



Natural Selections

Legacy Program Update

FY 2009 Pre-Proposals submission deadline closing in, enter your proposals in the tracker before September 5, 2008: The Legacy Program is accepting proposals through the Legacy Tracker until Sept 5, 2008, local time. The Legacy Tracker website is www.dodlegacy.org. Visit the website's Guidelines page for details.

Legacy Project Highlight of the Month

Legacy Project 07-334 The North Carolina Sandhills Weed Management Area: Sharing DoD Invasive Plant Species Management Strategies with Installation Neighbors

The North Carolina Sandhills Weed Management Area (NCSWMA) is composed of federal, state, and local agencies working with public and private landowners to prevent noxious and invasive weeds from causing ecological and economic damage in the region. Organized in 2006 with assistance from the US Army Engineer Research and Development Center, Construction Engineering Research Laboratory (ERDC-CERL) and the DoD Legacy Resource Management Program, NCSWMA is the premier Weed Management Area in North Carolina. The NCSWMA partnership provide the increased efficiency, shared responsibilities, and collective vision necessary for successful regional invasive plant management. Its diverse membership includes: Fort Bragg, Camp Mackall, Pope Air Force Base, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, The Nature Conservancy, Sandhills Ecological Institute, Sandhills Area Land Trust, private commercial foresters and concerned citizens. However, NCSWMA is still in the early stages of development, when technical, logistical, and physical support is needed to ensure its future success.

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In The News

The Value of Regional Partnerships in Promoting Sustainable Ranges

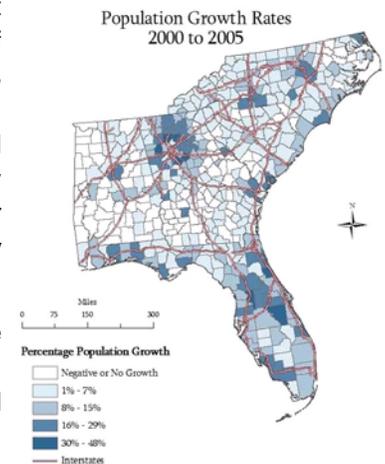
By Dr. Roel R. Lopez

Office of Secretary Defense, Environmental Readiness and Safety

The Fierce Urgency of Now

The human population is growing and shifting rapidly in the United States. Urban areas are sprawling, resulting in haphazard development and a scarcity of resources such as water and air space. These changing land uses affects the ability to test and train on our nation's military installations.

These forces have resulted, for example, in the loss of agricultural land, critical wildlife habitats, and working



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Naturally Speaking

From the Desk of L. Peter Boice,
DoD Conservation Team Leader and Director, Legacy Program



Partnerships. They long have been a fundamental building block of DoD's natural resources conservation program. December marks the 20th anniversary of our first national MOU with a conservation-based NGO, The Nature Conservancy. Other national partnerships have followed, the earliest and most successful being DoD's Partners In Flight program. More recently, we have fostered partnerships with National Public Lands Day, the Cooperative Ecosystem Study Units program, the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign, Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, and Bat Conservation International, among others.

The Legacy Program's motto, "Stewardship-Leadership-Partnership," graced our first Report to Congress in September 1991, and since has been a constant guiding principle. Our Web site <http://www.dodlegacy.org> provides many examples of effective collaborative projects.

DoD embraced the concepts of regional ecosystem partnerships in 1994 through both policy changes and major funding for the Mojave Desert Ecosystem Initiative. Subsequent regional efforts have included the Sonoran Desert, Great Basin, and Gulf Coastal Plain. Various legislative initiatives and Memoranda of Understanding have further facilitated the establishment of new global, national, regional, and local partnerships.

But why devote so much time and energy to something that can be difficult to establish, maintain, or quantify? Because in a complex, interconnected and rapidly changing world, we simply can't afford not to. Peruse this list of potential benefits and you'll understand why we place so much emphasis on partnering. Partnerships can:

- Improve the understanding of DoD mission and stewardship needs.
- Place DoD lands in a larger regional context.
- Identify regional threats to the natural environment both on and off military lands.
- Integrate smaller projects into regional planning efforts.
- Reduce external pressures on DoD lands by focusing on large-scale habitat conservation.
- Enhance resource sharing (e.g., funds, personnel, equipment, and technical information) and reduce costs.
- Demonstrate DoD's continued commitment to and leadership in conservation efforts.
- Assist in INRMP development and implementation.
- Build trust on issues of mutual interest by promoting transparency in decision-making.
- Enhance communications and provide a forum for effective information sharing.
- Encourage long-term management commitments.
- Develop win-win solutions to complex natural resource issues.



Training

Workshops, Interagency Training Announcements and More



Maintaining and Implementing Sustainable INRMPs Course: September 16-18, 2008 at the National Conservation Training Center, in Shepherdstown, WV. The three parties to the Sikes Act will participate in an offering of Maintaining and Implementing Sustainable INRMPs Course. This course will be held Tuesday, September 16, 2008 through Thursday, September 18, 2008 in Shepherdstown, WV at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Conservation Training Center. The course is designed for tri-party participation to highlight the importance of cooperation throughout the INRMP process. Registration is currently closed. Contact Patty McKenna at 703-412-7482 or mckenna_patricia@bah.com for more information!

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting: September 7-12, 2008 at the Saratoga Hilton, in Saratoga Springs, NY. The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies—the organization that represents all of North America’s fish and wildlife agencies—promotes sound management and conservation, and speaks with a unified voice on important fish and wildlife issues. The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is the collective voice of North America’s fish and wildlife agencies at every level of government. The Association provides its member agencies and their senior staff with coordination services that range from migratory birds, fish habitat, and invasive species, to conservation education, leadership development, and international relations. The Association represents its state agency members on Capitol Hill and before the Administration on key conservation and management policies, and works to ensure that all fish and wildlife entities work collaboratively on the most important issues. For more details and to register visit <http://www.fishwildlife.org/annualmeet.html>.

USEPA Online EMS Training Course: (Online) This online course provides an overview of how environmental management systems (EMS) can support facility programs. The course takes about one hour to complete and may be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/ems/ems-101/ems101.htm>.



Announcements and Events of Interest

A Short List of Future Events of Interest to the Conservation Community



NEW! The Wildlife Society 15th Annual Conference: November 8-12, 2008 in Miami, FL. The conference is an excellent opportunity to learn and debate cutting-edge research, management practices, and policy issues. A variety of workshops will provide hands-on training in new management techniques. It's also a great place to network among 1,500 wildlife biologists from across the U.S., Canada, the Caribbean, and worldwide. You're sure to come away with ideas and inspiration for tackling the challenges in your daily work environment. During this conference, DoD is sponsoring a 1/2 day symposium on "Biodiversity Management in the Department of Defense". To register or for more details visit <http://joomla.wildlife.org/miami08/>.

NEW! 8th Annual NAPPC International Conference: October 22-24, 2008, in Washington, DC. The work of the NAPPC partnership has brought significant attention to the plight of the continent's pollinators. From the NAS NRCS Study on the Status of Pollinators to the US Postal Service Pollination Stamps to the IABIN Western Hemisphere Pollinator Data Portal to National Pollinator Week, this collaboration needs your help to keep our momentum moving forward for pollinators. Wednesday, October 22, 2008 will include an optional pollinator field trip to Plummers Island and the National Museum of Natural History Coevolution Hall, followed by an opening evening reception at the Organization of American States where invitations will be extended to the Ministers of the Environment, the Ministers of Agriculture, and numerous Ambassadors from across the Western Hemisphere. For details visit www.napcc.org or to register go to www.regonline.com/NAPPC2008.

35th Annual Conference on Ecosystems Restoration and Creation: November 6 - 8, 2008 at the John R. Trinkle Building located on the Plant City Campus of the Hillsborough Community College (Plant City, Florida). Kiran C. Patel Center for Global Solutions at University of South Florida is joining the Institute of Florida Studies in co-hosting this year's Conference. The Conference provides a broad forum for exchange of results of the latest research and experience with restoration, creation, and management of ecosystems. The theme of this year's conference is "Assessment of Wetland Mitigation and Mitigation Banks". Visit <http://www.hccfl.edu/ifs/conference/index.html> for details.

CALL FOR POSTERS! Partners in Environmental Technology Symposium 2008 Symposium: December 2 – 4, 2008, in Washington D.C. The Partners in Environmental Technology Technical Symposium & Workshop will take place December 2 – 4, 2008 in Washington, D.C. This event is sponsored by the Strategic Environmental Research & Development Program (SERDP <http://www.serdp.org/>), DoD's environmental science and technology program, and the Environmental Security Technology Certification Program (ESTCP <http://www.estcp.org/>), DoD's environmental technology demonstration and validation program. This year's Symposium & Workshop has been expanded to a full three-day format that will offer a more comprehensive technical program featuring 13 technical sessions and five short courses. Technical sessions will highlight research and innovative technologies that assist the Department of Defense (DoD) in addressing increasingly complex environmental and mission sustainability challenges. Over the course of the three days, short courses on select technologies in the environmental restoration and munitions management areas will offer unique training opportunities on recent advancements in science and technology. For the most up-to-date information about the Symposium, visit <http://www.serdp-estcp.org/Symposium>.



Legacy, continued from page 1

Initial NCSWMA planning sessions specifically identified the need to: 1) communicate invasive plant species identification information and management strategies, 2) implement early detection/rapid response (ED/RR) control efforts, and 3) recruit additional active membership for leadership and supporting roles. This project addresses these needs, by sharing invasive plant species management strategies and experiences developed on Fort Bragg and Camp Mackall with the NCSWMA.

Fort Bragg and Camp Mackall's invasive plant species management program, with the technical and logistical support of ERDC-CERL, has implemented invasive plant species control efforts, using strategies developed from an Integrated Non-Native Invasive Plant Species Management Plan. After only a single year of implementation, invasive plant species control efforts successfully reduced populations of 13 highly invasive plant species identified for ED/RR control. Many of Fort Bragg's strategies for ED/RR control, and integrated management planning can also be applied throughout the region to proactively prevent the spread of invasive plant species onto Fort Bragg and Camp Mackall.



Early detection/rapid response teams were instrumental in the control treatment of targeted species not yet widely distributed in the region.

The approach taken to meet the project objective builds upon Fort Bragg's highly successful invasive plant species management program and upon insights gained during NCSWMA development. Specifically, key technical, logistical and physical support will be provided to aid NCSWMA with regional invasive plant management strategies:

- Technical support – An online regional center of expertise will be developed to provide NCSWMA with technical support for invasive plant species identification and management. The online regional center of expertise will utilize the skills of expert botanists and land managers in the NC Sandhills to communicate invasive plant species identification information and management strategies. This will provide a highly effective and convenient way of dispersing important invasive plant species information to the land managers that need it. The online regional center of expertise will be integrated with the NCSWMA website (www.ncswma.org), which allows for simple data transfer, question and comment posting, and information archiving.
- Logistical support – A Weed Management Area Coordinator will be hired to support NCSWMA logistics. The position will support the NCSWMA on all levels; organizing meetings, coordinating events, recruiting membership, writing funding proposals, leading volunteer work days, facilitating communication amongst the members, etc. During the NCSWMA planning workshop in July of 2006, participants identified the need to hire a Coordinator to assist them. A Coordinator would greatly improve the effectiveness of the NCSWMA by supporting its members, who are currently participating as volunteers with busy schedules that preclude them from coordinating all the logistics necessary for the developing group.
- Physical support – A seasonal Early Detection/Rapid Response (ED/RR) Field Team will be hired to assist participating NCSWMA landowners in searching for and treating infestations of ED/RR species. During the NCSWMA planning workshop, participants also identified the need to establish a seasonal crew to aggressively manage ED/RR species that threaten their properties. Previous surveys and member input will be used to identify the ED/RR species that need treatment before they spread and cause damage within the region.

NCSWMA partner members benefit from coordinated efforts, as well as shared information, resources and expertise. Some of the many important activities of the NCSWMA include education, public outreach, regional prioritization, fundraising, early detection of invasive weeds not yet widely distributed in the region and rapid response control initiatives. Effective regional invasive plant species management is also particularly important to Fort Bragg, Pope AFB, and Camp Mackall. These installations are at particular risk to outside introductions of new

invasive plant species because of the high volume of equipment, vehicles, and people that travel in and out of the area on a daily basis. This heightened risk of introduction coupled with regular disturbances in the training areas creates an ideal environment for new infestations to spread, damaging training lands and threatened and endangered species habitat. Supporting NCSWMA efforts to control new invasive plant species infestations before they spread onto the installation will protect the significant investments these installations have made in invasive plant management.

In 2008, the NCSWMA launched a Forum page on its website to provide regional invasive plant identification and management expertise. A standing panel of professionals was recruited to field questions in the Forum that have been submitted by members and the general public. The website also details current NCSWMA activities, a master list of all documented invasive plants within the Sandhills region, NCSWMA projects including summer field site profiles, NCSWMA outreach materials and public presentations, invasive plant species profiles, and a listing of native xeriscape alternatives (i.e. drought tolerant landscaping). A photo gallery featuring invasive species photos and identification keys, as well as photo documentation of summer field site management has been added to aid website readers in the identification of regionally important invasive plants. The website also provides links to other invasive species resources and to NCSWMA partner organizations.

During the summer of 2007, a two-person ED/RR team implemented diverse, invasive plant control treatments at five regional sites, including: Dennis Williams' tract, Boyd's tract, Kinlaw-Snipes tract, Long Valley Farm, and Bowling-Crowley tract. Although it is too early to assess long-term successes of the treatments, preliminary results lend optimism. Continued monitoring and treatment of re-sprouts and seedlings will be necessary to maintain the integrity of these natural areas.



DoD partnerships, continued from page 1

landscapes comprised of farms, forests, and fisheries, all of which serve as important bufferlands in supporting the DoD mission. These national changes are amplified in the Southeast, where rapid population growth is placing major demands on the region's ability to sustain critical natural resources, provide healthy living environments, offer long-term prospects for economic vitality, and support the military's mission, which requires space to train. The Southeast is at a cross roads. Federal, state, and local governments and a wide array of stakeholders from the private and non-profit sectors must improve their ability to work together to anticipate and accommodate change within a sustainable, regional framework. Otherwise, the "business as usual" approach that has dominated much of the state and local growth management systems in the Southeast will simply react to change only after significant and often irreversible losses have occurred. Most of these systems are in need of an overhaul since they are not capable of meeting 21st century demands that require change in a more sustainable direction. Thus, there is a "fierce urgency of now" due to these significant expected changes (e.g., 30-80% regional growth in 20 years). Our actions now will make a difference over the next several years in ensuring a sustainable Southeast. This is particularly true in the conservation of wide-ranging species (e.g., gopher tortoise, red-cockaded woodpecker), which require greater coordination and a strategic approach to realize full benefits of management actions.

Seizing Opportunities

In 2005, an effort to promote greater regional planning was initiated by North Carolina state officials who approached the Department of Defense (DoD, DUSD(I&E)) regarding proposed Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) changes. As a result of that meeting, state environmental and natural resource officials from across the Southeast partnered with DoD and other federal agencies to form the Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS). SERPPAS is a coalition of state environmental and natural resource agencies (states represented – Florida, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina), DoD and military services, and other federal agencies (EPA, NOAA, USFS, USFWS) that promotes collaboration in land-use decisions. SERPPAS seeks to address these issues by coordinating partner activities and sharing GIS resources to promote sustainable development across regional, multi-state scales.

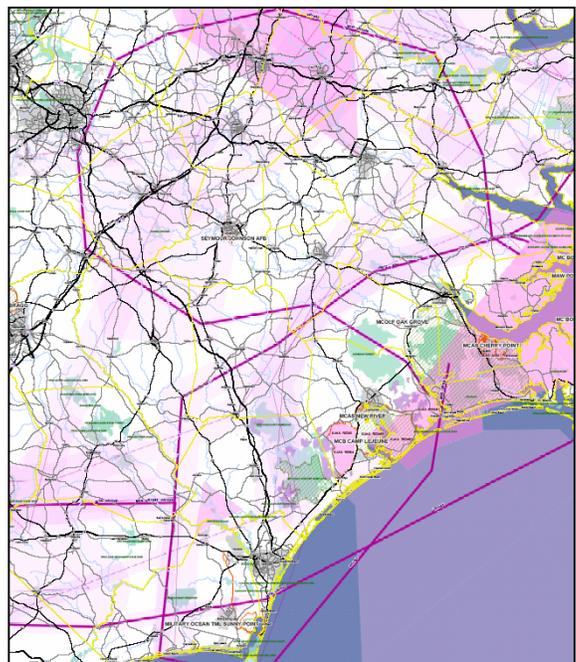
SERPPAS Formula for Success:
Good GIS Map +
Effective Working Relationship
= Multiple and Mutual Benefits

Partner representatives, called Principals, meet biannually to identify joint work projects. The mission of SERPPAS is to seize opportunities and solve problems in ways that provide mutual and multiple benefits to the partners, sustain the individual and collective missions, and secure the future for the region and nation.

This mission is accomplished through identifying opportunities for mutual gain and focusing on identifying solutions to complex problems. The SERPPAS "formula" for success is an "Effective Working Relationship + Good GIS Map = Multiple and Mutual Benefits. A brief description of each component is provided in the next few paragraphs.

The "Good Map"

A Strategic Lands Inventory (SLI) is a key input into the broader SERPPAS regional effort. The first step in a SLI is to document mission "footprints" and requirements for an array of Federal, State, local, and private stakeholders, including military/national defense, economic, environment, natural resources, and social/cultural. This combination of interests is considered a "good map" that can serve to better understand needs for all partners and potential opportunities for mutual benefits (see figure). The products of the Strategic Lands Inventory include land use suitability maps for six land use types: residential, commercial, industrial, sustainable farmland, sustainable forestland, and natural resources. The suitability maps are validated using a stakeholder input process involving an array of Federal, State, regional, and local partners during the mapping process. Synthesis maps that illustrate competing values between land uses as the region grows and resources become scarcer also are being developed. Ultimately, the purpose of the SLI is to engage local communities and businesses in the creation of custom regional models and maps that will be the basis for sustainable land use and related policies and collaborative actions.



Effective Working Relationships – An example

Understanding the requirements for multiple partners and stakeholders is fundamental in avoiding incompatible land uses and ultimately promoting sustainable development. As mentioned before, a “good map” serves to identify partner needs, opportunities for mutual benefits, and establish effective working relationships to find solutions to complex problems. An example in the benefits of working together can be seen in the America’s Longleaf Initiative, a project supported by SERPPAS.



Longleaf forests once covered over 90 million acres from Virginia to Texas. Today, less than 3% remain. Previous efforts to restore longleaf have employed a “shotgun” approach, which may have fallen short of maximizing an area’s restoration potential. A more coordinated approach would serve to leverage resources and improve the overall benefits, thus, one outcome from the Initiative is to develop a range-wide conservation plan for longleaf pine – a common “road map” that can be used by partners. This comprehensive strategic plan can serve to leverage partner resources, align state and federal funding, identify restoration areas that provide mutual benefits (e.g., promoting working timberlands that also serve as bufferlands

around a military installation), and address regional issues that require collaborative planning (e.g., smoke management in use of prescribed fire).

Other examples of SERPPAS projects that serve to streamline conservation efforts include support of a regional red-cockaded woodpecker translocation project and the development of a gopher tortoise Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA), to name a few.

Mutual and Multiple Benefits

The end result of regional partnerships can serve to break-down “stove-pipe” approaches in land planning and management, and eventually serve to promote a more sustainable Southeast. Ensuring the sustainability of our military installations will require a new way of doing business. Henry Ford once said that coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success. Regional partnerships can provide a forum for working together and ensuring the success of all our missions resulting in sustainable ranges for testing and training. For more information about SERPPAS, visit www.SERPPAS.org.



Armed and Protected

Rare Species Get a Boost from the Military

By Beth Geiger, The Nature Conservancy

When the echo of artillery fire fades at Fort Lewis, Washington, it is replaced by a sweeter chorus: the chirps and trills of songbirds, including the rare streaked horned lark.

The birds are attracted by the fort’s native prairie habitat, which is increasingly rare in western Washington; the fort’s vast “artillery impact area” is by far the prairie’s best last stand. Ironically, explains ecologist Jeff Foster, who works at the fort, shelling actually helps maintain the native prairies. “During the summer,” he says, “exploding munitions start fires that limit tree invasion and keep Scotch broom [an invasive shrub] at bay.”

This well-preserved prairie is a haven for the streaked horned lark as well as three other species—two rare butterflies and a gopher—that are candidates for listing as endangered species.

The military may seem like an unexpected advocate for threatened species. But if any of the four animals end up on the Endangered Species List, the Army would face serious limits on training maneuvers, explains Foster. “The

impact to the military mission would be large,” he says.

That’s one reason officials at Fort Lewis began working with The Nature Conservancy in September 2006 to restore populations of the four animals at several nonmilitary sites in the region. Typically, the military helps groups buy lands adjacent to bases to create habitat buffers. But this project marks the first time the Army has used restoration funds to protect species outside a base without helping to direct a purchase or project.

More than any other federal lands, military bases have become islands of native habitat within seas of development. “Military installations can be some of the last remaining habitat for rare species,” says Hannah Anderson, the Conservancy’s rare-species program lead at Fort Lewis. “This is absolutely true for Fort Lewis.”



The Mazama pocket gopher, protected at Fort Lewis in Washington, is an herbivore that digs burrows with forelimbs and teeth, forages below ground, and forms soil mounds. This adorable creature has pointed ears with a black patch behind, a short tail, heavy jaw bone, big incisors. Total length: 180-240 mm; tail: 50-80 mm; mass: 50-95 g. Photo © Kelly McAllister



SMR Conference Update

Call for papers hit the streets



SMR 2009: Call for Papers

Thank you for your suggestions for natural resources track sessions at the Sustaining Military Readiness (SMR) Conference, set for 9-14 August 2009 in Phoenix, Arizona. The natural resources track lead has taken heed of your suggestions and is calling for papers! Broad conference themes include: energy, partnerships, sustainability, emerging issues, and the future. Papers may pertain to one of the above themes, or another subject relevant to the DoD natural resources community such as: ecosystem management; bird conservation; invasive species; endangered species; conservation strategies; readiness and range sustainment, and others. Abstracts should be approximately 500 words and submitted no later than 15 November. Please send your abstracts by email to Pedro Morales, Pedro.Morales.ctr@osd.mil. Note: A call for posters will be issued in late winter.



Did You Know?

Little Did You Know Conservation Could Be So Much Fun!



Partnership happens! – Private land conservation plays an important role not only for the conservation of endangered species but also for the effective training of our troops. Many installation commanders are finding the added value of entering into partnerships with non-governmental organizations, private land owners and others for the conservation of our nation's natural resources. The most obvious advantage is the addition of buffer lands around military bases. Setting aside land surrounding installations for conservation or other compatible land use practices diminishes the adverse impacts of encroachment on the military's ability to test and train. The benefit to endangered species living in conservation buffer lands is not simply an added bonus, but part of a broader effort from all members of the partnership for the benefit of the species.

Nationwide, among the most recognized names in private land conservation engaged in multi party partnerships involving a wide range of partners from federal & state, tribal and local government, non-governmental organizations and others are Mr. Ted Turner, who has donated many lands in western United States, and Mr. MC Davis, who is actively involved in conservation efforts in the eastern United States.

Donating land to national conservation groups is not new. There are several ways of doing it, including:

- **Outright Donation of Land and Endowment:** most straight forward way to protect your land and ensure that it is properly managed in the long-term, full title and ownership are transferred to a nonprofit conservation organization or qualified government agency, generally offers the maximum potential tax benefit, and endowment needed for on-going care of the property
- **Donation with Life Estate:** similar to outright donation but allows you to retain the right to live on the property for the rest of your life, tax deduction will be less than in an outright donation
- **Bequest:** donating your land through your will or living trust allows you to maintain complete control of the land while you are alive, may leave a life estate for your family, it does not receive an income tax deduction for donation but may significantly reduce estate taxes
- **Conservation Easement:** places permanent restrictions on development of your land, you retain ownership, but binds all present and future owners of the eased land into agreement with conservation group. May receive an income tax deduction in return for reducing the market value of the land-may also reduce estate taxes
- **Bargain Sale:** protects land by selling it to a conservation group for less than market value, difference between bargain sale price and fair market value is considered a charitable donation, and tax benefits may include deduction for donation and decreased capital gains tax liability
- **Limited Development and Conservation Subdivision:** alternatives to traditional development: portion of land is developed while rest remains open space, balances need for higher financial gain with desire to preserve land, and careful planning ensures that most critical ecological features are preserved

The U.S. Congress authorized the authority to enter into conservation land use partnerships in November 2003 through the National Defense Authorization Act. Section 2811 states that the Secretary of Defense or a Military Department may enter into an agreement with a State or private entity to limit development or property use that is incompatible with the mission, to preserve habitat, or to relieve anticipated environmental restrictions that would restrict, impede, or interfere with military training, testing, or operations on the installation.



40,000 acres of land nearby Eglin AFB was purchased in 2002 for private conservation by conservationist Mr. MC Davis, of Santa Rosa Beach, naming it the Nokuse Plantation (in dark green).



Contact Us

Who we are and where to find us!



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