

# JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD SENTINEL LANDSCAPE

Washington | est. 2013

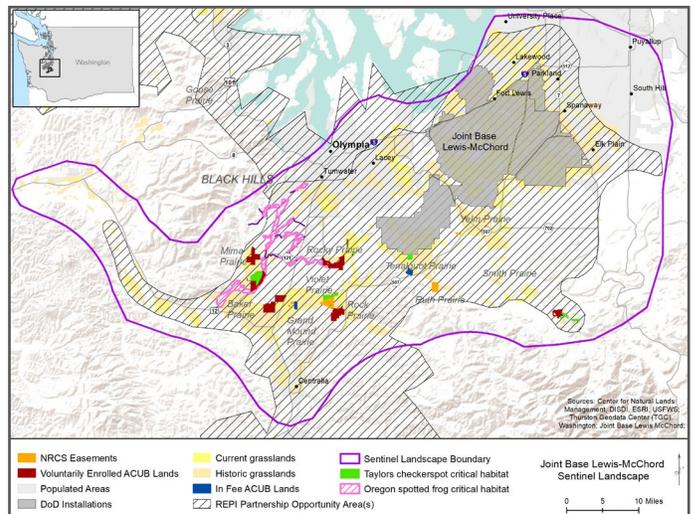


Designated in 2013, the Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) Sentinel Landscape was the first federally recognized sentinel landscape in the nation. It is anchored by one of the largest installations in the U.S. Army, which is home to over 295,000 soldiers, civilians, dependents, and retirees. JBLM encompasses 63,000 acres of military training area, including over 7,000 acres of impact area, 86 ranges and mortar points, 13 drop zones, and two airfields. In addition, the sentinel landscape supports the majority of the remaining prairie habitat in the South Puget Sound. For decades, prairie lands in the region have deteriorated due to rapid development and increased demand on natural resources. Conversely, the ecosystem has thrived on JBLM where development is minimal and periodic fires caused by prescribed burning and military training activities have maintained healthy vegetation. This has resulted in many species that rely on the prairie habitat, including the Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly, Mazama pocket gopher, and streaked horned lark, seeking refuge on JBLM training lands. The JBLM Sentinel Landscape partners have worked together to identify and act upon three strategic goals that aim to maintain the South Puget Sound agricultural landscape, restore lost native South Puget Sound prairie land, support and protect native threatened and endangered species, and increase JBLM training flexibility.

## PRESERVING THE HISTORICAL HABITAT

JBLM Sentinel Landscape partners work tirelessly at the federal, state, and local level to promote mutually beneficial projects that support local agricultural viability, sustainable community development, and prairie conservation on working lands. These projects can take on many different forms but rely heavily on local partner and landowner support and coordination. Whether

**Figure 1:** JBLM Sentinel Landscape Map



**Table 1:** JBLM Sentinel Landscape Footprint Details (from year established through fiscal year 2021)

Total Protected Acres <sup>1</sup>	23,109
Total Enrolled Acres <sup>2</sup>	63,205
Active Base Area	91,322
<b>Total Sentinel Landscape Area</b>	<b>196,526</b>

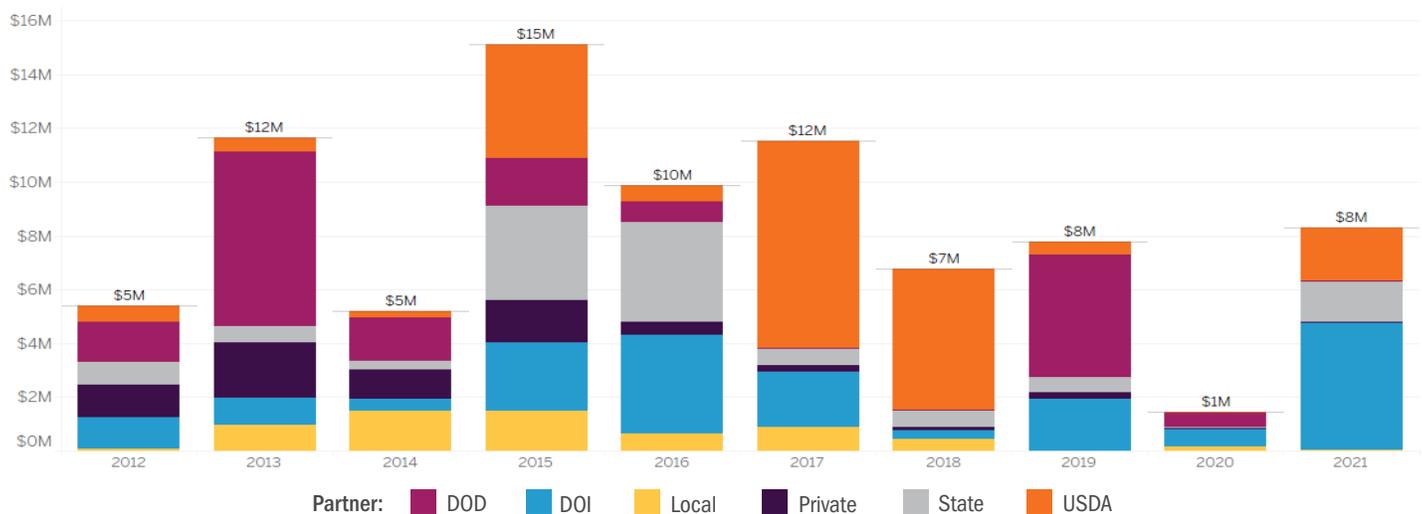
the partners are seeking to permanently protect local ranches or provide technical support to landowners, these efforts are carried out with the goal of jointly conserving agriculture and rare species.

Private landowners play a significant role in restoring prairie habitat in the JBLM Sentinel Landscape and are critical to sustaining military readiness at JBLM. Understanding this, partners work with private landowners to develop individual stewardship plans, which recommend parcel-specific

<sup>1</sup> Protected acres are recognized as land acquisitions—fee simple or easement—that have completed the due diligence and closing actions necessary to obtain a real estate interest.

<sup>2</sup> Land is considered enrolled if the property owner voluntarily participates in a federal or state land-management program that provides financial or technical assistance to promote sustainable agricultural practices, restore imperiled species and their habitat, or preserve critical natural resources; or if a landowner or an organization receives a federal or state grant to conduct a conservation project on said property.

**Figure 2: JBLM Sentinel Landscape Total Funding by Partner**



conservation practices that will improve prairie health and align with the landowner’s management goals. Introducing conservation practices on these properties will align with existing efforts at JBLM to restore habitat health, protect threatened and endangered species, and improve training access. By uniting a diverse group of partners from various government assistance programs, the JBLM Sentinel Landscape has enabled Thurston Conservation District to better explain the financial and technical benefits available to private landowners in the region.

### INNOVATIVE CONSERVATION CREDITING

The JBLM Sentinel Landscape, in close coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, became the second sentinel landscape with an approved Conservation Crediting Program.



*The prairie land on and around JBLM is the ideal habitat for the endangered Taylors’ checkerspot butterfly. By proactively protecting its habitat, JBLM Sentinel Landscape initiatives can protect this endangered species and also preserve the mission and operations at JBLM (Photo courtesy of Roderick Gilbert).*

The Conservation Crediting Program establishes a system for calculating values or credits for threatened species management. This is an important and innovative tool to coordinate increased training flexibility with off-installation habitat conservation of sensitive prairie species such as the Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly, Mazama pocket gopher, and streaked horned lark. The JBLM Sentinel Landscape and partners in the South Puget Sound region have already begun applying the crediting framework to steer capacity and resources towards conservation priorities.

### Key Partners

- ★ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- ★ U.S. Department of Defense, Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program
- ★ U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
- ★ University of Washington
- ★ Washington Department of Corrections
- ★ Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- ★ Washington Department of Natural Resources
- ★ Washington Department of Veterans Affairs
- ★ Washington State University Extension
- ★ Thurston Conservation District
- ★ Thurston County
- ★ Capitol Land Trust
- ★ Center for Natural Lands Management
- ★ Enterprise for Equity
- ★ Evergreen State College
- ★ Nisqually Land Trust
- ★ Nisqually River Council
- ★ Northwest Rangeland Trust
- ★ Oregon Zoo
- ★ Pierce County Conservation District
- ★ Washington Farmland Trust
- ★ South of the Sound Community Farmland Trust
- ★ Wolf Haven International