



Department of Defense National Public Lands Day 2014

Project # 14-086

Background:

National Public Lands Day began in 1994 with three sites and 700 volunteers. Coordinated by the National Environmental Education Foundation, National Public Lands Day (NPLD) is the nation's largest single-day effort for public lands.

In 2014, approximately 175,000 volunteers worked at 2,132 locations in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Along with the Department of Defense (DoD), seven federal agencies, nonprofits and many state and local governments participate in this annual day of caring for shared lands. NPLD takes place on the last Saturday of September. In 2014, National Public Lands Day took place on Saturday, Sept. 27. In 2015, NPLD will occur on Saturday, Sept. 26.

The DoD Legacy Resource Management Program joined the NPLD partnership in 1999 to support volunteer habitat restoration projects on military installations open to the public for recreation throughout the United States. Legacy has provided financial support for NPLD events over the past 16 years.

Volunteers at Joint Base Langley in Virginia enhanced and restored the natural and cultural resources of Bethel Park.



Objective:

A primary objective of NPLD is to enlist those who use public lands for recreation to help care for the natural places they enjoy. NPLD educates Americans about critical environmental and natural resources issues and the need for shared stewardship of these valued, irreplaceable lands.

Summary of Approach:

NPLD projects that take place on military installations with some lands open to the public for recreation are eligible for DoD Legacy funding. This is a competitive funding application process. Projects emphasize habitat and cultural restoration. In 2014, the maximum amount awarded to each site was \$6,500. Funds may be used for equipment, materials and enhancements to land used by the public, but not for T-shirts, food or labor. The application is at: publiclandsday.org. Applications are due in the summer.

Benefit:

The military benefits from enhancing and restoring lands for recreation with much of this work directed to improving natural habitat for wildlife or cultural resources. Participating in NPLD provides the natural and cultural resources managers the means and labor to complete small installation-specific projects that while beneficial to the installations, may not otherwise get done due to budget or manpower limitations. These projects improve habitat and biodiversity for common and rare species alike, which may help reduce the need for intense management and constraints to installation operations.

Additionally, NPLD provides an opportunity for the military to invite the community to learn about these lands and understand the unique challenges surrounding natural resource management on DoD installations.

Accomplishments:

In 2014, 25 applicants were selected to receive Legacy funds. Many sites focused on improving habitat for pollinator species such as bees, birds, bats and insects. The following are examples of work done at selected military installations:

- Bellows Air Force Base in Hawaii—volunteers planted native trees, shrubs and plants to restore riparian habitat along Puha Stream.
- Fort McClellan Army National Guard Training Center in Alabama—volunteers installed sportsmen blinds with wheelchair accessible trails to assist disabled hunters.
- Naval Support Activity Hampton Roads Portsmouth Annex in Virginia—volunteers participated in an oyster gardening workshop and created a pollinator garden, providing wildlife habitat and a place for Wounded Warriors and personnel to relax.

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