



2016 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards Environmental Quality, Individual/Team Award

Each year 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 2016 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards recognize accomplishments from October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2015. 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 Environmental Quality, Individual/Team Award

The Environmental Quality, Individual/Team award recognizes individuals and teams making significant and lasting contributions to their environmental management program. This award acknowledges efforts to ensure mission accomplishment and the protection of human health in the areas of environmental planning, waste management, and compliance with environmental laws and regulations (e.g., Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act). Meeting or exceeding all environmental requirements not only enhances the protection of our environmental assets, but also sustains DoD's ability to effectively train and maintain readiness. The 2016 winner of the Environmental Quality, Individual/Team Installation award is *Eglin Air Force Base Environmental Quality Team, Florida*.

About Eglin Air Force Base Environmental Quality Team

Situated along the Emerald Coast and extending into the heart of Florida's panhandle, Eglin Air Force Base (AFB) is home to the 96th Test Wing. Encompassing 464,000 acres of land and 120,000 square miles of water ranges, the installation is responsible for the development, acquisition, testing, deployment and sustainment of all air-delivered conventional weaponry.



The Eglin AFB Environmental Quality (EQ) Team consists of 43 professional engineers, physical scientists, biologists, archeologists, foresters, forestry technicians, environmental protection specialists, fire management specialists and fire ecologists. The EQ Team implements a holistic management approach to reduce risks, maintain compliance, and continuously improve processes and programs.

Eglin's EQ Team consist of a wide variety of professionals, and is tasked with providing excellent support to the management of the DoD's largest forested installation.

Major Accomplishments in FY 2014-2015

- Implemented an Environmental Management System (EMS) which fully conforms to Air Force and international standards. The EMS is a one-stop-shop for all aspects of the environmental program and satisfies documentation requirements online, saving program time and resources while minimizing impacts to the mission.
- Furthered the national goal of pursuing alternative energy sources by facilitating and completing an environmental assessment for a 30 megawatt solar photovoltaic array project on 245 acres. This effort made the \$200 million project viable and raised Eglin's percentage of renewable energy sources to 19 percent.
- Partnered with five federally recognized tribes and the state to develop a programmatic agreement to support the Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative Landscape Initiative for the use of state forests for military training. Through this agreement, careful analysis, and consultation, the Air Force was able to evaluate and resolve anticipated concerns regarding cultural resources without having to conduct expensive and time consuming field work.
- Personnel adopted state-sponsored practices and procedures for the marina, including emphasis on preventing the release of pollutants into waters, and strengthened Eglin's ability to withstand natural and man-made disasters. As a result of these efforts, the state of Florida designated Eglin's marina as "Clean and Resilient" - one of just 10 such designations in Florida.
- Became an active participant in a national effort to promote science, technology, engineering and math in schools. The EQ Team developed a science curriculum that teaches students how to develop hypotheses about local wildlife, test them with camera trap data, and understand the concepts of habitat and ecosystems.



Russell Brown, a member of the EQ Team, checks a culvert for storm water compliance. Due to the Team's efforts, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection granted Eglin a waiver for reduced sampling protocol, saving more than \$13k per sampling cycle.



Team Eglin's Fire Rescue assists the EQ Team members in rescuing a disoriented loggerhead sea turtle. Eglin volunteers contribute over 2,000 hours to sea turtle monitoring annually.