

CHAPTER 13

REGIONAL CONSERVATION

13.1 Regional Conservation

Eastern North Carolina provides a variety of critical habitat types and ecosystems that are threatened by rapid commercial and residential development. Regional development also has implications for natural resources management as well as military training on Camp Lejeune. Camp Lejeune is dedicated to working with partners to promote conservation in this ecologically-rich coastal area.

Camp Lejeune is a member of the Onslow Bight Conservation Forum; a collaborative forum composed of several federal and state agencies and non-governmental organizations dedicated to sustainable natural resource management in the region. Camp Lejeune is collaborating with members of the forum to conserve the biological diversity native to this area. Forum participants represent a broad spectrum of land managers and conservation organizations. Some are custodians of large areas of public land held primarily for resource conservation and utilization or national security. Some modify the resource base by their own construction activities, and some are conservation advocates with little or no land base of their own. All, however, are dedicated to sustainable natural resource management, providing for human needs while retaining our natural heritage. Toward this end, the participants are attempting to foresee potential resource conflicts and conservation opportunities and, within their authority and consistent with their individual missions, work to protect and maintain ecologically viable areas in the area known as the Onslow Bight landscape.

Camp Lejeune's objectives in the Onslow Bight Conservation Forum are twofold: 1) to promote encroachment partnering and compatible land use in the vicinity of key training areas and ranges, and 2) to promote preservation of habitat to help Camp Lejeune avoid future restrictions associated with endangered species protection.

In 2003 Camp Lejeune partnered with NCWRC and The Nature Conservancy to help preserve approximately 2,500 acres of forested habitat known as the "Beck" property in the Dixon/Folkstone area. The planned development of this property would have been incompatible with the on-going military training in the area. As a result of this partnership, water quality values were preserved in the headwaters of Stone Creek and Stone Bay. Also, this property will provide valuable outdoor recreational benefits to the public as the Stone Creek Game Land. In 2005, Camp Lejeune successfully partnered on several other parcels in the vicinity of GSRA. Camp Lejeune continues to work with Onslow Bight Forum participants to identify other opportunities to ensure compatible development and conserve local natural resources. See Appendix Q for a copy of the Onslow Bight MOU.

Consistent with Camp Lejeune's interest in regional habitat conservation, Camp Lejeune intends to pursue an agreement with USFWS and the state of North Carolina wherein Camp Lejeune's active participation in habitat preservation or enhancement can reduce training restrictions on base.

OBJECTIVE CON1: Promote compatible land use and regional habitat conservation with the Onslow Bight Conservation Forum participants, local governments, and others.

- **Action 13-01:** *Continue participation in Onslow Bight meetings.*
- **Action 13-02:** *Refine and update Onslow Bight Conservation design*
- **Action 13-03:** *Collaborate to identify encroachment partnering opportunities*
- **Action 13-04:** *Pursue an agreement with USFWS and NCWRC regarding RCW habitat conservation off base.*