

Environmental Infrastructure Essential to Army Readiness

“Combat-ready forces depend on successful stewardship of natural resources in order to simulate realistic maneuver areas, training environments and testing ranges.”

By Hon. Alex A. Beehler
Assistant Secretary of the Army
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The Army is prioritizing modernization and readiness as we train to deploy, fight, and win our nation's wars. Readiness and modernization depend on environmental infrastructure and necessitate training operations in large-scale, realistic natural landscapes and environmental conditions expanding in scope and complexity.

Combat-ready forces depend on successful stewardship of natural resources in order to simulate realistic maneuver areas, training environments and testing ranges.

As such, the Army has a tremendous obligation to protect and conserve air and water resources, and ensure rare and vanishing ecosystems and habitats are conserved.

As Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and Environment, I am committed to changing the focus on how we view the environment. Rather than isolating and independently managing environmental factors, we are moving towards recognizing these resources as strategic assets critical to the Army's warfighting readiness.

Through collaboration with industry, local utilities and other stakeholders, the Army is exploring technology-agnostic solutions to enhance installation and operational energy and water resilience. Energy initiatives involve project teams assessing costs, long-term environmental impacts, resilience benefits and other factors to develop solutions independent from the commercial electrical grid. The Army relies on alternative and renewable energy generation, battery energy storage systems, and microgrids at installations to decrease grid dependence and infrastructure vulnerability. We are also reforming efforts to measure and implement utility resilience. During resilience exercises, we disconnect installations from commercial electric power to determine gaps in operational capability during utility outages. The results of these exercises highlight vital issues such as undefined critical building loads and improperly configured backup generation. Combining new assessment and implementation approaches allows the Army to reform processes and procedures to enhance Army resilience and support mission readiness.

In addition to energy and water initiatives, the Army partners with

resource conservation agencies, universities, and non-governmental organizations to gain valuable insight and help implement effective environmental programs. Partnering with stakeholders enhances cooperation, increases communication, and provides for informed decision-making crucial to the success of our environmental programs while increasing Army access to capable and realistic landscapes. Through these partnerships we manage threatened and endangered species to effectively balance warfighting readiness missions and regulatory requirements pertaining to endangered species. Our habitat conservation initiatives have played a major role in conserving and recovering endangered species including the American bald eagle, red-cockaded woodpecker, black-capped vireo, golden-cheeked warbler, and the lesser long-nosed bat.

The Army is a large and geographically-dispersed organization with 146 installations and more than 2,200 community-based National Guard and Reserve Centers, all of which are dependent on reliable and consistent supplies of energy and water resources. We are shifting our paradigm towards a more holistic view of environmental resources as crucial assets



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in an increasingly complex training environment. Through successful partnerships with communities, experts and stakeholders, the Army is enhancing utility infrastructure resilience while conserving natural resources and protecting endangered species. The U.S. Army is committed to continuing to expand these efforts in order to maintain the readiness, lethality and adaptability of our Soldiers, installations and communities.

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