

DoD SUSTAINABLE RANGES INITIATIVE

Overview Summary



The Sustainable Ranges Initiative ensures our military will continue to be able to effectively test and train now and into the future, especially through lasting win-win partnerships that help maintain access to vital air, land, sea, and frequency spectrum resources.

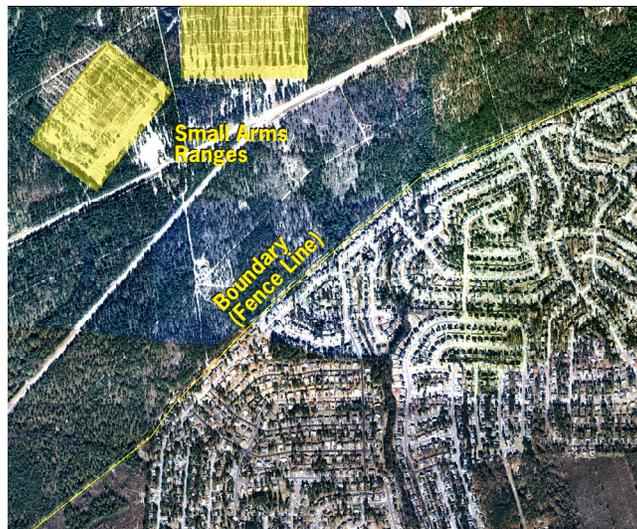
The Issue: Encroachment

Encroachment is broadly defined as any external factors that inhibit the ability of DoD and the Military Services to use their ranges, airspace, and other operating areas to conduct effective training and testing.

Military installations, training and testing ranges, and operating areas are national assets—essential for the realistic test and training activities that adequately prepare our men and women in uniform for peacetime and wartime missions. The **Department of Defense (DoD)** needs reliable access to land, air, sea, and frequency spectrum resources to conduct this training safely and effectively.

Most military testing and training ranges were established over sixty years ago as the nation prepared for World War II. These ranges were generally located in remote rural areas, but over the years urban and suburban development began to encroach upon military ranges. During that time, land, sea, airspace, and frequency encroachment on DoD ranges has evolved into a significant impediment to military readiness. Many testing and training activities, such as low-level flights, live-fire training, and nighttime exercises, are incompatible with nearby housing and commercial developments. And loss of viable habitat from these developments increases the relative burden on installations to serve as a last refuge for threatened and endangered species.

In response to these threats, DoD has instituted a broad-based, multi-faceted initiative to counteract these trends and sustain test and training capabilities.



Houses abut Fort Bragg near arms ranges used for target practice

The SROC-Led Solution: Partnering for Sustainable Readiness

In December 2001, the Deputy Secretary of Defense directed the formation of the **Sustainable Ranges Initiative (SRI)** to address the encroachment challenge. Under the leadership of the **Senior Readiness Oversight Council (SROC)**, which he chairs, DoD has embarked on a comprehensive strategy to counter encroachment on testing and training. This plan, designed to foster a coordinated approach toward encroachment issues, includes policy, programming, leadership and organization, legislation and regulation, compatible land use, outreach and stakeholder engagement, and comprehensive reporting to Congress.

Working under the direction of SROC, DoD established the **Overarching Integrated Product Team (OIPT)**, tri-chaired by the Deputy Undersecretaries of Defense (DUSDs) for Readiness and Installations & Environment and the Deputy Director, Operational Test and Evaluation for Live Fire Test (DDOT&E-LFT). Meeting regularly, the **Working Integrated Product Team (WIPT)**

effectively implements the OIPT’s recommendations. With active participation from each of the Military Services, this SROC-led effort has succeeded in:

- enacting clarifying legislative provisions and issuing range sustainment policies;
- shifting to long-term programmatic planning consistent with the Congressionally required comprehensive plan for range sustainment;
- obtaining conservation partnership authority and annual Congressional funding for compatible use buffers under the **Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI)** program;
- establishing supportive regional and state partnerships for sustainable planning efforts, including the **Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS)** and the **Western Regional Partnership (WRP)**;
- facilitating the sharing of GIS and decision-support information to foster community-driven planning and compatible land use partnerships;
- working with interested parties—such as signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the

SROC’s Commitment Ahead

In 2008, the SROC reaffirmed its overall commitment to the SRI partnership approach to sustainable readiness and established seven specific future focus areas:

- Mitigate Competing Land and Seaspaces Uses
- Address Energy Infrastructure Impacts
- Anticipate Climate Change Initiatives
- Meet Military Airspace Challenges
- Manage Increasing Military Demand for Range Space
- Address Frequency Spectrum Competition

Department of Agriculture—to protect key rural landscapes and working lands.

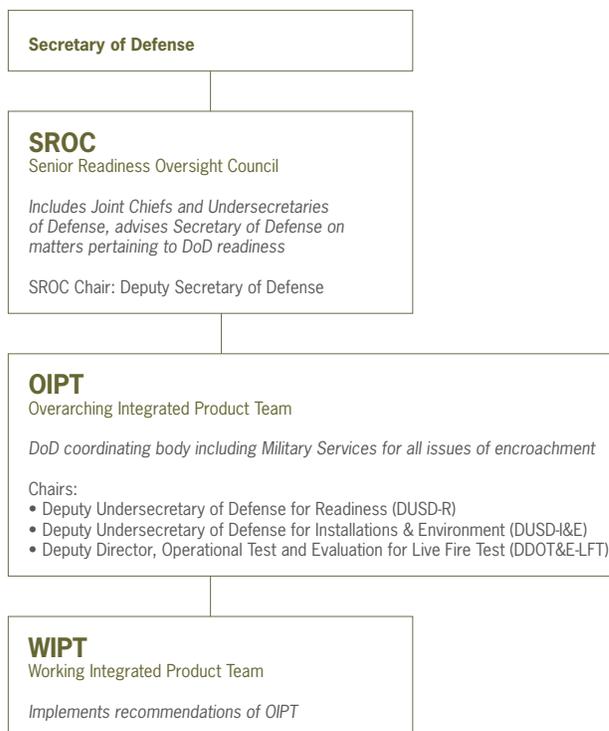
REPI in particular offers a core ongoing platform, providing funding for on-the-ground buffer projects—totaling 60,000 acres at 42 installations across the country since FY 2005—that protect habitat and ensure that nearby land use is compatible with military objectives. As we have learned through REPI and other Initiative activities, developing partnerships with win-win solutions has proven the most effective and enduring path forward.

Moving Forward: Institutionalizing Progress

Ranges and installations are as much a part of the landscape and fabric of the nation as the habitats and communities that surround them. They rely on each other for economic, environmental, and social benefits that serve the needs of both interests: military readiness on one hand, and sustainable community growth on the other. Collaborative planning at all levels—local, state, and regional—provides both these benefits. The further institutionalization of such planning is a cornerstone of the Initiative’s efforts.

As the Sustainable Ranges Initiative moves forward in combating encroachment, it continues to build on its successes, forge new partnerships, and broaden its scope to include emerging challenges (see sidebar above). This dynamic, forward-looking approach provides a solid foundation for making our installations and ranges truly sustainable in the 21st century. ▲

SRI’s Internal Organizational Structure



More information: (703) 604-1795 or http://www.denix.osd.mil/sustainable_ranges or (703) 604-1795