

DoD Natural Resources Conservation Program

Program Overview

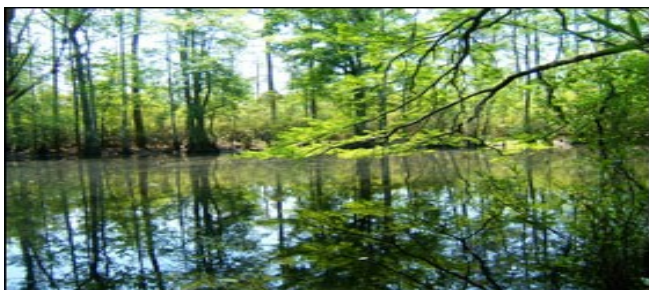
The Department of Defense's (DoD) Natural Resources Conservation Program (NR Program) provides policy, guidance, and oversight for management of natural resources on approximately 30 million acres of military land, air, and water resources. The NR Program's goal is to ensure continued access to realistic habitat conditions to support the military's combat readiness mission, while simultaneously working to ensure the long-term sustainability of our country's priceless natural heritage.

The three principles that guide the NR Program are stewardship, leadership, and partnership. **Stewardship** initiatives assist DoD in safeguarding its irreplaceable resources for future generations. By embracing a **leadership** role as part of the program, the DoD serves as a model for respectful use of natural and cultural resources. Through **partnerships**, the Program strives to access the knowledge and talents of individuals outside of DoD.

DoD is responsible for managing and protecting 420 federally-listed species and 523 species at-risk.

The NR Program's primary responsibilities are to:

- oversee development and implementation of natural resource-related policy, guidance, procedures, and metrics;
- ensure Military Service compliance with policies, Executive Orders, and legislative obligations;
- respond to Congressional inquiries;
- manage natural resources allocation programs; and
- coordinate with external stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, states, and other federal agencies.



Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, NC

Sikes Act

First passed in September 1960, the Sikes Act as amended authorizes DoD to manage the natural resources under its stewardship. To do this, the Act requires that DoD develop comprehensive Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans (INRMPs) that are fully coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and appropriate state agency. To assist the Military Services, the NR Program provides guidance through policy for preparing and implementing INRMPs.



Policy and Guidance

Through policy statements, procedures and supplemental materials, the NR Program provides broad guidance to help the Military Services comply with all federal environmental laws, including the Sikes Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and all relevant Executive Orders, e.g., 13514. DoD Instruction 4715.3 (under revision) is the NR Program's primary policy document.

The reissued DoD Instruction will formalize new conservation metrics that evaluate seven key performance areas for each installation's INRMP. These are:

1. INRMP Project Implementation
2. Listed Species and Critical Habitat
3. Partnerships Effectiveness
4. Fish and Wildlife Management and Public Use
5. Team Adequacy
6. Ecosystem Integrity
7. INRMP Impact on the Installation Mission



Wildlife and Habitat Management

DoD is responsible for the lands and waters under its control. This includes managing and protecting 420 federally-listed species and 523 species at-risk. In addition to providing guidance and policy, the ways in which the NR Program does this include:

- participating in partnership-based conservation efforts, such as Partners in Flight, Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, and the Pollinator Partnership;
- creating outreach materials, such as the *Invasive Species Outreach Toolkit* and the *Biodiversity Outreach Toolkit*;
- developing educational events, such as a national pollinator workshop, and regional invasive species courses; and
- supporting safety programs, such as Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) and wildland fire efforts.

Funding

The Legacy Resource Management Program and the Forestry Reserve Account are funding mechanisms controlled by the DoD NR Program.

The Legacy Program awards projects through a competitive process. Since its inception in 1991, Legacy has funded nearly 3,000 projects, totaling approximately \$300 million. To be eligible, projects must:

- focus on regional or DoD-wide activities;
- support military operations, or legal or statutory requirements that go beyond installation-specific needs; and
- emphasize crosscutting conservation projects that support or leverage ongoing or new DoD initiatives, demonstrate cost efficiencies and time savings, or exhibit new and innovative ways of doing resource conservation on DoD lands.



Black-Capped Vireo
Photo: USFWS

Forestry Reserve Account funds are awarded to projects on a competitive basis, and are primarily used to benefit forest resources. Funds result from the sale of forest products from military installations, with approximately \$1-2 million per year awarded across the Military Services.



Mojave Desert, Fort Irwin, CA

Outreach and Education

Each year, the DoD NR Program directly sponsors, attends, and/or actively participates in numerous natural resource and conservation-related conferences and meetings across the country. Events include the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association Annual Meeting, the Sustaining Military Readiness Conference, The Wildlife Society Annual Conference, and the annual SERDP/ESTCP Partners Symposium, to name a few.

Through the Legacy Program, the NR Program also sponsors educational courses and workshops, such as the Sikes Act Introductory and Advanced Sikes Act training courses, regional State Wildlife Action Plan/Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan Integration workshops, and a variety of other workshops focusing on topics relating to threatened and endangered species, invasive species, and pollinators. Additional outreach materials include specific publications, such as the *Natural Selections* newsletter.

Emerging Issues

In addition to its current program portfolio, DoD also advances strategies to deal with emerging natural resources issues. Areas the NR Program will focus on in the near future include ecosystem services, expanding partnerships across geographic and geopolitical boundaries, and the impacts and implications of adapting to global climate change.

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