



2020 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards Environmental Quality, Non-Industrial Installation Award

Each year since 1962, the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) has honored installations, teams, and individuals for outstanding achievements in Department of Defense (DoD) environmental programs. These accomplishments include outstanding conservation activities, innovative environmental practices, and partnerships that improve quality of life and promote efficiencies without compromising DoD's mission success. The 2020 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards cycle encompasses an achievement period from October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2019 (Fiscal Year (FY) 2018-2019). A diverse panel of 54 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. These nine categories cover six subject areas including natural resources conservation, environmental quality, sustainability, environmental restoration, cultural resources management, and environmental excellence in weapon system acquisition.

About the Environmental Quality, Non-Industrial Installation Award

The Environmental Quality, Non-Industrial Installation award recognizes efforts to ensure mission accomplishment and the protection of human health and the environment in the areas of environmental planning, waste management, and compliance with environmental laws and regulations (e.g., Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery 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. Non-industrial installations are large or small installations that include ranges, test centers, contracting and policy agencies/organizations/offices, and research and development centers. The 2020 winner of the Environmental Quality, Non-Industrial Installation award is *Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, California*.

About Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, California

Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar is in San Diego, California, and encompasses 23,065 acres of marine terrace and undeveloped coastal foothill. MCAS Miramar provides air station facilities and property, services, material support, and training venues for the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing and other tenants. With more than 15,000 civilians, service members, and their families working and living on Station, and over 260 helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft assigned to the installation, MCAS Miramar is the largest Air Station in the Marine Corps. The Air Station plays an important role in the San Diego community as an economic engine and ambassador of the military mission. The MCAS Miramar Environmental Management Department (EMD) supports the installation and its tenants through its comprehensive compliance, pollution prevention, conservation, planning, training, and management activities.



Staff participate in one of 11 projects to support the west coast basing of the F-35 aircraft at MCAS Miramar. Projects include demolishing and constructing aircraft hangars; constructing a new ready service magazine, communications facility, and simulator facility; expanding aircraft parking; and upgrading perimeter security.

Major Accomplishments in FY 2018-2019

- The MCAS Miramar EMD initiated an innovative project to remove per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) from 320,000 gallons of wastewater impacted by aqueous film forming foam (AFFF). The trailer-mounted system successfully remediated PFAS concentrations to levels below the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's health advisory level and the regional screening levels. This project also reduced the wastewater disposal costs by more than \$5/gallon, saving the Marine Corps more than \$1 million in disposal costs.
- Recognizing that environmental compliance is key to maintaining environmental quality, MCAS Miramar staff improved the installation's Environmental Compliance Evaluation program. They implemented a rigorous, risk-based inspection schedule, creating a new compliance communication tool to improve leadership's understanding of compliance findings and their potential impact to missions, and initiated a new "action items" list for unit Environmental Compliance Coordinators to better identify facility, personnel, and environmental requirements and tailor corrective and preventive actions.
- To prepare for the onboarding of F-35 aircraft squadrons, personnel prepared and oversaw 103 categorical exclusion documents, 84 multi-use categorical exclusion consultations, and 43 design reviews while supporting ambitious F-35 military aircraft construction. Planning efforts included 11 military construction projects for which staff evaluated consequences individually and cumulatively with ongoing and planned projects, such as implementation of the new station energy security microgrid, ongoing vernal pool mitigation planning and integrated natural resources management plan implementation, and a new U.S. Army Reserve Center currently under construction.
- MCAS Miramar provides important habitat corridors and linkages to adjoining conserved open spaces. The installation is also home to 11 federally listed threatened and endangered species, thousands of acres of regionally sensitive habitat, and the largest remnant of vernal pool habitat in Southern California. In FY 2018, EMD staff worked closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to address mitigation requirements from military construction for rare vernal pool wetland habitat.
- Staff reviewed and adjusted hazardous waste disposal contracts in FY 2018, resulting in an annual savings of \$96,000. The installation's Qualified Recycling Program also generated more than \$240,000 in revenue in FY 2018 and FY 2019, which Miramar applied to the operating costs of the program and to morale, welfare, and recreation programs for active duty personnel.



MCAS Miramar EMD staff employ their mobile trailer-mounted treatment system to remove PFAS contaminants from AFFF-impacted wastewater. Water is processed through the system vessels of organoclay, granular activated carbon, ion-exchange resin media, and colloidal scavenger resin. After sampling, staff discharge the wastewater to the sanitary sewer.



EMD employees Mr. Erick Orsorio and Mr. Luis Romero help MCAS Miramar personnel during a hazardous waste collection event. MCAS Miramar also extends waste disposal and recycling services to installation employees during its annual collection event, encouraging Marines, Sailors, and civilians to properly dispose of waste year-round.