



## NFWF'S AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL CHALLENGE

In 2022, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) established the America the Beautiful Challenge, a grant opportunity that combines public-private conservation and restoration funding to advance large landscape scale projects. Through NFWF, applicants can receive funding from multiple federal agencies, including the Department of the Interior (DOI), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Department of Defense (DOD) for activities that restore, protect, and conserve critical landscapes. By combining funding from multiple agencies and private organizations, the America the Beautiful Challenge provides applicants with a streamlined application process for developing innovative projects that protect critical natural resources.

### Projects funded through the America the Beautiful Challenge aim to:

- Conserve and restore rivers, coasts, wetlands, and watersheds
- Conserve and restore forests, grasslands, and other important ecosystems that serve as carbon sinks
- Connect and reconnect wildlife corridors, large landscapes, watersheds, and seascapes
- Improve ecosystem and community resilience to coastal flooding, drought, and other climate-related threats
- Expand access to the outdoors, particularly in underserved communities

## REPI AND THE AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL CHALLENGE

As one of the America the Beautiful Challenge partners, DOD is contributing funding to projects through the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program. The REPI Program protects military missions by helping remove or avoid land-use conflicts near installations, addressing endangered species restrictions that inhibit military activities, and enhancing military installation resilience to climate change.

REPI projects align with the core focal areas for the America the Beautiful Challenge by protecting open, natural landscapes outside DOD installations and ranges and improving installation resilience to climate change through the development of natural infrastructure solutions.

The REPI Program safeguards military missions by working in close collaboration with local, state, and federal partners to develop mutually beneficial projects near military installations. For example, DOD works alongside USDA and DOI through the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership to strengthen military readiness, conserve natural resources, bolster agricultural and forestry economies, increase public access to recreation, and enhance resilience to climate change.

Established in 2013, the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership mitigates land-use, encroachment, and climate-related challenges by connecting willing landowners around military installations or ranges with voluntary government assistance programs that offset the cost of implementing conservation projects. Read more about the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership at <https://sentinellandscapes.org/>.

### The Sentinel Landscapes Partnership

The Sentinel Landscapes Partnership is a coalition of federal agencies, state and local governments, and non-governmental organizations that works to advance mutually beneficial land-use goals in project areas known as sentinel landscapes.

**SENTINEL LANDSCAPES**



Soldiers prepare for a squad competition with a tactical foot march at Fort Stewart, one of the nine installations in the Georgia Sentinel Landscape. (U.S. Army photo by Amy Pfc. Duke Edwards).



## 2022 AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL CHALLENGE DOD PROJECTS

For the 2022 America the Beautiful Challenge, the REPI Program will contribute \$1.5 million towards two projects across the Georgia Sentinel Landscape and Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape in Arizona.

### Georgia Sentinel Landscape:

- The Georgia Sentinel Landscape is home to nine key DOD facilities, including installations that host ballistic missile submarine fleets, live fire training facilities, and heavy armor maneuver areas.
- Large swaths of longleaf pine forests across the landscape provide natural habitats, forest products, recreation opportunities, and enhanced resilience for the communities and neighboring installations.
- Funding for this project will build on the existing West Central Georgia Prescribed Fire Initiative to continue efforts to improve forest health in areas neighboring Fort Benning. Specific activities include executing prescribed burns on 20,000 acres of private land, 5,000 acres of public land, and installing new firebreaks for at least 50 landowners per year to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires across the region and Georgia Sentinel Landscape.

### Partner Organization:

- Georgia Forestry Commission



### Funding Breakout:

- \$523K in REPI funding and \$523K in U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service funding



Mortar soldiers fire an 81-mm mortar round at Fort Benning, Georgia. Sustaining natural, resilient landscapes allows for uninterrupted training across the installation. (U.S. Army photo).

### Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape:

- Fort Huachuca is one of the largest unmanned aerial vehicle training facilities in the world, supporting operations for the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Marine Corps, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.
- Drought and wildfire impacts across the landscape threaten the installation's vital mission, neighboring wildlife habitats, and public safety.
- To support mission flexibility and installation resilience at Fort Huachuca, project partners, including Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management, University of Arizona, and Tucson Audubon Society, will perform hazardous fuel reduction on over 70 acres, eradicate invasive species across 28,000 acres of riparian habitat, and repair over 700 acres of degraded waterways through erosion control and revegetation.

### Partner Organization:

- Borderlands Restoration Network



### Funding Breakout:

- \$977K in REPI funding



Prescribed burns allow soldiers to continue live fire training on Fort Huachuca without starting wildfires in the neighboring mountains. (U.S. Army photo by Karen Stevens Sampson).