

## Directorate of Public Works-Environmental

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### **Fort Hood recognized as a Tree City USA** By Christine Luciano

Fort Hood has been named a Tree City USA by The National Arbor Day Foundation to honor its commitment to community forestry.

It is the first year Fort Hood has received this national recognition.

“Trees are important in our community because they provide shade, beauty, and wind protection,” said Laura Sanchez, Directorate of Public Works’ Natural Resources Agronomist. “Healthy trees are attractive and desired in our community.”

Sanchez approached the Texas Forest Service in March 2005 and worked with them to help Fort Hood become recognized as a Tree City USA. Sanchez worked with different departments throughout the installation to meet Tree City’s four standards.

“The Natural Resources Branch organized a Tree Board made up of individuals throughout the installation who were involved in the tree management process and the responsibility of tree care,” Sanchez said. The Tree City standards also included a community tree ordinance, an Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation signed by the Garrison Commander, and a community forestry program.

“It’s important that we were able to get this designation because it draws attention to trees and the management of trees,” said John Cornelius, DPW’s chief of natural resources. “The board allowed us to get individuals who were involved in managing trees to come together and communicate useful information about the use of native trees, proper planting, and proper pruning. These are things we’ve known for years at the natural resources branch but have not been able to get out to the installation.”

“This puts the installation on a better path for maintaining sustainability in our cantonment areas, the same way the environmental division and the DPTMS ITAM program are working on sustainability in the training lands,” Cornelius said.

The Sportsmen’s Center, BLORA, Courses of Clear Creek, Fort Hood Family Housing, Central Texas College Fort Hood Campus, DPW Maintenance, and DPW Engineering Division were



*Jim Carse from the Texas Forest Service presented Laura Sanchez, DPW’s Natural Resources Agronomist a plaque that recognized Fort Hood as a Tree City USA.*

cooperators in the community forestry program that accomplished projects in pursuit of Tree City USA recognition.

One of the projects involved planting 33 trees at a medical holdover facility for Soldiers who were recovering from war wounds. “This was a beautification and therapeutic project to help Soldiers get better,” said Jennyth Peterson, DPW’s engineering tech.

“In therapy situations if you are able to remove someone’s focus from their own pain and emotional distress and have them focus on taking care of something else like a tree it helps them heal,” said Cornelius.

“I am proud that Fort Hood has formally committed to support this natural resource which improves the quality of life we all enjoy,” said Jim Boatman, DPW’s engineering program manager and Tree Board member. “It was especially interesting to watch this process begin with an idea and follow it all the way through...recognized as a Tree City USA.”

“Trees are a vital component of the infrastructure in our cities and towns, and provide environmental and economical benefits,” said John Rosenow, President of The National Arbor Day Foundation. “A community, and its citizens, that recognize these benefits and provide needed care for its trees deserves recognition and thanks.”

“This year we are excited to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Tree City USA,” Rosenow said. “From its humble beginning in 1976, the program has grown to be the leading community forestry recognition program in the country. Communities like yours, who emphasize the important role trees play to the well being of its citizens, have made this program such a success.”

The Tree City USA program is sponsored by The National Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters, the USDA Forest Service, and the Urban and Community Forestry Program.