How is the REPI Program Important to the Military?

Conserving longleaf pine forests buffers against training noise and supports endangered species recovery that has led to reduced restrictions on Fort Bragg training lands.

The Department of Defense's (DoD) Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program is a key tool for combating the encroachment that can limit or restrict military training, testing, and operations.

The REPI Program consists of three interdependent and integrated components:

- Buffer partnerships and projects
- Large landscape partnerships
- Stakeholder engagements

Together, these components of the REPI Program work to protect the military's ability to accomplish its training, testing, and operational missions by helping relieve or avoid land-use conflicts near military installations and addressing regulatory restrictions that inhibit military activities.

CONSEQUENCES OF ENCROACHMENT

- Workarounds, restricted or unrealistic training approaches, or training or testing that inadequately prepare soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines for their combat missions
- Increased transit time and costs from traveling to and from training at more distant ranges or installations that lack encroachment pressures
- Expensive construction of new range infrastructure to replace or bolster degraded training or testing capabilities
- Mission relocation and loss of jobs from lost training, testing, or operating capabilities

WHAT ISSUE DOES THE REPI PROGRAM ADDRESS?

DoD's ability to conduct realistic live-fire training and weapons system testing is vital to preparing warfighters and their equipment for real-world combat. There is a direct relationship between realistic training and success on the battlefield. In short, "We fight like we train, so we train like we fight."

Starting in the late 1990s, DoD became increasingly concerned about "encroachment" – pressures or factors affecting the military's use of training and testing lands. Specifically, installations saw two main threats to their ability to train: nearby incompatible development and regulatory restrictions on DoD lands to protect species and habitat under the Endangered Species Act.

The impacts of encroachment can have serious consequences. If military installations are to remain active and contributing economic participants in their communities, commanders must have the space necessary to successfully accomplish their training, testing, and operational missions. The REPI Program can help enhance military readiness by helping installations reduce and avoid restrictions on training and testing lands by promoting compatible development and protecting important natural habitat.

HOW IS REPI A POSITIVE SOLUTION?

In response to these encroachment pressures, DoD created the REPI Program. As the REPI Program evolved over its first 10 years, DoD has strategically focused its efforts on three key objectives:

- Protect high priority missions and unique training and testing capabilities by leveraging market-based opportunities to accelerate buffer project results
- Invest in large landscape partnerships and strategically engage on shared cross-boundary issues linking military readiness, conservation, working lands, and communities with federal, state, local and non-governmental partners
- Explore off-installation regulatory solutions and develop other policy at the national, state, and local levels to prevent, remove, and mitigate constraints on training, testing, and operations

Achieving these goals helps DoD to avoid the more costly alternatives of workarounds, segmentation, or investments to replace restricted training and testing capabilities. Already, REPI buffer partnerships have protected over 314,000 acres by leveraging over $870 million of public and private funding at a 1-to-1 cost-sharing ratio (as of 30 Sept 13).

The Department is also working with other federal agencies and stakeholders to create strategies and incentives to protect large landscapes where conservation, working lands, and national defense interests converge — places defined as Sentinel Landscapes.

Together, the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership among DoD, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of the Interior is recognizing landowners for using their lands in ways that are compatible with the military mission. By maintaining certain landscapes such as farms, ranches, timberlands, or simply open space, landowners have for years significantly contributed to the nation's defense.

Navy SEALs perform desert combat rescue exercises at NAS Fallon, one of 72 REPI buffer partnership locations in the U.S.

Through partnerships like Sentinel Landscapes, the REPI Program increases the Department's buying power while delivering better value to the taxpayer by enhancing military readiness, conservation, and economic outcomes.

REPI investments also protect training, testing, and operational assets that the Department spent much of the past decade building or modernizing. As training and testing activities increase, the ability to leverage partner contributions through REPI buffer partnerships, Sentinel Landscapes, and other strategic engagements to relieve regulatory restrictions becomes even more important.

Investing in and taking advantage of current opportunities to advance REPI's key objectives is paramount to securing the training, testing, and operational viability of local installations. Through REPI's partnerships and engagement efforts we can continue to support the warfighter, provide value to the taxpayer, and protect military readiness.

For more information about the REPI Program and supportive DoD efforts, please visit ***www.REPI.mil.***