



Revision of DoD Biodiversity Conservation Handbook and Commander's Guide

Project # 07-247

Background:

In the mid 1990s the Department of Defense (DoD) Legacy Program funded a project designed to synthesize relevant principals from the field of conservation science for DoD natural resources managers, and to document the tools and approaches available to those managers to accomplish biodiversity conservation goals. This project resulted in the 1996 book "Conserving Biodiversity on Military Lands - A Handbook for Natural Resources Managers." As a follow up to the original 1996 handbook, a 'Commander's Guide to Biodiversity Conservation' color brochure was produced and well received in the military.

A decade later, in 2006, DoD Legacy funded a revised handbook titled "Conserving Biodiversity on Military Lands: A Guide for Natural Resources Managers" (2008 edition) to provide military natural resources personnel with up-to-date guidance in meeting their military and natural resources obligations in ways that promote biodiversity conservation while preserving the ability to conduct required testing and training activities.

Based on recommendations received through in-depth interviews and an online survey of several hundred Department of Defense natural resources staff and others, many encouraged the production of an updated "Commander's Guide to Biodiversity" as a follow on item to the revised 2008 edition of the Department of Defense biodiversity conservation handbook.

Objective:

The full color "Commander's Guide" brochure will describe for installation Commanders why biodiversity conservation is important for DoD and the nation. The brochure will highlight key facts, figures, and case studies from the revised handbook (2008 edition).

Summary of Approach:

This effort followed on the 2008 revision of the DoD Biodiversity Conservation Handbook to produce and distribute an updated DoD Commander's Guide to Biodiversity - a short full color brochure with photos, summary text, facts, and sample case studies from the book. In addition to producing this new brochure, NatureServe staff reviewed and updated website content and links for the online version of the revised

DoD Biodiversity Conservation Handbook, found at www.dodbiodiversity.org.



Orchid, Warren Grove Air National Guard Range, NJ. (© Douglas Ripley)

Benefit:

The revised DoD Biodiversity Conservation Handbook and Commander's Guide will:

- Allow installation commanders to better accomplish their military testing and training obligations through enhanced capacity to carry out landscape-scale analyses and planning activities that address encroachment challenges in areas surrounding DoD installations;
- Support DoD natural resources management strategies by providing specific guidance needed to implement biodiversity conservation strategies at the installation level;
- Strengthen the ability of DoD to meet primary military objectives by proactively managing sensitive biodiversity before species are federally listed; and
- Serve as valuable tools to inform DoD stakeholders and the general public of the importance of military lands and the critical need to maintain their environmental well-being in order to successfully meet their primary military function.

Accomplishments:

At the conclusion of this project, NatureServe has completed and produced an updated 2008 edition of the handbook and Commander's Guide. The related website will serve as an ongoing resource and interactive tool for DoD natural resources managers and others.

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