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IN OTHER NEWS

Upcoming Events

National Military Fish and Wildlife Association Annual Meeting
March 14-18, 2016 in Pittsburgh, PA

81st North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference
March 14-18, 2016 in Pittsburgh, PA

America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative Federal Coordinating Committee
March 23, 2016 in Atlanta, GA

SERPPAS Steering Committee Meeting
March 24, 2016 in Atlanta, GA

American Planning Association National Planning Conference
April 2-5, 2016 in Phoenix, AZ

72nd Annual Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference

Message from the Director

All of us operate in a constrained environment where we are often working to achieve more than our resources allow. For the military, this manifests in testing, training, and operational requirements limited by a myriad of complex encroachment issues that are often too expensive – and expansive – to solve independently.

In this newsletter, we are highlighting the REPI partnerships, projects, and initiatives that have developed innovative ways to leverage funding, institutional knowledge, and capacity to accomplish goals on a magnified scale. These case studies, which by no means report the extent of creativity found within the REPI project sphere, show how local-level innovation is once again changing the paradigm of readiness protection and conservation around our installations.

In order to demonstrate the remarkable efforts occurring across the country, we have asked partners at USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program, Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center in Mississippi, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Longleaf Stewardship Fund, and the Conservation Finance Network to share behind-the-scenes details of their projects. As always in sharing these projects, it is our intention to spark ideas and encourage innovation and conversation, so please reach out to the REPI office, or to any of the contacts named in the case studies, if you have any questions. Even though our individual operating budgets only extend so far, our collective resources and ideas have the potential to magnify our impacts and achieve the goals of all stakeholders.

Best wishes,

Kristin Thomasgard-Spence



April 3-5, 2016 in
Annapolis, MD

Environmental Council of
the States Spring Meeting
April 11-13, 2016 in
Nashville, TN

National Fish and Wildlife
Foundation Annual
Stewardship Partners
Meeting
April 12-14, 2016 in St.
Simon's Island, GA

NatureServe
Conservation and Natural
Heritage Conference
2016
April 17-22, 2016 in San
Juan, Puerto Rico

Urban Land Institute
Spring Meeting
April 19-21, 2016 in
Philadelphia, PA

National Mitigation and
Ecosystem Banking
Conference
May 10-13, 2016 in Fort
Worth, TX

22nd SERPPAS
Principals Meeting
May 10-11, 2016 in Fort
Benning, GA

Southeast Land Trust
Alliance Meeting
May 11-13, 2016 in
Birmingham, AL

Did you know?

- The famous phrase "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!" is attributed to the first Admiral of the Navy, David Farragut (1801-1870).

- At 14, George Washington tried to join the British Royal Navy. Luckily, his mother did not allow him to do so.

Maneuver training at Fort Stewart, GA, one of the installations benefitting from the 2016 NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program awards.

Training at Camp Shelby, MS includes practicing medical evaluations. Camp Shelby is the site of REPI's first carbon sequestration buffer project.

Spotlight: Funding, Innovation, and the REPI Program

\$22.4 Million in NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program Grants Supporting REPI Efforts

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced their 2016 Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) awards, which will invest a total of \$720 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and local partners in 84 conservation projects across the country. Altogether, \$22.4 million of this funding is awarded to projects that will protect military readiness even as they engage in important land conservation activities.

On February 12, 2016, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced funding for winning 2016 RCPP proposals from Fort Stewart in Georgia, which will be one RCPP beneficiary as a part of a larger **Southeastern Regional Project** that will also impact installations and complement REPI activities in North Carolina, Mississippi, and other parts of Georgia. Four other locations are also receiving funds that will directly support on-going REPI efforts, including **Fort Huachuca** in Arizona, **NSY Portsmouth SERE School** in Maine, **Fort Hood** in Texas, and **Avon Park Air Force Range** in Florida. At the Federal level, NRCS and the REPI Program coordinate informally and formally through the **Sentinel Landscapes Partnership** to ensure that, where appropriate, our resources work in concert to amplify our investments and that of local partners as an efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

RCPP was created by NRCS to encourage and provide technical assistance and support to farmers' and landowners' efforts to tackle natural resource protection, restoration, and management. But rather than engage in "random acts of conservation," RCPP specifically calls for regional and watershed-level coordination and collaboration between landowners and other local stakeholders to ensure sensible, tangible, and meaningful results – a sentiment that will be familiar to any stakeholder in a REPI project.

In most cases, agriculture is one of the best neighbors an installation can have. From a REPI Program perspective, many of the typical encroachment issues that may impede readiness, like safety concerns, noise complaints, light pollution, and electromagnetic spectrum saturation, are inherently not a byproduct of agricultural production. Additionally, given the confluence of realities that might pose a threat

•Secretary of Defense Ash Carter's first job, at age 11, was at a car wash in Philadelphia.

to U.S. food security in the future – including the average loss of 1 million acres of agricultural land to development per year and an aging population of American agricultural producers – it is in the best interest of DoD to encourage the farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural producers already located adjacent to installations to keep doing what they do best.

For more information about REPI's involvement in RCPP, please contact **Jaime Simon**.

REPI Funds Provide the Match Requirement for NRCS Funding at Vandenberg AFB, CA

Nearly 780 acres of prime farmland sit outside the fence line of Vandenberg AFB in Santa Barbara County, California. Here, fields of artichokes and Brussel sprouts provide a buffer for the Air Force's west coast space and missile testing base and will remain productive working lands for future generations thanks to a \$1.5 million conservation easement preserving a well-loved local farm. The Air Force, Santa Barbara County, private landowner, and greater Lompoc Valley community all stand to benefit from this project, but the truly exciting part of this case study concerns how the Trust for Public Land financed the conservation easement.

After partners on the ground expressed frustration with inflexible federal grant matching requirements, Congress amended the REPI Program's 10 U.S.C. § 2684a statutory authority in the Fiscal Year 2014 National Defense Authorization Act. The amended statute now allows REPI funds to be eligible as match for USDA and Department of the Interior grants; the Vandenberg AFB REPI buffer partnership marks the first use of the amended authority.

The Lompoc Valley project provided the perfect opportunity to protect land fulfilling the requirements and priorities of Vandenberg AFB, the REPI program, and the NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program-Agriculture Land Easements (ACEP-ALE). After the installation submitted a REPI buffer partnership proposal requesting \$750,000 towards the purchase of the conservation easement, the Trust for Public Land requested equal funding from ACEP-ALE through a separate cooperative agreement with the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County and NRCS. The ACEP-ALE application indicated that the match requirement would be met by REPI Program funds operating under the amended authority, and the partnership acquired the easement from the farm's owners in November 2015. The Trust for Public Land assigned its easement to the Air Force, while the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County was also a co-grantee on the agricultural easement and will manage and monitor the easement.

While a final determination from the Department of the Interior has yet to be made, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has agreed that REPI funds can be used as match for USFWS program grants,

with additional details coming soon. NRCS has officially declared that REPI funds will be accepted as match for ACEP-ALE grants and that other NRCS programs may also be eligible to use REPI funds as match.

For more information about REPI projects and using NRCS funds as cost-share, contact your local installation, the REPI program office, your NRCS State Conservationist, or local USDA Service Center. You can also [download our fact sheet](#) on the funds as match authority here, or [contact the REPI office](#).

Carbon Sequestration and Longleaf Pine Buffers at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center (JFTC), Mississippi

The Camp Shelby JFTC, the largest state-owned and operated field training site in the U.S., is located in Mississippi's DeSoto National Forest, one of the greatest longleaf pine complexes in the southeast. A Special Use Permit managed by the U.S. Forest Service allows Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines to train on an assault landing strip, tank range maneuver sites, and artillery and other weapons firing ranges. These are all activities that create noise, smoke, and potential safety concerns for the surrounding community.

Under the leadership of the Mississippi Army National Guard and the Compatible Lands Foundation, the forested lands around the installation provide a buffer for the Camp's training mission. In addition, these forests are also being turned into an ecological and economic asset for our partner, the Compatible Lands Foundation. Over 1,000 acres of protected land around the installation is becoming REPI's first carbon sequestration project.

The Compatible Lands Foundation is enrolling several parcels of protected forested land around Camp Shelby into California's Carbon Market, managed by the California Air Resources Board. This is a cap-and-trade program that seeks to reduce California's greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 by pricing carbon and allowing greenhouse gas emitters to pay for carbon emissions offsets. By enrolling these parcels in the California Carbon Market, the Compatible Lands Foundation achieves the mutual goals of buffering Camp Shelby from incompatible development, alleviating Endangered Species Act regulatory pressures by protecting longleaf pine habitat for threatened, endangered, and at risk species, and creating a source of future income.

The Camp Shelby JFTC and the Compatible Lands Foundation are preparing to host a third-party verification team required by the California Air Resources Board at the beginning of March, which will finalize the enrollment of the forested parcels into the program and allow the Compatible Lands Foundation to begin receiving payments from the sale of the carbon offsets later this Spring. The Foundation will continue to receive annual payments thereafter for the next 99

years. Be sure to look for updates about this project in the Spring 2016 REPI Newsletter as we follow the implementation of this innovative project.

For more information about the Compatible Lands Foundation's carbon sequestration project at Camp Shelby JFTC, please contact **Joe Knott**.

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Longleaf Stewardship Fund and Southeastern United States Installations and Ranges

By working with the NFWF Longleaf Stewardship Fund, the REPI Program is able to help protect and restore habitat that strengthens military readiness across the Southeastern U.S. with remarkable leverage of partner funds.

Longleaf pine forests support 29 federally-listed threatened or endangered species and many more that are candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act, primarily due to the loss of habitat. Historically the dominant forest type across the Southeast, today longleaf pine forests cover less than 5% of their original acreage. Of this, DoD manages over 700,000 acres of longleaf pine habitat on 32 installations from Louisiana to Virginia, but rapid development of lands adjacent to military bases is eliminating wildlife habitat and putting pressures on base lands. The loss of nearby longleaf pine forests presents a considerable natural resource management challenge for installations, and a potential threat to testing, training, and operational flexibility. To prevent DoD from becoming the last remaining habitat for imperiled species, DoD is working with partners to protect the longleaf pine ecosystem and promote compatible land use around military installations.

The Longleaf Stewardship Fund is a landmark public-private partnership supported by funding from the Southern Company, International Paper, Altria Group, U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and DoD. In recognition of the important link between longleaf and national defense, applicants seeking grants from the Longleaf Stewardship Fund are encouraged to coordinate with local military installations to ensure that project activities are supportive and complementary to the military mission and the installation's natural resource management goals. Therefore, by partnering with the Longleaf Stewardship Fund, DoD gains access to experts and other stakeholders committed to restoring this habitat and maximizes its investment in longleaf protection. Since 2012, over \$2 million in DoD funds have been leveraged more than 6-to-1 overall to protect the missions of 14 installations and support REPI projects where they occur at: MCAS Cherry Point, MCB Camp Lejeune, Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point, Fort Bragg, Fort Stewart, Fort Benning, Townsend Bombing Range, Camp Blanding, Tyndall AFB, Eglin AFB, NAS Whiting Field, NAS Pensacola, Camp Shelby, and Fort Polk.

For more information about the Longleaf Stewardship Fund, please contact **Jon Scott**. For more information about longleaf pine's benefits to DoD, please download the **REPI & Longleaf Pine Fact Sheet**.

The Conservation Finance Network

The Conservation Finance Network (CFN) is the leading resource for practitioners, investors, conservationists, students, and others interested in using innovative finance to further environmental conservation. CFN provides resources and a forum where conservation professionals across the public and private sectors can learn, share, refine, and innovate best practices in funding forest, agriculture, water, open space, and ocean conservation. CFN brings leaders from academia, Wall Street, the non-profit world, government, and the military together in annual "Boot Camp" workshops, and produces and aggregates conservation finance information on **their website**.

The REPI Program supports CFN because it advances land and resource conservation by expanding the use of innovative funding and financing strategies. By convening leading practitioners, sponsoring intensive trainings, and supporting a growing network of public, private, and nonprofit professionals, CFN helps to increase the financial resources deployed for conservation. Within the CFN network, conservation practitioners and industry representatives also have the opportunity to present problems and float ideas that can lead to new innovative strategies in conservation finance. One example of this is the REPI Challenge, which originated through conversation at a CFN "Boot Camp," and is now a critical element of the REPI program.

There is a critical need to shift perceptions about the value and importance of conservation in order to attract private sector and local government buy-in to conservation efforts. CFN is helping to do this and building relationships between nontraditional partners that will result in the next evolution of conservation finance strategies.

For more information about the Conservation Finance Network, please contact **Leigh Whelpton**.

Webinars

Join us for this online series on best practices, tutorials, and knowledge sharing on REPI partnerships that support the military mission and accelerate the pace and rate of land conservation. Our 2016 REPI Webinar Schedule is now on the website and can be **downloaded here**.

Upcoming Webinars

The Full Suite: The REPI Toolbox

Summary: The REPI Program provides more to the Services and their installations than funding and guidance for buffer partnerships. Hear about the full suite of tools offered through the REPI Program, which can be used for encroachment management, partner engagement, and more.

When: Wednesday, March 16, 2016 at 1:00 PM ET.

For instructions to join the webinar, [please click here](#).

Annual REPI Help Session for FY17

Summary: This webinar is our annual special session to learn about changes to the REPI process for FY 2017, highlighting successful buffer proposal write-ups and answering your questions about REPI policy guidelines and changes involving the new online proposal system.

When: Wednesday, April 20, 2016 at 1:00PM ET.

For instructions to join the webinar, [please click here](#).

Past Webinars

If you missed the most recent REPI webinar, "National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Programs," please visit the [REPI website](#) to view the webinar recordings or [contact us](#) for more information. Below is a sampling of some key points and lessons learned from the recent webinars.

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Programs

- NFWF has numerous programs that can support land acquisition, improve waters, or habitat restoration and management, but many are region or ecosystem specific, so check www.nfwf.org for details.
- NFWF is increasingly a strong partner with DoD, ranging from grants that have supported the acquisition of buffer lands around multiple installations to providing installation-specific services at MCB Camp Lejeune for the Recovery and Sustainment Program.
- NFWF encourages innovation and is constantly developing new programs – contact your regional NFWF office to discuss opportunities if an existing program doesn't meet your needs.

REPI in the News

Historic Lompoc Valley Farm Protected

KEYT NewsChannel 3 (Santa Barbara, CA) reports that a 780-acre property next to Vandenberg Air Force Base is now permanently protected, due to the purchase of an agricultural conservation easement. The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County and the Trust for Public Land purchased the easement through matching funds from DoD's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program with funds from USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Services Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, as allowed

under REPI statute. This topic also appeared in stories in the **Noozhawk** (Santa Barbara, CA) and **Edhat** (Santa Barbara, CA).



The Lompoc Valley property is surrounded by Vandenberg AFB on three sides and is less than a half-mile from the impact limit line for Space Launch Complex-3, used to launch the Atlas V rocket. *Photo courtesy of Baroda Farms.*



The Delta IV Heavy rocket, pictured lifting off from Vandenberg AFB, stands 235 feet tall and is America's most powerful liquid-fueled rocket.

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