

Eastern North Carolina

Eastern North Carolina is home to multiple key military installations and ranges, among them Fort Bragg, Dare County Bombing Range, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Air Stations Cherry Point and New River, and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base (AFB). The military network stretching over the state's Coastal Plain and Sandhills landscape serves all the Military Services, providing a wide variety of capabilities, including heavy maneuver areas, air-to-ground training, training for more than half of all special operations forces, and thousands of miles of low-level flight routes. Behind only agriculture, military-related activity is the second largest economic driver in the state. As a result, a broad and diverse Federal-state-local, public-private partnership developed within the 33-county region with the goal of incentivizing qualifying private landowners and communities to preserve specific military mission-critical areas and take action to help sustain military readiness, working lands, and natural resources.

The Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape will seek to address top priority encroachment concerns identified by the military, including restrictions related to species conservation and potential development of privately owned agriculture, forest, and open space lands. Programs at Camp Lejeune and Seymour Johnson AFB will work with Federal and state partners to offer voluntary landowner incentives protecting aviation training routes through the promotion of compatible land uses, while a program at Camp Lejeune will create high quality habitat for the red-cockaded woodpecker outside the installation in order to forestall anticipated training restrictions inside the installation's boundary. Through the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, qualifying landowners in the 33-county region will also be able to access funding assistance for implementing best management practices for land and water resource management, which will provide additional income for farmers that will help to deter development while protecting natural resources. Other partners are offering cost sharing opportunities to local governments for conserving priority wildlife habitat, and a pilot concept for a Veterans and Youth Conservation Corps will provide skills and eight months of employment working on coastal conservation projects that also support military objectives and lands around Dare County Bombing Range.



U.S. Marines conduct fast rope training from an MV-22 Osprey over Camp Lejeune. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps)

BENEFITING WORKING LANDS

More than 90 percent of the land within the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape is privately owned. Of that, more than 60 percent of the landscape is forest land. Agriculture and agribusiness, North Carolina's biggest economic contributors, are more prevalent in this region than anywhere else in North Carolina and contribute \$84 billion annually to the state's economy, making the protection of these lands a top priority for the partnership. Through voluntary programs and incentives, eligible landowners and communities who want to conserve and protect their working lands could receive financial assistance to do so while also protecting the military mission of key installations.

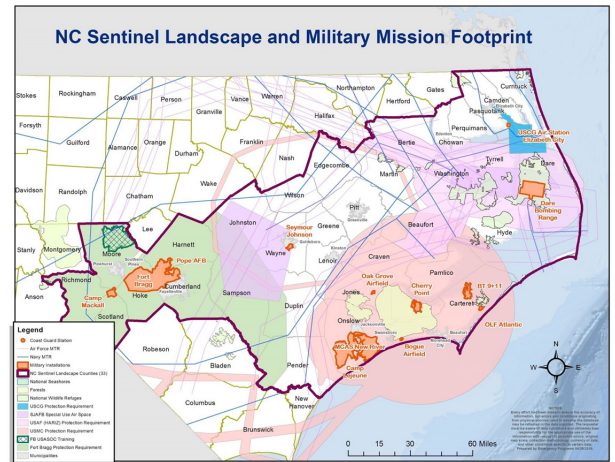
CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

Longleaf pine forests support 29 Federally-listed threatened or endangered species, such as the red-cockaded woodpecker, and many more that are at risk for listing under the Endangered Species Act primarily due to loss of habitat. As a significant amount of longleaf pine forest is contained within the Sentinel Landscape, coordination efforts will complement and build on the

effective longleaf pine restoration work occurring under the America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative.

Other significant and valuable wildlife areas are located within the Sentinel Landscape, including the 14,000-acre Bear Garden nature preserve on North Carolina's Holly Shelter game lands that is an ideal off-base habitat for the red-cockaded woodpecker. Bear Garden and Holly Shelter are part of a network of important conservation lands throughout Eastern North Carolina. Through programs like the Marine Corps' Recovery and Sustainment Program, these lands and waters will help support threatened, endangered, and at-risk species and protect the military mission in the state.

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LOOKING FORWARD

The expansive Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape partnership will continue to coordinate and leverage the resources of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense, and Department of the Interior, together with the other state and local partners, to advance the goals of the Sentinel Landscape. Through the innovative programs identified by the Sentinel Landscape partnership, landowners and partners will sustain military readiness while preserving working lands, protecting valuable natural resources, and supporting the region's economy.

PARTNERS

FEDERAL

- ★ U.S. Department of Agriculture
 - Farm Service Agency
 - Natural Resources Conservation Service
 - U.S. Forest Service
- ★ U.S. Department of Defense
 - Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program
- ★ U.S. Department of the Interior
 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

STATE

- ★ North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- ★ North Carolina Department of Commerce
- ★ North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
- ★ North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
- ★ North Carolina Department of Transportation
- ★ North Carolina Farm Bureau Federation
- ★ North Carolina State University and College of Natural Resources
- ★ North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

- ★ Texas A&M University
- ★ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

LOCAL

- ★ North Carolina Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts
- ★ Tyrrell County

NGOS

- ★ Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership
- ★ Bragg Alliance
- ★ Brooks, Pierce, McLendon, Humphrey & Leonard, LLP
- ★ Conservation Trust for North Carolina
- ★ Duke University
- ★ Elon University
- ★ Environmental Defense Fund
- ★ North Carolina East Alliance
- ★ North Carolina Coastal Land Trust
- ★ North Carolina Forestry Association
- ★ North Carolina Military Business Center
- ★ South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative

- ★ Southern Group of State Foresters
- ★ National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- ★ The Coastal Land Trust
- ★ The Conservation Fund
- ★ The Nature Conservancy
- ★ North Carolina Farms Bureau Foundation
- ★ North Carolina Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation
- ★ North Carolina Grange
- ★ North Carolina Land of Water