



Environmental Newsletter



VIRGINIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

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Lake Christine Watershed Improvements

Camp Pendleton, Collective Training Center (aka State Military Reservation) in Virginia Beach, VA is a strategic site for the Virginia National Guard (VANG). Bordering the Atlantic Ocean just south of Rudee Inlet and the City of Virginia Beach, this installation is blessed with both saltwater and freshwater recreational opportunities that augment its valuable training assets.

Camp Pendleton is part of a larger watershed that includes residential and commercial development to the north and the U.S. Navy's Dam Neck installation, along with some modest residential and commercial development, to the south. Within this 418 acre watershed lies Lake Christine, a 30-acre freshwater lake with approximately 20 acres located on Camp Pendleton and 10 acres on the Croatan private home development. The lake serves as a permitted stormwater retention pond for the City of Virginia Beach as well as providing opportunities for freshwater anglers, paddlers, and birdwatchers.

In September 2012, the Virginia Army National Guard (VAARNG) launched a comprehensive water quality study of Lake Christine to define and assess ongoing problems impacting good water quality in the lake and provide recommendations for improvement. As a result of that study the VAARNG has developed plans for improving water quality in Lake Christine that include future dredging and the construction of stormwater retention ponds in specific locations to intercept and remove pollutants like nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment from entering the lake.

Funding is being sought to construct the first of these retention ponds over the next two years and to begin monitoring water quality in the lake on a regular basis. Funding for military installations

within the Department of Defense (DoD) is always at a premium and competition for outside sources of funding such as state and federal grants are actively being pursued to increase the success of this endeavor.

The time tested adage of "nothing good comes easy" is at the forefront of this effort but the VAARNG doesn't shrink from these challenges, it thrives on them. And this challenge has been taken on by the FMO Environmental Section's Natural Resources Program Manager and by the Camp Pendleton Installation Commander and staff.

Undertaking a project like this one is very challenging and really requires the partnering of government entities and the public to help effect positive change. Everyone benefits from the endeavor and that is the message that we want to promote.

Good water quality in Lake Christine is not just a Virginia Army National Guard issue, it's a regional issue that transcends the property boundaries of the installation and even the drainage area boundary that it serves. And that is the kind of partnering it will take to effect long term positive changes in this lake for the future.

For more information on any of the recreational opportunities available at Camp Pendleton or the commitment to improving water quality in Lake Christine please contact the State Military Reserve, Camp Pendleton Billeting Office at 757-493-3125. And for more information on the commitment to excellence for improving water quality in Lake Christine please contact:

Ken Oristaglio, Natural Resources Program Manager, Virginia Department of Military Affairs 434-264-4929.



Special points of interest:

- CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEW ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM MANAGER: MS. PAM COLEMAN
- WELCOME ABOARD TO THE NEW ENV GIS PROGRAM MANAGER: MR. LINWOOD HOFFMAN
- FAREWELL TO MAJ SHAVER ON HIS UPCOMING DEPLOYMENT

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First phase of the riparian buffer project along Lake Christine to improve shoreline habitat. Regulatory and informational signage has been installed to increase environmental awareness and improve stewardship.

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EPAS time again!

It is hard to believe it has been three years since the last NGB Environmental Performance Assessment (EPAS). However, NGB and auditors will return to assess VAARNG facilities 16 – 20 May 2016. The assessment team will consist of 6 auditors who will visit MTC Fort Pickett, Camp Pendleton, AASF and 17 additional facilities. The auditors will be in the field conducting site assessments Tuesday through Friday. Once the list of facilities have been finalized, I will send notifications to each Command and facility. I will not know the exact dates until closer to the date of inspection.

Along with notifications, I will also send out a list of common findings and an assessment prep checklist. While the field teams are conducting assessments, NGB will also be assessing our eMS program. The eMS program supports [Command Policy 15-023, Virginia National Guard Environmental Policy](#). Please ensure that this policy is posted in your facility.

Thank you for your support of the environmental program. I am confident that we will have a successful NGB audit. If you have questions or need support, please contact me.

Pam Coleman
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First Take Stock: Inventory and Evaluation

Part one of a two-part series on cultural resources identification and consideration of effects



Camp Pendleton 1941

What makes a building, structure, or archaeological site “historic”? And what does “historic” mean? There are definitions and procedures established at the federal level that address these questions, and that are embodied in the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and other preservation laws. The VAARNG, like other federal agencies and those receiving federal support, are subject to the NHPA.

Under the NHPA, a “historic property” is a building, structure, object, archaeological site, or cultural landscape eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The property must meet one or more NRHP Evaluation Criteria and be at least fifty years of age; or if younger, meet the NRHP criteria consideration for more recent resources.

The NRHP criteria define historic significance through associations with important persons or events; for representing im-

portant developments in design, planning, architecture, or engineering; or for yielding information important for knowledge of history or prehistory (this criteria typically applies to archaeological resources). The criteria also recognize historic districts—complexes of buildings or other cultural resources that have a historic connection and together meet the significance test, but individually might not.

The VAARNG manages a NRHP-listed historic district comprised of Camp Pendleton. Within the district, there are buildings considered “contributing” since they “contribute” to the historic district’s NRHP eligibility. Likewise there are some that are “non-contributing”. Typically resources aren’t contributing if they don’t meet the fifty-year age cut-off for NRHP eligibility, or if they’ve been changed so much that their historic qualities are lost. Within the Camp Pendleton Historic District, the Governor’s Cottage

is considered individually NRHP-eligible because of its historic importance for serving as a retreat for Virginia’s governors.

There is also a NRHP-eligible historic district at Fort Pickett’s Blackstone Army Airfield, comprised of the BAAF hangar and the runway system. The hangar is considered “contributing” in the historic district and is also individually NRHP-eligible, while the runway system is “non-contributing” due to changes over time substantially altering its historic appearance.

A determination of NRHP eligibility is the first step to planning for treatment of properties. When a property is determined not NRHP-eligible, projects involving it don’t require review under the NHPA, since they are not considered “historic properties” worthy of preservation.

- Susan Smead, Cultural Resources Program Manager



The Governor's Cottage at Camp Pendleton 1941



Geographical Information System (GIS) Program Update

As we move into a new year and think of the excitement of what may come, we must also look back on the past year and the developments it has provided. In addition to joining a diverse assortment of environmental professionals as the new GIS Program Manager, there was successful GIS training conducted; from which I have witnessed each section's eagerness to provide input on spatial needs. This is pertinent in that any successful GIS program has a team of users that understand

how to translate their individual knowledge into a spatial environment. 2016 has already proven to kick off to a great start with the addition of Jason Byers as GIS Specialist in Facilities to new installs and updates of GIS software.

Fort Pickett does have a reasonable GIS presence and the next logical move is to follow the 5 simple steps to create a stronger state GIS program starting with standardization. With the various backgrounds from our user base we should be

able to create a format that not only makes GIS less of a monster under the bed, but more the handy multi-tool you have in your pocket. As this phase gets underway ideas are not only accepted but welcomed. Please feel free to contact our GIS team with any suggestions, questions, or comments.

Linwood Hoffman
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Species Spotlight - Eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) by Brian Webb

As the most common land turtle in the Eastern US, you have probably come across the Eastern box turtle each year at road crossings. The species is distributed from Maine to Florida along the Atlantic coastal states and as far west as the Mississippi River and coast Texas. Its unmistakable markings on both male and female individuals make it one of the most easily recognizable turtles in the region.

Description: Eastern box turtles are easily distinguished from other species by their domed shells and markings. They are an average of 5 inches long, but can reach 8 inches in older adults. The carapace is brown to black with varying pattern of yellow markings that resemble winter tulip poplar leaf litter. Many of the male specimens have red eyes, while females most often have brown to yellow eye color. The upper jaw has a distinct beak, especially in older adults. The species' primary defense mechanism is to retract all of its soft extremities into its shell and close a hinged front plastron to completely protect their head and neck. If handled, Eastern Box turtles will frequently urinate to dissuade predators from disturbing them. Male individuals are less timid than females and will not fully retract if carefully held by humans, but are capable of biting with their sharp beaks if mishandled. Most box turtles are poisonous for consumption among mammals due to toxins accumulated from eating certain fungi.

Habitat: Eastern box turtles prefer mixed or deciduous forest conditions and are most active during moist, humid conditions. They prefer bottom lands and are known to take baths in shallow puddles during hot weather, but will drown if they become completely submerged. For sustenance, box turtles are opportunistic scavengers. There are a variety of foods which are universally accepted by Eastern box turtles, which include earthworms, snails, slugs, grubs, beetles, caterpillars, grasses, fallen fruit, berries, mushrooms, flowers, bread, duck weed, and carrion. Because of the well maintained woodlands found around Fort Pickett and other training locations in Virginia, Service Members can expect to find box turtles while conducting field training in the late spring and summer months.

Interesting Facts and Conservation: Because of the turtles' slow speed, lack of fear for human activity, and widespread dispersal, the Eastern box turtle is highly susceptible to vehicle and agricultural equipment mortality during their active season, contributing to an estimated 32% decline of the species population from historic numbers. Loss of habitat is another contributing factor. Although the turtles reproduce and mature slowly (10-20 years to reach maturity), populations are sustained by the extended lifespans of animals in the wild. Individuals in natural settings have been known to live over 100 years, though in captivity they typically last only a few years. The turtle's age can be determined by counting rings in their scales. The box turtles lay clutches of 2-10 eggs per year in the summer months at depths of 5-8 cm, where they take 70-130 days to incubate and hatch. Although many Eastern box turtles are kept as pets throughout the Eastern US, it is illegal to keep more than five individuals of any native reptile species in Virginia.



Eastern box turtle (male).
Left Photo Credit: [Virginia Herpetological Society](#).

Right Photo Credit: National
Guard Bureau PAO





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Our Mission

The VAARNG Environmental Section leads and executes environmental programs in compliance with federal, state, and local requirements. We provide environmental expertise and advise the command to enable training, operations, acquisition, and the construction and sustainment of VAARNG facilities. Environmental programs include media areas such as air and water quality, natural and cultural resources, pollution prevention and hazardous waste management. Some of the subareas contained within these are wetlands, endangered species, historic structures, archeological sites, stormwater, erosion and sediment control, wildland fire, noise and encroachment, toxic substances, safe drinking water, storage tanks, recycling, and pest management. Our team also plays a key role in the implementation of the VAARNG Environmental Management System (eMS) by providing training, conducting inspections, and providing access to information.

Visit us on the web at <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/environmental/index.html>

Notes From the Environmental Officer



2015 was a very busy year for us here in the Environmental section within the FMO. There was a large amount of staff turnover and we were all busy with hails and farewells related to that, as well as our full plate of ongoing projects and initiatives. As a result, we did not publish as many bimonthly newsletters as we had originally set out to. If you paid attention though, you could still see that progress was

being made behind the scenes as evidenced in numerous articles thanks to the PAO. This year, we hope to improve in this newsletter endeavor and be more consistent with our own good news storytelling, supporting you all with useful information, and fulfilling our mission as environmental ambassadors.

I could not possibly list all of the accomplishments the team achieved last year in this short space, but I will say that they continued to represent the Virginia National Guard exceptionally well throughout the Commonwealth, NGB and the Army as an award winning organization. They found innovative ways to get the job done in this resource constrained environment through robust networking. This included discovering and exploiting shared objectives, leveraging existing partnerships

and forging new ones, and spending other people's money when ours was limited. Through prioritization of work, effective communication, and good old fashioned determination, they kept the machine turning with respect to natural resource conservation and environmental compliance.

As the only federal employee on the team, I have a unique role that allows me to enjoy the best of both worlds in my opinion. Having both civilian and military experience and education in the arenas of range operations and training, facilities and engineering management, environmental programs and GIS, as well as numerous overseas mobilizations, gives me a valuable perspective. I have a true appreciation of the big picture as it relates to our mission here in the VAARNG and I am thankful to have a career where I get to do the things I enjoy and contribute to this organization and the Commonwealth.

It is bittersweet that occasionally a professional military education or tour of duty opportunity takes me away from the FMO. I know the team always survives without me, but they also take on additional duties in my absence to cover down on my programs and managerial duties. As I prepare to depart this spring, I hope you will all continue to support the staff, consider your impacts on the environment in everything you do, and cultivate a stewardship ethic throughout your own personal and professional networks.

- MAJ Jaycee Shaver