

FEBRUARY 25, 2022

Enterprise Florida Announces Designation of Northwest Florida as a Sentinel Landscape



TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Today, Enterprise Florida announced that Northwest Florida has been designated as a new Sentinel Landscape.

The Sentinel Landscapes Partnership is a coalition of federal agencies, state and local governments, and non-governmental organizations that works with private landowners to

advance sustainable land management practices around military installations and ranges. This designation recognizes Northwest Florida's dedication to supporting military installations across the community and again emphasizes that Florida is the most military-friendly state in the nation. With this designation, Northwest Florida is the tenth designated sentinel landscape in the nation and joins Avon Park Air Force Range as the second in Florida. The designation is made by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Department of the Interior.

"Enterprise Florida, the Florida Defense Alliance and the Florida Defense Support Task Force were honored to have been team members in developing the proposal for this new Sentinel Landscape," **said Marc Adler, Acting Florida Secretary of Commerce and Enterprise Florida President & CEO.** "Under Governor DeSantis' leadership, we remain committed to working with Florida's state agencies and federal government agencies to support specific projects to protect the many military bases, listed species, and precious lands and waterways across the Big Bend and Panhandle."

"The State of Florida is committed to national security and maintaining military readiness, including through a strong focus on the resilience of the inland and coastal communities that support critical defense installations across our state," **said Wesley Brooks, Chief Resilience Officer for the State of Florida.** "Alongside the Avon Park Sentinel Landscape, the designation of the new Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape will further our efforts to sustain the military mission, rural economies, and Florida's environment in partnership with our federal partners."

"The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is excited about this new Sentinel Landscape Partnership in Northwest Florida, which demonstrates strong support from our state, federal and non-governmental agency partners," **said Florida Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Shawn Hamilton.** "Collaborating across organizations will enable partners to leverage additional resources, strengthen resilience, conserve land and water resources on a regional scale, and support military readiness for Northwest Florida's military installations."

"The Florida Forest Service is proud to support the growth of the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership through the designation of the Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape," **said Erin Albury, State Forester and Director of the Florida Forest Service.** "We are committed to the stewardship of Florida's forestland, and the Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape provides additional opportunities to protect and conserve the natural resources across these 16 counties while strengthening resilience."

The Sentinel Landscape Program was founded in 2013 through a Memorandum of Understanding among the United States Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Agriculture (USDA), and Department of the Interior (DOI). A joint committee made up of representatives from these agencies designates locations as Sentinel Landscapes which then

receive priority for Federal funding to protect military missions, maintain rural land uses and conserve habitat.

Previously, seven areas across the nation (one of which is anchored by the Avon Park Air Force Range in Central Florida) had been designated as Sentinel Landscapes. From Fiscal Year 2012 through Fiscal Year 2019, the DoD has leveraged \$141 million in funds with \$223 million in USDA funds, \$41 million in DOI funds, \$169 million in state funds, \$15 million in local funds, and \$80 million in private funds to support projects across Sentinel Landscapes, a 4:1 match.

The Florida Defense Alliance was created in 1998 with the purpose as the organization to ensure that Florida, its resident military bases and missions, and its military host communities are in competitive positions as the United States continues its defense realignment, and base structure adjustments, as well as efforts with the defense industrial base. The Florida Defense Alliance is a consortium of grassroots defense, economic development, and community planning organizations that advise EFI and the Florida Defense Support Task Force on the changing needs and opportunities of our military installations, Servicemembers and their families. For more information, visit <https://www.enterpriseflorida.com/floridadefense/>

The Florida Defense Support Task Force was created in 2011 with the mission to make recommendations to preserve and protect military installations, support the state's position in research and development related to military missions and contracting, and improve the state's military-friendly environment for service members, military families, veterans and businesses that bring military and defense-related jobs to the state.

The Florida Defense Support Task Force Grant Program is administered by Enterprise Florida and funds the publication of the Florida Military Friendly Guide annually. For more information on the Florida Defense Support Task Force, visit <https://www.enterpriseflorida.com/fdstf/>

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