use limitations for areas outside the right-of-way.

Utilities

Water, electric and septic tank connections are already established at Belmont. USAMDW will be responsible for transferring and paying for the cost of monthly utilities. USAMDW will also pay for services such as hook up or connection of services, inspection, and cleaning as required by state and local codes. Expansion of existing utilities services will not be allowed without the permission of BLM, especially any proposed expansion that requires wires or pipes to be buried in the ground.

Emergency Services

While conducting operations on the Belmont property, Soldier will use a land line or cellular phone for emergency use, such as fire, medical or law enforcement emergencies. Any emergency law enforcement issues will be resolved by calling 911, and Fairfax County PD will respond. Any non-emergent law enforcement needs will be relayed to BLM law enforcement for follow-up. Assigned Army personnel will follow all Army directives and will not use the housing facility for any activity other than approved use. The Army will provide direction for on-site personnel to ensure quiet and respect for neighbors and the natural setting. Soldiers will not be armed while on the Belmont property, this restriction includes both government as well as privately owned weapons. Any incidents that involve contacting Fairfax County emergency services will be reported to the BLM station manager as soon as practicable.

Return of Belmont to BLM

Prior to the Belmont property being returned to BLM, USAMDW will restore the area to the same or better condition than when the right-of-way is granted. As soon as a return date to BLM is identified, USAMDW will modify their pasture maintenance contract to allow for natural restoration of the meadows to occur. This includes reducing the frequency or ceasing the mowing of select paddocks. The application of herbicides (especially pre-emergent) will cease to allow natural weed growth. Based on the time of year for projected turn over, seeding for select plants may or may not be required. Restoration efforts will include, but will not be limited to, removal of all fencing, equipment, supplies, and structures from the property; with the exception of items BLM requests remain on site, such as fencing.