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# Osprey aircraft to land on Bladen Lakes State Forest

February 1, 2018 Bladen Journal News 0



RALEIGH — If you live or work around Bladen Lakes State Forest you may see an MV-22 Osprey approaching or departing designated areas of the forest.

Ospreys are tilt-rotor aircraft that serve multiple roles due to its ability to take off, land and hover like a helicopter.

The activity is the result of a lease agreement between the N.C. Forest Service, the Naval Facilities Command and the U.S. Marine Corps, which provides two 23-acre landing zones. Use of these landing zones began in January.

“This shows how the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services continues to support our military partners with their training mission to be operationally and combat ready, while simultaneously helping to keep our working forests working,” said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. “This is a great example of how the two top industries in the state, agriculture and the military, are working together to benefit North Carolina.”

Bladen Lakes State Forest is a working, demonstration and research forest that receives no appropriated funding. It is funded by revenue raised through the sale of forest products such as timber, pine straw and charcoal. The agreement with the Naval Facilities Command and the Marine Corps is an example of how working forests can also benefit from lease agreements.

The lease agreement is the culmination of more than three years of work between the state and the Marine Corps to identify and prepare suitable lands for the Osprey. The landing zones will allow Marine Corps aircrews to perform low-altitude pattern work away from the congested airspace over Camp Lejeune and the Marine Corps Air Station New River.

The agreement also supports the goals of the North Carolina Sentinel Landscapes Partnership, a voluntary collaboration between farmers, woodland owners, conservationists, state and federal agencies and military installations. The partnerships helps protect working lands and critical natural resources, while reducing the encroachment of development on military installations that inhibits training.

North Carolina is also one of two states nationally that is piloting the Forest Opportunities for Resource Conservation and Environmental Security program. This voluntary program recognizes and assists woodland owners near military bases who keep their working forests working.

An in-depth environmental assessment was conducted, including noise level evaluations, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act and the Federal Council on Environmental Quality regulations.



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