



# Utilizing Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas to Effectively Reduce Re-infestation of Invaders on six (6) Military Bases and Adjacent Lands in Florida

Project # 10-437

## Background:

Since 2009 The Nature Conservancy (TNC), with the continued support of Eglin Air Force Base (AFB) and through generous funding provided by the Department of Defense (DoD) Legacy Resource Management Program, has worked with military bases in Florida to establish and/or strengthen six Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs). These CISMAs are helping to reduce reinfestation from invasive species on six Department of Defense (DoD) bases and three service branches including: Eglin Air Force Base (AFB), Tyndall AFB, Camp Blanding Army National Guard (ANG), Cape Canaveral Air Force Station (AFS)/Patrick AFB Avon Park Air Force Range (AFR) and Naval Air Station (NAS) Key West. These types of partnerships support range sustainment, mission flexibility, and imperiled species protection for DoD in one of the fastest growing regions in the United States. This project also leveraged statewide support for CISMAs through the Florida Invasive Species Partnership (FISP).

## Objective:

Our overall objective was to have strong CISMAs, supporting DoD and other partners, that would collectively address the threat of invasive species in their boundaries. Phase II of this project proposed to:

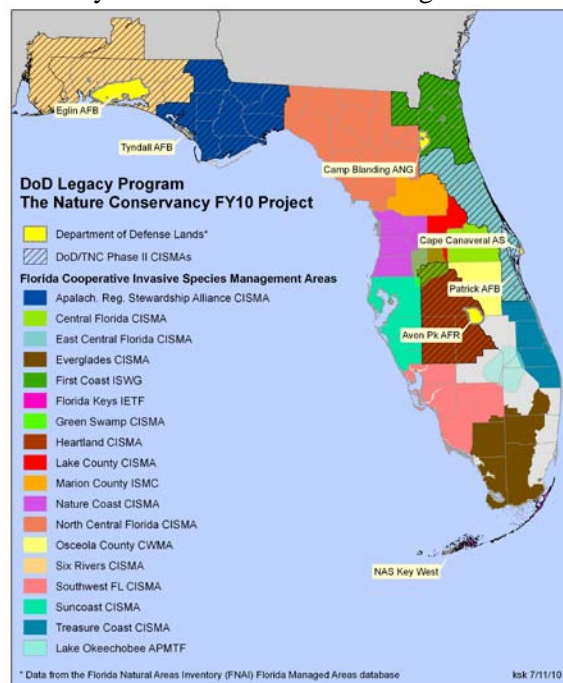
- Create a CISMA supporting Cape Canaveral AFS/ Patrick AFB; strengthen 5 existing CISMAs in support of Eglin AFB, Tyndall AFB, Camp Blanding ANG, Avon Park AFR and NAS Key West;
- Work collaboratively with DoD and other partners to create a five-year Strategic Plan detailing invasive species priorities for the new CISMA (Cape Canaveral AFS/Patrick AFB); update the 2007 Apalachicola Invasive Non-Native Species Management Plan (Tyndall AFB); and, create Annual Work Plans identifying cooperative projects for the other four existing CISMAs; and
- Complete on-the-ground invasive species control projects prioritized by and buffering 5 bases.

## Summary of Approach:

Invasive non-native species have been identified by all of the DoD installations as both ecological and economic threats to the natural communities and native species that they manage. To address this threat, TNC proposed to work with DoD installations to create strong CISMAs that would serve to buffer DoD as well

as include these CISMAs under the statewide umbrella of the Florida Invasive Species Partnership (FISP) in order to tie them into a network of CISMAs and provide additional resources and continuity in approach.

CISMAs encourage development of local partnerships among federal, state, and local governmental agencies, tribes, individuals, and other interested groups to manage invasive species in a defined geographic area addressing both public and private lands. The CISMA process results in efforts that work across boundaries, pools limited resources and similar priorities, and creates a unity of voice that will propel the issue of invasive species to the forefront of the public's sight as well as improve efficiency and effectiveness in management.



## Benefit:

The benefits of this project are creating partnerships that result in reducing invasive species re-infestations on and adjacent to six military bases in Florida as well as protecting high quality natural areas and imperiled species. Additional benefits to DoD include:

- Allowing for invasive species treatment across property boundaries by working with agency partners and
- Assisting neighboring private landowners in removing invasive species;
- Leveraging funding and reducing the high maintenance cost caused by re-infestations;
- Expanding public awareness of invasive species.



## Accomplishments:

One new CISMA was created and five CISMAs were strengthened. Each of the CISMAs have strong DoD partners and has worked to solidify their structure and collectively agree on future steps through the creation of strategic plans and annual work plans. In addition, each of the CISMAs completed control projects on lands adjacent to or buffering military bases:

**Six Rivers CISMA - DoD Partner: Eglin AFB:** TNC Ecosystem Support Team treated Chinese tallow, mimosa and cogongrass on 80 acres of heavily-infested State of Florida and Okaloosa County properties buffering Eglin AFB.



**Apalachicola Regional Stewardship Alliance (ARSA) CISMA - DoD Partner: Tyndall AFB:** TNC coordinated treatment of cogongrass and mimosa on private lands adjacent to Apalachicola National Forest and Japanese stiltgrass on Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserve adjacent to Torreya State Park.

**Heartland CISMA - DoD Partner: Avon Park AFR:** TNC Ecosystem Support Team treated 19 acres of cogongrass infestations on Avon Park AFR property. TNC also coordinated treatment of 6 acres of Old World climbing fern on a private land literally “across the fence” from Avon Park AFR.



**First Coast Invasive Working Group - DoD Partner: Camp Blanding ANG:** TNC Resource Management Support Team hand pulled taro along ~1 mile of the

North Fork of Black Creek on Camp Blanding property. This “Outstanding Florida Water” provides habitat to the listed Black Creek crayfish. The team also treated ~1 acre of Chinaberry trees on Camp Blanding property.



**East Central Florida CISMA - DoD Partner: Patrick AFB/Cape Canaveral AFS:** TNC coordinated 2 CISMA workdays on the AF/DoD REPI funded conservation easement portion of the Coastal Jewel sanctuary. Targeted plants were Chinese tallow, cogongrass and Brazilian pepper. During the workdays, partners removed over 500 Chinese tallow trees and saplings under powerlines at the site.



**Florida Keys Invasive Exotic Task Force - DoD Partner: NAS Key West:** TNC coordinated a CISMA workday, removing 4 cubic yards of night blooming cereus, an invasive cactus, off of private properties that abut the NAS Key West lands along Boca Chica beach.

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