



ENVIRONMENTAL E-NEWSLETTER

Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division



PARTNERSHIP RENEWED, COMMUNITY RECOGNIZES ENVIRONMENTAL AMBASSADORS

Col. Jason Wesbrock, commander of U.S. Army Garrison – Fort Hood, along with mayors, city managers and staff from the communities of Killeen, Harker Heights, Copperas Cove, Nolanville, Belton, Salado, Gatesville and Lampasas gathered at Nolanville Monarch Park to renew the Cen-Tex Sustainable Communities Partnership April 8.

“This unique partnership between community leaders and stakeholders will build self-sustaining, community-based projects and programs,” Wesbrock said. “This will help us to achieve positive impacts from sustaining the mission to enhancing the well-being of our youth, Soldiers and Central Texas residents on Fort Hood and in our neighboring communities.”

Wesbrock and Andy Williams, Mayor of Nolanville, hosted the event, signing a memorandum of agreement to renew the partnership until July 2024.

“I look forward to the great things we have planned for the next 3 years as we continue to cultivate and foster collaboration with our neighboring cities, and promote environmentally sound practices through initiatives like Nolanville’s Monarch Park and today’s tree planting ceremony,” Wesbrock said. “Through leadership in sustainability and collaboration we will enhance environmental awareness and stewardship.”

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RENEW: LEGACY CONTINUES

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The renewal also included the presentation of the first annual Environmental Ambassador Awards. Recipients included community members, staff, youth and the 504th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Brigade for their efforts in fostering community service and promoting beautification, conservation, pollution prevention and recycling through youth and community initiatives. During the recognition, awardees were presented with a tree cookie – a cross section of a tree. Williams thanked the awardees for their leadership, dedication and commitment to sustainability.

“These individuals serve as a reminder of our responsibility as government leaders, managers and residents to remain committed to sustainability in the long term,” he said.

The 504th EMIB was recognized for their support to Nolanville on projects such as Make a Difference Day, community clean ups and beautification efforts at Monarch Park.

“This is an honor but isn’t about us. We just love giving back, and try to take every opportunity to come out and support the city,” Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Mabanag, 504th EMIB, said. “We wear the uniform for a reason, and as professionals, we need to set the example.”

Lt. Col. John Langford, the brigade’s executive officer, echoed the importance of giving back and being active members of the community.

“You have an opportunity to provide a service that carries on beyond you,” he said. “The things you do, whether it is planting trees, serving at a food bank, reading to kids at school – think about how that is going to carry on after. It’s going to be a legacy of not only your unit, but as well as the uniform that you wear, building the community and working with partners.”

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LT. COL. JOHN LANGFORD



SOLDIERS, CEN-TEX PARTNERS HELP STUDENTS BEAUTIFY SCHOOL

Students from Brookhaven Elementary along with staff, Soldiers from Bravo Company, Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center, and Cen-Tex Sustainable Communities Partnership members from Fort Hood, Killeen and Copperas Cove joined together to beautify the school’s footprint.

Trista Webb, third grade teacher, and Ester Hadley, counselor, led the collaborative effort to help students connect with nature and learn about social responsibility, environmental stewardship and teamwork.

“One team, one goal is how we thrive here at Brookhaven,” Webb said. “Teamwork is number one, and number two, we teach students to give back at an early age. When they get older, it will be inherent to them to continue to give back to their community.”

Students, staff, Soldiers and Cen-Tex representatives collectively volunteered more than 65 hours pulling weeds, removing old landscape lining and preparing the site for flowers, soil and mulch.

“As Soldiers, it is important for us to be involved with our local community and set an example for youth that one can rise above whatever station they may be in in life,” Sgt. First Class Gregory Phillips, said. “With a little bit of hard work, one can push forward and do great things.”

The school is participating in the Cen-Tex Partnership’s Youth Environmental Ambassadors! program and empowering students lead as environmental stewards with their recycling program, energy conservation efforts and beautification project.

Hadley said YEA! is an opportunity for students to build a relationship within their community and inspire teamwork amongst their peers.

“This gives them a sense of pride to see the outcome of their volunteer efforts,” she said. “Together with our partners from Fort Hood and neighboring communities, we can plant the seed amongst our youth that everyone can make a difference.”

GENETIC RESEARCH ON GOLDEN-CHEEKED WARBLER

Genetic diversity plays a key role in a species' continued existence. For natural selection to work so a species can adapt to a changing environment, there must be genetic variation among individuals. The Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCWA) nests only in central Texas, within suitable habitat occurring in parts of 33 of Texas' 254 counties; that is old-growth dense canopy stands of oak-Ashe juniper woodlands and forests found in the limestone hills in this region.

By accessing a thorough cross-section of central Texas GCWA habitat including Bell and Coryell counties at Fort Hood, the City of Austin and Texas A&M University proposes to generate whole genome based datasets to learn more about genetic diversity, demographic history, and population structure.

This type of science begins with field work which involves catching birds using mist nets and song playbacks and then taking blood samples.

Dr. Laurel Moulton, City of Austin biologist completed the Fort Hood field work and explained how the data works.

"These data will serve as an important and necessary waypoint in genetic monitoring of this species, and help inform the future management priorities for the next decade," she said. "We have also generated a novel genome resource for the GCWA in the form of a genome assembly that will be a standard, open source foundation for genetic assessments for this species into the foreseeable future."

According to Moulton, the results from this project will help advise the future needs for protection of birds and regulation on military lands and throughout the breeding range.

"This study will generate the most comprehensive assessment of genetic diversity and population structure of this species to date, using the most up-to-date tools available," she adds.

Why is Fort Hood involved in this genetic study?

"This genetic work is part of the Recovery and Sustainment Partnership (RASP) initiative between the DoD and Department of Interior-USFWS," said Virginia Sanders, Endangered Species program manager. "This is a new program as of June 2018 to promote effective ecosystem and species conservation and therefore increases military training flexibility."

Fort Hood has the largest known population of GCWA under one landowner.

According to the experts, Fort Hood is a top Installation among DoD peers.

"Out of 450 listed species on DoD lands, both the GCWA and Black-capped Vireo [both found in large numbers at Fort Hood] were selected for the joint agency Top 20 priority species for recovery efforts," Sanders added.

After the lab results are in, researchers are hopeful the RASP genetic study will shed some positive light on the long-term conservation of this species on and off Fort Hood.



BIRD NESTS IN THE WORKPLACE

Each spring, birds seek out suitable spaces to build nests and rear their young. Some species are cavity nesters, and often use man-made structures to create their homes. Unfortunately, buildings with uncovered gaps and crevices create the perfect space for a nest, but when occupied by noisy birds, can impede the mission.

This month, the DPW Natural and Cultural Resources Management Branch-Wildlife Team assisted Fort Hood Animal Control Officers and the DPW Operations and Maintenance Division staff, to successfully relocate a problem bird nest in hanger 7022 at Hood Army Airfield. The teamwork allowed for the removal of a second-story nest of invasive European Starlings, much to the relief of Soldiers working in the adjacent office area.

Reminder: DO NOT REMOVE BIRD NESTS without calling in a Demand Maintenance Order (DMO) at 254-287-2113.

DMOs allow for the proper coordination, which keeps installation staff and Soldiers alike in compliance with laws such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

HOW YOU CAN HELP PREVENT WILDLIFE PROBLEMS:

- Inspect buildings for gaps created by design or that have deficiencies due to age of the structure
- Report gaps that might lead to wildlife entry by calling in a DMO
- Never leave doors and windows propped open for extended periods of time



MEET THE NEW GAME WARDEN CHIEF



In March, CPT Jeffrey (Jeff) Moore onboarded as Fort Hood's Game Warden Section Chief. Though game laws are a large part of their day-to-day field work, game wardens also enforce criminal trespass, water safety, permits, and investigate/enforce numerous non-game environmental laws in training areas: fossil digging, artifacts tampering/removal, and illegal dumping.

"I believe that the Game Warden section at Fort Hood is an invaluable asset and need for the community. I strongly feel that the section is important to manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources within Fort Hood and to provide hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of everyone," Moore said. Moore understands the Fort Hood community effort required to effectively do the job, which spans several Garrison Directorates.

"The job of the Game Wardens could not be done without DPW and especially the Natural and Cultural Resources Branch, DFMWR, Range Operations, FHFD and other partners at Fort Hood," Moore stated. "Each section relies on each other on a daily basis to complete their mission."

Prior to assuming his GW Chief position here, Moore was the Detective Supervisor and Chief of Police in the U.S. Army Garrison in Ansbach, Germany.

Moore retired as a Texas Master Peace Officer in 2017 after 25 years of law enforcement service in Travis and

Upshur Counties in Texas as well as an Agent with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission.

A native of Gilmer, Texas, Moore cites his upbringing for part of why he works with us today.

"My father instilled in me a love of the outdoors and natural resources. I was camping, fishing and hunting before kindergarten. My father taught local Texas Game Wardens about trapping; where sets would be located and different sets depending on the animal. So they would know where to look and what to look for to locate illegal trappers," Moore added.

This knowledge and experience will be useful because Fort Hood has had a recent increase in illegal trapping. The DPW Environmental Division welcomes Jeff, and looks forward to working with him and the Game Wardens to enhance the Fort Hood community. You may contact CPT Moore at his email at Jeffrey.s.moore79.civ@mail.mil. To report illegal activities in training areas, please call the Police Desk at 287-4001. For emergencies call 911.

SPRING CLEANUP: COLLECTS MORE THAN 95,000 LBS OF MATERIALS

Fort Hood units, Directorate of Public Works Operations and Maintenance Division, Fort Hood Recycle, Directorate of Emergency Services and Range Operations came together to support the installation-wide spring cleanup.

"There are more than 440 points of illegal dumping sites throughout the training areas, main cantonment and nine lakes," Jim Imhoff, engineering technician, DPW OMD, said. "Soldiers have collected everything from boats, couches, concertina wire and wood to tank tracks."

OMD spearheaded the cleanup process with more than 340 Soldiers tasked, predetermining the sites from the fall cleanup.

"The previous cleanup event gives us a starting line and from there it's a team effort between Range Operations, the Conservation Law Enforcement Officers and myself to identify the points," Imhoff said. "Range Operations marks the exact coordinates to prepare for the next cleanup."

At the end of the day, vehicles headed to Deployment Ready Reaction Field to unload items into collection containers for trash, metal and concertina wire and designated areas for hazardous materials and items for the Defense Logistics Agency.

"Having trash and debris accumulate is not only harmful to the environment but hinders training and mission readiness," Master Sgt. Michael Steadman, the OMD sergeant major, said. "As leaders and a community, we need to emphasize there are sites where items can be properly turned in. Take advantage of facilities like the recycle center, classification unit and landfill to do the right thing."

By the end of the week, Soldiers collected 61,500 pounds of trash, 19,720 pounds of scrap metal, 14,160 pounds of concertina wire and 415 tires.

"Everyone did their part from our Soldiers to our Garrison Directorates to illustrate teamwork and make this week a success," Steadman said. "But as leaders, we need to walk our unit footprint and maintain cleanliness throughout the year in support of mission readiness and environmental compliance."

Lt. Thomas Weiss, conservation law enforcement officer, DES, explained dumping is illegal and perpetrators will face federal charges.

"Actions have consequences and you will pay for your mess," Weiss said. "In the past year, we have caught and charged more than 30 individuals and enforced them to clean it up."

Citations for criminal trespassing, processing trash into an area and weight of the debris can easily add up to a \$690 fine and lead to the possibility of an arrest.

"Just do the right thing and take your trash to the local landfill," Weiss said. "Otherwise you're interfering with training, harming wildlife and polluting the environment and waterways."

If you observe an individual illegal dumping, Weiss emphasizes to not confront the individual.

"The best thing is to get a description of the person dumping, what items/materials were being dumped, location of the incident, and a description of the vehicle and license plate number," he said. "Give us a call at 254-206-7777 or 254-288-1062 to report the situation and we will be dispatched to investigate."



LEADERS TOUR RECYCLE CENTER, CONTAMINATION CHALLENGES

Military and civilian leaders joined Brigadier General Ronald Ragin, 13th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, and Director of Public Works Brian Dosa for an environmental quality control committee meeting April 20 at the Fort Hood recycle center. Dosa explained the purpose of the quarterly forum is to share successes, challenges and lessons learned with commanders and units, while balancing the mission and environment.

"We do these EQCCs to balance training and readiness with the realities of being a federal installation in the state of Texas and having rules we have to live by in terms of compliance," Dosa said. He added the benefits of Fort Hood recycling not only from an environmental standpoint but also the economics and support for community programs and events. "It's good for the environment and it is the right thing to do," he said. "It's not only a cost avoidance but a profit that comes back to pay the wages of the people who work here and give money back to the community for Family and Soldier programs like the fireworks for the upcoming Freedom Fest."

However, in recent years there have been challenges with the quality of products deposited in the recycle bins. While the transition to single stream four years ago has made sorting more efficient, it has also increased contamination. Michael Bush, operations manager for Fort Hood Recycle, explained when food waste, plastic bags, sharps and ammunition are improperly disposed of it creates

costs along with life and safety hazards for the team.

"If we are not getting the right products in our bins in then it makes our process more inefficient," Bush said. "Every time we have to stop the line to unjam the screen, to fix the magnet or to do repair work, it leads to down time and increased costs." The weight of the recycle equipment and fast-paced sorting and processing system can create pressure that can easily cause contaminants like a bullet to discharge or a lithium cans to explode.

"Since November 2018, we have had eight fires, and out of them, a majority were attributed to lithium batteries," Fort Hood Fire Chief Sergio Campos, said. "The proper disposal is not to just throw them in your trash can or recycling bin. They can spontaneously combust, and have created about \$100,000 worth of damage here at the recycle center."

Pointing to a pile of recyclables mixed with paper and cardboard, Campos added that the product is a pile of fuel for combustibles. "Individuals can get hurt and possibly lose their life," he said. The tour concluded with Ragin explaining the forum is a great opportunity to get Soldiers informed. "I thank you for the education and I ask the units to continue to push recycling and put it in the right place," he said. "I encourage you all to keep recycling and get the word out."

For information on recycle resources, call Recycle at 254-287-2336 or visit [Facebook.com/FortHoodRecycle](https://www.facebook.com/FortHoodRecycle).



DID YOU KNOW?

- The black-capped vireo is a small songbird found in Texas during the breeding season.
- It has a black head and bold white spectacles surrounding a red eye, and yellow sides with white underparts.
- Populations are threatened by loss and degradation of habitat and nest parasitism by the brown-headed cowbird.
- Black-capped vireos prefer shrubby habitats with oak and juniper, especially on hillsides.
- They generally arrive in Texas in April and depart in September.
- They migrate south to Mexico for the winter.
- There are currently more than 14,000 birds estimated across the vireo's breeding range of Oklahoma, Texas and Mexico.



POISON IVY SAFETY MESSAGE

Not everyone is allergic to poison ivy, but those who are get reminded or learn it the hard way the first time.

Poison ivy is a common native plant found on Fort Hood. This species most commonly grows along creeks and under shade trees but may grow within grasslands and fields associated with shrubs and trees.

To identify poison ivy, you should look for the three-leaflet leaves that define its vegetative appearance. The leaves have three leaflets, which according to plant experts, make it compound rather than simple.

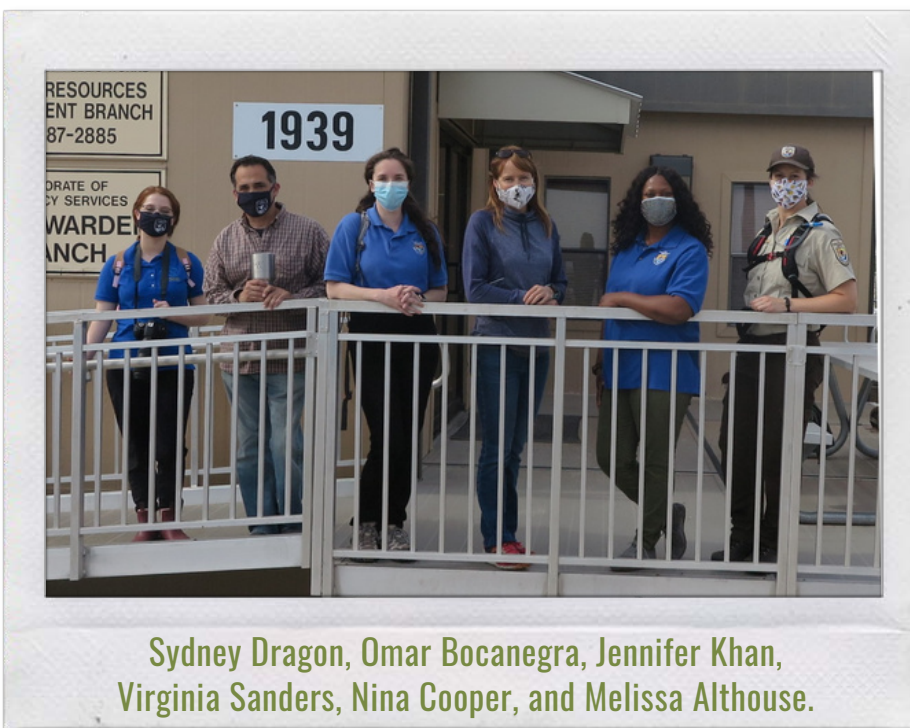
Hence the old saying, "Leaves of three, let it be." Poison ivy leaves most often have serrated edges. Its fruits are light-colored lime green to off-white in color. If the vine has five-seven leaflet leaves, it is not poison ivy, but most likely a harmless but similar looking seven-leaf or Virginia creeper vine. Both are also found in Fort Hood woods.

Every part of the poison ivy plant, including the stem and fruit, produces an oil which can cause mild to severe skin rashes. The plant is a deciduous (leaves fall off in winter) woody vine which often uses other plants as support, but can also grow standing alone. Because it is deciduous, many people think that poison ivy cannot be contracted during the winter months, but it can be problematic even then if you contact too many stems in one outing.

If you have been exposed, using poison ivy-specific products such as Tecnu may help reduce the amount of time the skin is exposed to the oil, and thus helps minimize the severity of a forthcoming skin reaction. In order for these topical meds to work effectively, you must read the labels, understand, and follow the instructions. You should also thoroughly wash exposed clothes separately from other laundry. If you experience a severe allergic reaction accompanied by illness, you should see a doctor right away.

Some interactions are inevitable, but caution and being alert when outdoors will go a long way in preventing exposure. Keep in mind that even if you've never reacted to poison ivy, increased and prolonged exposure may eventually cause you to become allergic to the plant. For more information about poison ivy, myths and facts as it relates to occurrence on Fort Hood, contact Natural Resources at 287-2885.

"Leaves of three, let it be."



Last month, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, from the Arlington Texas Field Office, visited Fort Hood to explore Natural and Cultural Resources Management Branch's management of endangered and recovered species.

Virginia Sanders, Endangered Species program manager, hosted the visitors.

The USFWS uses this annual Fort Hood site visit as an opportunity for professional development. Topics covered on this trip included:

- Golden-cheeked Warbler monitoring
- Black-capped Vireo monitoring & nest searching
- Cowbird trapping

1-9 CAV, YOUTH COLLECT 300 LBS OF TRASH, DEBRIS

Brookhaven Elementary students, parents and staff along with community volunteers, their Adopt-A-School unit, 1st Battalion, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, and Fort Hood and Killeen representatives from the Cen-Tex Sustainable Communities Partnership spent April 24 supporting a beautification cleanup event within and around the campus.



More than 50 volunteers spent a busy morning raking leaves, clearing trash from the creek and storm drain and gathering litter from the area. Within a couple hours, more than 300 pounds was collected.

Lt. Vicente Gumataotao, AAS coordinator for 1-9 Cav., was there along with 14 of his Soldiers and joined the effort to support the school's cleanup event and promotion of the Cen-Tex Partnership's Youth Environmental Ambassadors! program. "The YEA! program brings the youth and members of the community into the fold to make a lasting impact going forward," Gumataotao said. "As an Adopt-A-School unit, this gives us the opportunity to extend our reach and lend a hand. This is one of the most rewarding things you can do for yourself and the youth." "We take pride in our campus and our students do too," Iris Felder, principal for Brookhaven Elementary, said. "When they learn it here, they take it back home, and keep doing it as they get older, passing it on to their peers, neighbors and families." Fourth-grader Riley Engelke and her sister, Rowenna Engelke, a kindergartener, with their bag in hand eagerly chased after litter. "The creek was nasty and trashy," Rowenna said. "The best part was cleaning it up." "It made me feel better and happy to know we are making an impact on the environment," Riley, said. "Otherwise, if you don't, litter can kill plants and trash can end up in the ocean, hurting the fish so do your part."

Felder challenged schools to take the charge to promote environmental stewardship within their footprint. "If you haven't started doing something like this in your area, school or community, get started. This is how we can help our community stay beautiful," she said. "...we, at Brookhaven, make a difference because we are difference makers and so can you."



ENVIRONMENTAL POINTS OF CONTACT

Classification Unit	288-7627
Used oil turn-in, hazardous waste turn-in, empty and used hazardous material container turn-in, household hazardous waste, battery disposal, and personal/residential electronic waste	
P2 Services	286-5993
Oil water separator servicing, MKT/CK washing, used oil/used antifreeze/off-spec fuel tank servicing, fuel tank purging, Clarus parts washer servicing, and contaminated soil turn-in	
Spill Reporting	287-7127 or 911
Recycle	287-2336
Cultural Resources	288-1092 or 288-0427
Endangered Species	285-6094
Wildlife Management	287-1088
ECAT	287-9103
Energy Conservation	287-SAVE (7283)
Air Quality Team	287-8714
Water Team	288-5462
Sustainability	535-8557
Dig Permits	288-3220 or 287-4507
Hazardous Materials	287-9734
Service Orders (DMO)	287-2113
Base Supply Center	532-9861
Environmental Training	287-8755
DLADS	287-7763
Environmental Safety	287-6499
DPW Safety	287-8294
General Information	287-6499

Have an environmental success story you would like highlighted?

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The next edition of the Environmental Newsletter will be July.