



Department of Defense National Public Lands Day 2011

Project # 11-086

Background:

National Public Lands Day began in 1994 with three sites and 700 volunteers. Coordinated by the National Environmental Education Foundation, National Public Lands Day (NPLD) is the nation's largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance the public lands Americans enjoy.

In 2011, approximately 180,000 volunteers worked at 2,060 locations in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and U.S. territories. Along with the Department of Defense (DoD), seven federal agencies, nonprofits and many state and local governments participate in this annual day of caring for shared lands. NPLD takes place on the last Saturday of September. In 2011, National Public Lands Day took place on September 24. In 2012, NPLD will occur on September 29.

The DoD Legacy Resource Management Program joined the NPLD partnership in 1999 to support volunteer habitat restoration projects on military installations open to the public for recreation throughout the United States and has provided financial support for NPLD events over the past 13 years.

Volunteers at Fairchild Air Force Base in Washington planted native trees, which provide shade for animals and a new habitat for birds.



Objective:

A primary objective of NPLD is to enlist those who use public lands for recreation to help care for the natural places they enjoy. NPLD educates Americans about critical environmental and natural resources issues and the need for shared stewardship of these valued, irreplaceable lands.

Summary of Approach:

NPLD projects that take place on military installations with some lands open to the public for recreation are eligible for DoD Legacy funding. This is a competitive funding application process. Projects emphasize habitat and cultural restoration. In 2011, the maximum amount awarded to each site was \$6,500. Funds may be used for equipment, materials and enhancements to land used by the public, but not for t-shirts, food or labor. The application is at, www.publiclandsday.org. Applications are due in the summer.

Benefit:

The military benefits from enhancing and restoring lands for recreation with much of this work directed to improving natural habitat for wildlife or cultural resources. Participating in NPLD provides the natural and cultural resources managers the means and labor to complete small installation-specific projects that while beneficial to the installations, may not otherwise get done due to budget or manpower limitations. These projects improve habitat and biodiversity for common and rare species alike, which may help reduce the need for intense management and constraints to installation operations.

Additionally, NPLD provides an opportunity for the military to invite the community to learn about these lands and understand the unique challenges surrounding natural resource management on DoD installations.

Accomplishments:

In 2011, 41 out of 43 applications were selected to receive Legacy funds. Many sites focused on improving habitat for pollinator species such as bees, birds, bats and insects. The following are examples of work done at the selected military installations:

- Fort Sam Houston in Texas- volunteers created rainwater gardens;
- McCrady Training Center in South Carolina- student volunteers painted honey bee boxes that will be used to propagate the existing Honey Bee population;
- Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Hawai'i- volunteers enhanced and cared for the Halealoha Haleamau Burial Platform.

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