

# 1. INTRODUCTION



The purpose of this plan is to inform U.S. citizens, Department of Defense officials, the U.S. Congress and the President about the people and resources available to them in the Fort McCoy and Volk Field Region of Wisconsin and on how we can work together in the future to make this the best four season region in the Nation to train and care for our Nation's defense personnel and their families. This plan is also being prepared to respond to the Department of Defense's (DOD) 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round that will involve evaluating costs and benefits of all military installations for closure or realignment to reduce an estimated military installation over capacity of 24%.

***In early 2004 a regional steering committee was formed to respond to the 2005 BRAC round. This plan is part of its response.*** The primary task of the committee was to determine how the local governments and residents could demonstrate to Congress and the DOD how vitally important Fort McCoy and Volk Field are to the region, the State of Wisconsin, and the Nation. The steering committee met monthly in Sparta, Wisconsin. The meetings were well attended by local representatives, state representatives, federal representatives, community leaders, and the public. The committee sought public involvement through communications with local units of government. What stood out during the entire process was the overwhelming community support for Fort McCoy and Volk Field. This strong support was further demonstrated as 4 counties, 2 cities, 5 villages, and 24 towns adopted resolutions supporting the military bases.

### ***This Plan's organization and contents***

Fort McCoy and Volk Field are two separate military installations on Interstate 90/94 within 25 miles from one another. Fort McCoy is located in Monroe County and is in close proximity to Jackson and La Crosse Counties. In this plan the three county area encompassing Fort McCoy will be referred to as the Fort McCoy Region. Volk Field is a military installation located in Juneau County. Volk Field and Juneau County in this plan will be referred to as the Volk Field Region.

The first portion of this plan will focus on Fort McCoy and what makes the Fort McCoy Region an excellent location for a four season military training facility. The second portion of the plan will demonstrate the benefits of Volk Field and the Volk Field Region as a location for a military installation. Additionally, the plan will detail "action items" that when undertaken will ensure the continued viability of the military installations.

### ***2005 BRAC process and criteria***

In 2005, the Department of Defense in conjunction with the Base Closure and Realignment Commission will determine which military bases will be closed. A generalized summary of the 2005 BRAC guidelines and the criteria the Department of Defense and the BRAC Commission will utilize to decide which bases will be closed include:

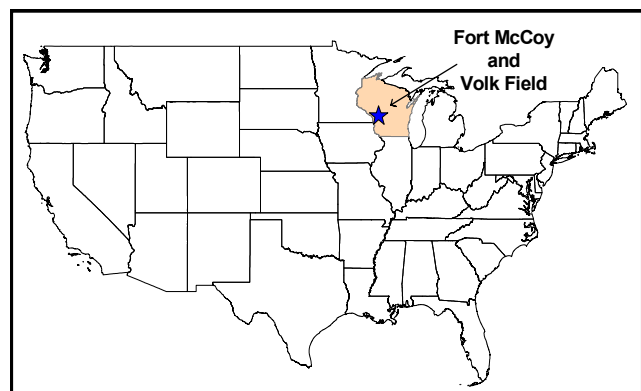
#### Primary Considerations:

- How much a base affects the military's ability to fight and train
- How much land and airspace the base can provide for military use
- How well the base can accommodate troops in various circumstances, such as for deployment
- How much it costs to run

#### Secondary Considerations:

- How much will it cost to close the base
- How a base will impact the community
- How well the community supports military missions and personnel
- Environmental impact, including potential environmental restorations

The main consideration will be the facilities importance to the military, but that being equal other factors will be evaluated.



**Previous BRAC rounds have led to a regional imbalance of military personnel.** The Department of Defense has conducted four prior rounds of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) in 1988, 1991, 1993, and 1995. Those BRAC rounds closed 97 major military installations in the United States. As a result, there is now a low military presence in the Midwest compared to the total population of the region (3.4% of military personnel are located in the Midwest while 18.6% of the total population is in the region). The closings of Fort Sheridan, Ill. and Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind. have left Fort McCoy as the only major installation located in the north central United States. (Source: "Base Closings and Military Presence in the Northeast-Midwest: The Nation's Unguarded Region", Northeast-Midwest Institute, May 2004)

**This military regional imbalance contributes to the State of Wisconsin being the 49th lowest per capita federal spending and defense spending recipient state in the Nation.** In 2002, per capita federal spending in the State of Wisconsin was \$5,301. Wisconsin only surpassed the State of Nevada which received \$4,940 per capita in federal funds. (Source: Table "State Ranking of Per Capita Spending, Per Capita Tax Burden and Return on Federal Tax Dollar: Fiscal 2002", Northeast-Midwest Institute, Jan. 2004) The same trend holds true with federal defense spending. In 2000, per capita federal defense spending in Wisconsin was \$230. The only state that received less per capita in defense spending than Wisconsin was West Virginia, with \$195 per capita. The Department of Defense spending per capita for the United States in 2000 was \$789. (Source: "Defense Spending in the Northeast-Midwest: Fiscal 2000", Northeast-Midwest Institute, Sept. 2001)

**Geographically, the Fort McCoy and Volk Field Region is located between Minneapolis/St. Paul and Chicago and is served directly by Interstate 90/94 and the Canadian-Pacific Railway.** Fort McCoy is located in the north central part of Monroe County in western Wisconsin and lies within an area known as the Wisconsin Driftless Region, an area that was left untouched by ice during the last glacial period. This area is characterized by well-drained ridges and valleys. The Fort is located on Interstate 90 and is only minutes from Interstate 94. Minneapolis/St Paul (160 miles to the northwest), Milwaukee (170 miles to the southeast) and Chicago (240 miles to the southeast) are all located within a four hour drive of Fort McCoy. In addition to Interstates 90 and 94 Fort McCoy also is served by the Canadian Pacific Railway. The railway bisects the military reservation and has a spur line that serves Fort

McCoy. The City of La Crosse, located only 30 minutes away from the Fort, is on the Mississippi River and can provide barge service as well.

**The climate of the Fort McCoy and Volk Field area is Humid Continental.** A variety of weather can be expected in all seasons. Spring is a mixture of warm and cold periods. As spring advances precipitation increases, usually reaching its peak in June. Summers are warm with Fall arriving in mid September and often lingering on into November. Winters have periods of cold and snow. The average winter temperature is 19.9 degrees F. In December, January, and February the average daily minimum temperature is 9.9 degrees. In summer the average daily minimum temperature is 68.4 degrees, and the average daily maximum temperature is 80.3 degrees. The total annual mean precipitation is 28.04 inches, of this 17.87 inches, or 65%, usually falls in May through September. The average seasonal snowfall is 39.9 inches.