
CONSERVATION

INTRODUCTION

Conservation of natural and cultural resources is critical to maintaining military readiness, allowing the U.S. Armed Forces to test new equipment and train in environments similar to those they may encounter in a conflict. This requires the Department of Defense (DoD) to effectively manage the resources it holds in the public trust and to prevent degradation wherever possible. DoD's goal is to balance the use of air, land, and water resources for current military readiness while maintaining compliance with environmental requirements to protect and manage those resources for current and future uses.

DoD installations are often rich in natural and cultural resources, in part because of DoD's past conservation initiatives. These resources include archaeological and historical sites, wetlands, marine mammals, Native American burial and sacred sites, historic buildings, and more than 320 threatened and endangered species. Installations contain some of the finest remaining examples of rare native vegetation, including old-growth forests, tall-grass prairies, and vernal pool wetlands. DoD makes every effort to protect these resources by managing threatened and endangered species, leading migratory bird studies, implementing ecosystem and land management initiatives, and protecting the natural and cultural resources on and around DoD lands. DoD has an obligation both to protect these resources for future generations and to ensure the success of the mission.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES IN FISCAL YEAR 2003

DoD meets its conservation goals by using a systematic approach to identify, evaluate, and manage natural and cultural resources on its installations. Through DoD's Conservation Program, the Department preserves land, water, and airspace needed for new equipment testing and military training while maximizing environmental protection.

Natural and Cultural Resources Planning

Integrated planning encourages the sustained use of resources while minimizing harmful effects of mission activities on the environment. DoD recognizes that installations are part of larger regional ecosystems. Therefore, DoD's planning efforts consider not only impacts on installations, but also

issues within the ecosystem as a whole. Investments in resource conservation help avoid costs associated with repairs to damaged soil, vegetation, wildlife habitats, archaeological sites, and historic objects.

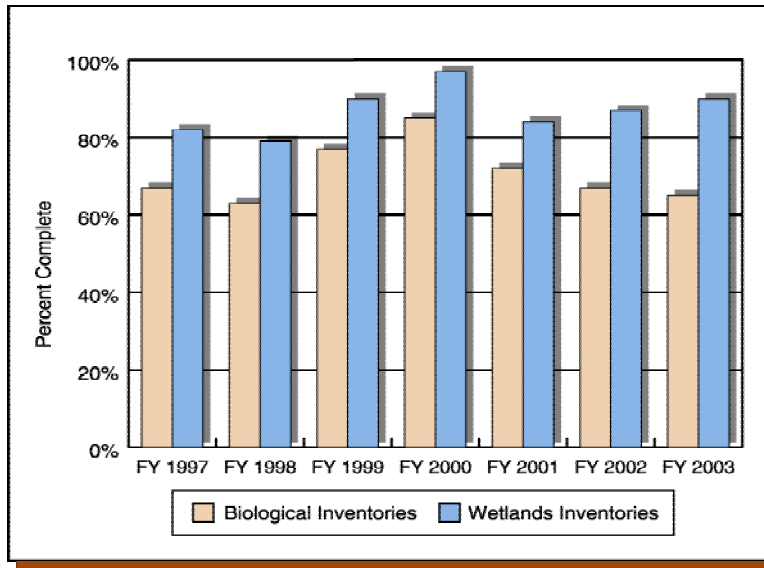
DoD installations inventory resources and develop plans to manage those resources. Installations identify potential habitats of threatened or endangered species; areas likely to contain archaeological sites; and areas likely to contain historical buildings, objects, or structures that require protection.

Completing Natural Resource Inventories

Natural resources are the nonliving resources (such as soil, minerals, fossils, air, and water) and biological (living) resources that make up a diverse ecosystem.

Figure 21 illustrates the progress DoD installations made in Fiscal Year (FY) 2003 toward completing natural resource inventories. DoD has completed approximately 65 percent of biological resource inventories, and almost 90 percent of wetlands inventories. The decline in the percentage of

Figure 21
Natural Resource Inventories Completed



biological resource inventories completed is largely due to an increase in the number of installations requiring these inventories. As the DoD Components review the data each year, it is not unusual to discover additional installations that require natural resource inventories. This may be because an installation discovered new resources, acquired land containing biological resources or wetlands, or the condition, legislative or regulatory status of these resources may have changed.

Installations update their inventories periodically to ensure that personnel have the most up-to-date information. DoD also reevaluates installation resource management methods periodically, regardless of any actual changes to existing resources.

Sikes Act Requirements and INRMPs

The Sikes Act of 1960 authorizes each DoD installation to develop a plan to manage and maintain wildlife, fish, and game conservation and rehabilitation. In 1997, Congress passed amendments to the original Sikes Act requiring DoD to prepare and implement an Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan (INRMP) for each installation in the United States with significant natural resources.

In preparing an INRMP, an installation must provide an opportunity for public comment, as well as cooperate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and appropriate state fish and wildlife agencies. DoD policy requires that INRMPs be coordinated with military trainers and operators and other stakeholders. Each plan also must ensure that the natural resource management activities at the installation ensure “no net loss” to the military mission. A further explanation of the Sikes Act and DoD’s progress in developing INRMPs is located in Appendix B.

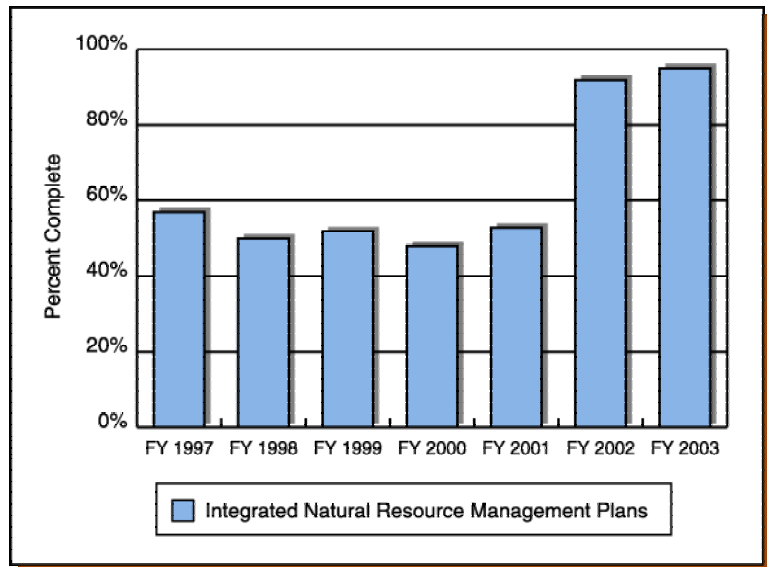
An INRMP provides guidance and sets priorities for natural resource protection, improvement, and restoration. Installations use INRMPs to manage natural resources, fish and wildlife conservation, forestry, land management, outdoor recreation, and mission needs. An INRMP should:

- Integrate military operations and conservation measures
- Reflect cooperation between the FWS, the state, and the installation
- Document requirements for the natural resource budget
- Serve as a principal information source for National Environmental Policy Act documents
- Guide planners and facility managers in the use and conservation of natural resources on lands and waters under DoD control
- Balance the management of natural resources unique to each installation with mission requirements and other land use activities
- Identify and prioritize actions required to implement conservation goals and objectives.

The Sikes Act requires that INRMPs be reviewed as to operation and effectiveness by the installation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the State fish and wildlife agency on a regular basis, but no less than every 5 years. INRMPs should be revised when there are significant changes

to the military mission or affected resources that warrant a revision. Figure 22 illustrates the progress that installations have made toward meeting the goals of the Sikes Act Amendments. By the end of FY 2003, DoD completed revising 95 percent of its INRMPs. The remaining plans are in coordination with the FWS or state fish and game officials.

**Figure 22
INRMPs Revised**



Threatened and Endangered Species

Congress passed the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1973 to protect plant and animal species at risk of extinction. As defined by the ESA, a species classified as endangered is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range, while a species classified as threatened is likely to become endangered. As of February

26, 2004, there were 1,816 species listed by the FWS as either threatened or endangered within the United States, 320 of which inhabit DoD lands.

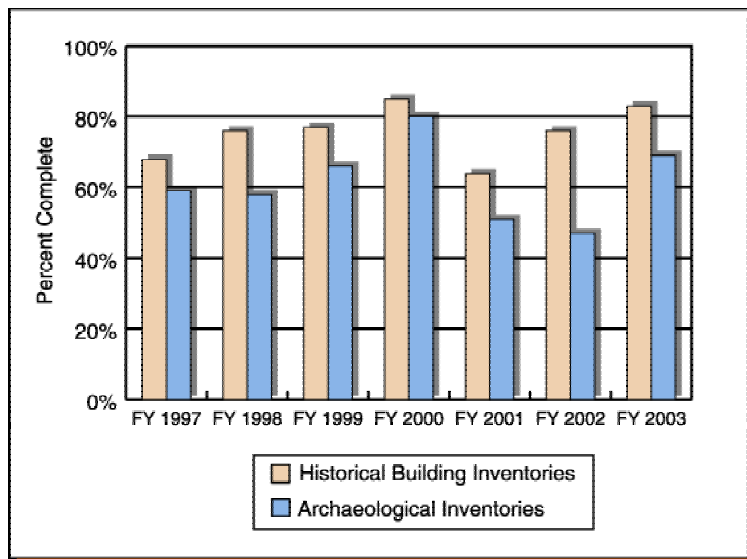
DoD spends more than \$30 million dollars each year to protect threatened and endangered species. Like all other landowners, DoD is required to protect threatened and endangered species by preserving the habitat that is crucial to their survival. Under the ESA, any area that is essential to the conservation of a species can be classified as critical habitat. The FY 2004 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) modified the critical habitat provision in the ESA to allow an approved INRMP to be used by the Department of the Interior in lieu of a critical habitat designation. The INRMPs can be more effective than the critical habitat designation because they provide a more holistic approach to species conservation and provide greater flexibility for installations to manage their lands while maintaining coordination with the FWS and all interested stakeholders.

Cultural Resource Management

The primary mission of the U.S. military is to defend the people, the land, and the heritage of the United States. America's cultural resources are an integral part of that heritage. Cultural resources

include historic sites and districts, archeological sites, historic personal and related property, historic records, and sacred sites.

Figure 23
Cultural Resource Inventories Completed

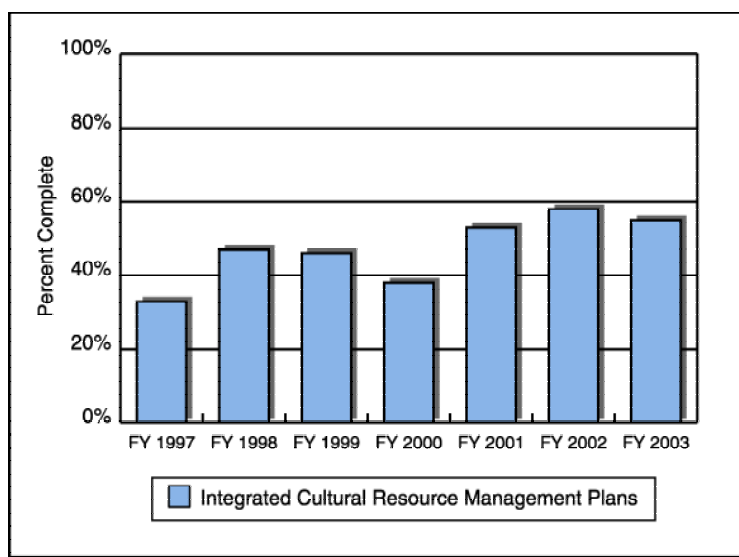


To effectively manage cultural resources, DoD personnel must understand the historic and cultural significance of these resources. Each DoD installation conducts surveys and maintains an inventory of cultural resource located in a specific area. These inventories help installations manage their resources and protect important national treasures.

Figure 23 illustrates DoD’s progress in completing cultural resource inventories. Archaeological inventories

are 69 percent complete and 83 percent of the historic building inventories are complete. The reason for the increase in the number of cultural resource inventories completed is that installations update inventories periodically to ensure that personnel have the most up-to-date information. Installations prepare Integrated Cultural Resource Management Plans (ICRMPs) to manage historical sites and archaeological artifacts on installations. ICRMPs also help installation commanders comply with laws such as the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act.

Figure 24
ICRMPs Revised



ICRMPs provide an effective method for measuring and monitoring the status of cultural resources on a DoD installation. Installations often use ICRMPs in conjunction with INRMPs to effectively manage installation resources. Each installation within the United States with significant cultural resources must prepare an ICRMP. DoD installations must review their ICRMPs at least once every year, and update the plans every

five years. As illustrated in Figure 24, 55 percent of ICRMPs are complete.

Legacy Resource Management Program

Congress created the Legacy Resource Management Program in 1990 to balance the use of DoD lands for military training and testing with the need to protect natural and cultural resources. The goal of the Legacy Program is to preserve the military’s ability to test new equipment and train on its lands and waters while meeting conservation objectives. The Legacy Program emphasizes leadership in exploring new ideas and implementing innovative technologies for natural and cultural resource management, and creates partnerships with other organizations to conserve natural and cultural resources in a cost-effective and technically sound manner.

In FY 2003, the Program funded 69 projects and invested a total of \$9 million. The projects focus on various areas including cultural resource management, invasive species control, monitoring and predicting migratory patterns of birds, and range sustainment. The Program also facilitates partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies and private groups to cost-effectively manage resources.

FY 2003 BUDGET EXECUTION

In FY 2003, DoD invested approximately \$179 million in conservation efforts. Of this amount, DoD invested approximately \$113 million, or 63 percent, in supporting nonrecurring, innovative conservation projects. Of the total Conservation Program nonrecurring budget, DoD invested approximately \$73 million in natural resource initiatives and \$40 million in historical and cultural resource initiatives (Figure 25).

Of the \$73 million allocated for natural resource protection, DoD invested \$9 million in wetlands

**Figure 25
DoD Budget Summary:
Natural vs. Historical and Cultural Resources**

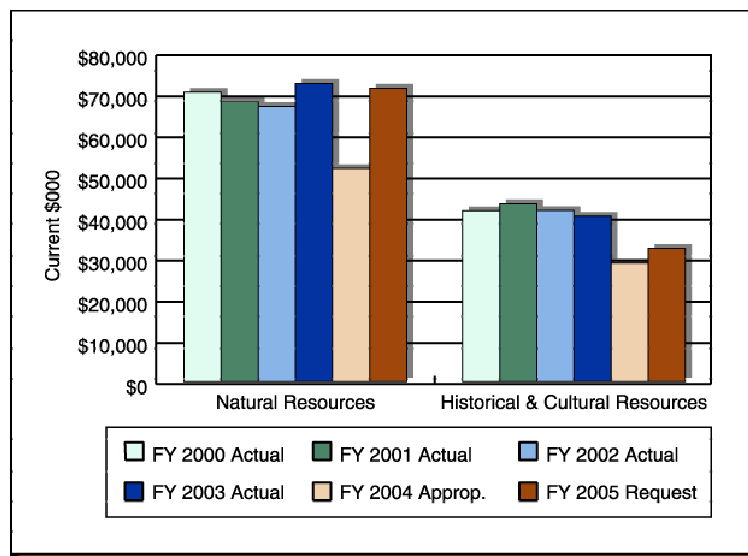
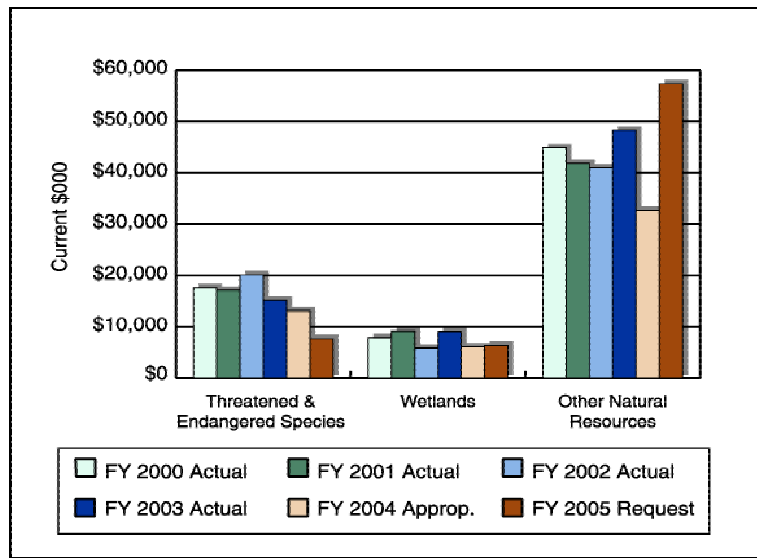


Figure 26
DoD Budget Summary:
Natural Resource Investment by Category



protection—an increase of 52 percent compared to FY 2002, allowing for inflation (Figure 26). DoD invested \$15 million in managing and protecting threatened and endangered species in FY 2003—a decrease of 26 percent compared with FY 2002, allowing for inflation. In addition, DoD invested \$48 million in protecting other natural resources.

DoD invested approximately \$66 million, or 37 percent, of the Conservation Program appropriations in recurring costs. These activities

include preparing and updating integrated natural and cultural resource management plans, coordinating with other conservation and regulatory agencies, and other management actions.

FY 2005 BUDGET REQUEST

The President’s FY 2005 Environmental Quality Program budget request includes \$168 million for DoD conservation initiatives. This request is \$27 million more than Congress appropriated in FY 2004. This increase is mostly due to new funding for the Readiness and Environmental Preservation initiative. This initiative takes advantage of the authorities given to the Department in the FY 2003 and FY 2004 Defense Authorization Acts (NDAAs) to partner with environmental conservation groups and state and local governments to better manage compatible land uses around military installations. This funding helps the DoD Components establish buffers or other compatible use areas around military installations to prevent inappropriate development around test and training ranges that might restrict their mission capabilities and preserve valuable habitat.

DoD funds and invests in Conservation Program efforts to develop innovative processes and technologies to improve efficiency. In FY 2005, DoD will continue to lead stewardship efforts through collaborative planning, process improvements, and comprehensive resource management.

