



# Department of Defense National Public Lands Day 2009

09-086

## Background:

National Public Lands Day began in 1994 with three sites and 700 volunteers. Coordinated by the National Environmental Education Foundation, National Public Lands Day (NPLD) is the nation's largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance the public lands Americans enjoy.

In 2009, approximately 150,000 volunteers worked at over 2,000 locations in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories. Along with Department of Defense (DoD), seven federal agencies and many state and local lands participate in this annual day of caring for shared lands. Generally, NPLD takes place on the last Saturday of September. In 2009, National Public Lands Day took place on September 26. Next year, NPLD is planned for September 25, 2010.

The DoD Legacy Resource Management Program joined the NPLD partnership in 1999 to support volunteer habitat restoration projects on military installations throughout the U.S. and has provided financial support for NPLD events over the past 11 years.



During National Public Lands Day 2009, volunteers planted 494 trees and other native vegetation along the bank of a lake at Sparta Training Area, an Army National Guard site in Illinois. The objective of the planting was to provide wildlife habitat, inhibit bank erosion, and promote water quality filtration through a buffer installation in a reclaimed mining area.

## Objective:

The primary objective of NPLD is to enlist those who use public lands for recreation to help care for the natural places they enjoy. Participation in NPLD educates Americans about critical environmental and natural resources issues and the need for shared stewardship of these valued, irreplaceable lands.

## Summary of Approach:

NPLD projects that take place on military installations are eligible for DoD Legacy funding. This is a competitive funding application process. Projects generally emphasize habitat and cultural restoration - the forests, mountains, prairies, plains, rivers, wetlands and urban streams that are home to a rich diversity of animals and plants as well as historic buildings, bridges and other

cultural structures. The maximum amount awarded to each site was \$6,500 in 2009. Funds may be used for tools and equipment, materials and enhancements to land used by the public, but not for T-shirts, food or labor. The application is posted on the NPLD website ([www.publiclandsday.org](http://www.publiclandsday.org)). Applications are due in May or June each year.



Volunteers at Heritage Park in Fort Huachuca, Arizona restored an overgrown hiking trail system and added benches during National Public Lands Day 2009.

## Benefit:

The military benefits from enhancing and restoring lands for recreation with much of this work directed to improving natural habitat for wildlife or cultural resources. Additionally, this provides an opportunity for the military to invite the community to learn about these lands and understand the unique challenges surrounding natural resource management on DoD installations.

## Accomplishments:

In 2009, 51 out of 62 applications were selected to receive Legacy funds. Many sites focused on improving habitat for pollinator species such as such as bees, birds, bats and insects. The following are just a few examples of work done at the selected military installations: at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland, volunteers built a butterfly garden; at Umatilla Army Chemical Depot in Oregon, volunteers conducted surveys and installed artificial burrows for burrowing owls; and at Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach in California, volunteers restored salt marsh habitat by planting native vegetation.

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