

# CAMP RIPLEY SENTINEL LANDSCAPE

Minnesota | est. 2016

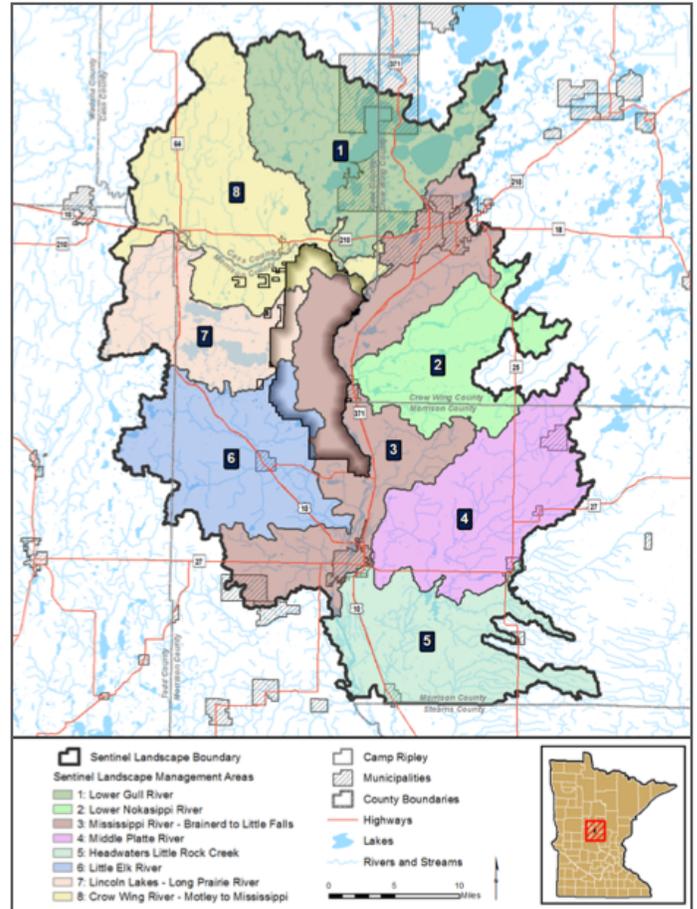


Located along the northern stretch of the Mississippi River, Camp Ripley is the primary National Guard Training Center for units from Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Ohio, and Illinois. The installation is surrounded by agricultural and recreational lands that protect the quality of water entering the Mississippi River and enable the base to conduct winter training activities with limited restrictions.

Despite enjoying a history of solitude, mounting development pressure from urban sprawl and population growth threatens to undermine Camp Ripley’s mission. To prevent that, in 2014 the Minnesota State Legislature forged a coalition of conservationists, community leaders, military personnel, and business owners to promote land management practices that are compatible with the installation’s training activities. One year later, the USDA, DoD, and DOI followed suit and officially designated the Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape.

Since its inception, the Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape has engrained itself in the fabric of its community by encouraging partnerships among personnel from the installation, NRCS, local businesses, the public school system, and individual citizens. In October 2018, Minnesota Power, a regional utility company and ardent supporter of veteran’s issues, dedicated land as the first Veteran Memorial Yellow Ribbon Forest. Located within the landscape’s footprint, the protected forest increases public access to recreational activities and provides citizens

**Figure 12:** Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape Boundary



**Table 1:** Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape Total Funding by Partner in Millions

Partner	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
USDA	\$0.8	\$0.8	\$0.5	\$1.2
DoD	\$2.8	\$3.6	\$8.9	\$4.1
State	\$6.4	\$8.3	\$3.7	\$6.9

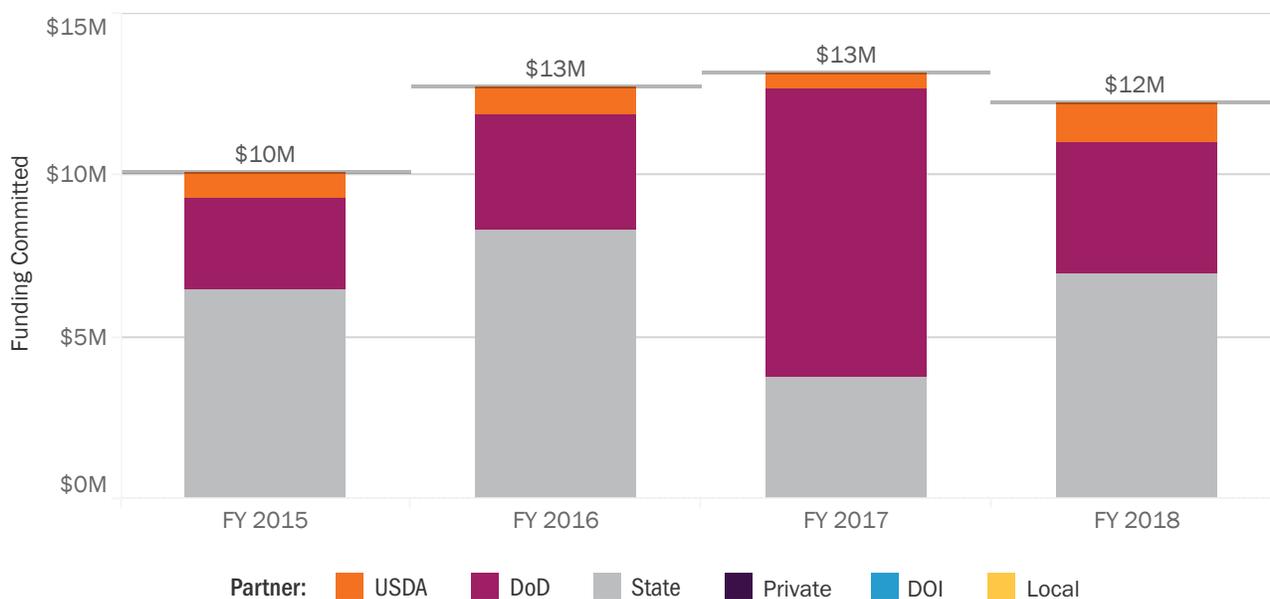
**Table 2:** Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape Footprint Details (acres)

<b>Total Protected Acres:</b> <sup>16</sup>	8,556.0
<b>Total Enrolled Acres:</b> <sup>17</sup>	50,585.4
<b>Active Base Area:</b>	52,758.3
<b>Total Sentinel Landscape Area:</b>	719,829.0

<sup>16</sup> Represents total acres protected through projects administered by sentinel landscape partners since FY 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Represents total acres enrolled in state and federal conservation programs since FY 2015.

**Figure 2:** Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape Total Funding by Partner



with the opportunity to reflect on the service and sacrifice of veterans. Additionally, in 2018, Camp Ripley and Minnesota Power partnered with a local brewery to host several events that raised funds for reforestation efforts on and around the base. The Minnesota business community’s enthusiasm for the partnership and willingness to facilitate conservation projects demonstrates that there are significant economic benefits associated with operating in an intact ecosystem.

In addition to harnessing the support of local industry, Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape partners have also built a strong relationship with the Brainerd Public School System. Leveraging funding from the DoD REPI Program, Camp Ripley and the City of Baxter are in the process of acquiring a large property along the Mississippi River that provides a local middle school with access to an ‘outdoor classroom’. The project grants children the opportunity to explore nature, while also preventing large-scale residential development adjacent to the installation.

The Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape encompasses 40 minor watersheds, 50 miles of the Mississippi River, 49,000 acres of water bodies, the 2,000-acre Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, and 42,000 acres of public land. Over one million people reside between Camp Ripley and Minneapolis, a vast majority of which rely on the Mississippi River for drinking water. This makes the sentinel landscape one of Minnesota’s most important drinking water source protection areas. As a result, local communities are deeply committed to projects that enhance the quality of the region’s water resources. In 2017, NRCS RCPP granted a network of 11 partners within the sentinel



*U.S. Army officer candidates, from the Minnesota National Guard Officer Candidate School, conduct a 10-mile ruck march at Camp Ripley, Minnesota. (Photo by: U.S. Army. Staff Sgt. Anthony Housey)*

landscape—led by the Morrison Soil and Water Conservation District—\$2.8 million in Healthy Forest Reserve Program funds to execute conservation easements that will promote clean water, prevent erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat. These projects will build upon the existing 39,000 acres of working lands that landowners have voluntarily enrolled in conservation programs through NRCS.

**Table 3: Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape Goals and Progress**

Goal	Progress
<p><b>Goal #1</b> Protect 78,000 acres within Camp Ripley’s Army Compatible Use Buffer program boundary from incompatible development</p>	<p>Sentinel landscape partners have permanently protected 30,000 acres using funding acquired through the DoD REPI Program that will protect Camp Ripley’s training mission.</p>
<p><b>Goal #2</b> Work with private citizens, local businesses, and conservation organizations to protect, restore and improve forest and water resources in the sentinel landscape</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Partners hosted several events in 2018 to raise awareness on the scope and mission of the Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape.</li> <li>★ In October of 2018, local breweries sponsored an event to raise funds and promote reforestation efforts within the landscape.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal #3</b> Restore, manage and protect the viability of historic agricultural and forest lands within the Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ NRCS RCPP awarded the sentinel landscape \$2.8 million in 2017 to execute conservation easements on working lands within the landscape.</li> <li>★ NRCS has administered conservation measures on over 39,000 acres of working lands within the sentinel landscape to date.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal #4</b> Institutionalize the sentinel landscape’s mission to leverage additional resources for projects within its geographic footprint</p>	<p>In 2015, the Minnesota legislature passed M.S. 190.33, which convened four state agencies, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Board of Water and Soil Resources, the Department of Military Affairs, and the Department of Agriculture, to develop a suite of tools that can provide technical and financial assistance to landowners within Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape.</p>