FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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BOOTS ON THE GROUND: SAVING SPECIES, SUPPORTING THE MISSION

The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations and Environment announces the release of *Boots on the Ground: Saving Species, Supporting the Mission*—a video that showcases the Department of Defense's (DoD) success in maintaining its national defense and security mission, while conserving military lands and the species that call them home.

Filmed at Vandenberg Space Force Base in California and narrated by world-renowned photographer Joel Sartore of the National Geographic Photo Ark, this inspirational, seven-minute video tells a story of the unique balance between the vital military testing, training and operational mission and the extraordinary work, commitment, and dedication of the DoD to the conservation of at-risk species.

Mr. Sartore and installation personnel take the viewer on a visual tour of a conservation success story on Vandenberg Space Force Base and beyond. They address compatible land use, while simultaneously promoting long-term sustainability and stewardship of critical natural resources and species. The viewer is introduced to a few of the many DoD employees and conservation partners, who dedicate their careers to supporting the military mission and species conservation—showing the land and "critters" through their eyes.

"The Department of Defense is one of the greatest stewards of wildlife in the world," explains Mr. Sartore. The American public has entrusted the DoD with nearly 27 million acres of land, air, and water resources to accomplish its mission. These same acres provide habitat for over 500 federally-listed plant and animal species (55 of which exist *only* on DoD lands), and more than 500 other species at risk.

December 28, 2023, marks the 50th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, which presented the perfect opportunity to debut this inspiring video, highlighting the leading role DoD plays in the conservation of threatened and endangered species. *Boots on the Ground: Saving Species, Supporting the Mission* was made possible by the DoD Legacy Resource Management Program (https://www.denix.osd.mil/legacy/), which is honored to collaborate with Joel Sartore, his team, and our Military partners.

The video can be viewed at: https://www.acq.osd.mil/, https://youtu.be/mA3GIs0hmPA and www.vandenberg.spaceforce.mil.

Development of an additional more comprehensive video is underway, for release in Fall 2024. This full-length video explores success stories of conservation on DoD lands, many that offer the last protection for some of our nation's most vulnerable species.

Please direct inquiries to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations and Environment, Public Affairs Office at (703) 571-2113.

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