



Engaging active-duty service members in habitat restoration, rare species conservation, and ecological science – Fact Sheet

Project # 18-842

Background:

Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) hosts 38 rare animal species including 6 listed under the Endangered Species Act. It is also an installation with a large standing garrison and many retiring service members seeking post transition job skills training. Creating a program, Environmental Restoration Warriors, that allows these personnel to assist in habitat and species management has helped JBLM meet its environmental and regulatory objectives (potentially preventing future species listings or training land closures) while simultaneously providing transition support to service members as well as positive community engagement with other volunteers and civilian conservation groups. This program's model shows promise for other installations, regions, and service branches.

Objective:

The goal of the Legacy funding request was to 1) solidify the existing program to better support transitioning service members and environmental management efforts at JBLM, 2) develop educational materials that could be used by other installations to initiate similar programs, and 3) seek a pathway to private donor donations that would allow the program at JBLM and similar program to support themselves over the long term.

Summary of Approach:

To solidify the existing program, we explored new relationships with JBLM Career Skills Programs (CSP), nearby installations, and permissive TDY (Temporary Duty Travel) options for nationwide participants. To develop and share educational materials, we hosted an in-person symposium at the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association (NMFWA) annual meeting and created a training manual on our program at JBLM that we can share with any interested persons. To seek pathways to private donations we explored 501(c)3 options as well as a relationship with the Colorado State University (CSU) Foundation as a potential funding partner.

Benefit:

Our internship program at JBLM produced over 16,000 hours of volunteer labor in FY19 alone, helping us meet environmental objectives, ensuring regulatory compliance, keeping training lands open, and

preventing future species listings. During this time, we also involved 27 active duty service members, providing them job skills training to help ensure their post-transition success. The program itself saved money and increased the efficacy of the DPW (Division of Parks and Wildlife) Fish & Wildlife and Forestry branches. We also built relationships with other installations and have shared out training manual with 15 people who expressed interest in exploring our idea. The expansion of this concept to other installations will provide mutual benefits to environmental efforts DoD-wide and America's warfighter community.

Accomplishments:

A new relationship with WorkEx (a JBLM CSP affiliate) was established to streamline our internship process. We also signed up our first Navy participant from nearby Bremerton Naval Shipyard as well as 3 Army personnel who participated through PTDY (Permissive Temporary Duty) arrangements from Ft Gordon, Ft Bliss, and Ft Benning. We hosted a successful symposium at the NMFWA annual meeting in Denver (March 2019) where we had about 75 attendees. We completed and submitted our training manual (contact us for a copy at the email address below). The 501(c)3 idea was a dead end but we built a website through Colorado State University (<https://operationwildlife.colostate.edu>) and gained permission to accept private donations through the CSU Foundation, although we are still waiting on approval from JBLM Administrative Law to follow through with this.

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For Open Publication

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Nov 12, 2020

Department of Defense
OFFICE OF PREPUBLICATION AND SECURITY REVIEW

