

2020 Secretary of Defense Environmental Award Request Nomination Narrative  
Natural Resources Conservation - Team  
Defense Supply Center Columbus (DSCC) Environmental Division

Introduction:

DSCC in Columbus, Ohio is the Land and Maritime Supply Chain headquarters for the Defense Logistics Agency. DSCC manages 2.1 million items, and supports more than 145,000 customers throughout the military services, civil agencies, and other Department of Defense organizations. DSCC awards over 707,000 contracts annually, supports nearly 1,400 weapon systems, handles over 6.7 million orders on a yearly basis, with annual sales topping \$3.5 billion. It is a unique installation that capitalizes on the synergy of state, federal and defense organizations such as the Ohio National Guard and Reserves, a new Veterans Administration Clinic, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, and Defense Information Systems Agency, which are collocated on or near the site.

The DSCC Environmental Division team's four members support this important mission by ensuring that DSCC maintains compliance with all environmental laws and regulations and sustainably manages its natural resources. The team has created a model small installation natural resources conservation program that goes well beyond compliance by implementing innovative initiatives that create a more pleasing and sustainable natural environment for employees and visitors to the installation. The team's natural resources outreach efforts are also a model for how a small installation can go beyond what is required for regulatory compliance, while effectively supporting mission goals. The following narrative provides details on their exemplary outreach through collaboration with federal and state regulators and public interest groups. In addition, the DSCC Environmental Division team has developed a number of unique ways to raise natural resources awareness using traditional classroom and online methods combined with special awareness events, opportunities for hands on participation and projects that when completed provide opportunities for individuals to experience firsthand the importance of a healthy natural environment and how to protect and restore it. These outreach efforts target the DSCC workforce at large and the children enrolled in the DSCC Child Development Center (CDC).

Background:

Nicole Goicochea – Lead Environmental Protection Specialist, Environmental Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Samuel Zentkovich – Environmental Protection Specialist, Environmental Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Nicholas Doss – Environmental Protection Specialist, Environmental Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Robert Scalamera – Environmental Protection Specialist, Environmental Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Matthew Foreman – Lead General Engineer, Installation Management Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Anthony Cea – Facility Engineer, Installation Management Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Julie Seymour – Deputy Facility Engineer, Installation Management Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Shawn Burkhart – Maintenance Mechanic Supervisor, Installation Management Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

James Abbott – Mason, Installation Management Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Michael Cox – Carpenter, Installation Management Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

David White – Maintenance Worker, Installation Management Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Jeff Laughery – Maintenance Worker, Installation Management Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Stephen Feeman – Maintenance Mechanic, Installation Management Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Scott Emrick – Maintenance Mechanic, Installation Management Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Zachary Lower – Maintenance Worker, Installation Management Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

James Faught – Maintenance Worker, Installation Management Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Allen Robey – Maintenance Worker, Installation Management Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

George Nelson – Electric Forklift Repairer, Installation Management Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Gary Tarr – Electromotive Mechanic, Installation Management Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Michael Wood – Chief Security and Emergency Services, Security and Emergency Services Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Paul Batory - Deputy Chief Security and Emergency Services, Security and Emergency Services Division, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Steven Coulson - Chief of MWR, MWR, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Michiel DeVito – Family Services Program Manager, MWR, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Jennifer Russell – Marketing Manager, MWR, Installation Management (Defense Logistics Agency) at DSCC

Position Description:

The Environmental Division portion of the team is responsible for maintaining environmental compliance at the Defense Supply Center Columbus. This includes implementing the following programs: Air Quality, Water Quality, Asbestos/Lead, Fuel Storage Tanks, Hazardous Waste/Material, NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act), Pesticide Management, Pollution Prevention, Sustainability, Installation Restoration, Potable Water, Solid Waste (Recycling/composting), Cultural/ Natural Resources Management, and Environmental Management Systems. The Installation Management Division portion of the team is responsible for all projects and activities on the installation to include carpentry, masonry, mechanic and shop functions, project design, and contract oversight. The Security and Emergency Services portion of the team is responsible for overseeing the police and fire forces on the installation, as well as physical security and antiterrorism. The MWR portion of the team is responsible for all MWR functions on the installation to include managing the golf course, CDC, outdoor recreation, and ticket sales.

Relevant Awards:

Ohio Department of Natural Resources certification of DSCC as a USA Tree City, January 2018 and January 2019

DLA Installation Management Director's 'Ya Done Good' Coin for USA Tree City Certification, May 2019 – Nicole Goicochea

Agency Management Review Star Performer, August 2019 – Nicole Goicochea

## Summary of Accomplishments (Oct 2017 – Sep 2019):

### **Environmental Enhancement:**

DSCC was certified as a USA Tree City in 2018 and 2019 by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the Arbor Day Foundation. Tree City USA is a nationwide program that provides the framework necessary for communities to manage and expand their urban forest. DSCC has achieved Tree City USA status by meeting four core standards of sound urban forestry management: maintaining a tree board, having a tree ordinance, spending at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry and celebrating Arbor Day. The Environmental Division has prevented future planting of invasive species by implementation a Tree Permit system. The USA Tree City initiative is an example of a strong partnership with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

On April 23, 2018, the DLA team planted 100 trees to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of DSCC. The grove consists of eight different native species, both deciduous and evergreen varieties. Posters were displayed at the event to communicate the importance of planting native trees. This planting displays our commitment to preserving and improving natural resources, specifically our urban forest.

In September 2018, the team partnered with MWR to create Hope Garden in Mission Park. This is a very special place which was established as a living memorial to those who have lost their loved ones to domestic violence and child abuse and a symbol of the resilience of the survivors. In the fall of 2018, twelve native trees were planted and dedicated to victims and survivors of domestic violence and child abuse by MWR in a Command attended opening of Hope Garden. MWR published this information in through posters, L&M website articles, and through Command Daily Announcements. The twelve trees, six Whitespire Birch and six Cumulus Serviceberry each represent a victim from the military and/ or Ohio who passed away in 2018. Adjacent to Hope Garden is a bench that invites visitors to stop and reflect on the hope that someday domestic violence and child abuse will be eliminated. In spring of 2019 a combination of native seeds and seedlings were planted. April is the designated Child Abuse Prevention Month and blue is the color associated with the cause. As associates walk Mission Park, they can anticipate seeing a variety of blue blooms around Hope Garden as early as this fall. The seeds and seedlings included five native perennials, all various shades of blue. They are northern blue flag iris, woodland phlox, blue eyed grass, New England aster and great blue lobelia. The blossoms will return each year from spring until the first frost. All species in the garden, including trees and flowers, are native and selected for their support of pollinators at various times during the growing season. The garden is an ongoing project of DSCC's Environmental Division and MWR's Family Advocacy Program which is added to every year.

On May 6, 2019, DSCC celebrated Arbor Day. To commemorate the Tree City USA designation bestowed on DSCC, the Site Director read the DSCC Arbor Day Proclamation in front of a ceremonial planting. Nineteen native trees were planted in an open lawn area near the Police and Fire Memorial and the Exchange. The trees will beautify and cool the area. The tree varieties include Serviceberry, Chinkapin Oak, and Northern Catalpa. All three varieties benefit wildlife through flowers, berries, and/or acorns. The Site Director and Lead Environmental

Protection Specialist met with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources during the Tree City USA recognition ceremony at Capital University. During the event, DSCC was recognized with a Tree City USA plaque, banner and road sign. Capital University also showcased their Tree City USA achievements, providing DSCC with new ideas for future goals. USA Tree City signs have been placed at each installation entrance to raise awareness about the importance of planting trees.



In 2019 the team designed a project to add 100 trees to the DSCC landscape. In order to justify the cost, these trees will be planted in two areas that were previously identified as needing obscuration for physical security. One of the sites is the CDC, which will be the site for the 2020 Arbor Day celebration. This celebration will involve educating the children about the importance of trees, while also keeping them safe!

In total (additional tree planting are discussed in other sections), close to 200 trees were planted during the award period and an additional 100 trees were designed and budgeted for during the award period and will be planted spring 2020. In addition, 200 failing, dead, or invasive trees were removed and replaced with 200 healthy and mostly native trees.

### **Conservation Education:**

The CDC garden has been planted every year since 2014. FY2018 and FY2019 were no exception. The CDC garden is a sensory garden planted with vegetables and flowers. Each plant is selected for ease of growing and sensory experience (sight, touch, smell, taste) and has been vetted by our Industrial Hygienist to ensure that all plants are 100% edible. (E.g., the tomato plant has toxic leaves, so it is not allowed in the CDC Garden.) Each year, the Environmental Division provides opening remarks and spends time assisting the children during the planting event. Every Kindergarten Prep student plants at least one seedling under the care of the team and CDC staff. The program also includes preschool and toddler classrooms in care of the garden. The CDC teachers discuss the importance of growing plants that help our pollinators while the children water and weed the garden throughout the growing season. The children bring their harvest to the Chef; who prepares and serves the fresh vegetables and herbs. There are even pumpkins for Halloween! Two rain barrels are kept in the garden area to ensure water is readily available for the children to use and to spark discussions about stormwater runoff and water conservation. During preparations to replant the CDC Garden in 2018, a caterpillar was identified on dill that had grown back from the previous year's plantings. The Kindergarten Prep classes were so excited that their planting was food and a host plant for a caterpillar! They were

even more excited to take care of it. The caterpillar was quickly named 'Houdini' for his ability to hang upside-down. Houdini happily munched away in his protected butterfly cage for about a week before becoming very 'sleepy.' Houdini stopped moving late on a Friday and by first thing Monday he had become a chrysalis. The children loved learning all about butterflies while their friend 'rested'. About seventeen days later Houdini spread his wings for the first time, he became a beautiful Eastern Black Swallowtail. The children gave him lots of sugar water and sunlight while his wings grew stronger. A couple of days later, they released him on the playground. There is no better way to learn about nature than experiencing it. With luck, this experience will remind the children of the importance of pollinators and the preservation of endangered species when they are adults.



A representative from the team visited the CDC in April 2019 to discuss landfills and how to reduce waste with seven preschool and Kindergarten Prep classes. The children enjoyed the discussion and were excited about reusing, reducing, recycling, and composting! The students help the Chef with composting efforts at the CDC beginning in 2019.

On April 25, 2019 the team handed out fifty native tree seedlings to children attending the DSCC Take Your Child to Work Day event. The seedlings were purchased from Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District, helping to support a fellow government agency. The Conservation District ensures all trees they sell are native to Franklin County, Ohio and are both sustainably and locally sourced. On April 26, 2019, an article was released discussing the benefits of planting native species at home to support pollinators and spend less time maintaining your landscape on the Land and Maritime environmental webpage and linked on the DLA Facebook account. The article was also discussed at installation meetings to raise awareness that planting a native garden can be a powerful tool to help pollinators to include the Environmental Coordination Committee and Tenants Meetings.

### **Land Use Management (Stream Erosion control and Stormwater Runoff Improvements, Invasive Species Removal):**

The Mason Run stream running through DSCC was identified as having several areas of substantial bank erosion. Some of the erosion is occurring in areas where concrete was added as a protective measure many years ago. The team partnered with Facilities on an erosion control project that is currently underway. So far, all of the concrete has been removed (except for a few necessary culverts) and the eroded bank areas are currently being re-sloped. Over the past decade, tens of cubic yards of soil has likely been lost. In the areas where the slope angle can be properly graded; native grasses will be planted to stop the erosion and add species habitat. In areas that have severe erosion and a steep slope angle; concrete matting will be applied. This material will also allow for the planting of native grasses; thereby also providing species habitat. This project is projected to be completed by May 2020. When additional funding becomes

available; the team plans to add native shade trees close to Mason Run. This will provide the stream shade; thereby increasing the quality of the stream habitat.

The Environmental Division has also partnered with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to revegetate a portion of a large detention pond. The area had recently been inhabited by a stand of invasive pear trees; which were removed. USFWS donated forty Black Willow stakes to DSCC. Live stakes are dormant cuttings from live plants that can be installed directly into the ground in areas prone to erosion. These cuttings will root and eventually grow into an adult shrub/tree and the roots will help to stabilize the soil. This native tree is great for erosion control, suited to the detention environment, and will support wildlife. The Environmental Division partnered with the Facilities Management Division to plant the forty stakes in November of 2018.

In September of 2019, several bio swales, which were created and planted with all native plants to assist with stormwater runoff, had also become impacted by invasive pear trees. The bio swales were weeded by hand to remove any identified invasive species. During that time, fourteen river birch trees were also added to one large bio swale. These native trees will assist the bio swale in intercepting rain water and reduce the impact on the two Installation streams (Mason Run and Turkey Run) during hard rains.

In 2019, the team wanted a better way to raise DSCC associate awareness regarding stormwater runoff issues. The team worked with the DLA Learning Management System (LMS) team and created a short ten minute video that all associates are required to take as part of the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer permit. The video is now available in LMS. The previous training was closer to thirty minutes long and focused on water bodies that were not local. The team took pictures of the Installation, utilized local water bodies, and referenced Ohio EPA regulations to keep it interesting and improve relevance to DSCC. To make the video more accessible, it was posted on YouTube. This allowed contractors and tenants to also partake in the training for the first time. The training discusses the importance of protecting stormwater by keeping sediment, oils, and other pollutants out of the storm drains. Also addressed is what to do if a sheen is observed at DSCC. Finally, it explains why protecting stormwater is important and ways that associates can protect it at home.

#### **Other Natural Resources Conservation:**

Pollinators are on the decline throughout the U.S. The main reason for the decline in populations is habitat loss and pesticide use. The team decided to establish a project to provide a natural pollinator habitat on DSCC. A native prairie refers to land in its original or natural state and is an important part of the ecosystem. The team worked to plant a three acre native prairie in December 2017 with assistance from Facilities. The prairie consists of all native Ohio grasses, perennials and annuals. This area is tended to annually. The mix was formulated for pollinators and contains blooms for spring, summer and fall. Additionally, the prairie has a 10-foot wide buffer of grass along a blacktop path that allows associates to take a walk and enjoy the flowers. Simultaneously, the team worked with MWR to plant the same seed mix at the Golf Course in the rough areas. The combined effort results in substantial pollinator habit and a reduced cost to DSCC. Because the prairie areas only have to be mowed once a year. This represents a

reduction in manpower because those same areas were previously mowed regularly throughout the growing season allowing those personnel to focus on other tasks. Originally, the team looked into contracting the planting and received cost estimates of \$3,500.00. After purchasing the seed and renting the equipment, capital expenditures were closer to \$500.00 to complete the project in-house.

### **Invasive Species Control and Pest Management:**

In October of 2017, the team partnered with Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and Facilities on a project to repair and expand the landscaping at DSCC. ODNR conducted a free site visit to DSCC and made recommendations for hardy native species to replace any failing ornamentals. The species selected were chosen for their beauty and benefit to the ecosystem, with an emphasis on pollinators. ODNR suggested a phased approach for adding trees to some of the spacious open grass areas across DSCC. DSCC then created a plan to fund and implement the project from 2018 - 2020. During the awards period, approximately two thirds of the project was completed with the rest of it wrapping up in spring of 2020. In the projects entirety approximately 200 trees will be removed and replaced.

In preparation to create Hope Garden (discussed in the Environmental Enhancement section above) in the fall of 2018, the Environmental Division teamed up with the Installation Management Division to remove a stand of invasive ornamental pear trees. These attractive ornamentals negatively impact ecosystems when they are released into the environment. The pear trees seed readily and create large stands which block out native undergrowth. Very few animals and insects can utilize the pear trees for food or habitat. Without the presence of the pear tree, those areas have the potential to support native plants which do offer food and habitat for pollinator and other insects and animals. The DSCC environmental team has recently written a Tree Ordinance that will prevent any future plantings of all cultivars of ornamental pear trees, and all other invasive species. The ordinance was signed by the DSCC Site Director in December of 2018. In the spring of 2019, pear trees were removed from all four detention ponds on the property.



### **Community Outreach:**

The team frequently partnered with MWR throughout FY2017 – FY2019 on community outreach. To make it official, on April 1, 2019 MWR kicked off an unprecedented initiative called EcoPromises where MWR Marketing Manager Jennifer Russell said “MWR is committed

to improving our processes today for a better, cleaner and safer environment tomorrow.” “We’ve partnered with [DLA Installation Management at Columbus Environmental Division](#) to identify ways we can be more eco-friendly in 2019 and beyond.”

At the April 1 kickoff, MWR rolled out their latest commitment to the workforce and environment - Eco Promises.

The Eco Promises campaign centers on a few key principles:

- Reduce plastic and styrofoam usage across all MWR Programs.
- Offer Eco-friendly options to our customers.
- Develop pollinator and native prairie habitats on the installation.
- Utilize solar chargers and renewable energy sources.
- Offer eco-friendly giveaways and free workshops.
- Manage food waste diversion and composting program at food service operations.
- Utilize eco-friendly products to clean and landscape MWR facilities.
- Maximize recycling efforts.

“Every year, we take a step back and look at our business to see what we can do better, how we can build brand equity, how we can make our customers feel good about doing business with us. Eco Promises helps us do all of those things,” MWR Chief Steve Coulson said. “We’re delighted to launch the program and committed to being good stewards of our resources.” MWR and the environmental team plan to review progress and search for additional green initiatives annually.

The team also helped to launch volunteer opportunities for associates under the EcoPromises initiative to include the Nest Box Team and the CDC Garden Team. The CDC Garden team assists ‘the team’ in cleaning up the CDC garden at the end of the season and preparing the beds for the next year and has been very successful in 2019. Another initiative, the Nest Box Team has had many successes as well, including a fully-fledged nest of native house wrens.

Native birds are threatened by loss of nesting habitat, so the team worked with MWR and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to place nest boxes on the DSCC Golf Course to supplement nesting sites from spring to fall of 2019. Three nest boxes were placed and monitored by the Nest Box Team. Native tree swallows and house wrens were spotted checking out all three boxes, and one nest and fledglings were produced for the first time at DSCC. The Nest Box team will be monitoring the boxes again in 2020 and seeking ways to increase the number of fledglings.



DSCC holds an annual Shred Day, which diverts materials from the landfill. That conserved landfill space saves one of our most important natural resources, land. In April of 2018, the team collaborated with MWR to save twenty one cubic yards or seven tons of paper from entering the local landfill. This number beat the April 2017 number by 2,340 pounds. Since a certified shredding company was contracted, employees benefited from knowing personally identifiable information security was ensured and recycled. Many employees partake and request the event annually.

## **Overall Natural Resources Conservation Management**

**Endangered Species Act (ESA) Compliance:** The team began a collaboration with the USFWS in July 2018 to obtain USFWS assistance with resource management planning. Recent additions to Endangered Species Act (ESA) listings indicated that an updated natural resources survey would be beneficial. This is particularly true for the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee and Northern Long-Eared Bat that have recently been listed as ESA endangered and threatened species, respectively. In lieu of hiring a contractor to do this work; USFWS conducted a site visit free of charge, to check for suitable threatened or endangered species habitat. No federally-listed endangered or threatened species were found at DSCC during the USFWS site visit or during previous species surveys. USFWS made recommendations for projects to improve the quality of the installation's natural resources. The partnership with USFWS has reduced cost to DLA and will increase productivity of future natural resources planning, between the two entities. DSCC is currently working with USFWS on a Memorandum of Agreement. The goals for this MOA include installation wide official threatened and endangered species surveys, assistance with invasive species removal, tree inventories, and general natural resource recommendations. USFWS has proposed a ballpark cost of this work to be \$25,000. This same work accomplished through an industry contract would cost over \$100,000. We are working to identify funding resources to pursue this opportunity.

### **Mission Enhancement (Solid Waste Diversion):**

DSCC began composting food waste offsite from the CDC Cafeteria and the main cafeteria in August of 2019. All pre-consumer food waste is composted from both locations utilizing a company which takes the scraps offsite by a company which provides bins and training as part of the DSCC integrated solid waste contract. Composting helps DSCC divert food waste from area landfills and turns it into a useful product for the local economy. DSCC is the first DLA site to compost food waste. This is a joint effort between the Environmental, Installation Management and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) teams that highlights our strong inter-divisional partnerships. The composting initiative began after a meeting with Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio (SWACO). SWACO has previously performed waste audits free of charge and continues to be a great partnership for DSCC. The SWACO meeting revealed a city-wide effort to increase composting. The addition of composting to the services on the integrated solid waste contract had very little additional cost because it allowed several other waste pickups to be moved from daily to weekly; and it helped to streamline the contract overall. In addition, as part of our educational outreach program, the team talked to Kindergarten Prep and preschool classroom students at the CDC about the composting effort. The team educated them on what composting means for the environment and how they will be a part of this effort.

In order to create a more concerted effort to ensure clean drinking water, and sufficient storm and sewer system maintenance, One Water Council was created in July 2018. The Council includes members from Environmental, Installation Management, and Safety Divisions. The Council has met bimonthly since its creation to discuss projects to include improvements to the sanitary and stormwater system. One example of a stormwater awareness project is the placement of markers on outfalls stating that they drain to waterways and dumping is prohibited. Drinking water safety projects include updating building plumbing.