



2021 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards Sustainability, Non-Industrial Installation Award

Each year since 1962, the Secretary of Defense has honored installations, teams, and individuals for outstanding achievements in Department of Defense (DoD) environmental programs. These accomplishments include outstanding conservation activities, innovative environmental practices, and partnerships that improve quality of life and promote efficiencies without compromising DoD’s mission success. The 2021 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards cycle encompasses an achievement period from October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2020 (Fiscal Years (FY) 2019-2020). A diverse panel of 47 judges with relevant expertise representing Federal and state agencies, academia, and the private sector evaluated all nominees to select one winner for each of the eight categories. These eight categories cover five subject areas including natural resources conservation, environmental quality, sustainability, environmental restoration, and cultural resources management.

About the Sustainability, Non-Industrial Installation Award

The Sustainability, Non-Industrial Installation award recognizes efforts to prevent or eliminate pollution at the source, including practices that increase efficiency and sustainability in the use of raw materials, energy, water, or other resources. The sustainability award also recognizes energy efficiency and renewable energy practices, greenhouse gas reduction efforts, procurement of sustainable goods and services, waste diversion, electronics stewardship, and efforts to plan for adaptation and resilience. Sustainable practices ensure that DoD protects valuable resources that are critical to mission success. Non-industrial installations are large or small installations that include ranges, test centers, contracting and policy agencies/organizations/offices, and research and development centers. The 2021 winner of the Sustainability, Non-Industrial Installation award is *U.S. Army Garrison Fort Polk, Louisiana*.

About U.S. Army Garrison Fort Polk, Louisiana

Located in the dense woodlands of West Central Louisiana and encompassing over 240,000 acres, Fort Polk is home to the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), the Army’s only Combat Training Center that also deploys combat units. Fort Polk’s mission is “to train Soldiers and when ordered, deploy those Soldiers worldwide.” The JRTC and Fort Polk is home to one brigade combat team and four separate, deployable combat battalions, with additional support units and organizations. Approximately 43,649 soldiers, civilians, and family members live and work at the JRTC and Fort Polk. In addition, more than 67,000 military retirees live in the five parishes that surround the JRTC and Fort Polk. Fort Polk implements sustainability practices and principles, which enhance training opportunities, ensure long-term availability of training areas, and improve the quality of life for military and civilian personnel and their families.



Fort Polk’s Sustainability Program supports Army missions while protecting its natural resources. Fort Polk implements sustainability practices and principles to enhance training opportunities and ensure long-term availability of training areas. Sustainability practices have reduced life-cycle costs, increased unit performance and cost avoidance, which directly supports the installation’s training mission.

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Major Accomplishments in FY 2019-2020

- Fort Polk's Energy and Water programs use advanced technologies to reduce energy and water use; increase the installation's resilience through renewable onsite resources; and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, facilities, and construction. Focusing on energy resilience, efficiency, awareness, and ethos, Fort Polk invested \$13 million in advanced technology projects during FY 2019-2020 to expand upon micro grids, energy storage, electric vehicles, building control integration, and infrastructure improvements.
- Fort Polk continually works to integrate sustainability practices into master planning and has participated in several Area Development Plans workshops. Fort Polk renovated the Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital medical center with aesthetic designs that reduce heating and cooling costs by 20 percent. The building also features efficient low-emissivity glass, heat-resistant roofing, floors made from recycled materials and renewable resources, and low-volatile organic compound paint. In addition, Fort Polk has 18 projects registered with the U.S. Green Buildings Council and requires all new building construction to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design requirements.
- Fort Polk implemented resource-efficient management practices that increase the quantity of material recycled. The environmental staff works with installation organizations to increase the quantity of solid waste diverted from landfills through this recycling and reuse. In addition, environmental staff members train installation personnel to become Recycling Coordinators who then serve as liaisons to the environmental staff on recycling issues. In FY 2019-2020, Fort Polk diverted nearly 16,000 tons of waste from disposal in state landfills. Fort Polk also created a sustainable use program for disposed green waste. The Christmas Tree Recycling program staged trees throughout open-wooded spaces for use as quail habitat and aquatic habitat. This initiative successfully diverted nearly 3,000 pounds of green waste from entering the landfill.
- Fort Polk directs a multimedia marketing and environmental education outreach program that includes Facebook, videos, mascots, skits, and events that effectively communicate environmental sustainability awareness. Installation leadership participates in the environmental outreach events to bring awareness and encourage service members and the public to participate in the environmental community. In FY 2019-2020, the combined training and outreach event efforts reached over 8,200 military, family members, and civilian personnel.
- To improve environmental performance, Fort Polk developed the Environmental Management Performance Review (EMPR). The EMPR tracks the JRTC and Fort Polk training mission and environmental program changes from year to year using tables, graphs, and charts. The EMPR is an environmental resource reference for Fort Polk leaders, planners, and environmental staff.



The JTRC leadership supports sustainability requirements at the installation. The Recycling Coordinator Program is an effort to assign recycling champions to each facility on the installation. This program shifted the focus from conventional classroom education to hands on training and assessments in an effort to increase recyclable materials diverted from the landfill.



Each year the JRTC & Fort Polk celebrate Earth Day. The celebrations emphasize how environmental sustainability not only supports military training, but also supports the quality of life of soldiers, families, and civilians that live on or near and work on Fort Polk. Qualified Recycling Program proceeds help purchase catfish to stock ponds for the annual Youth Catfish Derby conducted during Fort Polk's week long Operations Earth Friendly event.