

NEWS

DOD Efforts Showcased in Climate Adaptation Companion Document

NOV. 4, 2021 |

BY OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR
ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY RESILIENCE

.....

From increased wildfires and flooding to new requirements for equipment and training, climate change impacts all Defense Department activities. This demands new missions and alters the operational environment.

.....



Coast Guardsmen in a small motorboat watch from the water as a backhoe places rocks on a pile.

A wide range of activities are addressed in the DOD Climate Adaptation Plan. Much of this is not new; the DOD has been working to address climate change for over a decade, and many projects have been undertaken during that time. A recently released Companion Document to the CAP showcases a selection of these projects.

The DOD has been integrating climate information into everyday decisions, ranging from the 2014 Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap and updated building codes to guidance specific to the Departments of the Army, Navy and Air Force. Work on Line of Effort 1, climate-informed decision-making, is well underway. In addition to highlighting these different resources, the CAP Companion Document provides information about the DOD Climate Assessment Tool and the DOD Regionalized Sea Level Database, which provide key information to DOD planners and engineers.

The increased frequency, intensity and extent of wildland fires are unfortunate realities of changing climate, and DOD personnel are central to firefighting operations on land the department owns and in support of firefighting efforts on public lands. Ensuring this is possible is one way the DOD is working on Line of Effort 2: train and equip a climate-ready force. The CAP Companion Document highlights wildland fire training operations across the military departments.



In fiscal year 2020, the Air Force Wildland Fire Branch taught close to 800 students from the Air Force and partner organizations and partnered with the Army Wildland Fire Program to deliver 12 additional higher-level wildland fire training courses. The U.S. 3rd Fleet, Naval Air Forces Pacific and Navy Region Southwest partner with the California's CAL FIRE Air Program on semi-annual training to ensure an immediate response capability in support of local authorities for emergency events.

While fires rage, coastal and inland flooding are becoming more common with climate change, as well. The DOD is working to protect military installations through Line of Effort 3: resilient built and natural installation infrastructure. DARPA's Reefense program is one example highlighted in the CAP Companion Document. By developing novel hybrid biological and engineered reef-mimicking structures, Reefense can mitigate wave and

storm damage. Coral or oyster settlement and growth on the Reefense structures will enable them to be self-sustaining and address infrastructure-related impacts of sea level rise over time.



Climate change affects more than just military bases; impacts anywhere along the supply chain for materials and equipment could affect DOD operations. This is addressed in Line of Effort 4: supply chain resilience and innovation. Considering direct and indirect impacts is not new for the DOD. One example in the CAP Companion Document is the Air Force's demand-side optimization program, which works to optimize logistical support requirements — including water to improve resilience — and make supply lines less vulnerable to the effects of climate change and adversaries.

Resilient supply chains have good implications for the DOD's own climate impact, as well. Another example in the CAP Companion Document is the Defense Logistics Agency's Defense Supply Center Columbus Environmental Division, where the Management System includes a requirement for identifying and employing source reduction; sustainable resource use; climate change mitigation and adaptation; diversity and ecosystem protection; and pollution prevention opportunities, where practicable.



The DOD won't be able to address the impacts of climate change alone, which leads to Line of Effort 5: enhance adaptation and resilience through collaboration. One part of the collaboration highlighted in the CAP Companion Document are the grant programs administered by the DOD that support community coordination with local installations

on climate change and extreme weather: the longstanding Compatible Use Plan and two pilot programs established in fiscal year 2020— Military Installation Resilience and Defense Community Infrastructure. These build on the success of the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program, which partners with communities to acquire real property or other interests in land from willing sellers to promote compatible land uses, enhance military installation resilience, and preserve habitat to relieve existing or future restrictions on military activities.

The CAP provides a roadmap to ensure the department maintains the ability to operate under changing climate conditions while preserving operational capability and protecting systems essential to our success. This companion document highlights many of the ways that the DOD is already putting this roadmap into action and will continue to do so.

Subscribe to Defense.gov Products

Choose which Defense.gov products you want delivered to your inbox.

Subscribe

Search...