



Revision of DoD Biodiversity Conservation Handbook - Phase I

05-247

Background:

In 1993, DoD funded a Legacy Biodiversity Initiative project that sponsored a series of workshops and dialogues designed to provide guidance to DoD on biodiversity conservation strategies. In 1995, to implement a key recommendation from that initiative, DoD Legacy funded a project designed to synthesize relevant principles from the field of conservation science for DoD resources managers, and to document the tools and approaches available to those managers to accomplish biodiversity conservation goals. This project resulted in the 1996 *“Conserving Biodiversity on Military Lands: A Handbook for Natural Resources Managers.”* The purpose of the handbook was to provide a tool for DoD natural resources managers to fulfill their goals of responsible stewardship and management while enabling their core mission of supporting military readiness.

While this handbook has been a valuable resource, DoD Legacy recognizes that since its publication a decade ago there have been significant advances in the fields of conservation science and natural resources management and many changes in DoD’s policy framework related to natural resources management. At the same time, issues related to base encroachment have intensified, the resolution of which requires base managers to think and act at scales that often transcend installation boundaries and to collaborate with a wider array of stakeholders.

Objective:

The purpose of this new edition of the biodiversity conservation handbook is to provide military natural resources personnel with up-to-date guidance for promoting biodiversity conservation while preserving the ability to conduct required testing and training activities on DoD lands. The goal of Phase I of this project was to develop the content requirements needed for the revision of the handbook by conducting a series of related information gathering activities.

Summary of Approach:

In Phase I of this project, which was conducted by NatureServe, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and DoD collaborators, the project team gathered input from DoD stakeholders through a survey, in-depth interviews, and a 2-day stakeholders’ workshop. The final product of Phase I is an outline and work plan for the revised handbook.



Photo by J. Douglas Ripley

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Benefit:

The revised handbook will support DoD natural resources managers by providing guidance for implementing biodiversity conservation strategies at the installation level, as well as serving as a valuable tool to inform DoD stakeholders and leadership about the critical need to maintain natural resources in order to successfully meet the military function of DoD lands.

Accomplishments:

At the conclusion of Phase I, we have completed the information gathering activities, having conducted 28 in-depth interviews with key DoD stakeholders, sent out a detailed on-line survey to over 400 DoD natural resources managers and others, which resulted in 171 responses, and conducted a 2-day stakeholders’ workshop to gather additional feedback on a draft handbook outline. We also researched and identified military installations that have implemented exemplary conservation strategies for use as case studies in the revised handbook. Using the input and feedback from these information gathering activities, we developed a detailed outline and work plan for the revised DoD Biodiversity Conservation Handbook, to be written in Phase II of this project.

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