



REPI UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
 READINESS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION INTEGRATION PROGRAM

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REPI Monthly Newsletter - September 2020 Edition

Please see below for exciting news and announcements relevant to the REPI community! If you would like to have an announcement or photo featured in next month's newsletter, please email us at osd.repi@mail.mil.

Message from the Director

I hope everyone has enjoyed the first week of fall and is staying safe and healthy. Although we are sad to say goodbye to summer, the REPI Office is looking forward to beginning our annual proposal review process and learning all about the innovative and exciting work going on at installations across the country. Before jumping into REPI project proposals, we are hard at work hosting events and improving some resources and tools that we hope will be valuable to you in planning and executing future projects.

In the past few months, we have hosted and participated in multiple webinars. We hosted a discussion on Effective Community Engagement where we highlighted different programs and initiatives that help installations and their communities work more effectively together. Alongside many accomplished speakers, we also participated in the Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability's Coastal Resilience Virtual Session. This engaging discussion provided valuable insights and examples of resilience efforts being carried out in the southeast region.

We've posted the materials from this virtual session on our new REPI.mil "**Resilience**" page along with other exciting updates and materials relating to enhancing installation resilience through REPI. We encourage everyone to visit this new tab and take a look at our REPI Resilience Webinar Series Flyer that lists all upcoming resilience events that pertain to the REPI Community.

The rest of the newsletter provides additional information on what we have been up to these past couple months and what we are looking forward to in the future. Thank you all for your continued support and partnership throughout this challenging time! As always, please reach out to my office with your comments and questions.

Best,
 Kristin Thomsgard

Red-Cockaded Woodpecker Downlisting



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced a proposed downlisting of the red-cockaded woodpecker under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) from endangered to threatened. USFWS is also proposing to issue a rule under section 4(d) of the ESA to tailor protections for the woodpecker to those appropriate for its continued recovery, while allowing some commercial and military activity to take place. Click [here](#) for Frequently Asked Questions. There will be a 60-day comment period upon

the rule's publication in the Federal Register.

You can view a video of the ceremony on the Fort Benning Public Affairs Office's Facebook page [here](#).

REPI Webinar Resilience Series

To showcase new and existing military installation resilience efforts, the REPI Program is supporting several virtual engagements this Fall. The 2020 Resilience Webinar Series Flyer highlights the diverse range of workshops and webinars hosted by REPI, the Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability, and the Western Regional Partnership. Throughout this series, we will engage with installations, partners, and resilience leaders across the country to discuss how installation resilience can enhance military readiness.

To view the Resilience Webinar Series Flyer, click [here](#).

The Great Outdoors - Fort Indiantown Gap



Fort Indiantown Gap engages in prescribed burns to reduce the risk of wildfire and to manage and improve the forested ecosystem.

This new section of the REPI Newsletter will be a multi-piece feature on different REPI projects and partners that have gone above and beyond to improve or expand public recreation opportunities for military members, their families, and our neighboring communities.

Serving as the Pennsylvania National Guard Joint Force Headquarters, **Fort Indiantown Gap** is rich in both history and natural resources. Nestled amongst state game lands, state parks, state forests, and the Susquehanna River, the Fort is surrounded by a wealth of recreational opportunities open for the public to enjoy including hiking, hunting, fishing, kayaking, and swimming. In addition to sustaining the mission of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, maintaining the public status of these recreational areas was one of the original pillars of the REPI program when it was established at Fort Indiantown Gap in 2013.

The existing rural forestlands of Lebanon County and Dauphin County are ideal for the aviation training and low-level night flying operations that are essential to the mission of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. Aircraft stationed at Fort Indiantown Gap's airfield execute the largest Flying Hours Program in the Army National Guard, averaging over 9,000 flight hours annually, making it one of the Army's busiest heliports. In order to sustain this mission and ensure the safety of the soldiers and the surrounding community, it is essential to protect these existing compatible lands.

"REPI is the only way we can protect this training capability for future generations", said Mr. David Weisnicht, the Deputy Garrison Commander of Fort Indiantown Gap "We have protected this land in perpetuity, for my grandsons' grandsons to train on."

These lands don't only serve a critical role for the National Guard, they also provide the public with access to the beautiful, diverse natural wonders of the area. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Pennsylvania has over 12,000 miles of hiking trails. In the area surrounding Fort Indiantown Gap,

there are portions of the Appalachian Trail, the Horseshoe Trail, and the Darlington Trail, which are all open to the public for recreational hiking.

“Helping maintain the public’s use of these recreational trails has been a huge secondary benefit of this project,” stated Mr. Daryl Valley of the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

In partnership with The Nature Conservancy, the Fort accomplished one of their principal goals of protecting the 8,000-acre DeHart Reservoir area. In addition to providing beautiful viewsheds and hiking trails, this reservoir serves as the primary drinking water source for the city of Harrisburg. Therefore, the protection of this land ensures the continuance of the Fort’s mission, preserves the public’s access to recreational areas, and safeguards the water supply of the surrounding community. Local residents are able to utilize the hiking trails, parks, and waterways during the daylight hours and the Guard is able to carry out their night flying operations in the dark skies after dusk, making this a truly win-win scenario.

When speaking about this accomplishment Weisnicht stated, “the most fulfilling aspect of my job is being able to protect the training capability and the land surrounding the Fort in perpetuity. The personal knowledge that I had a hand in that is worth more than money or any award.”

Another primary partnering organization for this project is the Ward Burton Wildlife Foundation, a nonprofit created in 1996 to protect the environment, wildlife, and rural culture. The Ward Burton Wildlife Foundation has mainly worked with Fort Indiantown Gap to limit incompatible development which provides multiple benefits beyond protecting the base from encroachment, such as the preservation of mountaintop viewsheds. Ward Burton, founder and president, describes the now-protected mountain ridgetops, which are free of satellite towers and powerlines, as pristine. Speaking about his experience with this project Burton explained,

“It only takes one person to look at this land as income and it will be gone forever. At the end of the day, what all this work does is give this land a perpetual voice, which was not present before.”

Through the process of protecting these lands, the partners, communities, and local organizations involved in the Fort Indiantown Gap REPI project have established an effective working relationship.

“It is an honor to be involved with the National Guard and its leaders,” said Burton “They are true American patriots—men and women that give their all every day of the week. Working with them is inspiring.”

“We don’t always have the same priorities, but we work through that using communication and maintaining focus on the goal,” said Valley. “Everyone’s goal is to conserve the land for the benefit of the local community, and we get a lot more done together, than working against each other.”

With the collaboration and dedication of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, the partnering organizations, and the landowners, Fort Indiantown Gap has permanently protected 9,057 acres of land through the REPI program.

Sentinel Landscapes 2020 Accomplishments Report

The **2020 Sentinel Landscapes Accomplishments Report** is now available! The report outlines how the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership enables the Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Defense (DoD), and Department of the Interior (DOI) to collaborate on land conservation and natural resource restoration projects that enhance national security by increasing the resilience of military installations and ranges.

The report's findings demonstrate that over the past seven years, \$141 million in DoD funds have been leveraged with \$223 million in USDA funds, \$41 million in DOI funds, \$169 million in state funds, \$15 million in local funds, and \$80 million in private funds to support partnership projects. These contributions have protected over 467,000 acres of land and implemented sustainable management practices on 2.3 million acres around high-value military testing and training areas.

SERPPAS Coastal Resilience Principals Session



On Wednesday, September 16, 2020, the Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS) hosted a webinar on Coastal Resilience. During this webinar presenters updated the SERPPAS Principals on the progress made within the SERPPAS Coastal Resilience and Regional Adaptation focus area, highlighted specific coastal resilience partnerships and projects from around the region, and facilitated discussion among the SERPPAS Principals to inform SERPPAS resilience actions moving forward.

Click [here](#) to view a recording of the webinar and [here](#) to download the accompanying slides. For more information on resilience efforts and upcoming events, visit the REPI website's new [resilience tab](#).

Conservation Banking Webinar Series

The Conservation Fund has announced an eight-part webinar series being offered from October 2020 – January 2021. It is designed to provide an introduction to foundational topics related to conservation banking for endangered species and habitat recovery, as well as joint authority programs that mitigate for impacts to wetlands and streams.

In addition to addressing core elements of conservation and joint authority banking establishment and implementation, this series also covers in-lieu fee programs and other alternative mitigation programs. Field experts from federal regulatory agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the private banking community will be presenting each webinar.

The first session will be held Wednesday, October 14, 2020, at 2 PM ET. For more details, click [here](#).

Webinars

Upcoming Webinar:

REPI Resilience Workshop

Description: Resiliency & Readiness Virtual Workshop - A National Look at Military Installation Resilience will identify challenges that military installations are facing due to changing environmental conditions, and highlight best-practices learned from ongoing projects, to equip installations and partners with the knowledge necessary to execute successful REPI resilience projects.

When: Wednesday, November 18, 2020, at 1 PM ET

For detailed instructions of how to register for and join this webinar, click [here](#).

Past Webinar:

If you missed the most recent REPI webinar, “Effective Community Engagement”, please visit the [REPI website](#) to view the webinar recording or [contact us](#) for more information. Below are brief descriptions of some key points and lessons learned from the recent webinar.

Effective Community Engagement

During this webinar, six presenters outlined how they engaged with members of the community and how this engagement benefitted their holistic encroachment mitigation strategies.

- Bill Van Houten (Associate Director, Senior Project Manager, Office of Economic Adjustment) presented on the Department of Defense’s Office of Economic Adjustment’s unique authorities and capabilities for community engagement and investment.
- Tim Ford (CEO, the Association of Defense Communities) outlined the mission and capabilities of the Association of Defense Communities and how they build “one community” on and off base.
- Kristina Brown (Deputy Directory, Government External Affairs Office, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms,

California) presented on the stakeholder engagement that was required and carried out for the Johnson Valley Training Area expansion project.

- Todd Holman (Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape Coordinator), Emilee Nelson (Minnesota Representative, The Conservation Fund), and Josh Doty (Community Development Director, City of Baxter, Minnesota) outlined the broad range of local engagement that occurs within the Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape.

View all past webinars on the [REPI website](#).

REPI in the News



Representatives of Harford County Government, Harford Land Trust and others joined County Executive Barry Glassman to officially close the purchase of Belle Vue Farm, a 347-acre waterfront property that will become a Harford County park.

Harford County Purchases Nearly 350-acre Belle Vue Farm, Which It Plans to Turn into Public Park. (24 September 2020)

The Baltimore Sun (Baltimore, MD) reports that Harford County purchased a 347-acre farm with plans for it to become a public park. This land will be added to two established parks to create 1,250 acres of contiguous land including 2.5 miles on the Chesapeake Bay coastline. With the help of the Harford Land Trust and the Aberdeen Proving Ground's Army Compatible Use Buffer program, the county was able to purchase this land which will also act as a buffer between developments and the military installation.



A living shoreline project on Stump Sound in Onslow County. Photo credits: North Carolina Coastal Federation.

NC Water, Land Projects Awarded 14.6M. (25 September 2020)

Coastal Review (Newport, NC) reports that the North Carolina Land and Water Fund awarded \$14.6 million in grants to fund 39 projects in North Carolina. The funds will help protect 6,710 acres that will preserve 102 rare plant species, animal species, and natural communities. According to the grant breakdown, 9%, or about \$1.3 million in grants went to military buffer projects as well as more funding for military-related projects and the Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point's living shoreline.



Partnership Aims to Bolster Military Readiness, Protect Environment. (26 August 2020)

DoD News (Washington, DC) reports that the 2020 Sentinel Landscapes Accomplishment Report has been published. This report summarizes the work accomplished along the seven locations designated as sentinel landscapes, all of which host at least one high-value military installation. The article highlights the Georgia Sentinel Landscape, a 6-million-acre landscape, which includes Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay. In coordination with The Nature Conservancy and The Open Space Institute, Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay was able to protect an 11,000-acre parcel known as Cabin Bluff adjacent to the base. The protection of this area protects the mission at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay while also contributing to the strategic goals of the Georgia Sentinel Landscape by protecting forests which house at-risk species and defending against erosion through the protection of tidal marshes.

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