



# REPI Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program

## 2017 REPI CHALLENGE

The REPI Program designed the REPI Challenge, an annual competition that aims to:



**Cultivate projects** that conserve land at a greater scale and test promising ways to finance land protection.



**Help the REPI Program meet its ambitious goals** with limited funding.



**Demonstrate benefits** above and beyond normal requirements for REPI projects for important military missions and natural resources.



**Harness the creativity** of the private sector to access and leverage unconventional sources of funding and market-based approaches.

**The Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program** fosters multi-agency initiatives and collaboration across DoD to preserve compatible land uses near military installations that conserve natural landscapes in support of military readiness, allowing them to create unique cost-sharing partnerships with state and local governments and private conservation organizations. The REPI Program has protected over **464,000 acres** of land near **89 DoD installations** in **30 states** across the country through fiscal year 2016. Incompatible activities outside military bases provide the impetus and responsibility for DoD to manage and recover important species. By protecting habitat and other nearby lands, the military is able to maximize the amount of limited space available for testing, training, and operations. DoD and its REPI partners approach these important mission assurance and species protection challenges in a flexible, innovative, and cooperative manner in order to optimize the use of tax payer dollars.

### ABOUT THE WINNING PROJECT: EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA SENTINEL LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP

The Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Partnership—which includes Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, Dare County Bombing Range, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Air Station New River, Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, and Fort Bragg—is a joint effort between the Army, Marine Corps, Air Force, other Federal agencies, state and local governments, and non-profit organizations coordinating to protect rural and natural lands important to the Nation's defense mission across 33 counties in the state. As agriculture and defense represent the top two economic sectors in North Carolina, the Partnership encompasses an area of strategic importance to DoD and economic significance for the state. Under the leadership of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, **a 2017 REPI Challenge award of \$9.2 million will leverage \$10.1 million in partner contributions** to help the Partnership make significant progress toward its goal to maintain compatible land uses that enable military training and operations on installations while effectively considering landowner preferences; keeping private working lands in the tax base; and assisting private farmers and foresters to maintain their livelihoods, local wildlife habitats, and natural resources. Given the intersection of numerous partner interests and priorities within the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape, DoD hopes to leverage this REPI Challenge award with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service programs, to include the Partnership's proposal for the 2017 Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

### MULTIPLE BENEFITS ACROSS MULTIPLE MILITARY INSTALLATIONS

There is significant biological diversity across the Eastern North Carolina geography, including 48 at-risk species, such as the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW), henslow's sparrow, wood stork, Carolina gopher frog, northern pine snake, and tundra swan. Protection of parcels within the landscape that are essential habitat and feeding areas for threatened and endangered species include fertile land for agriculture and forests, and their protection will help achieve recovery goals. Thus, the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Partnership and its partners will use the REPI Challenge award to protect more than 17,000 acres of farms and forests that are integral to mitigating DoD's installation encroachment and airspace concerns in the area. The project will address threats such as potential wind turbine development that may adversely impact airborne operations and habitat degradation by establishing conservation easements on high priority parcels with willing landowners.



Over the past 6 years, the REPI Challenge has provided benefits across **12 locations** that have resulted in leveraging **\$37 million** in REPI funds with **\$117 million** in partner contributions, to protect nearly **110,000 acres** of working lands, habitat, and open spaces.



Habitat for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker can be found on Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune and other military installations. (Photo by Michael McCloy)



A U.S. Navy F/A-18F Super Hornet aircraft conducts a routine training evolution above the Navy Dare Bombing Range in Dare County, N.C. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Joseph R. Wax/Released)

The Marine Corps will use \$5.8 million of the REPI Challenge award to leverage funding from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission to establish an easement and support management of over 12,100 acres of state-owned land for RCW habitat. The Bear Garden project, in conjunction with other initiatives, will enable **Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune** to expand lands dedicated to RCW recovery, reduce the installation's RCW recovery goal, and provide flexibility and capacity to infantry training at the base. This effort will help resolve a significant number of habitat-related training challenges for the foreseeable future. This project will help promote conditions necessary to proceed with the development of new training ranges, expansion of ship-to-shore exercises, and enhancement of tactical tank maneuver areas, as well as ensure operational training realism on the base's main side and in the Greater Sandy Run Area.

The Air Force will leverage \$3.4 million of the REPI Challenge award with contributions from the North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund to protect more than 5,600 acres of high priority land necessary to maintain viable training airspace for Dare County Bombing Range. Potential barriers to mission training and flight paths include renewable energy compatibility and spectrum encroachment. **Dare County Bombing Range** is the primary training range for F-15E aircraft crews from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base and the primary backyard range for F/A-18 squadrons operating out of Naval Air Station Oceana. The range is an electronic combat, day-night, and air-to-ground training site critical to multiple installations and Army and Navy special operations teams (including SEALs).

### PARTNERS

- North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
- North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission
- The Conservation Fund
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Clean Water Management Trust Fund
- Town of Spring Lake
- North Carolina Department of Military and Veteran Affairs
- North Carolina Coastal Land Trust
- The Nature Conservancy
- Working Land Trust
- Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership
- North Carolina Farm Bureau Federation
- North Carolina Forestry Association
- North Carolina Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation
- North Carolina East Alliance
- North Carolina State University

### NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS REALIZED THROUGH THE 2017 REPI CHALLENGE

The quality and scale of REPI Challenge competition reflects a continued appetite for new partnership and innovative conservation opportunities. In this cycle, 10 pre-proposals revealed over \$129 million in potential partner funding, at a greater than 2.5:1 match to REPI funding, with potential to protect nearly 100,000 acres across 11 states. Other highlights and opportunities include private foundations partners, large landscape projects that benefit multiple high-value military installations, and direct benefits to numerous rare species.

