

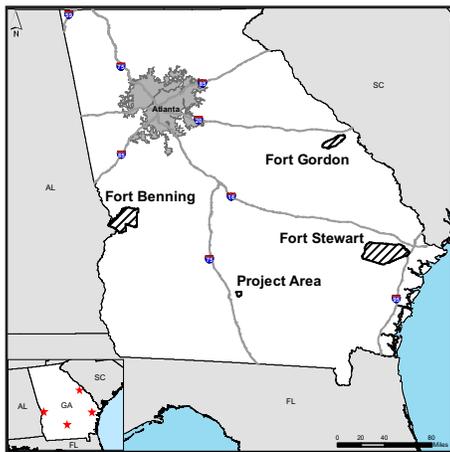


U.S. ARMY :

SOUTHEAST REGIONAL ARMY PROJECT : GEORGIA



The Southeastern United States is home to a complex of vital National Defense assets, including some of the Army’s largest and most important training installations. Fort Benning, Fort Gordon, and Fort Stewart are all located in Georgia alone. These installations support the full gamut of training and operations, including the infantry school; primary flight training; tracked and armored vehicle maneuver; artillery; small to large caliber arms; and airborne drop zones.



The Southeast was also once a vast regional ecosystem of longleaf pine forests supporting rich biodiversity. As these forests dwindled, military installations increasingly became a home for many rare species. Such species’ reliance on DoD lands presents a conflict with the need to meet training requirements. For example, mechanized maneuver training can compromise burrows where the gopher tortoise lives.

The gopher tortoise is a candidate species that if listed as threatened or endangered could restrict training missions across the region. Preventing its listing and preemptively mitigating impacts to training requires a creative response.

The Army is piloting a solution by partnering with the State of Georgia and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to protect some of the most important habitats based on gopher tortoise counts within the state, regardless of distance to an installation. While the goal is to preclude a listing of the gopher tortoise, the partners are developing a conservation crediting process to benefit Army installations in case a listing is ultimately warranted. This crediting process, once completed, will serve as a model that can be applied to other at-risk species and DoD installations across the United States.

BENEFIT SUMMARY

COMMUNITY

- Protects habitat for multiple threatened, endangered, and candidate species
- Preserves working agricultural land
- Supports regional planning objectives

MILITARY

- Protects multiple installations’ live-fire, maneuver, and aviation capabilities
- Supports multiple Service missions
- Helps avoid and reduce workarounds and restrictions on training



Controlled burns help maintain a healthy forest ecosystem for the longleaf pine across the Southeastern U.S. (top). The Army is seeking to avoid future restrictions on training by protecting this habitat and the gopher tortoises that live there (bottom).

KEY PARTNERS

- Georgia Department of Natural Resources
- Knobloch Family Foundation
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

FAST FACTS THROUGH 30 SEP 2015

- » Acres preserved:
0
- » Transactions conducted:
0
- » Total funds expended:
\$0
- » Project status:
Initiated

CONTACT

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