

DoD Natural Resources Program Feb 27, 2018

Program Overview

The Department of Defense's (DoD) Natural Resources Program (NR Program) supports the military's combat readiness mission by ensuring continued access to realistic habitat conditions. The NR Program invested nearly \$340 million in FY2017 to ensure continued access to the 25 million acres of military land, air, and water resources needed to accomplish vital testing, training, and operational activities, and to ensure the long-term sustainability of our nation's priceless natural heritage. The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) provides policy, guidance, and oversight for DoD's NR Program.

The three principles that guide DoD's NR Program activities are mission enhancement, long-term sustainability of lands/resources, and cost avoidance and minimization. **Mission enhancement** is the primary goal of every NR Program action or activity. The Program strives to maintain the **long-term sustainability of DoD's lands and resources** to enable realistic, mission essential testing, training, and operations. By addressing imperiled species, critical habitats, invasive species, fire, and other key NR issues on base, the NR Program can **avoid or minimize costs** that could otherwise result in natural resources related restrictions or delays.

DoD manages and protects nearly 450 federally-listed species and more than 550 species at-risk.

OSD's primary responsibilities are to:

- oversee Military Service natural resources programs, including expenditures and compliance with legislative obligations, Executive Orders, and DoD policies;
- assess, develop, and implement natural resources-related legislation, policy, guidance, procedures, and metrics;
- provide tools for DoD natural resources managers, such as training courses and outreach materials;
- develop and maintain partnerships with external stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, state governments, and other federal agencies;
- promote awareness of the NR Program to the DoD community, Congress, and other interested parties; and
- advocate and ensure adequate resources for the NR Program and for installation natural resources managers.

Sikes Act

Department of Defense
OFFICE OF PREPUBLICATION AND SECURITY REVIEW

First passed in September 1960, the Sikes Act as amended authorizes DoD to manage the natural resources under its stewardship. It requires that DoD develop comprehensive Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans (INRMPs) that are fully coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and appropriate state wildlife agency. To help the Military Services, the NR Program provides policy and guidance on preparing and implementing INRMPs.



Policy and Guidance

Through policy statements, procedures, and supplemental materials, the NR Program provides broad guidance to help the Military Services comply with all federal environmental laws, including the Sikes Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and all relevant Executive Orders. DoD Instruction 4715.03 is the NR Program's primary policy document.

DoD Instruction 4715.03 formalizes conservation metrics that evaluate key performance areas for each installation's INRMP. These are:

1. INRMP Implementation
2. Listed Species and Critical Habitat
3. Sikes Act Cooperation
4. Fish and Wildlife Management and Public Use
5. Team Adequacy
6. Natural Resources Management
7. INRMP Impact on the Installation Mission

DoD Manual 4715.03 provides procedures to prepare, review, update, and implement INRMPs in compliance with the Sikes Act and in accordance with DoDI 4715.03.



Wildlife and Habitat Management

DoD is responsible for the lands and waters under its control. This includes managing highly diverse habitats from coastal to mountainous, desert to forest, sagebrush to longleaf pine. Many of these areas are unique and becoming increasingly rare. These habitats provide food and shelter to ~450 federally-listed plant and animal species, over 550 species at-risk of needing listing protections, and 75 species that occur only on DoD lands.

To maximize the effectiveness of our management activities, the NR Program actively supports partnership-based conservation efforts, such as Partners in Flight and Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation; and supports safety programs, such as Bird/Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) and wildland fire prevention.

Funding Award Programs

Through OSD, the NR Program manages the DoD Legacy Resource Management Program and Forestry Reserve Account, both of which provide funding to installations for competitively awarded projects.

The Legacy Program awards funding to high priority natural and cultural resources projects that support the military mission. Since its inception in 1991, Legacy has funded approximately 3,000 projects, totaling over \$300 million.

To be eligible, projects must:

- be regional or DoD-wide and involve more than one Military Service;
- support military operations or meet legal or statutory requirements beyond installation-specific needs;
- be more effectively managed at the DoD level;
- not be an assigned responsibility of a Military Service; and
- emphasize cross-cutting conservation that supports or leverages ongoing or new DoD initiatives, demonstrates cost efficiencies and time savings, or exhibits new and innovative ways of managing resources on DoD lands.



Black-Capped Vireo
Photo: USFWS

Forestry Reserve Account funds result from the sale of forest products from military installations. Projects are competitively awarded to installations for activities that benefit DoD forestry programs and resources.



Mojave Desert, Fort Irwin, CA

Emerging Issues

DoD advances strategies to deal with emerging natural resources issues. Currently identified areas of focus include species at-risk and declining species and habitats; ecosystem services; and adapting to and mitigating impacts from extreme weather events, such as fire, drought, flooding, sea level rise, and more frequent and intense storms. Through collaborative initiatives and by implementing installation INRMPs, DoD strives to address these and other issues proactively.

Outreach and Education

The NR Program also serves DoD's natural resources personnel by providing educational materials, such as the *Endangered Species Act Implementation training course* (available on [DENIX](#)), and *Sikes Act 101* and *Sikes Act Implementation* training materials for installation personnel, and the *Biodiversity Outreach Toolkit* and *Commander's Guide on Invasive Species* for installation personnel to use when educating their leadership and stakeholders.

The NR Program also has a newsletter (*Natural Selections*), websites (www.DoDNaturalResources.net and www.DENIX.osd.mil/nr), and a Twitter presence at [@DoDNatRes!](#)

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