

Working with Conservation Districts: A Guide for Military Installations



NACD National Association of Conservation Districts



This document was prepared as a service to the Department of Defense community. The opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s), and are not necessarily representative of those of the Department of Defense.



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March 2013



Greetings,

On behalf of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), I want to first of all thank you for your service to our nation. We are honored to partner with the U.S. Department of Defense on a number of worthy projects to advance natural resources conservation on military lands and surrounding local communities across the country.

While NACD represents a diverse group of citizens, our member districts all have one important thing in common: like you, they are driven by a common mission larger than themselves. Whether they live in a rural or urban district, or raise corn or livestock, what they do is more than just a “job,” it’s a passion and something which they live out every day, in every aspect of their lives.

Across the United States, nearly 3,000 conservation districts are working with local farmers, landowners, and communities to help conserve our nation’s natural resources and leave our land in better shape for future generations. Districts coordinate assistance from all available sources—public and private, local, state, and Federal—in an effort to develop locally-driven solutions to address natural resources concerns.

I hope this primer will be a useful tool to identify ways in which the military and conservation districts can continue working together on joint efforts to promote our shared goals of protecting our nation’s citizens, as well as the air, water, land, and related resources that sustain them.

If you haven’t already, we encourage you to reach out and start building relationships with your local conservation district(s), and find out how they can serve as a resource for you on the ground. Again, thank you for your service to our nation’s citizens. We look forward to continuing our ongoing partnership, as well as seeking new ways to work together in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gene Schmidt". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

Gene Schmidt
President
National Association of Conservation Districts

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Working With Conservation Districts: A Guide for Military Installations

FRAMING THE ISSUE	1
<i>The Issue</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>The Implications</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>The Need for Communication</i>	<i>3</i>
HISTORY OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS.....	3
<i>What are Conservation Districts?</i>	<i>4</i>
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS	7
<i>NACD History.....</i>	<i>8</i>
FINDING YOUR LOCAL CONSERVATION DISTRICT.....	9
EXAMPLES OF PARTNERSHIPS	10
<i>Guam.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Maryland.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Mississippi.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Missouri</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>New York</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Washington.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Wisconsin</i>	<i>18</i>

FRAMING THE ISSUE

The Issue

Encroachment on U.S. military installations and ranges is a serious and growing problem for the Department of Defense (DoD). Encroachment, as defined by DoD, refers to any external factors that inhibit the ability of the Military Services to use their ranges, airspace, and other operating areas to conduct effective training and testing.

The rapid pace of urban growth into formerly rural areas around military installations and ranges presents two sets of encroachment problems. First, as residential and commercial development increases in areas near military bases, residents may be exposed to aircraft over-flights, dust, and noise from military activities. Second, the military's ability to conduct important training exercises may be compromised due to incompatible land use adjacent to or near installations and ranges. For example:

- Night training can be compromised when light from nearby shopping centers interferes with a soldier's night vision
- Airborne training, such as parachute training, can be halted when housing developments are built near drop zones
- Usable testing and training areas can be segmented and diminished if development forces endangered species to migrate inside the military installation fence lines
- Energy projects, such as wind turbine and transmission line development, may interfere with military operations if project siting is not planned collaboratively with the military

Other issues that can lead to degradation of testing or training capabilities include:

- Competition for frequency spectrum
- Tall structures, such as cell phone towers or wind energy turbines in military use airspace
- New highways cutting through or adjacent to training areas

In 2002, the General Accounting Office reported that nearly 80 percent of the nation's military bases were witnessing growth around their fence lines at a rate higher than the national average.

The Implications

Today, our men and women in uniform are deployed around the globe. When our nation sends its military forces abroad, it does so under a solemn agreement with the American people: to train and prepare our military personnel for the challenges of war before placing them in harm's way.

Training provides our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines with the skills they need to successfully complete their mission and return home safely to their families. Experience has taught us that realistic training saves lives: military forces must train as they would fight, replicating the challenges, stress, discomfort, and physical and psychological conditions of actual combat. But such training also requires substantial resources, including air, land, seaspace, and frequency spectrum.

To protect our military forces, we must preserve the viability of our installations and ranges. This need is becoming increasingly important in light of the growing challenges posed to training and testing by the rise of urban growth and other encroachment activities that impact our previously isolated training and testing lands.

State and local governments have the responsibility for managing growth and development through their land use management authorities. Additionally, groups such as land trusts, the agriculture community, and conservation organizations—including conservation districts—can leverage their respective interests in conservation areas and partner with the military to establish compatible land use areas, or buffer zones, around DoD lands. Working collaboratively, the military, regional and local conservation organizations, and other stakeholder groups can protect military training capabilities while conserving important natural resources and maintaining community well-being.

To date, various groups have taken action in response to the growing issue of encroachment. For example:

- State and local governments have formed military advisory boards to facilitate discussion and develop compatible land use policy for areas around military installations
- States have passed legislation to minimize incompatible development and promote compatible resource use around military installations
- Specific installations have engaged conservation non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as land trusts, as well as state and local governments, to establish conservation areas surrounding military lands

The Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps manage nearly 30 million acres of land on more than 425 major military installations.

The Need for Communication

Two-way communication between the military and stakeholder groups is critical to successful compatible land use planning. Conservation districts have the ability to greatly amplify the military's efforts to promote compatible development, while the military can bring various resources that work toward the stakeholder groups' missions. This guide is designed to:

- Help DoD officials and military base commanders gain a better understanding of how conservation districts operate in making land-use and other natural-resources decisions that may affect military operations
- Facilitate communications and potential collaboration among stakeholders on encroachment issues

HISTORY OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

In the early 1930s, along with the Great Depression, came an unparalleled ecological disaster known as the Dust Bowl. Following a severe and sustained drought in the Great Plains, the region's soil began to erode and blow away, creating huge black dust storms that blotted out the sun and swallowed the countryside. Thousands of "dust refugees" left the black fog to seek better lives.

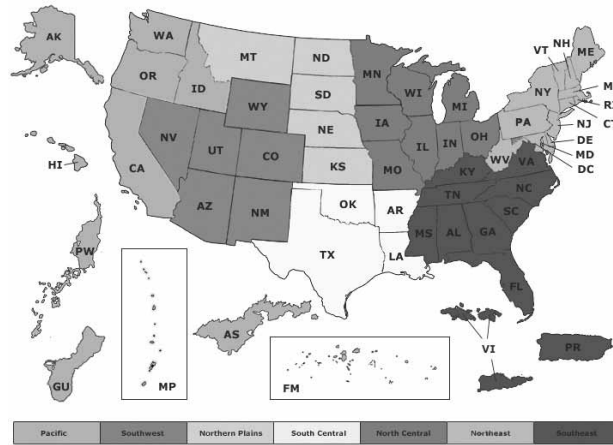
But the storms stretched out across the nation: they reached south to Texas and east to New York. Dust even sifted into the White House and onto the desk of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

On Capitol Hill, while testifying about the erosion problem, soil scientist Hugh Hammond Bennett threw back the curtains to reveal a sky blackened by dust. As a result, Congress unanimously passed legislation declaring soil and water conservation a national policy and priority. Because nearly three-fourths of the continental United States is privately owned, Congress realized that only active, voluntary support from landowners would guarantee the success of conservation work on private land.

In 1937, President Roosevelt recommended legislation that would allow local landowners to form soil conservation districts. North Carolina established the first district: the Brown Creek Soil & Water Conservation District. The movement caught on across the country with district-enabling legislation passed in every state. Today, the country is blanketed with nearly 3,000 conservation districts.

Today, there are nearly 3,000 Conservation Districts in the United States.

(Pictured right)
There are
seven regions
of conservation
districts.



Conservation
Districts are local
units of state
government.

What are Conservation Districts?

Today, nearly 3,000 conservation districts—almost one in every county—across the United States and its territories are helping people to conserve land, water, forests, wildlife, and related natural resources on a local level. Conservation

THE DETAILS ON DISTRICTS

Districts share a single mission: to coordinate assistance from all available sources—public, private, local, state, and Federal—in an effort to develop locally-driven solutions to natural resources concerns. Among other things, conservation districts help to:

- Implement farm, ranch and forestland conservation practices to protect soil productivity, water quality and quantity, air quality, and wildlife habitat
- Conserve and restore wetlands, which purify water and provide habitat for birds, fish, and numerous other animals
- Protect groundwater resources
- Assist communities and homeowners to plant trees and other land cover to hold soil in place, clean the air, provide cover for wildlife, and beautify neighborhoods
- Help developers control soil erosion and protect water and air quality during construction
- Reach out to communities and schools to teach the value of natural resources and encourage conservation efforts

districts are local units of government responsible for soil and water conservation work within their boundaries. The districts are established by state law and their role is to increase voluntary conservation practices among farmers, ranchers, and other land users. To that end, the districts work with millions of landowners, operators, and community leaders to help them manage, protect, and enhance natural resources on private lands, as well as some public lands, in the United States.

Because conservation districts are established by state law, their names and sources of funding vary by state. We use the term “conservation district” to include all of the following:

- Conservation Districts
 - Arkansas, Delaware, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming
- Land Conservation Departments
 - Wisconsin
- Natural Resource Conservation Districts
 - Arizona
- Natural Resources Districts
 - Nebraska
- Resource Conservation Districts
 - California
- Soil Conservation Districts
 - Colorado, Idaho, Maryland, New Jersey, North Dakota, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, and Utah
- Soil & Water Conservation Districts
 - Alabama, Alaska, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Texas, Virgin Islands, Virginia, and the Pacific Basin

Conservation district boundaries also vary by state: they could be along county lines, watersheds, or geography (e.g., mountain range, body of water).

For information on student and educator resources, visit www.nacdnet.org/stewardship&education/

Structure of Conservation Districts

Each conservation district is organized under state law and is governed by an independent, nonpartisan board of directors. More than 17,000 citizens serve on conservation districts' governing boards; these officials are elected and/or appointed.

In addition to their board of directors, the districts also receive advice and support from a state agency. In virtually every state, the state agency provides the conservation districts with limited coordination and advice on subjects such as audits or elections. For many districts, these state agencies are also their primary funding sources.

All of the districts within a state also have an organized association called, The [State] Association of Conservation Districts. These associations are non-governmental organizations that support, enhance, and promote the state's conservation districts and their programs. The Association primarily serves as the collective voice for the state's districts by representing the interests of the conservation districts at a state level.

STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). NRCS works with landowners through conservation planning and assistance designed to benefit the soil, water, air, plants, and animals that result in productive lands and health ecosystems.

State Technical Committees serve in an advisory capacity to the NRCS and other agencies of the USDA on the implementation of the natural resources conservation provisions of Farm Bill legislation. These committees are intended to include members from a wide variety of natural resources and agricultural interests.

Chaired by the NRCS State Conservationist in each state, these Committees are composed of representatives from Federal and state natural resources agencies, American Indian Tribes, agricultural and environmental organizations, and agricultural producers. Conservation districts are represented by their State Association and their State Agency representatives.

State Technical Committees meet regularly to provide information, analysis, and recommendations to appropriate USDA officials, who strongly consider their advice on project funding and priorities.

Conservation District Programs

Conservation districts maintain a variety of programs, all designed to develop and implement local solutions to natural resources problems. A primary focus of the districts is education: conservation districts are constantly working to develop America's next generation of natural resources stewards. Some of the districts' programs to provide hands-on conservation education for students and educators include youth conservation camps, outdoor classroom development, stewardship week celebrations, tree planting, and classroom presentations. All of these education programs give communities a better understanding and appreciation for our natural resources.

In addition, conservation districts work with private landowners and other concerned citizens to develop and implement on-the-ground conservation strategies. For example, districts organize field days focusing on conservation tillage, habitat development, forestry, ponds, watersheds, safety, best management practices, backyard conservation, natural resources tours, grazing, and other natural resources management issues.

For additional examples of conservation district programs, see the box on page 4, "The Details on Districts."

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) is the national organization for all 3,000 local conservation districts across the country and their respective state associations. Its mission is to serve the conservation districts by providing national leadership and a unified voice for natural resources conservation. NACD's goals are to.

- Represent districts as their national voice on conservation issues
- Provide information and resources to conservation districts and their state associations
- Build partnerships with Federal and state agencies and other organizations, in order to carry out district priorities and programs
- Analyze programs and policy issues that have an impact on local districts
- Offer needed and cost-effective services to districts

The Association was founded on the philosophy that decisions on local conservation issues should be made at the local level, with technical and financial assistance from Federal, state, and local governments and the private sector.

As the national voice for all conservation districts, NACD supports voluntary, incentive-driven natural resources conservation programs that benefit all citizens.

NACD's activities include:

- Maintaining relationships with organizations and government agencies
- Publishing information about districts
- Working with leaders in conservation, environment, agriculture, education, industry, and other fields
- Providing services to its districts

NACD is primarily financed through voluntary contributions from its member districts and their state associations. Additional sources of funding include grants for work on specific deliverables, fees for annual meetings for conservation districts and partners, and stewardship and education product sales

NACD History

Representatives from soil conservation districts in 32 states met in Washington, D.C. in 1946 and set in motion the process to organize a National Association of Conservation Districts; at that time, over 1,600 soil conservation districts had already formed in 48 states.

The health of the land and the welfare of future generations was a commitment taken very seriously by early district officials. A February 1947 report from Nolen J. Fuqua of Oklahoma, a council member and later the fourth president of the National Association of Soil Conservation Districts (NASCD), exemplifies the commitment:

“We reorganized into a state organization at the beginning of soil conservation work in 1937. This was due to government men who came down telling us what we needed to do to serve as supervisors. We thought a national organization would help us and we voted unanimously last week to associate ourselves with the National Association.

Four of every five acres in Oklahoma farms and ranches are now being damaged by soil erosion, or have lost some of the precious topsoil before soil conservation treatment was applied. Less than 5,000,000 acres of farmlands have suffered no erosion damages, but more than three-fourths of the topsoil has been lost from 8,543,000 acres.

Farmers and ranchers, with the help of Soil Conservation Service technicians, have developed 34,000 coordinated conservation plans.

These plans provide for sound land use, the proper combination of conservation practices, improvement of soil productivity, and an economical system of farming whereby man can not only save soil, but improve it and at the same time, increase his financial return from the land. Oklahoma has made the most outstanding record in the United States in seeding land removed from cultivation to native grasses. Almost a half-million acres have been seeded under the Soil Conservation Districts' program. However, there is a big conservation job yet to be done."

By forming a national organization in 1946, the districts provided the means to deliver a unified message to policy makers and to better coordinate district activities. However, as R. Neil Sampson noted in *For Love of the Land: A History of the National Association of Conservation Districts*, "the accomplishments of the first half-century are impressive, but the challenges ahead seem equally awesome." Mr. Sampson saw the greatest challenge as being that of "moving people to constructive action." He urged those attempting to understand political forces to first recognize the "potential that lies in the dedication, commitment and skill of those who love the land — the people of the [soil] conservation districts."

FINDING YOUR LOCAL CONSERVATION DISTRICT



If you're interested in whether, and how, a conservation partnership could work for you, reach out to your local district officials to start building relationships and learn more about their work in your community. If you don't know the name of your district or the location of its office, there are several ways you can find this information:

1. Use the "Locate Your Local District" link on the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) webpage at: www.nacdn.net/org/about/districts/locate/
2. Call NACD at (202) 547-6223.
3. The USDA Service Center Employee Directory at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/employeeDirectory/app> is searchable by city, county or state. If your conservation district is located in a USDA Service Center, contact information will be available.

*(Pictured left)
Conservation districts
provide opportunities to
build partnerships with
local communities.*

EXAMPLES OF PARTNERSHIPS

The military and conservation districts share an appreciation for the value of our nation's land and natural resources. While their reasons may be varied, the desire to protect the land and keep it in the best condition possible for future generations is nonetheless an important common goal in which both groups have a vested interest.

There are many examples of successful partnerships between the military and local conservation districts both within and outside the fenceline of military installations. A few of these are discussed below. These partnerships focus on a wide variety of projects both on and off military bases. However, there is a growing need to identify partnership opportunities outside the fenceline of military bases to provide habitat for endangered species, while protecting the military's ability to test and train on the base.

As you seek to build partnerships, be sure to:

- Develop and maintain good relationships with a variety of stakeholders
- Understand the goals of each group
- Look for areas of common interest
- Keep those goals and interests on the table until some combination of partners makes sense

THE SIKES ACT

The conservation districts' partnership with DoD came as a result of the Sikes Act, which allows for USDA to work with DoD to solve environmental problems on their bases. As a result of the Act, district officials introduced themselves to the bases in their county and offered their assistance with erosion issues, stormwater management and other conservation needs. Because of their proven ability to plan and implement projects on a short deadline, district workers share a positive relationship with their local military bases, and receive calls on a regular basis from DoD officials seeking technical assistance or advice on various environmental issues.

The Sikes Act of 1960 authorizes the Department of Defense to develop cooperative plans with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state fish and game agencies for conservation and rehabilitation programs on military installations throughout the United States.

Finally, keep in mind that with any projects involving multiple partners, changes in direction or funding are likely to occur throughout the course of the project, so remain flexible and be ready to adjust along the way as needed.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCILS

Conservation districts are members of Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils. These Councils are non-profit organizations whose goal is to provide a system of rural development, encourage the wise use of natural resources, and improve the quality of life in America. While conservation districts focus exclusively on the conservation of natural resources, RC&D Councils also work on rural development issues.

RC&D Councils organize local people to solve local problems. The Councils mobilize local, state, and national resources to address economic, social, environmental, and quality of life issues on the ground where those issues occur. Often that is in rural America and, consequently, the partnerships formed through this work are rooted in the communities being served.

Like the local communities they serve, the Councils are extraordinarily diverse. There is no one RC&D model. There are 375 local RC&D Councils located in all 50 states, the Caribbean, and Pacific Basin. Each Council is made up of local leaders of all types who know their communities well. In addition to conservation districts, other members include state and local agencies, development authorities, and chambers of commerce. Today, more than 32,000 volunteers serve on RC&D Councils. These volunteers are driven by a passion to serve their home places. They identify the challenges their communities are facing and forge partnerships to take on and solve those challenges.

In fiscal year 2010, the Councils collectively assisted 2.2 million economically or socially disadvantaged people nationwide, while protecting or preserving more than 2.1 million acres of agricultural land. For more information on RC&D Councils, visit the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils website at: www.rcdnet.org.

Guam

The Navy and Air Force have a strong history of supporting natural resources conservation projects in Guam. One example project where DoD could partner with local conservation districts to protect military training operations while

preserving natural resources adjacent to the installation is the restoration of Limestone Forest Habitat (Yigo, Northern Guam, Anderson Air Force Base, Anano Conservation Reserve).

Anao Conservation Reserve is a Government of Guam Conservation Reserve. This reserve is one of the few locations on or near Anderson Air Force Base and Cocos Island with native starlings. Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and the Guam Forestry and Soil Resources Division are established partners.

The condition of the native limestone forest in this area is degraded; however, there are important areas of secondary limestone forest with relatively intact structure and limited exotics. Feral ungulates, cycad pests, and the brown tree snake are invasive species that are having a significant negative impact on the native ecosystem. The control and removal of these invasive species can help the native forest to recover and could enable native birds and bats to successfully reestablish breeding populations in this location.

Maryland

There are several military bases in the three southern Maryland counties. So, instead of having an agreement between DoD and each county or conservation district, there is one agreement between DoD and the Southern Maryland Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) office. As a 501(c)(3), the RC&D is eligible to enter into agreements with the U.S. Navy to assist the bases in implementing their Integrated Natural Resource Management Plans. Projects range from small to large scale efforts and are primarily concerned with protecting and stabilizing severely eroding shorelines along the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay.

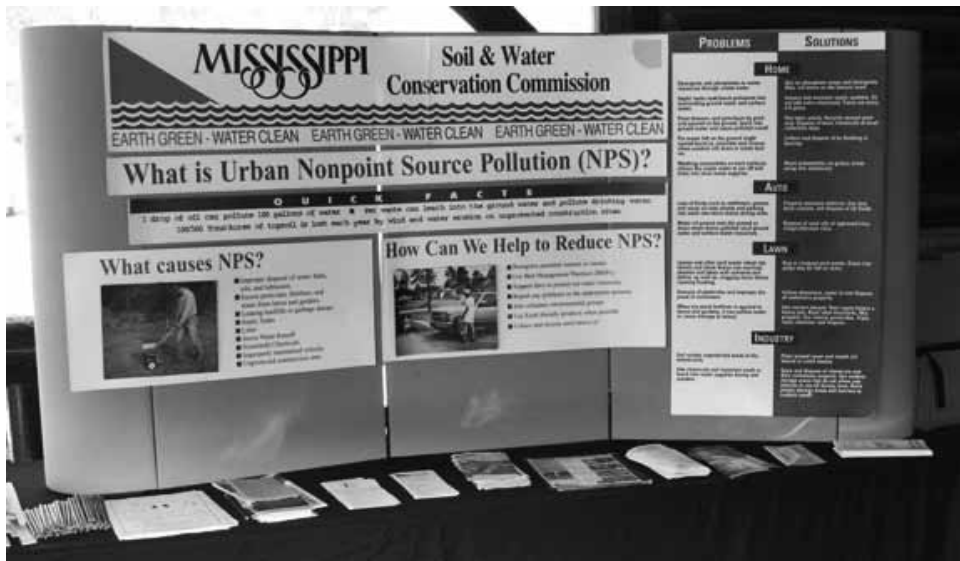
All work passes through the RC&D office and is then shared with to each county and its respective soil conservation district. The RC&D provides the fiscal and administrative management of these agreements and partners with conservation districts for technical and contracting assistance. However, any individual soil conservation district may develop its own relationship with its local DoD base.

Examples of partnership projects include the protection of over two miles of shoreline and the restoration of two in-stream fish passages at the Naval Support Facility Indian Head along the Potomac River. The RC&D also worked with a local soil conservation district on a shoreline protection project in front of two off shore air space monitors at Naval Air Station Patuxent River. The RC&D is currently involved in another partnership involving bulkhead repair and the restoration of 3,000 linear feet of shoreline at the Naval Research Lab, Chesapeake Bay Detachment in Calvert County.

Districts enjoy the work and the partnership with the military, while DoD ultimately saves money and receives a quality job in a timely manner.

Mississippi

Every April, representatives of the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission and Lowndes County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) participate in Columbus Air Force Base's Earth Day celebration for local school kids. The base sets up approximately 10 stops for the kids in the base playground and park area. A SWCD representative gives an overview of Enviroscope: a series of portable, table-top environmental education models providing unique, interactive learning experiences, including how these lessons apply to the base. The Commission has worked with districts on similar presentations at Earth Day events at Seabee Base in Columbus and Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi.



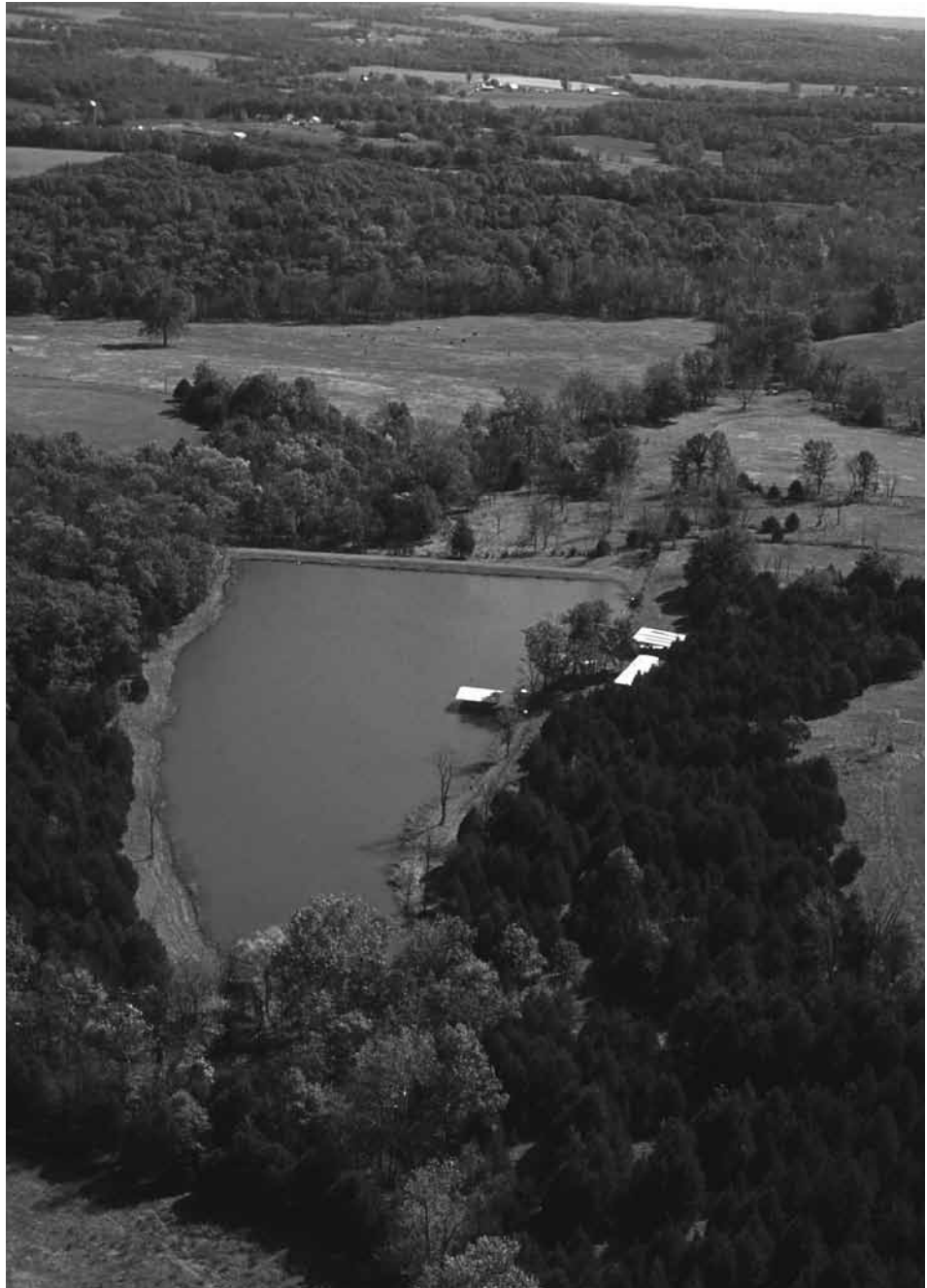
*(Pictured left)
Mississippi Soil and
Water Conservation
Commission display.*

Missouri

During a time of budget constraints and a hiring freeze, the Missouri National Guard found a non-traditional way to ensure the preservation of land surrounding their facilities. Using grants and agreements, the Missouri National Guard partnered with their local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) in Cole County to hire two individuals to work on the land. Grant dollars also covered the lease of a truck and the purchase of field equipment, including survey rods and levels. The work included prescribed burns, timber stand improvement, wildlife management, critical-area seedings, designing and overseeing construction of diversions, and other efforts to control erosion issues on their land.

Ultimately, the partnership proved to be both successful and mutually beneficial. The Guard benefited through strategic conservation practices that would not have been possible without the strong SWCD partnership. In turn, the District exercised new opportunities for promoting increased awareness of the importance of conservation.

*(Pictured right)
Depicted in this
Missouri landscape
are numerous
conservation
measures, including
managed pastures,
water storage,
flood prevention,
woodland
management, wildlife
habitat development
and erosion-control
measures.*



***LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION:
AMERICA'S LONGLEAF RESTORATION INITIATIVE
A CASE STUDY***

With less than 4% of longleaf forests remaining, America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative's vision is to sustain functional, viable longleaf pine ecosystems through a partnership of concerned organizations and individuals. This partnership is guided by *The Range-wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine* that takes a landscape level approach and pursues restoration on both public and private land. *The Conservation Plan* boldly calls for an increase in longleaf pine restoration and conservation over 15 years from 3.4 to 8.0 million acres, with more than half of this acreage targeted in significant landscapes and sites in states from Virginia to Texas.

As Longleaf Initiative partners, conservation districts can help link voluntary private landowner actions with actions on DoD lands to promote a sustainable longleaf ecosystem landscape that offers ecological, social, and economic benefits. The restoration of longleaf pine supports our national defense by sustaining compatible land use outside military bases, providing natural buffers to facilities and increasing flexibility for managing the region's 29 endemic threatened and endangered species.

Federal partners include DoD, the Department of Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and Farm Services Agency. Successes to date include:

- Over 130,000 acres of new acres added through the partners' private land programs
- Over 1.9 million acres of public lands are being managed for longleaf and additional acres are being restored each year
- Over 30 organizations are involved in restoration efforts, including conservation districts

For more information on America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative, please visit: www.americaslongleaf.org.

New York

Since 1991, the Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has worked closely with the Army's Fort Drum on a number of projects on base, ranging from 12 to 30 acres in size, at a cost of \$90,000 to \$150,000.

To provide the manpower on the ground, the SWCD received funding from DoD, through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which agreed to provide technical assistance. This longstanding relationship between the District and Federal partners has proven to be highly successful, resulting in a wide variety of effective conservation initiatives on base.

The partnership first began when Fort Drum contacted the SWCD to assist them in reforesting their training areas. These areas consisted primarily of heavily used terrain that had deteriorated as a result of heavy use, causing the sandy soils to erode and create blow dunes areas. The District applied fertilizer and planted vegetation including White Pine tree seedling and Cape Beach grass. In later years, training areas were treated with manure, fertilizer, lime, native grass seed, and beach grass.

The District also worked with Fort Drum to treat hardened surfaced areas for helicopter landings. These areas were graded (leveled) and, in some cases, treated with manure, fertilizer, lime and grass, or geo-textile fabric, and crushed stone. Other work included treating hardened driveways and other access points to training areas, in order to protect wetland areas, archeological sites, and other cultural resources areas. Access driveways were typically graded and constructed of geo-textile fabric and crushed stone. In sensitive areas, grading was avoided; geo-fabric and stone was integrated in the landscape to minimize soil disturbance. The District also assisted Fort Drum with wetland mitigation and willow plantings.

Washington

Whidbey Island Conservation District worked with Naval Air Station Whidbey Island and Skagit River System Cooperative (a natural resources management consortium of local Indian tribes) to design and implement a large scale salt marsh restoration project located at the Crescent Harbor area of the Naval Air Station. The purpose of the project was to restore critical near-shore rearing habitat for the Federally-listed Puget Sound Chinook salmon.

Under the project management of the Skagit River System Cooperatives staff, the District's engineering department completed several key tasks of the habitat restoration project covering over 200 acres, including preparing engineering plans for regulatory permitting, completing the engineering design for an inlet



*(Pictured left)
9.5 foot trestle for a
sewer line crossing at
the Crescen Harbor
area of the Naval
Air Station (NAS)
Whidby Island, WA.*



*(Pictured left)
The Whidbey Island
Conservation District
worked with NAS
Whidbey Island
and Skagit River
Cooperative to
design and build this
inlet channel and
beach berm.*

channel through a beach berm and designing a sewer line crossing structure over a 80-foot wide section of breached dike. The project used funding provided by the Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board.

Wisconsin

Wisconsin's Monroe County Land Conservation Department (LCD) has a longstanding relationship with the Army's Fort McCoy's resource managers. Working mainly with McCoy's Fish Biologist and Wildlife Manager, LCD assists with a variety of projects on the base. Fort McCoy staff serve as advisors to the LCD in the preparation of resource management plans and the resulting work plans.

A particular area of focus is invasive species control. In fact, the LCD and Fort McCoy established a multi-agency group called the Monroe County Invasive Plant Species Working Group, which conducts educational activities for invasive species control in the local area. In addition, members of the group initiated several invasive species control projects.

Fort McCoy is home to miles of high quality trout streams. Because land use outside the base has an impact on the water quality of these streams, Fort McCoy fish biologists pooled money and staff time to do water quality sampling and stream-bank restoration work on surrounding Monroe County streams. LCD helped with these efforts by assisting Fort McCoy and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources with a Total Maximum Daily Load study on a stream located on the installation. The LCD has also been involved in providing technical assistance on erosion control projects on the installation.

The LCD and Fort McCoy staff share a strong working relationship, meeting together on a monthly basis to discuss resource issues of mutual interest. With 60,000 acres of property within the county, most of which is excellent fish and wildlife habitat, the partnership has proved to be a valuable asset, not only to the LCD and Fort McCoy, but also to the entire community.

In partnering with the base, the LCD has at times found it challenging working within the parameters of the military's strict rules and chain of command. According to the LCD, the key to overcoming this challenge is getting to know the right people at the installation. Because of the close relationship shared by the LCD and McCoy resource managers, the two parties have been highly successful in finding mutually satisfactory ways to achieve joint goals.



*(Pictured left)
Fort McCoy staff
doing stream inventory
work on Coles Valley
Creek, a Class 1 trout
stream that drains to
Fort McCoy.*

This primer is one of a series designed in cooperation with DoD's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program.

The primer series includes:

- ❖ Collaborative Land Use Planning: A Guide for Military Installations and Local Governments
- ❖ Commander's Guide to Community Involvement
- ❖ Commander's Guide to Renewable Energy
- ❖ Outreach for Mission Sustainability: Working to Balance Military and Civilian Community Needs
- ❖ The Department of Defense's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Buffer Program
- ❖ Working to Preserve Farm, Forest and Ranch Lands: A Guide for Military Installations
- ❖ Working with Conservation Districts: A Guide for Military Installations
- ❖ Working with Land Trusts: A Guide for Military Installations and Land Trusts
- ❖ Working with Local Governments: A Practical Guide for Installations
- ❖ Working with Non-Governmental Organizations: A Guide for Military Installations
- ❖ Working with Regional Councils: A Guide for Installations
- ❖ Working with State Legislatures: A Guide for Military Installations and State Legislatures

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