



## 2015 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards Natural Resources Conservation, Large Installation Award

Since 1962, the Department of Defense (DoD) has honored individuals, teams, and installations for their outstanding achievements and innovative work protecting the environment while sustaining mission readiness. The 2015 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards recognize accomplishments from October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2014. A diverse panel of 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 nine categories that cover six subject areas: natural resources conservation; environmental quality; sustainability; environmental restoration; cultural resources management; and environmental excellence in weapon system acquisition.

### About the Natural Resources Conservation, Large Installation Award

The Natural Resources Conservation, Large Installation award recognizes large installations (over 10,000 acres) promoting the conservation of natural resources, including the identification, protection, and restoration of biological resources and habitats; the sound long-term management and use of the land and its resources; and the promotion of a conservation ethic. Providing enhanced quality of life for installation personnel and visitors (e.g., outdoor recreation) are also factors in this award. Protecting endangered plant and animal species on our installations and other DoD lands not only preserves these valuable environmental resources for current and future generations, but also assures the availability of these resources to sustain military readiness. The 2015 winner of the Natural Resources Conservation, Large Installation award is *Camp Blanding Joint Training Center, Florida Army National Guard*.

### About Camp Blanding Joint Training Center

Camp Blanding Joint Training Center (CBJTC) is a 73,000-acre installation located in northeast Florida, with a primary mission to support military training. About 3,000 acres comprise the cantonment area, 15,267 acres comprise the artillery impact area, and about 10,686 acres are leased for sand mining and mineral recovery by the DuPont Corporation. The remaining 42,000 acres are used for military training, forestry operations, wildlife management operations, and public recreation.

CBJTC has long been recognized for its successful Natural Resources Conservation (NRC) program. A total of 19 federal and/or state listed threatened and endangered plant species and 20 animal species are located at CBJTC. The post is also the home of a groundbreaking coalition studying the control and elimination of disease-causing insects. The studies bring together the Florida Army National Guard (FLARNG), World Health Organization (WHO), United States Navy Entomology Center of Excellence (NECE), U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Army Air Reserve, Florida Air National Guard, and the University of Florida



**Controlled Burn:** Camp Blanding partners with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to conduct aerial ignition prescribed fire projects. These controlled burns improve both the quality of military lands and the habitats of various game species of concern to the Commission.

to conduct a multi-year entomological project with life-saving potential for millions of soldiers and civilians around the world.

Over the past two years, the NRC program has achieved key milestones, including establishing stable populations of endangered red cockaded woodpecker (RCW) in excess of the targets set for CBJTC and successfully negotiating the relocation of state-listed gopher tortoises to suitable habitat on Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) lands. These efforts reduce conflicts between conservation and training goals. The new arrangement also eliminates the need for special relocation permitting, saving CBJTC \$10,000 to \$15,000 each year in tortoise management costs. The NRC program is coordinating with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to establish a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances, which will further streamline management of threatened and endangered species based on the benefits of CBJTC's landscape approach to conservation.

### Major Accomplishments in FY 2013-2014

- CBJTC established a goal of 25 active RCW clusters to be compatible with the mission and sustainable population; at present, the installation has 29 or 30 active clusters. At a density of 30 or more clusters, FLARNG soldiers will no longer have to undertake any particular mitigation for additional RCW.
- CBJTC's Integrated Pest Management Program (IPMP) continues to have great success in its 12 ongoing research initiatives. Last year, CBJTC was designated as a WHO/NECE collaborative center for excellence partner. CBJTC is the only site in the world conducting public health research on insecticide dispersal systems and application techniques.
- The post's ACUB lands have enabled the NRC program to protect against encroachment and establish mitigation credits. Through incorporation of two wetlands parcels this year, CBJTC now has \$2.5 million in wetlands credits that could be used to offset construction and maintenance activities on CBJTC.
- The ACUB lands now total nearly 19,000 acres. In FY 2013, CBJTC acquired 1,600 acres dedicated to gopher tortoise habitat creation and purchased an additional 320 acres in FY 2014.



*RCW Habitat: A CBJTC team member works to remove and replace artificial nesting boxes for RCW in live longleaf pine trees.*



*IPMP: Jerry Kerce, CBJTC Integrated Pest Management Coordinator inspecting pesticide application panels for research in Malaria Control.*

For information on past winners, please go to: [www.denix.osd.mil/awards](http://www.denix.osd.mil/awards).