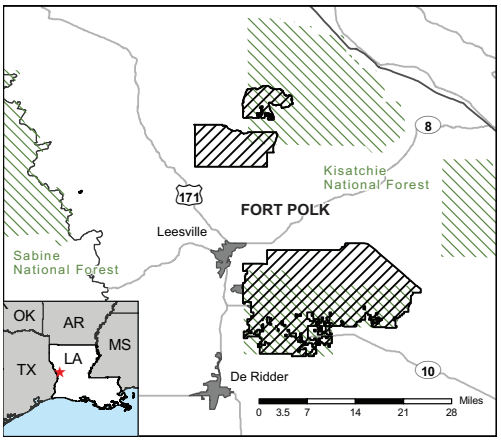
U.S. ARMY :

FORT POLK : LOUISIANA

Home of the Army's Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), Fort Polk is located mostly in Louisiana's Kisatchie National Forest in a special use agreement with the U.S. Forest Service. The post supports training for deploying units, including special operations forces, in contingency missions. The JRTC provides highly realistic and stressful joint operations exercises that are extremely important for supporting forces in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other theaters.

Fort Polk's location and surrounding ecosystem are critical to a host of species, especially the Louisiana pine snake, one of the rarest snake species in North America, and the red-cockaded woodpecker. The loss of longleaf pine habitat across the Gulf coastal plains of the Southeast has put increased pressure on the installation to act as one of the last bastions of viable habitat. Protecting this habitat—and managing acquired REPI lands to meet conditions desired for the species—can help prevent the listing of the pine snake under the Endangered Species Act. Listing the pine snake has the potential to impose significant restrictions on land use and off-road vehicle movement on-post.



Partnering with Fort Polk, with the support of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is The Nature Conservancy, who will acquire easements that will protect and expand the pine snake's habitat. The project also aims to sustain working forest lands and allow continued flexibility in the use and development of Fort Polk's land to meet its important national defense mission.

BENEFIT SUMMARY

COMMUNITY

- Preserves working lands and local character
- Provides habitat for rare and endangered species

MILITARY

- Preserves on-installation live-fire and maneuver training capacity
- Reduces lost training days and the need for workarounds that would reduce training realism or effectiveness
- Provides for future mission growth

A Chinook helicopter performing an exercise (top) and a Stryker vehicle firing a missile (bottom) at the Joint Readiness Training Center.

KEY PARTNERS

- The Nature Conservancy
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

FAST FACTS AS OF 30 SEP 12

» Acres preserved:
1,041

» Transactions conducted:
3

» Partner cost share:
8%

» Project status:
In Progress

CONTACT

Public Affairs Office
(337) 531-1344

For more information about REPI, please see <http://www.repi.mil>.