

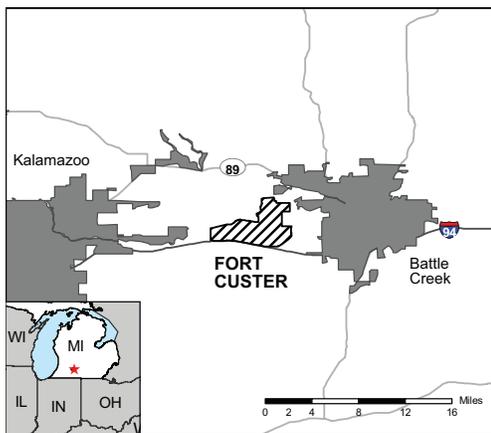


U.S. ARMY :  
**FORT CUSTER : MICHIGAN**



**O**ne of the more heavily used Midwest training centers for the National Guard, Fort Custer is important for its company-level small arms training, as well as maintenance training. Its location in southwestern Michigan makes it easily accessible for units from the neighboring states of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Since the military training mission is a critical lifeline for this area’s fiscal solvency, providing a means to protect training also benefits the area economy.

Nearby Hart’s Lake, one of the last remaining undeveloped lake properties in



Michigan, had been promoted by the city for 30 years as a potential site for development. These plans had reduced Fort Custer’s ability to fully conduct live-fire training. To address this issue, Fort Custer creatively utilized REPI funding with a matching grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation (one of the nation’s largest foundations and based in nearby Battle Creek)

to forever preserve this conservation area for public use and as a buffer for military training.

As a result, Fort Custer is now able to fully utilize a range that had previously been limited to 50 percent of its capacity because of neighbors’ noise and safety concerns. With the Battle Creek Community Foundation and Calhoun Conservation District helping to manage the property, the public can enjoy a pristine natural haven for fishing, hiking, bird watching, non-motorized boating, and other passive recreational activities.

**BENEFIT SUMMARY**

**COMMUNITY**

- Preserves working lands
- Provides recreational opportunities for area residents
- Protects water supplies

**MILITARY**

- Preserves live-fire training capacity through the buffering of high-noise areas
- Prevents the loss of training days and workarounds that would reduce training realism or effectiveness
- Improves operational safety



Hart’s Lake, protected by REPI, provides recreational opportunities (top). A Humvee during a field training exercise (bottom).

**KEY PARTNERS**

- Calhoun Conservation District
- W. K. Kellogg Foundation

**FAST FACTS** AS OF 30 SEP 12

- » Acres preserved: **326**
- » Transactions conducted: **1**
- » Partner cost share: **52%**
- » Project status: **Completed**

**CONTACT**

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