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Natural Resources

The Department of Defense (DoD) manages approximately 29 million acres of land across the United States. These lands are rich in natural resources and encompass a wide variety of habitat types, including wetlands, grasslands, semi-arid scrublands, forests, and other ecosystems. These and other high quality habitats host a wide array of threatened, endangered, and at risk species; provide valuable ecosystem services; and ensure a strong foundation for realistic and sustainable military training.

Natural Resources at a Glance

Program Accomplishments:

- Provided **\$188.1 million** to develop and implement Integrated Natural Resource Management Plans (INRMPs) in Fiscal Year (FY) 2009
- Funded **72** Legacy Resource Management Projects in FY2009
- Provided **\$15.3 million** to protect 420 federally listed species in FY2009

Applicable Requirements

Environmental law and policy require DoD to address natural resource conservation efforts on installations. The following are some major requirements that govern DoD's natural resources programs:

- **The Sikes Act and The Sikes Act Improvement Act (SAIA)** mandate the development and implementation of INRMPs for all installations with significant natural resources, while ensuring no net loss to the military mission.
- **The Endangered Species Act (ESA)** protects plant and animal species at risk of extinction. ESA §7 requires DoD to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service when any activity authorized, funded, or carried out by DoD may affect an endangered or at risk species or an area designated as "critical habitat."
- **The Fiscal Year (FY) 2004 National Defense Authorization Act §318** allows INRMPs to be used in lieu of a critical habitat designation with approval from the FWS if an installation prepares and implements an approved INRMP.

Additional external requirements are:

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1970
- The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918
- The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940
- All applicable Executive Orders (e.g., 13112 – Invasive Species; 13186 – Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds)

In addition, DoD developed internal policies to meet the above requirements, including:

- **DoD Directive 4715.1e "Environment, Safety, and Occupational Health"** requires that DoD Components maintain readiness by managing natural resources to support mission completion and to uphold the quality of life of installation personnel.
- **DoD Instruction (DoDI) 4715.3 "Natural Resources Conservation Program"** implements policy, assigns responsibilities, and prescribes procedures for the integrated management of natural resources on property under DoD control. DoDI 4715.3 is not final and is entering formal coordination in FY2010.

Management Practices

DoD uses natural resources planning to support conservation efforts and meet operational requirements, while minimizing damages from testing and training. Installations keep inventories of management needs, resource characteristics, and constraints related to military testing and training activities.

DoD is responsible for the lands and waters under its control. This includes managing and protecting 420 federally-listed species and 520 species at risk. In addition to providing guidance and policy, DoD's Natural Resources Program manages and protects its land by:

- 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
- Supporting safety programs, such as Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard and wildland fire efforts

Integrated Natural Resource Management Plans

INRMPs are comprehensive plans that help installation commanders manage their resources to support the military mission and be compliant with applicable laws.

INRMPs briefly summarize the key interrelationships with other plans, reference where those plans may be obtained, and describe where detailed information can be found.

INRMPs must reflect mutual agreement between the installation and state and federal agencies with respect to the conservation, protection, and management of fish and wildlife resources on the installation. At the same time, each INRMP ensures military installation lands support the military mission.

Legacy Resource Management Program

Since its start in 1991, the Legacy Resource Management Program has funded nearly 3,000 projects, totaling approximately \$300 million. Congress appropriates Legacy Program funds separate from Natural Resources Program funds. 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
- 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 conserving resources on DoD lands

In FY2009, the Legacy Program funded 72 projects, totaling \$7.1 million. The Program leveraged an additional \$4.1 million through in-kind and matching contributions. The Legacy Program funds projects that focus on natural resources, cultural resources, and Native Americans. The areas of emphasis include: integrated natural resource management, invasive species control, monitoring and predicting migratory patterns of birds, regional ecosystem management, and historic preservation and cultural resource management.

Following are examples of FY2009 natural resources Legacy Program projects:

- **Grassland Bird Productivity on Military Airfields** is a series of projects involving migratory bird conservation in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions. DoD is in the final stages of approving a new Coordinated Bird Monitoring Plan designed jointly by DoD and U.S. Geological Survey biologists and managers. The Plan will ensure that bird monitoring and assessments address important issues for DoD and will be implemented in partnership with the Partners in Flight Program.
- **National Public Lands Day** is a nation-wide volunteer event to implement projects that enhance and protect natural resources on public areas. The Legacy Program supported 52 National Public Lands Day projects that created or improved habitat for pollinators, cleared invasive species, and cleaned up natural areas.

- **The Utah Bat Initiative** developed, directed, and facilitated comprehensive bat management in Utah. The Initiative centered on defensible data, a scientifically-validated survey protocol, strong multi-agency partnerships, and coordinated long-term planning efforts.
- **The Migratory Linkage of Burrowing Owls on DoD Lands** project partnered DoD with 31 organizations to gather and analyze data to determine if the burrowing owl, a candidate species by the FWS, is truly on the decline or is changing its migratory habit.

Chapters 4 and 5 provide examples of Legacy Program projects for cultural resources and Native Americans, respectively.

Evaluation Criteria

All DoD Components are required to provide the following natural resource management data to show program performance. Some of these data are shown in Appendix B (Figure B-3.2) and include:

- What year was the most recent INRMP reviewed/ revised for operation and effect?
- Does the INRMP meet SAIA requirements?
- Was there annual coordination with the FWS?
- Was there annual coordination with the State?
- Dollars spent in the current fiscal year to implement INRMPs

There are a number of factors that can cause an INRMP to not meet SAIA requirements. Some of these include:

- Unexpected changes to mission requirements or natural resources conditions
- Insufficient resources to prepare a new plan or perform an out-of-cycle INRMP revision
- Failure to perform a mandated five year review for operation and effect

Additionally, each installation requiring an INRMP is rated on a "red-yellow-green" basis for the seven focus areas below, according to criteria developed by each DoD Component:

- INRMP Implementation
- Partnership/Cooperation and Effectiveness
- Team Adequacy
- INRMP Impact on Installation Mission
- Status of Federally Listed Species and Critical Habitat
- Ecosystem Integrity
- Fish & Wildlife Management and Public Use

At this time, the data regarding these INRMP focus areas are too new to provide trend analysis. DoD anticipates that a minimum of three years of data collection will be necessary to begin to identify trends or forecast future performance.

Performance Summary

DoD spent a total of \$188.1 million in FY2009 to develop and implement INRMPs, which is an increase of \$43.3 million from FY2008 (Figure 3-1). Overall, INRMP funding has increased by \$87.7 million since FY2005, showing DoD’s commitment to natural resource preservation.

In FY2009, 74 percent of DoD’s required INRMPs were up-to-date (Figure 3-2). The decrease from 86 percent in FY2008 is largely due to the DoD Components implementing a new system of INRMP reporting metrics that more closely scrutinized INRMP status and whether INRMPs meet SAIA requirements. In particular, this seemed to affect Army INRMPs more than others. Since the Army accounts for nearly 50 percent of DoD’s 343 total INRMPs, this system will allow the DoD Components to better manage INRMPs requiring attention.

Appendix B, Section 3 contains Natural Resources Program data by DoD Component.

Figure 3-1 DoD Natural Resources: INRMP Funding



Figure 3-2 DoD Natural Resources: INRMP Progress

