



2021 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards Environmental Quality, 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 2021 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards cycle encompasses an achievement period from October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2020 (Fiscal Years (FY) 2019-2020). A diverse panel of 47 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 eight categories. These eight categories cover five subject areas including natural resources conservation, environmental quality, sustainability, environmental restoration, and cultural resources management.

About the Environmental Quality, Industrial Installation Award

The Environmental Quality, 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. Industrial installations are large or small installations that have a primary mission of manufacturing, maintaining, rehabilitating, or storing military equipment such as depots, fleet readiness centers, air logistics centers, regional logistics/support centers, armaments plants, shipyards, and other manufacturing plants. The 2021 winner of the Environmental Quality, Industrial Installation award is *Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, California*.

About Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, California

Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Camp Pendleton is a full-service air installation that supports rotary- and fixed-wing aircraft. Located entirely within the fence line of sister installation Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, MCAS Camp Pendleton is 488 acres of largely developed floodplain in Southern California's San Diego County. The Air Station is protected by a 14,500-foot levee and 2,300-foot floodwall to safeguard the Air Station and aircraft from the Santa Margarita River during flood events. The mission of MCAS Camp Pendleton is to maintain and operate Air Station facilities and property, providing support and services that enable I Marine Expeditionary Force, tenant units, and visiting units to maintain and enhance their mission capability and combat readiness. MCAS Camp Pendleton's Environmental Department maintains the vital balance between mission accomplishment and protecting human health and the environment. Although small, comprising eight permanent staff members, the MCAS Camp Pendleton Environmental Department adeptly meets ever-changing regulatory demands.



MCAS Camp Pendleton as seen from above. The Air Station is located adjacent to the Santa Margarita River and located above the Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin and aquifers. The proximity to these important natural resources is the driving force for the Environmental Department's focus on environmental quality and pollution prevention.

Major Accomplishments in FY 2019-2020

- MCAS Camp Pendleton partnered with the Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office (CFWO) to remove vegetation obstructions in the runway clear zone. The vegetation obstructions violated DoD's Airfield and Heliport Planning manual and posed a significant safety concern to pilots and aircrew operating at MCAS Camp Pendleton. In 2014, the project was estimated to cost \$20 million, which was too costly. In August 2019, MCAS Camp Pendleton Environmental Department worked with CFWO to re-scope the project and conduct a new, streamlined National Environmental Policy Act Environmental Assessment. Collaboration with CFWO decreased the habitat mitigation requirement, drastically reducing the project price to \$7.8 million.
- MCAS Camp Pendleton implemented several pollution prevention initiatives to minimize the potential impacts of hazardous materials (HAZMAT) and hazardous wastes. In FY 2019-2020, MCAS Camp Pendleton used over 380,000 recycled red rags for HAZMAT spot cleanups that staff members could launder and reuse, rather than disposable wipes. In addition, the Environmental Department recycled nearly 30,000 gallons of jet propellant and over 11,000 gallons of used oils. Together, all the pollution prevention initiatives saved MCAS Camp Pendleton nearly \$2 million. In addition to providing cost savings, these efforts reduced the amount of HAZMAT used through the FYs, drastically decreasing the risk of spills or releases.
- The MCAS Camp Pendleton Environmental Department installed and maintained Smart Sponge filters on all flight deck storm drains. The Smart Sponges remove sediment and hydrocarbons from water and prevent all trash and debris from entering the drain. They dramatically reduce the amount of petroleum, oils, and lubricants travelling to the storm drains during a rain event. Since installing the Smart Sponges, MCAS Camp Pendleton has not tested high for these constituents in any of the four annually mandated tests.
- The Comprehensive Environmental Training and Education Program (CETEP) ensures that all personnel understand the materials they work with, are certified to handle HAZMAT, and receive training in First Responder Operations. In FY 2019-2020, the CETEP trained 455 hazardous material handlers and first responders and trained 1,800 personnel in Environmental Awareness. The program ensures there is a spill containment and rapid response capability at every squadron, which protects human health and the environment.



An AH-1Z Viper flies over the Riparian Scrub in the MCAS Camp Pendleton Runway Clear Zone. MCAS Camp Pendleton partnered with CFWO to reach a mutually beneficial solution: remove the hazards on the Air Station and restore similar habitat in the local community.



MCAS Camp Pendleton CETEP students don protective gear to exercise First Responder Operations. Working with HAZMAT on a daily basis during the maintenance of the aircraft aboard the Air Station, Marine Aircraft Group 39 personnel require extensive training to ensure the safe handling of HAZMAT and a rapid response to spills that could threaten human health or the environment.