



(<http://www.army.mil>)

FORT STEWART-HUNTER ARMY AIRFIELD

FORT STEWART-HUNTER ARMY AIRFIELD



(<https://home.armv.mil>)

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION EFFORTS RECEIVE TOP HONOR

4/1/21, 9:32 AM

Lori Hogan

U.S. Army Environmental Command



Courtesy photo

Prescribed burning on Fort Stewart provides the installation with benefits such as wildfire reduction, a superior military training platform, enhanced threatened and endangered species habitat and improved forest ecosystem health.

Natural resources conservation efforts receive top honor

WASHINGTON –Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield recently received the 2020 Secretary of the Army Environmental Award for Natural Resources Conservation for a Large Installation.

Fort Stewart's 284,000 acres in southeast Georgia provide unrivaled training opportunities for Soldiers in a diverse environment.

The lands contain some of the most biologically and ecologically diverse areas of Georgia, made up of pine forest, wetlands, blackwater rivers, hardwood management areas, forest clearings, and the largest tract of longleaf pine ecosystem in Georgia.

Its wildlife habitat includes seven species protected by the Endangered Species Act and more than 20 species of concern. Additionally, Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield's diverse landscape has 948 different plant species. Through the management strategies developed in the Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan, natural resource managers have formulated a masterful balance between military training needs and the responsible stewardship of natural resources.

To achieve the goals of the INRMP, a team made up of representatives from the environment, cultural resources, and training and security branches developed detailed Integrated Management Prescriptions for each of the installation's 120 training areas.

Those prescriptions dealt with habitat restoration, threatened/endangered species, forestry, cultural resource sites and surveys, wetlands, and training facilities. They also worked with federal and state agencies, universities, research institutions, and non-governmental organizations to ensure that environmental activities were backed by the best science available.

Some of the most notable achievements included protecting 17,003 additional acres under the Army Compatible Use Buffer Program. The ACUB program aids in preventing encroachment from incompatible development adjacent to installation boundaries. The result increased the total acreage protected under ACUB to 94,597 acres, guaranteeing superior training opportunities for both current and future generations of Soldiers. Another long-lasting accomplishment was accomplished through land use and forest management with support from external partners, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Forest Service, Georgia Forestry Commission, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Together, they were able to restore the native longleaf pine/wiregrass ecosystem by planting 134 acres of wiregrass and 438 acres of longleaf pine and by conducting timber thinning on 5,531 acres.

The thinnings and future prescribed management actions will serve as an effort to reduce the threat of wildfire related damages to people and property both on and off the installation.

“The prescribed burn program not only sustains the longleaf pine-wiregrass ecosystem, it opens up the landscape, creating better training grounds with less restrictions,” said Jamie Heidle, director of public works.

Additionally, the Forestry Branch maintains an extensive timber harvest program, conducting timber sales that totaled \$5.3 million in support of the Army’s Conservation Reimbursable and Fee Collection Program.

The combination of these actions led to improved habitat for the eastern indigo snake, gopher tortoise, and the red-cockaded woodpecker. In fact, continued protection of the red-cockaded woodpecker has resulted in a 63 percent increase in its population since the woodpeckers reached recovery in 2012.

Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield receives more than 148,000 visitors each year who recreate, hunt, and fish on the installation. Providing ample, well-maintained hunting and fishing areas bolstered participation in the recreation program and enhances the community outreach program.

From 2019 to 2020, the team held 287 public outreach events that reached more than 45,000 area residents. School programs, both on- and off-post, included Earth Day events, community showcases, community safety days, and back to school fairs. These educational events increased conservation awareness, which is instrumental in successfully conducting natural resource management to audiences that reach beyond the borders of the installation.

“The lands on Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield have been used to serve our nation’s defense for well over half a century and this legacy is not taken lightly by those who use them today. The natural resource team is dedicated to future generations who will use these lands and their resources,” said Col. Bryan Logan, Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield garrison commander.

MORE NEWS

🔍 Garrison Commander offers Earth Day message (<https://home.army.mil/stewart/index.php/about/news/garrison-commander-offers-earth-day-message>)

Apr 22, 2021, 3:23 PM

File photo Each year Earth Day is recognized on April 22 and is intended to inspire awareness and appreciation for the Earth’s natural environment...

🔍 Installation practices “worst day” during annual Stewart Guardian exercise (<https://home.army.mil/stewart/index.php/about/news/installation-practices-worst-day-during-annual-stewart-guardian-exercise>)

Apr 22, 2021, 3:17 PM

Photo by Kevin Larson Role players simulating protesters at Fort Stewart’s Wright Army Airfield gate as military police protect it during the...

🔍 Marne Air trains on new AH-64E Apache helicopter (<https://home.army.mil/stewart/index.php/about/news/marne-air-trains-new-ah-64e-apache-helicopter>)

Apr 22, 2021, 3:13 PM

Photo by Sgt. Andrew McNeil An Apache pilot assigned to the 3rd Sqn., 17th Cav. Regt., 3rd CAB, performs familiarization training on the AH-64E Apache...

🔍 Georgia Air National Guard teams with Spartans, administers vaccines (<https://home.army.mil/stewart/index.php/about/news/georgia-air-national-guard-teams-spartans-administers-vaccines>)

Apr 22, 2021, 3:03 PM

Photo by Capt. Bryant Wine U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Tiffany Sneeze, a medical technician with the Savannah-based 165th Medical Group, 165th Airlift...

🔍 Serving on wheels (<https://home.army.mil/stewart/index.php/about/news/serving-wheels>)

Apr 22, 2021, 3:00 PM

Photo by Spc. Aaliyah Craven Soldiers with the 287th Field Feeding Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Division Sustainment Brigade, 3rd...