



# Department of Defense National Public Lands Day 2018

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## Background:

NPLD, coordinated by the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF), is the nation's largest volunteer effort for public lands. Each year, thousands of Americans come together on the fourth Saturday of September to volunteer their time to improve parks, refuges, waterways, recreational areas, historical sites, trails, community gardens, and other public land sites throughout the country. In 2018, 1,776 sites celebrated the 25th NPLD. NEEF connected and engaged approximately 113,055 volunteers with public land sites across the nation, contributing an estimated \$11.2 million in improvement projects. Events took place in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and US territories.

The DoD Legacy Resource Management Program joined the NPLD partnership in 1999 to support volunteer habitat restoration as well as cultural and historical projects on military installations throughout the United States. Legacy has provided financial support for NPLD events over the past 19 years.

## Objective:

A primary objective of NPLD is to enlist those who use public lands for recreation to help care for the natural places they enjoy. NPLD educates Americans about critical environmental and natural resource issues, and the need for shared stewardship of these valued, irreplaceable lands.

## Summary of Approach:

NPLD projects that take place on military installations with some lands open to the public for recreation are eligible for DoD Legacy funding. This is a competitive funding application process. Volunteer-based projects must emphasize habitat and/or historical/cultural restoration. In 2018, the maximum amount awarded to each site was \$9,500. NEEF received a total of 28 applications and ultimately awarded 26 applicants. Funds were used for equipment, materials, and enhancements to land used by the public. Applications were due on July 30, 2018 and applicants were selected shortly thereafter.

## Benefit:

These DoD Legacy funded projects enable the enhancement and preservation of precious natural resources on installations, as well as the upkeep of other manmade assets such as the repair, rehabilitation, or installation of infrastructure such as roads and bridges, visitor centers, trails, benches and signage.

This year's natural resource restoration and resilience themed projects included a sand dune restoration; birdhouse construction; invasive plant removal; pollinator habitat improvements; restoration of raised garden beds; and more. Project Managers were prompted to incorporate these themes into their projects and to encourage participants (service members, their families, retirees, veterans, and community members) to restore their public lands and make them more resilient to future threats. By highlighting the importance of restoration and resilience on installation sites, NPLD projects benefited the military's mission to protect and enhance natural and cultural resources, making military installations more sustainable.

## Accomplishments:

In 2018, 26 awardees led projects that were diverse and spanned a range of focuses including invasive vegetation removal; restoration of habitat; infrastructure repair and more. The following are project examples:

- **Camp Mabry:** volunteers restored native trees, removed invasive species and constructed bird houses for the Chimney Swift. Staff hosted an educational event about the importance of habitat restoration.
- **Joint Base Lewis-McChord:** volunteers constructed and installed bird and bat houses to provide habitat for rare species. They also restored the Hardhack Marsh and removed invasive vegetation.
- **Naval Air Station Oceana:** volunteers helped to restore and stabilize sand dunes along the eastern coastline of the NASO Dam Neck Annex.

In total, this year's DoD NPLD sites hosted approximately 1,296 volunteers who donated over 400 hours of volunteer time to accomplish the following:

- Building or maintenance of 5 trails
- Planting of 1,317 trees and 57,559 plants
- Rebuilding or repair of 87 structures
- Disposal of 5,543 pounds of trash
- Removal of 996,250 pounds of invasive vegetation
- Restoration of 2,201,932 square feet of land

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Department of Defense Natural Resources Program

Enabling the Mission, Defending the Resources

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