



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



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REPI Monthly Newsletter - April 2021 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



REPI Program Director, Kristin Thomasgard (left) and U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense, Honorable Kathleen H. Hicks (right).

Happy belated Earth Day from the REPI office!

This Earth Day, I had the privilege of celebrating with the Honorable Dr. Kathleen H. Hicks, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, in a beautiful outdoor setting on the banks of the Nanticoke River within the Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape. The Deputy Secretary and I were joined by the Commanding Officer of Naval Air Station Patuxent River, CAPT John Brabazon, and a selection of state and local partners from within the landscape to discuss how we can better collaborate to protect and preserve the mission of NAS Patuxent River and the Chesapeake Bay, while contributing to the strategic goals of the Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape.

Located in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, the Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape is a premier example of just how valuable partnerships can be in strengthening national defense. Together, DoD,

USDA, DOI, and a coalition of state, local, and private partners have been able to help sustain local historic agricultural and fishing traditions, protect critical forest habitats, improve community resilience to climate change, and strengthen military readiness at one of the Navy's most important aircraft testing locations in the country.

I am so grateful to have been able to visit this pristine landscape and witness firsthand all the amazing work our partners are accomplishing on the ground. I thank each and every one of you for your contribution to these REPI and Sentinel Landscapes partnerships—we could not protect our military mission without you. We look forward to expanding our natural resource management and resilience work in the coming years and continuing to make our Earth a better and safer place to live!

Thank you again,
Kristin Thomasgard

Read more about the Deputy Secretary of Defense's visit to the Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape [here](#).

DoD: Tackling the Climate Crisis

DoD is elevating climate change as a national security priority, integrating climate considerations into policies, strategies, and partner engagements. To better understand and manage climate change risks such as wildfires, drought, and floods, the department has adopted and expanded a climate change tool designed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to project the effects of climate change on almost 1,400 locations. The DoD Climate Assessment Tool, or DCAT, enables DoD personnel to understand each location's exposure to climate-related hazards using historical data and future climate projections.

Learn more about DCAT and other DoD climate news in the DoD Spotlight: [Tackling the Climate Crisis](#).

Great American Defense Communities



The Blue Angels fly with the team's new C-130J Super Hercules over Naval Air Station Pensacola.

This Earth Day we would like to highlight four REPI installations which have been recognized for their community support and dedication to mitigating the effects of climate change. The **Association of Defense Communities** has announced that the communities of Altus, OK, home to **Altus Air Force Base (AFB)**; Coastal Georgia, home to **Fort Stewart**; and the Pensacola region, home to Naval Air Stations (NAS) **Pensacola** and **NAS Whiting Field**, have been selected as **2021 Great American Defense Communities**. These communities are being recognized and celebrated for improving the lives of service

members, veterans, and their families. This year's Great American Defense Communities considerations included a special focus on community recovery, resilience, and racial equity.

The community of Altus, Oklahoma, serves over 6,000 active duty, retirees, and military families. Based in this strategic location, Altus Air Force Base has a broad set of aviation capabilities that allow the Air Force to effectively train service men and women for worldwide deployment. Both the community and the installation are at risk due to increased drought conditions in the area that threaten the surface water supply for the City of Altus, Altus AFB's primary source of water. To combat this challenge, the installation is working with the City of Altus and Tom Steed Master Conservancy District to promote drought resilience and improve the water security of the installation and the surrounding community of Altus.

Coastal Georgia is home to over 75,000 military professionals, civilians, families, and retirees. Fort Stewart specifically provides training capabilities of up to 50,000 soldiers annually. Along with multiple key partners, the installation is working to prevent incompatible development around Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield through the acquisition of conservation easements. The protection of this land allows for better land management. For instance, controlled forest burns prevent unplanned forest fires, allowing the native longleaf pine forests and the species within them to thrive. Additionally, as part of the **Georgia Sentinel Landscape**, Fort Stewart partners to also protect local agricultural lands and water resources.

The community of Pensacola, Florida, is home to over 30,000 active-duty personnel, retirees, and family members. NAS Pensacola has a proud history of being the initial training base for the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard Aviators and Naval Flight Officers. To protect the installation from storm surge and periodic flooding, the NAS Pensacola REPI project is working to protect nearby wetlands that contribute to a larger greenway system. Wetlands provide natural drainage for the base and surrounding community, acting as a sponge during flooding and storm surge events, thereby improving the overall resilience of the community.

Pensacola, Florida, also hosts the NAS Whiting Field REPI project which is working to mitigate impacts to adjacent wetlands and critical aquifers to protect its Navy flight training mission, as well. Other working agriculture and forestry lands surrounding the installation are being preserved, thus maintaining historic landscapes that are compatible with the military mission and contribute positively to the local economy.

Military installations see themselves as part of the community and would not be able to sustain their operations without the support of local partners and stakeholders. The Altus AFB, Fort Stewart, NAS Pensacola, and NAS Whiting Field REPI project partnerships have worked hard to coordinate and collaborate with their communities and have seen exceptional benefits as a result.

The Sentinels Featured on Maryland Public Television

In honor of Chesapeake Bay Week, **Maryland Public Television** aired *The Sentinels* on April 19. This documentary video tells the story of the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership featuring the partners and landowners that make these projects possible. One of the seven federally designated sentinel landscapes, The Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape home to one of the U.S. Navy's premier aircraft testing locations, Naval Air Station (NAS) Patuxent River-Atlantic Test Ranges (ATR). The U.S. Navy conducts over 150,000 annual testing and research flights within its 1.5 million-acre special use airspace in the region. This averages out to more than 410 aircraft operations occurring per day.

Sea Grant Liaison Position

The University of Georgia Marine Extension and **Georgia Sea Grant program** seeks an individual to serve as a liaison between the National Sea Grant program and **Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS)** and to work with military bases and their surrounding communities on implementing coastal resilience measures. The liaison is expected to develop a comprehensive research and outreach program that facilitates the transfer of information, tools, and resources between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the National Sea Grant program, and military installations in and adjacent to U.S. coastal areas. To learn more and apply please click [here](#).

The Last Bit of "Real Florida"



Avon Park Air Force Range Sentinel Landscape.

provides unique training environments in an undeveloped area that is deemed by some to be the last bit of "Real Florida." The partnership aims to protect land surrounding the range to support critical plants and animals in the mostly untouched habitat. The article includes a video that highlights the partnership through an interview with Aline Morrow, a USFWS biologist.

Airman Magazine highlighted **Avon Park Air Force Range (AFR)** for its partnership between the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The location in central Florida

To view the article and video clip, click [here](#).

To learn more about work being done in the Avon Park Sentinel Landscape, click [here](#).

Rose Tree Ranch Addition To Fort Huachuca

Fort Huachuca, a REPI installation and sentinel landscape, preserved their critical mission, while enhancing protection in the Sonoran Desert with the addition of the Rose Tree Ranch property. The Arizona Land and Water Trust, in partnership with REPI and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, worked with the owners of the Rose Tree Ranch to protect 1,150 acres of land that connects to the already protected Rain Valley, Mustang, and Babacomari ranches – resulting in 16,345 total acres of protected land beneath the R-2303 restricted airspace and Buffalo Soldier Electronic Test Range. Protection of these lands will reduce proliferation of electromagnetic interference with electronic testing and support Fort Huachuca’s air operations, including flight patterns used by A-10 and F-16 training aircraft. The Rose Tree Ranch is also home to invaluable cultural resources such as prehistoric petroglyphs and Apache ruins, which will now be permanently protected along with wildlife habitat, a portion of the local watershed, and historic working lands contained on the property.

Webinars

Upcoming Webinars

Varying Levels of Protection

Description: Not sure what level of land protection is right to preserve your installation’s mission? During this webinar, panelists will discuss the benefits of different levels of land protections such as local zoning, land trust management, and easements.

When: Wednesday, May 5, 2021, at 1 PM ET

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

Sentinel Landscapes Webinar: Land Management Innovations

Description: Looking for new ideas and partners to reach your sustainable land management goals? During this webinar, participants will learn about the innovative ways sentinel landscapes are advancing land management practices that benefit the strategic goals of the Department of Defense, Department of Agriculture, and Department of the Interior.

When: Wednesday, June 2, 2021, at 1 PM ET

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

REPI in the News

**Natural Resources
Conservation Efforts
Receive Top Honor.** (1 April
2021)



Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield (Fort Stewart, GA) reports that the Fort-Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield Prescribed burning at Fort Stewart. received the 2020 Secretary of the Army Environmental Award for Natural Resources

Conservation for a Large Installation. The installation recently added 17,003 acres under the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) Program which results in 94,597 total acres protected. Fort Stewart's diverse environment provides unrivaled training opportunities which ACUB protects through preventing encroachment from incompatible development nearby which may impede training capabilities. The installation has management prescriptions for all 120 of their training areas, including prescribed burns to reduce wildfire risks and improve forest ecosystem health.

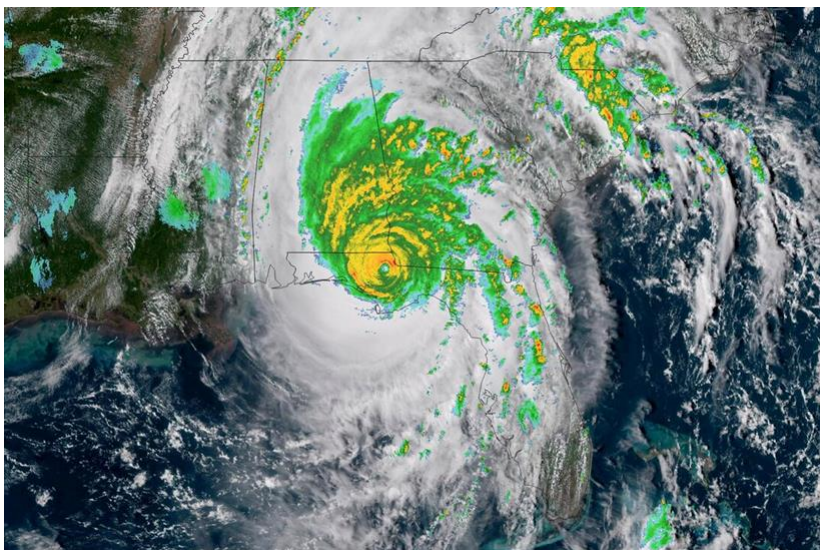


Electric Vehicle and Biofuel: Pentagon Poised to go Greener Under Biden. (31 March 2021)

The Air Force and Navy flight demonstration top squadrons fly over the Pentagon.

includes encouraging the Pentagon to use its resources through funding and programs to achieve "mission critical" climate change mitigation efforts. One program highlighted to achieve these efforts is REPI which covers efforts to mitigate impacts of climate change on military installations.

Politico (Washington, DC) reports that the Biden administration is pushing forward with combating climate change as a priority. This top priority



A satellite image taken of Hurricane Michael over a map of the Florida panhandle.

Climate Change in Florida is a Threat to National Security. (9 April 2021)

South Florida Sun Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL) reports that eight Florida bases were on the **2019 Department of Defense list** of bases most threatened by climate change. Florida's coastal bases have already began seeing increased flooding and large infrastructure damage due to hurricanes. The report highlights the benefits of using programs like REPI to mitigate the risk faced by climate change at military installations.

Congress Continues to Affirm That Climate Security is National Security. (5 January 2021)

Union of Concerned Scientists (Washington, DC) reports that at the end of 2020 Congress voted to override the president's veto of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) which includes four provisions that will strengthen the Department of Defense's climate resilience approach. One of the four provisions authorize an additional \$25 million to the REPI program.

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