

**2001-2003 NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION AWARD
(SMALL INSTALLATION)
NAVAL AIR STATION
PENSACOLA, FLORIDA**

INTRODUCTION:

Naval Air Station Pensacola (NASP) is located in Escambia County in the panhandle of Northwest Florida. The installation occupies 8,423 acres of land -- 5,800 acres at the main installation (NASP), and 2,623 acres at other area locations, including Naval Technical Training Center (NTTC) Corry Station, Naval Education and Training Professional Development and Technology Center (NETPDTC) Saufley Field, and Navy Outlying Landing Field (NOLF) Bronson. The land is distributed as follows:

Land use.

Forest Management	2,449 acres
Wetlands	650 acres
Semi-improved	911 acres
Outdoor Recreation	350 acres
Improved	4,360 acres
Miles of Shoreline	17 miles



Mission. Spanish explorers discovered Pensacola in 1559. In 1825, a Naval Yard was authorized and constructed in Pensacola to serve the Gulf Coast. The yard became the nation's first Naval Air Station in 1914, and became known as the "Cradle of Naval Aviation." NASP is also home to the world-renowned Navy Blue Angels precision performance air team. The main mission of NASP is to provide quality support for the operations of the Naval Education and Training Command, headquartered on station. In addition, the command supports over 100 Department of Defense (DOD) related tenant commands and customers, including Commander, Training Air Wing SIX, Naval Aviation Schools Command, Naval Aviation Technical Training Center, Naval Operational Medicine Institute, and Navy Public Works Center. Other support includes 27 non-defense related agencies located on Navy lands, including the National Park Service, U.S. Coast Guard, Barrancas National Cemetery, and the National Museum of Naval Aviation. A significant ancillary mission is to provide operational support to fleet exercises and training missions. A combined workforce of over 19,000 military and civilians make up the population of the Pensacola region.

Environment. Natural resources onboard and surrounding NASP are typical of the Florida panhandle - southern Alabama ecosystem. Wetlands, forests, sand hills, rivers, streams, and sensitive ocean coastal zones create an environment abundant with animal, plant, and marine life. Located at the focal point of the regional ecosystem with 17 miles of shoreline, NASP serves as a unique interface for air, water, and land resources. The protection of these environmental treasures is vital to the sustainability of NASP, its military mission, and continued community support in achieving the public trust. In addition to its natural resources, NASP is also home to cultural resources managed by the National Park Service, including Fort Barrancas and Advanced Redoubt that receive approximately 50,000 visitors per year.

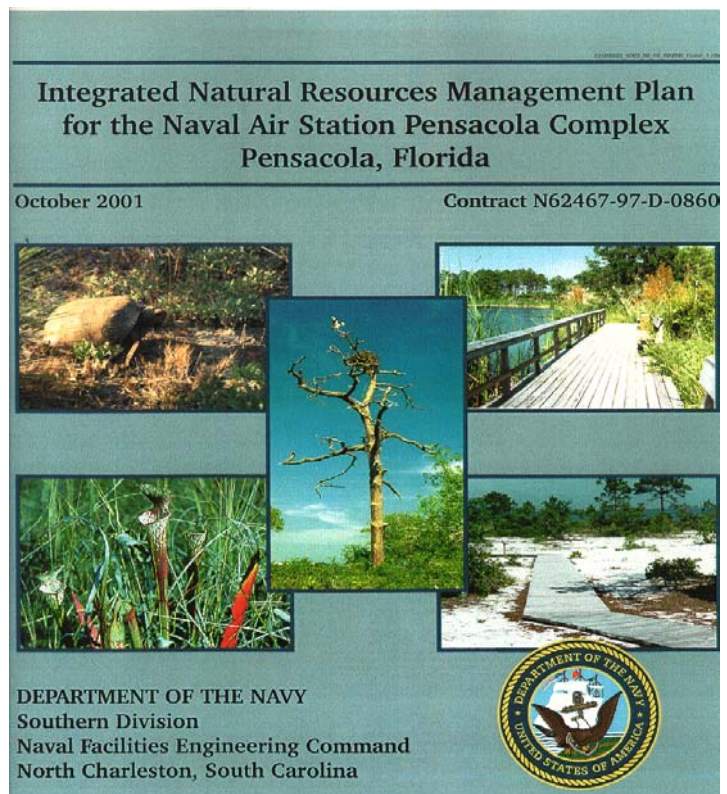
BACKGROUND

The NASP Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) was completed in FY 2001, and signed into action in compliance with the Sikes Act Improvement Act of 1997. The new INRMP brings together the management of natural resources of three formerly independent commands into one organization and one document. Naval Air Station Whiting Field completed a separate INRMP at the same time as NASP with oversight provided by the NASP Natural Resources (NR) Manager.

Cooperative Agreements. A cooperative agreement between the Navy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC) was signed in 1979 and continues to be effective for fish and wildlife projects. For outdoor recreation, a cooperative agreement between the Navy, the National Park Service, and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection was signed in 1987.

Organization. The NR Manager (NRM) within the Environmental Department of the Pensacola region conducts NR Management for NASP and the Pensacola region. Navy staffing consists of one Forester, designated as the Regional NRM and one Forester designated as the Regional Forester. Pensacola regional NR work includes management for all Navy lands in the area including, NETPDTC Saufley, NTTC Corry, and NOLF Bronson, as well as support to NAS Whiting Field – a separate command with a separate INRMP. In addition, periodic management work is accomplished at Coastal Systems Station, Panama City, Florida, and Naval Construction Battalion Center, Gulfport, Mississippi. Commanding Officers and facility managers of each installation are highly active and supportive of the NR program. The Natural Resources Branch, Southern Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Charleston, SC, provides administrative, technical, and financial support. Environmental requirements funding and major claimant oversight are provided by the Naval Education and Training Command, Pensacola.

Additional and innovative staffing during this award period included five Student Conservation Association (SCA) 12-week Interns (2500+ hours of support). NASP partnered with five different universities to sponsor these students: Texas A&M University, University of Vermont, University of California Los Angeles, Emory University, and New York University. These programs significantly supported the accomplishments of the regional Navy NR program while providing a valuable educational experience to future managers of natural resources. The SCA Program is well established within the Regional Command with continuing plans for student interns and associates each year.



New INRMP aggressively implements the Sikes Act Requirements. INRMP and the associated EA / FONSI were completed on schedule with complete public review and NEPA compliance.



Navy SCA Student supporting Regional Ecosystem Restoration Prescribed Burn at Garcon Point Preserve.



SCA Student coordinated the renovation and improvement of the Lake Frederic Freshwater Fishery.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Pensacola Navy region greatly expanded its NR accomplishments this award period by concentrating its activities on the Navy's influence within the regional ecosystem.

Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan Objectives.

- Completed NR planning for the next decade, 2001 - 2010.
- Fully integrated NR work with military missions/operations -- especially for Bird Animal Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH); updated plan; revamped BASH Working Group.
- Established renewed cooperation among NASP regional commands and tenants by completing the INRMP and involving all levels of the activities and tenants.
- Improved community quality of life through active participation and management for regional conservation initiatives (State of Florida's Pitcher Plant Prairie, Garcon Point Preserve, Jones Creek Swamp Preserve).

Accomplishment of Objectives. The NR Program accomplished significant goals in each of the management plan objective areas. Completing the INRMP was significant in achieving the planning and establishing the funding stream for projects through 2010. The newly hired Regional Forester enabling project work to continue while the NRM focused on the accomplishment of the new INRMP significantly improved staffing upon the completion of all training requirements. Regionalization of formerly separate commands resulted in the newly formed Regional Command taking on the direct administration of all area NR programs. Former installation "points of contact" were no longer available, resulting in more efficient NR operations and more direct influence to properly conduct programs and carry out the INRMP. As a result, area commands were brought together in a new initiative of unity by the Pensacola region NR staff, enhancing effectiveness that overlapped into the community.

Outstanding Program Features:

- Area Osprey restoration project continued. 20+ Osprey fledglings were produced each year.
- Regional Forester position established and hired.
- SCA student support of over 2,500 NR work hours.

- Five timber sales creating \$51,236 in forestry income.
- Prescribed burning on 137 acres; 19 miles firebreaks.
- Tree City USA status achieved for 9th year.
- Honeybee Management Program for 5th year.
- 5 Scouting programs (1 Eagle Scout project).
- “Adoption” by local groups of 6 special NR areas.
- Received 2001 COMNAVREG Award for Community Service with 5,000 hours of service in NR stewardship.



Honeybee Swarm Removal:
100+ swarms removed and saved from buildings and aircraft without using pesticides.



19 artificial Osprey nestboxes strategically located reduced BASH problems and significantly increased area Osprey population.

The Area Osprey Restoration Project best demonstrates the Navy’s regional influence upon the management and conservation of the ecosystem. During the 10-year period from 1985-1992, only three Osprey chicks were successfully fledged at NAS Pensacola. From 1993-1997, six chicks were fledged each year. From 1998-2000, however, a total of 28 chicks were fledged in a combination of 14 artificial platforms and two natural nests. From 2001 - 2003, new platforms were added and over 20 fledglings were produced each year. Osprey nesting platforms are located to reduce bird strikes in aviation patterns.

Tree City achieved for 9th year!



Osprey rescued by Navy Public Works Center from entangled fishing line (NAS Pensacola).



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Ecosystem Management

- Project Green Shores. Navy Seabees worked with Community Environmental leaders to construct an offshore reef comprised of 6,000 tons of recycled rock from the base. The resulting project and all partners received awards from Coastal America and the DoD.

Project Green Shores offshore reef and estuary.

- State of Florida Pitcher-Plant Prairie land purchase within aviation approaches to NASP; continued Navy support resulting in purchasing half of the Prairie's 7,000 acres.
- Community partnerships in NR Management, resulting in major accomplishments on Navy lands: Partnerships with SCA, Audubon Society, Eglin Air Force Base, Longleaf Alliance, and State of Florida agencies.



- Forestry and Military Prescribed Burning Partnership; promoted by NASP and the Florida Division of Forestry to broaden the regional application of prescribed fire in maintaining ecosystems.



- Participated in the Florida Forever program for the Lower Perdido River Buffer encompassing 7,800 acres.

Land Use Management

- Planted 14,000 sea oats to repair shoreline erosion caused by hurricanes and 7,000 emergent vegetation plants along bays and inlets to reduce erosion and improve riparian habitat.
- Restored 3,000 feet of waterfront via beach renourishment and seawall repair.
- Conducted Urban Forestry Programs, resulting in three area installations being designated Tree City USA. Over 500 young trees were planted and 1,500 trees maintained.
- Conducted three International Coastal Cleanups on Navy and National Park Service lands.



A cooperative project with the State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Ecosystem Restoration Section, established 7,000 plants along NASP shorelines to assist in reducing erosion and improve riparian habitat in public waters.



Following the September 11th Terrorist Attacks, the 14th Year of International Coastal Cleanup at NASP had to be restricted to on-base personnel only. A record 200+ volunteers displayed their patriotism and pride by removing 2 tons of debris from Navy shorelines. The 3-year total was nearly 7 tons.



Tree Planting at Child Development Center



CDR Beaudrot (Reserve projects officer) and CAPT Pruitt (CO, right) lend a hand for coastal cleanup 2003 (16th Annual)

Forest Management

- Regional Forester hired to facilitate forest management work at all area locations.
- Two timber sales harvesting 4,724 tons of commercial forest products, creating \$51,236 deposited to the DoD Forestry Account and supporting the local economy.
- Prescribed burning on 137 acres.
- 19 miles of firebreaks maintained.
- 4.2 miles of forest roads maintained.
- Managed additional 141 acres of site preparation for planting of forest species.
- Planted 45 acres to longleaf pine in cooperation with the Longleaf Alliance (Auburn Univ.)
- Completed the 10-year regional forest management plan for 2001-2010.
- Replaced antiquated forest management equipment with a new fire management transport truck and crawler tractor; replaced NR management vehicle.



Prescribed Burn at Corry



Timber Sale

- Purchased prescribed burning equipment: ATV, 4x6 Gators (2), and suppression spray tank.
- Developed an area 5-year salvage contract for timber damaged by natural causes or removed from construction sites, eliminating waste of resources and supporting the NR Program.

Fish and Wildlife Management

- Osprey restoration resulted in over 20 fledglings produced in artificial and natural nests annually; installed 3 new nestboxes.
- Revised the BASH Plan.
- Renovated and improved Lake Frederic Freshwater Fishery.



New trees established



The Gopher Tortoise, a “keystone species” in the regional ecosystem, enjoys protection and exclusive habitat on Navy lands. Over 100 active burrows support a thriving population.

- Coordinated 4 releases of rehabilitated wildlife from the NW Florida Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Conducted nuisance wildlife management for the control of deer, beaver and coyote.
- Inventoried wetlands at three installations and coordinated four jurisdictional reviews.
- Conducted Christmas Bird Counts and spring migration surveys with the Audubon Society.
- Conducted gopher tortoise protection measures and relocation from hazard sites.
- Initiated region-wide honeybee management project saving over 100 swarms of honeybees.
- Initiated deer depredation plan for aviation safety in conjunction with the Gulf Breeze Zoological Society and FFWCC.
- Sea turtle nesting protection. Initiated consultation with FFWCC and U.S. Fish and Wildlife to reduce base lighting. As part of this effort, a \$300,000 lighting renovation project was initiated by NASP and funded in FY2003.

Pest Management

- Partnered with National Park Service (NPS) and received NPS grant for \$55,000 to control invasive species on Navy lands.
- Regional forester certified as DOD Pest Manager; NRM and forester also recertified.
- Continued nuisance wildlife management.
- Initiated program to identify domestic pets via implanted chip identification.



National Park Service partners with Navy to control cogongrass and other invasive species.



Constructed 300' Nature Trail Boardwalk for public-use NR Education and recreational fishing; designed by SCA students and built in-house using NR funding.



SCA Intern

Other Natural Resources

- Maintained seven interpretive natural trails, 5,000+ users per year.
- Two youth camping areas.
- Coordinated with Big Lagoon State Park (FDEP division of Parks and Recreation) to manage access into Tarkiln Bayou State Preserve.



Navy Enlisted Students volunteering



Navy Chiefs construct 500' extension to Trout Point Nature Trail; expanding public-use and handicapped access.

Conservation Education

- Actively participated in continuing education: 8 natural resources conferences/training.
- Provided three natural resources programs to Pensacola Junior College and local elementary and middle schools in partnership with the Navy, Audubon Society, local schools, and local agencies.
- Coordinated Eagle Scout projects and maintained Youth Primitive Camping Area.



Community Relations

- Averaged 5,000 hours per year of Community and Volunteer Service in Natural Resources; awarded the COMNAVREG SE “Flagship” Award (First place in 2001, runner-up in 2002 and 2003).
- Published Navy and area press releases and news articles promoting public awareness.



Certificate of Volunteer Appreciation

Presented with pride and congratulations to
*Naval Air Station,
Pensacola, FL*

1st Place Regional Winner - 2000-2001 Annual Awards

in recognition of exemplary environmental stewardship to protect America's natural resource heritage and legacy.

Your dedicated commitment and voluntary service to environmental conservation preserves our nation's natural resources and strengthens America's heritage as a maritime nation.

*5 October 2001
5 October 2001*

John L. Albertson
COMNAVREG SE
Community Support Programs Dept.
Marketing, Operations & Community
Services Manager



NAVPERG 1600/18 (5/99)

Environmental Enhancement

NASP continues to be a NR program model for environmental stewardship.

The careful management of the NR assets at NASP has allowed NASP personnel and the public to enjoy protected habitats via trails, boardwalks, and camping areas.

Mission Enhancement

Implementing nuisance wildlife management, updating the BASH plan, and installing osprey nest boxes all serve to protect flight approaches and operations. The NR team is actively involved in facilities planning which results in efficient ecosystem management by coordinating timber sales, controlled burns, tree plantings, species relocations, and minimizing impacts to wetlands and other sensitive habitats. The NR program has demonstrated outstanding land management practices supporting mission accomplishment while also

protecting NR assets.

Natural Resources Compliance Program

- The NAS Pensacola region delivered a comprehensive Natural Resources Management Program this award period. Features such as quality of life improvements, beautification in land management, coordinated forestry projects, completed biological surveys, and the use of

natural areas to increase public ecosystem awareness and protect flight approaches are all aspects of the NR program at NASP.

- Budget Support: Environmental conservation funding and NR stewardship funding (Reimbursable Forestry and Agriculture Funds) were obtained for all NR projects, contracted services, labor, equipment, vehicles, material, and supplies. Naval Facilities Engineering Command funding for SCA Students are not shown, but averaged \$10K per year.

Environmental Funds

NR Stewardship Funds (Reimbursable NR)

FY 01 \$ 39K
FY 02 \$ 51K
FY 03 \$ 111K

\$ 116 K
\$ 128K
\$ 126K



Florida Division of Forestry inspects effectiveness of Invasive Species Control for Chinese Tallowtree



Navy, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and Florida Park Service determine Land Management alternatives at NOLF Bronson, adjacent to the Pitcher Plant Prairie 7,000 acre preserve



Michael Hardy and CAPT Pruitt inspect an area treated by the GYROTRAC for brush control in Security zones.