



Sentinel Landscapes: Where Conservation, Working Lands, and National Defense Interests Converge

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Summary: In July 2013, the Administration launched the Sentinel Landscapes partnership to accomplish three critical goals: preserve agricultural lands, assist with military readiness, and restore and protect wildlife habitat.

Last July, the Administration launched the [Sentinel Landscapes](#) partnership to accomplish three critical goals: preserve agricultural lands, assist with military readiness, and restore and protect wildlife habitat.

In this unique collaboration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense, and Department of the Interior work with state, local, and private partners to preserve and restore natural lands important to the nation's defense mission. The basic premise is to preserve and restore habitat around the military base to ensure at-risk species can survive, while also improving military readiness by ensuring training activities can proceed unimpeded.

Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM), located in Washington state's Puget Sound region, was the first designated Sentinel Landscape. Located about 10 miles southwest of Tacoma, Washington, JBLM is one of the premiere military installations on the West Coast, covering over 91,000 acres to support 43,000 soldiers and airmen for maneuver training and land-warrior system testing.

JBLM also boasts the largest and highest quality prairie habitat in the South Puget Sound region. Once covering more than 150,000 acres, this irreplaceable ecological asset now covers only 23,000 acres, with nearly 90 percent of it found on JBLM. This prairie landscape is a large part of the remaining habitat for several animal and plant species protected under the Endangered Species Act. As development moves closer, these species take refuge on the base, restricting certain military activities like maneuver training for Stryker Brigade Combat Teams. The Sentinel Landscapes partnership ensures that at-risk species can thrive in the habitat surrounding the base without threatening military readiness.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/08/01/sentinel-landscapes-where-conservation-working-lands-and-national-defense-interests->

As the partnership supports the training of current soldiers and airmen, it also provides job training to veterans in the environmental field. Initiated through a new partnership between Center for Natural Lands Management and the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, the [Veterans Conservation Corps](#) project is forging lasting relationships between veterans and the environment and assisting in the transition of warfighters into civilian employment and life. So far in 2014, veterans have conducted ecological monitoring, weed control, and prairie and wetland restoration.

Other accomplishments since the designation include:

- **More Lands Protected:** More than 6,000 acres of potential acquisitions and easements have been identified on top of the more than 2,600 acres announced in 2013. This will expand the available habitat around the base, further reducing restrictions to training activities on JBLM.
- **More Dollars on the Ground:** A debit-credit methodology tool, [Prairie Habitat Assessment Methodology](#) (PHAM), is completed. This tool aims to quantify credits and debits resulting from impacts to and restoration of prairie habitat in Thurston County, which will allow the trading of these credits and create an ecosystem market. The tool will continue to be tested and refined in the coming months.
- **Species on the Road to Recovery:** Taylor's checkerspot larvae, a federally-protected species, were released in March at a new site on JBLM by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and others. These larvae were reared at the Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women through a partnership between the Washington State Department of Corrections and the Sustainability in Prisons Project.

In the past year, the Sentinel Landscapes partnership has helped 'guard' our military, rural communities and natural resources by maintaining and encouraging compatible land uses around military installations and ranges—places where conservation, working lands, and national defense interests converge.

Building on that success, the next designated Sentinel Landscapes will be selected this fall from among six Sentinel Landscape finalists:

- Fort Huachuca, Arizona
- Avon Park Air Force Range, Florida
- Fort Stewart/Townsend Bombing Range, Georgia
- Naval Air Station Patuxent River – Atlantic Test Range, Maryland
- Camp Ripley, Minnesota
- Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina

The White House salutes the military, veterans, and landowners who are partnering for national security, conservation and local community economies.

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