

# Resiliency and Readiness Virtual Workshop – A National Look at Military Installation Resilience

Wednesday, November 18, 1:00 – 3:00 PM ET

---

## Moderators

**Kristin Thomasgard**, Program Director, Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Sustainment

Since 2013, Kristin Thomasgard has served as Program Director for the Department of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program, which links communities, land preservation, and national defense. The REPI program protects the military's mission by preventing, removing, and mitigating restrictions to military activities through partnerships with state and local governments, land conservation organizations and other key stakeholders. To-date, REPI partnerships have conserved over 688,000 acres of land at 110 installations in 33 states. Ms. Thomasgard also serves as the federal chair for the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership, a collaborative effort between the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Defense, and the Interior.

In addition, Ms. Thomasgard serves as the DoD-DOI Liaison, where she works to enhance coordination between the Departments and works with leadership to develop mutually beneficial solutions to policy or mission issues.

Prior to her current role, Ms. Thomasgard worked at Army Headquarters, Training Directorate and served for 8 years in the Army National Guard. Ms. Thomasgard has a BS in Political Science and Public Administration from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and an MBA from the Johns Hopkins Carey Business School.

**Bill Ross**, Counsel, Brooks Pierce

Bill led the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources as the agency's secretary from 2001- 2009. In those years, the department included 27 different divisions. Among them were environmental protection agencies, natural resources conservation agencies, the state zoo, three state aquaria, and the state museum of natural sciences. The department managed an annual budget of approximately \$1 billion and had 4,000 permanent and 2,300 seasonal employees. In 2009, Bill returned to the law firm Brooks Pierce where previously, from 1984-2001, he had helped build the firm's environmental law practice. Bill now focuses on projects, cases and initiatives in environmental law, environmental health, natural resource conservation, military readiness, sustainability, and resilience. Bill served as a visiting professor in environmental science and policy at the Duke University Nicholas School of the Environment from 2010-2014, chair of the US EPA's National Advisory Council on Environmental Policy and Technology from 2012-2016, and a member of the Advisory Council of the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health from 2015-present. In 2017, at Governor Cooper's request, he served briefly as interim secretary of the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality. In so doing, he became both the longest and shortest serving secretary of the department.

---

---

## Speakers

### **John Nicholson**, Chief Deputy Secretary, N.C. Department of Environmental Quality

John Nicholson was named chief deputy secretary for the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality in February 2017.

Nicholson provides direct support to the Secretary and coordinates the efforts of the department and the senior staff in executing the department's mission and associated goals and objectives.

Nicholson is a retired Colonel in the U.S. Marine Corps where he served on active duty for 28 years. He is a skilled executive with international leadership experience in solving critical and complex challenges.

He was also the military affairs advisor to two North Carolina governors. Nicholson has experience in advanced strategic planning, policy development and work force analysis while leading high performance teams. He has also advanced programs in energy efficiency and environmental conservation while serving his country.

Nicholson earned a master's degree in national security and strategic studies from the U.S. Naval War College, a master's degree in military studies from the U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College and a bachelor's degree in political science from San Diego State University.

### **H. Camille Crain**, BRIC Section Chief, FEMA Headquarters

Camille Crain is the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Section Chief at FEMA Headquarters. In this role it is her responsibility to design and administer FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance's newest grant program, BRIC.

Camille came to FEMA HQ from FEMA Region 6 where she served as the Hazard Mitigation Assistance Branch Chief in the Mitigation Division. It was her responsibility to manage FEMA's three HMA grant programs and the HMA staff for the five states and 68 tribes located in Region 6. She administered in excess of \$3 billion of mitigation funding.

Camille formerly worked for FEMA Region 4 where she has served as a Senior HMA Program Manager, serving as the Team Lead and Supervisor for the States of Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi. She also was responsible for HMA training needs in the Region, Mitigation Planning coordination with HMA and Standard Operating Procedures development for the HMA Branch. Camille also served as the FEMA Region 4 representative on the Federal Interagency Community Resiliency Workgroup.

Camille was the State Hazard Mitigation Officer for the Commonwealth of Kentucky, where she managed the Commonwealth's hazard mitigation grant program and planning office and led the effort

for the approval of the Kentucky State Enhanced Hazard Mitigation Plan. Camille started her emergency management career at the University of Kentucky, where she was the Commonwealth's Grants Manager for its Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

She brings over 20 years' experience with FEMA's HMA grant programs at the university, State and Federal level.

Camille holds a Bachelor of Arts in History and a Masters of Public Administration from the University of Kentucky and is a proud member of Big Blue Nation. She loves to travel and all the planning that goes into trips.

---

## **Panel One**

### **Roger Gorke**, Senior Policy Advisor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Roger Gorke has over 30 years of experience in environmental and public health protection at the local and federal levels. Currently, he is a senior policy advisor in the Office of Water at United States Environmental Protection Agency and is now place based in Southern California. In that role, Roger is Agency lead for drought and western water issues, such as the nexus between water quantity and water quality and the cleanup of abandoned mines. Roger played a key role for USEPA in the development of the 2016 Presidential Memorandum "Building National Capabilities for Long Term Drought Resilience." He is also the liaison for USEPA with the Western States Water Council and the Western Governors' Association with respect to water issues. Roger is a native of southern California and a graduate of the University of California, Santa Barbara. He lives in Camarillo, Calif., with his wife Chaan and two sons, Luke (22) and Jackson (13). In his spare time, when he isn't driving to, attending, and/or coaching his sons' baseball and football games, he enjoys playing and building guitars and building and restoring vintage tube amplifiers.

### **Marissa McInnis**, Department of Defense Program Manager for Water Resources and Climate Resilience

Marissa McInnis currently serves as the Department of Defense program manager for water resources and climate resilience.

In previous roles, she served as climate resilience and sustainability manager with the Department of Navy, as the first senior sustainability officer for climate preparedness within the White House, and in various leadership roles over a decade at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. McInnis received her Master of Science in environmental science and policy from Johns Hopkins University and her bachelor's degrees in environmental studies and piano performance from Maryville College.

### **Todd Miller**, Executive Director, North Carolina Coastal Federation

Todd Miller is the founder and executive director of the North Carolina Coastal Federation, a nonprofit with over 16,000 supporters working for a healthier North Carolina coast.

A coastal North Carolina native from Carteret County, it was here in 1982 that Miller found his passion—working to keep the coast a great place to live, work and play. Forming partnerships and rallying

volunteers, Miller grew the organization from a one-man (and a dog) venture in a back room of his house to three offices covering the North Carolina coast. With 30+ staffers and a multi-million dollar budget targeted for educating the public, advocating for a clean coast and restoring water quality and shorelines, the federation takes on projects, and partners with others in hundreds of endeavors that influence these priorities.

A graduate of University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, from which he holds undergraduate and master's degrees, Miller was selected as a distinguished alumnus by the university in 2013 and honored with a 2015 "Hero of the Seas" award by the Peter Benchley Ocean Awards. Along with numerous other awards and recognitions, Miller is a founding board member and current board chair of Restore America's Estuaries and currently serves on the Board of Visitors for the UNC Institute for the Environment and as a board member on the Policy Committee for the Albemarle-Pamlico Estuary Partnership.

Since the launch of the federation, Miller has worked tirelessly to raise awareness of the threats to the coast and advocate for access to clean coastal waters. In bringing together like-minded folks from all walks of life, from fishers to paddlers to boaters and beachcombers, the federation under Miller's leadership has succeeded in protecting and restoring tens of thousands of acres of North Carolina coast.

### **Tony Willardson**, Executive Director, Western States Water Council

Tony Willardson was named as Executive Director of the Western States Water Council in July 2009. Formerly the Deputy Director, Tony joined the Council in 1979. He holds a BA in political science from Brigham Young University, and a MS in public administration from the University of Utah. He is a member of the National Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration (Pi Alpha Alpha). He oversees publication of a weekly newsletter, Western States Water, which he edited for many years. He is the author of numerous articles and reports covering a wide range of water resource issues, including drought, water project financing and cost sharing, ground water management and recharge, water conservation, drought, water use fees, remote sensing of water use and interregional water transfers. He is one of the principal authors of the WGA's 2006 Report, Water Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future and subsequent 2008 Next Steps Report, as well as the related WSWC 2010 Progress Report. He also was a contributing editor to the WGA's December 2012 Report, Water Transfers in the West: Projects, Trends, and Leading Practices in Voluntary Water Trading. Further, he oversees the Council's Water Data Exchange (WaDE) project which enables states to share data with each other and the public in a more streamlined and cost-effective way.

---

## **Panel Two**

### **Matt Walsh**, Executive Liaison Assistant to the Commanding General, U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence and Fort Huachuca

- Executive Liaison Assistant to the Commanding General, US Army Intelligence Center of Excellence & Ft. Huachuca
- Served in this capacity since 2002
  - Ft. Huachuca is a multifunction installation supporting an array of Army and DoD missions including individual skills training for Military Intelligence and Unmanned

Aircraft Systems professionals, Army network operations worldwide, communications and intelligence systems testing and interoperability certification, and a variety of associated support functions as well. I support the Commanding General in his role as the Installation Senior Mission Commander as well as the Commanding General for the US Army Intelligence center of Excellence. My support includes the areas of all engagements with Congress, the Arizona Governor's Office and State Legislature, our Federal and State agency partners, as well the Western Region Partnership and the Arizona Commanders Summit.

- **Education:**
- Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering from California State University, Fresno

## **Heath Sirmons**, Optimization Branch Chief, 97<sup>th</sup> Air Mobility Wing at Altus Air Force Base

Heath has served as the Optimization Branch Chief for the 97<sup>th</sup> Air Mobility Wing at Altus Air Force Base, Oklahoma for the past 15 years. He is a Community Planner by trade and together with his small staff is responsible for all long term project planning and the associated \$30M annual project program. Included in his responsibilities is the Energy portfolio, which includes the acquisition of all utilities and associated infrastructure required to run the installation as well as ensuring the resilience of energy, water & natural gas systems. Additional duties include Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) program manager, NEPA, encroachment management, housing branch chief and advisor on any required real property acquisitions or actions. Heath serves on the Board of Western Farmer's Electrical Cooperative, a Generation and Transmission Coop that serves Altus Air Force Base as well as all of Oklahoma and a few small markets in Texas and New Mexico. He is a 2020 Military Energy Resilience Catalist (MERC) Cohort for the DoD and member of the Southwest Oklahoma Water Task Force.

Heath identified "potable water availability" as the Installations #1 encroachment issue which led him to enter the REPI program as a means to secure water rights for the installation and the small community that supports Altus Air Force Base with potable water.

## **Jeff Mixson**, Special Contracting Subject Matter Expert (SME), Tyndall AFB

### Background

41-year northwest Florida resident

Strong Family ties to Panama City and Tyndall community (all father's side relatives live there)

Avid Outdoorsman (Fishing and Hunting) and

Belief in importance of wildlife management and value the environment that makes wildlife thrive

### Education

NWF State College—Bachelor's Degree in Acquisitions and Program Management

University of Arkansas—Master's Degree in Operations Management

### Career

Enlisted US Army Combat Veteran (1999-2005)—Served tours of duty in Iraq War

Education with Industry-worked with 2 defense contractors (2005)

USAF Inventory Management Specialist (2006-2009)

Contract Specialist—Multiple Armament Directorate Program Offices-Eglin AFB (2009-2014)

Contracting Officer and Section Chief—Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile (AMRAAM) (2014-2018)

Chief of Pricing, Eglin AFB (2018-2019)

Chief of Contracting, Direct Attack International Contracts (2019-Present)

Special Contracting Subject Matter Expert (SME) for Tyndall AFB (2019-Present)

### **Dennis Blazak**, Community Plans and Liaison Officer, Naval Weapons Station Earle

Dennis Blazak, a thirty-year Federal civil servant, currently serves as the Community Plans and Liaison Officer for Naval Weapons Station Earle in Colts Neck NJ.

He participates in planning efforts at the local, county, and state level, especially on actions to improve storm resiliency and increase community cooperation in the face of extreme weather events. His recent work focuses on using shared services to benefit both local governments and the military, planning for resilient energy infrastructure, and preserving land near NJ military bases (over 5,000 acres so far) as a compatible development tool.

Born in Newark, NJ and a lifelong “Jersey” resident, he occasionally consults Madame Marie on the Asbury Park boardwalk for insights into the future, regularly drives on Thunder Road, and works near Bruce Springsteen’s humble three hundred acre homestead. Just a simple chemical engineer trying to make his way in the world.

### **Carmen Lombardo**, Acting Deputy Regional Planner, MCIEAST

Graduated from Passaic Valley Regional High School in Little Falls, New Jersey in 1982, attended William Paterson College, New Jersey from 1982 to 1984. He received a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies with a Wildlife Emphasis in May of 1988 from Unity College in Maine. In June of 1988 he began a graduate research program focusing on black bear ecology on Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune and received a Master of Science degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science in May 1993 from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Mr. Lombardo worked as a Wildlife Biologist for the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Channel Islands National Park from May 1990-October 1993. He joined the staff of the Fish and Wildlife Division, Environmental Management Department, Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune as Supervisory Wildlife Biologist in October of 1993. He served Camp Lejeune for 14 years before moving to his position as Natural Resources Manager at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point in May 2007. At Cherry Point he guided and led the installations Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) efforts to sustain mission readiness through compatible conservation approaches. In 2019, Mr. Lombardo returned to Camp Lejeune to serve as a Regional Strategic Planner with Marine Corps Installations East (MCIEAST).

In his current role Lombardo serves as Regional REPI point of contact for MCIEAST installations; coordinates mission compatibility evaluations; and is the MCIEAST coordinator for encroachment partnerships including the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape and Southeastern Regional Partnership for Planning and

Sustainability. His professional interests include encroachment partnering, landscape level conservation, human dimensions in game/non-game management, and ecosystem services. His personal interests include woodworking, fishing, and native landscaping.