

Michael F. Easley  
Governor



## State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

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*Twice monthly, the governor or one of his cabinet secretaries publishes an informational column related to ongoing state programs and initiatives.*

### **NORTH CAROLINA'S LAND ACQUISITION EFFORTS SUPPORT MILITARY BASE ACTIVITIES**

**By Secretary William G. Ross  
Department of Environment and Natural Resources**

Led by Gov. Mike Easley, North Carolina has set a goal of being the most military friendly state in the nation.

The reasons are clear:

- North Carolina's military bases are essential to national security;
- Research shows the military sector is responsible annually for \$18.1 billion of the state's economy and approximately 84,000 jobs, and
- Natural partnerships between the state and the armed services grow out of the many shared interests between the partners, including mission, environment and community.

The Governor has committed his administration to supporting the missions of the military stationed within North Carolina. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has backed up that commitment by helping to ensure that the state's bases and training areas can support the missions of the Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force now and in the future.

DENR and other partners are focusing on helping military bases and training areas address problems caused by nearby development. The U.S. Department of Defense identified encroachment by incompatible development near military installations as one of the primary concerns as it develops plans to close and realign military bases and ranges.

The state's natural resources trust funds are playing significant roles in the preservation effort. For example, the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) has been a significant player in efforts to buffer military bases from incompatible development. The CWMTF has provided \$9.8 million to fund projects to protect water quality in eastern North Carolina and at Camp Lejeune and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base.

The CWMTF also is considering an additional funding of \$31 million to support the purchase of more than 22,000 acres around our bases and training areas to limit encroachment. That land will support mission and training by limiting encroachment on Fort Bragg/Pope Air Force Base, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, and Cherry Point Marine Air Station.

Additionally, DENR's Division of Parks and Recreation and the Natural Heritage Program, as well as the Ecosystem Enhancement Program, a partnership involving the N.C. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and DENR, are working with Fort Bragg and the counties surrounding the base to preserve key land, wetlands, creeks and rivers in the Sandhills. The preservation will support Fort Bragg's mission as well as preserve the natural resources for future generations. Similar efforts are taking place at Camp Lejeune.

The results of these coordinated efforts have been significant. Earlier this month, Gov. Easley announced that 37,445 acres within five miles of North Carolina's military bases have been protected from incompatible development since the last round of federal base realignments and closures in 1995.

The military is a key contributor to our state's economy and a leader in the stewardship of our state's natural resources. We will continue to make progress together, conserving and protecting our natural resources, while at the same time supporting the current and future national defense missions of the military in our state.

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