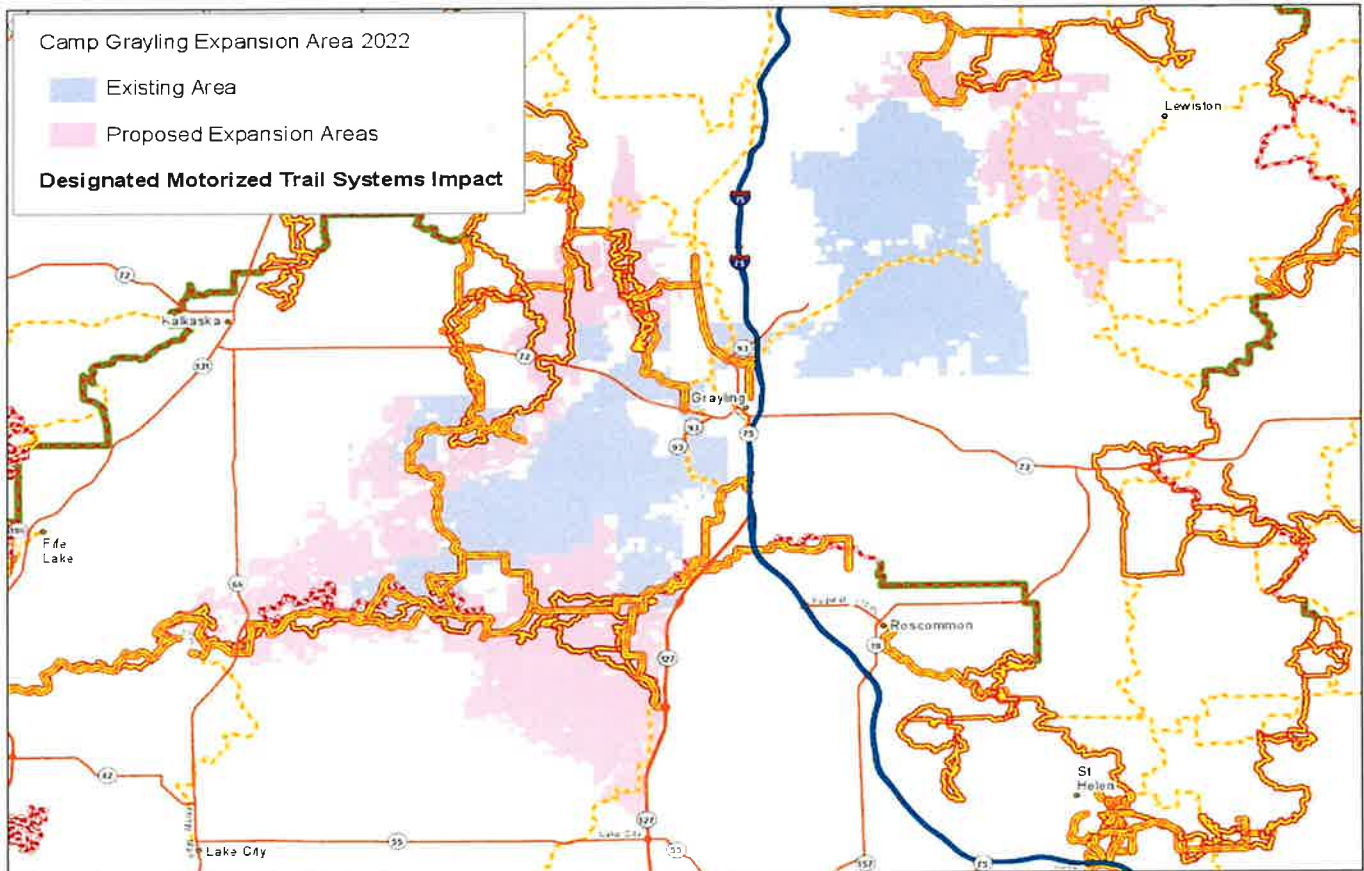


Press Release- Camp Grayling Expansion

Contact Karen Middendorp Exe Director 616/361-2285 - karen@misorva.org
October 12, 2022



MISORVA's support of motorized recreation and its stakeholders in the State of Michigan requires us to investigate proposed actions by both state and federal governments where our community may be negatively or positively affected. While we wholeheartedly support all facets of our military, at this time due to the lack of specific information being provided by either party MISORVA opposes the Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center expansion into public recreational land.

The DNR is reviewing a proposal for the expansion of DNR-leased lands available for low-impact Camp Grayling military training activities. The proposal for approximately 162,000 more acres of land around the camp, headquartered west of the city of Grayling in Northern Lower Michigan, is part of a desired update to accommodate evolving training methods. Under this new agreement, military personnel would be required to use the current existing trails, county roads, and open fields.

Military activity has been ongoing in the Grayling region for over 100 years. Camp Grayling is used by a cross-section of the U.S. military, including active-duty and National Guard forces; the 147,000-acre facility has served the military for training well.

In January 2022 Major Paul Barnes requested a proposal for a meeting with DNR Director Eichinger to expand Camp Grayling. This 162,000-acre expansion would make the camp the largest training facility in our nation. **We as citizens and recreation enthusiasts of all types applaud our military forces and their training needs however, we question the expansion that will compromise the recreation that fills and retains the delicate economy of our state.**

Safety for residents while ensuring the military can train soldiers and airmen is paramount, the existing area that has been in service for over 100 years and the local citizens and tourists visiting the area have mostly peacefully coexisted to date, residents are accustomed to the current level of training despite disruptions every now and then. Area residents are even tolerant of the sounds of aircraft and live fire that sometimes (literally) shake the foundations of their homes. Some local residences and get away cottages are just 500 feet from the range boundary, 2,800 feet from established artillery firing points and approximately 1 mile from the impact area. That is too close for sound to dissipate to a reasonable level for a residential area and therefore causes disruption to the tranquility.

CAMP GRAYLING MISSION, VISION, AND INFO

MISSION

Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center provides joint, all-domain training facilities with user-focused support, which enable rotational training units, inter-agency, unified action, and multi-national partners to meet modernization priorities, build and sustain readiness in order to overmatch and dominate our nation's enemies.

VISION

Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center evolves within the National All-Domain Warfighting Center (NADWC) concept to challenge Soldiers, Leaders, and multi-echelons in the most realistic near-peer battlefield environment.

INFO

The Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center at Grayling, MI is the largest National Guard training facility in the United States. It comprises 147,000 acres of four-seasons training lands, 337 square-km of restricted airspace, and up to 6000 Hz spectrum available. Camp Grayling supports the summer and winter Northern Strike joint exercises, and National Guard Exportable Combat Training Center Exercises. Camp Grayling provides premier facilities including a Combined Arms Collective Training Facility, two impact areas for indirect fire and aerial weapon systems up to 500-pounds, and three live-fire shoot houses. Specialized facilities include the Maneuver Area Training Equipment Site for pooled equipment, Multipurpose Range Complex capable of armor/crew served weapons and Combined Live Fire Exercise, and an Army Airfield with two 5,000-foot runways.

Camp Grayling, already the largest National Guard training center in the country, is a 147,000-acre training site, spanning portions of Kalkaska, Crawford, and Otsego counties. The central cantonment area is located in Crawford County, southwest of Grayling Township, and the rest of the property is largely used as maneuver area and range land.

Camp Grayling has a state-of-the-art Urban Operations training site, used to train soldiers to handle combat in urban environments. It features a mock village, including subterranean tunnels, to simulate wartime settings. The Michigan

Army National Guard (MIARNG) mixes live training at the installation with virtual capabilities using state-of-the-art simulation software.

Nonmilitary groups and agencies also use the ranges and other facilities, including Michigan state police, county sheriff departments, local clubs, and scout troops. The training area is also used by international partners such as Canada, Great Britain, Australia, Latvia and Liberia (part of the National Guard's State Partnership Program that matches states with international security partners). Much of the land on and around Camp Grayling is managed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and leased to the Michigan Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (MDMVA). The surrounding communities and townships are small, and the area is mostly rural and wooded, with abundant recreational uses.

While on the surface this appears to be much like the agreement currently in place, many more miles of trails will be affected. This new proposal also includes allowing private sector contractors to use the land as a test bed for new technologies. The Michigan National Guard (MING) has yet to explain why the current 230 square miles of training area are inadequate to support current/future needs, or whether this is a national security necessity. They have also not explained why the use of these public lands by private companies would be let at such a discount.

According to the Traverse City Record Eagle in an article dated August 29, 2021, in 2017 National Guard and state officials found contamination from a class of thousands of manmade "forever chemicals" called PFAS at four places across Crawford County: the main camp by the lake, the airfield in town, an equipment site, and most recently, the irrigation fields for the city's wastewater treatment facility.

Efforts remain ongoing to study and map the community's ground and water contamination through the Superfund program; eventually authorities are expected to decide how to clean up the widespread pollution. Investigations at the airfield are further along than at the main base by the lake. Military funding so far paid for whole-house water filtration systems in 18 homes discovered with drinking water tainted by PFAS chemicals associated with activity at Camp Grayling's sprawling complexes. Results of tests at those homes showed water wells surpassed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 70 ppt lifetime advisory level — the threshold for the federal Department of Defense to pay for clean water access because of pollution it caused.

A question posed to the DNR - I use a side-by-side in many areas of west Crawford County/east Kalkaska County. Will I be able to do this during the summer?

Answer - The ORV status of these roads will not change if the expansion is approved. Roads currently open to ORVs will remain open and roads currently closed to ORVs will remain closed. If any forest roads are closed for a brief period of time to accommodate specific exercises, area residents and others will be notified by the military through social media and posting at access points.

MISORVA (Michigan Snowmobile and Off Road Vehicle Association) is a non-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to the success of MOTORIZED RECREATION in Michigan. Protecting and Preserving Your Privilege to Ride. Representing Your Rights. Promoting Your Rights. Keeping You Informed. Promoting Safe and Responsible Use. Maintaining and Enhancing Trails. Sponsoring Fun-Filled Family Activities. To further your voice in Lansing, MISORVA has a full-time legislative consultant and a full-time office staff, all working on snowmobile and ORV-related issues — locally, statewide and in Washington, D.C.



John Newman MISORVA President