Goal: The Department of Defense’s (DoD) Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program may provide up to $8 million in FY15 funding for land transactions at any DoD installation that limit incompatible development in the vicinity of these bases or that relieve current or anticipated environmental restrictions on military testing, training, or operations.

Background: Since 2003, the REPI Program has helped fund cost-sharing partnerships between the Military Services (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force), private conservation organizations, and state and local governments to maintain compatible land uses and conserve habitats around DoD installations in support of military readiness. REPI has a long and successful history of partnerships around the country. The challenges, however, of conserving the large acreages necessary to adequately protect military installations threatened by incompatible development remain daunting. For this reason, the REPI Challenge was established in 2012 as a competitive process to seek projects that would help accelerate land conservation efforts through innovative partnerships and financing. In 2012 and 2013, REPI offered a $5M award for projects that promised to incentivize new business practices, increase partner cost-share, and promote compatible land use around military installations at a larger scale. In 2014, the REPI Challenge sought projects that met these existing criteria while also advancing the new Sentinel Landscapes Partnership initiated in late 2013.

2014 REPI Challenge Outcomes:
In 2014, two REPI Challenge awards were made: $4 million was awarded to Fort Huachuca, Arizona and $1 million was awarded to Naval Air Station (NAS) Patuxent River, Maryland.

At Fort Huachuca, the Arizona Land and Water Trust, Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Bureau of Land Management, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation are working together to reduce land and water development between the post and the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area.

NAS Patuxent River, the Chesapeake Conservancy, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), NRCS, the states of Maryland and Delaware, and the Conservation Fund are working to protect a corridor along the
Nanticoke River to protect land under the Atlantic Test Range airspace heavily used by planes for Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation (RDT&E) missions.

2015 Award Criteria:

DoD will consider committing up to $8 million in FY15 REPI funds through 10 U.S.C. § 2684a agreements for proposals that:

- Protect land in areas already targeted by installations. Lands closer to military operations are generally preferred. Lands further from military operations will be considered on the merits of the effect, including, but not limited to, scale and evidence that regulators (such as USFWS for Endangered Species issues) indicate that the proposed action will lead to regulatory predictability.

- Attract at least a 1:1 match, with preference given to higher ratios, to include other federal, state, local, or private funds, in-kind contributions, bargain sales, below fair market value sales, technical assistance, land management and restoration activities, outreach and engagement, planning, etc.

- Demonstrate a project or process that addresses encroachment concerns through a suite of actions or tools that promote land protection, land uses, and land management practices that are compatible with the military mission.

- Attract multiple and diverse partners who bring financial support and an increased constituency for REPI, including federal and state resources and assistance programs.

- Coordinate with multiple levels of government to foster effective delivery of local, state, and federal initiatives or programs focused on maintaining compatible land use, land or habitat management or conservation, protection of agricultural or working lands, or other such interests.

- Model promising strategies to finance conservation, including market-based incentives and partnerships with private investors and landowners that could extend to other states.

- Illustrate the multiple values of the proposed project, such as creating and/or retaining rural jobs, protecting important habitat, increasing recreational opportunities, etc.

- Conserve important natural resources in a manner that will enhance DoD mission operations, such as ecosystem function, regulatory status, and relationship to military mission activities, and which also support and enhance the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership.

- Conserve large parcels of land in a manner that benefits the mission of the installation by protecting, sustaining, or enhancing range and installation missions to facilitate test, training, and operational capabilities, and which also leverages the Departments of Agriculture (primarily NRCS and USFS) and the Interior (primarily USFWS) to stimulate large-scale land protection with significant conservation and working lands benefits, therefore advancing Sentinel Landscapes.
**Geography:** The 2015 REPI Challenge is open to all DoD installations.

**Process:** The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities will administer the 2015 REPI Challenge application process. The 2015 REPI Challenge proposal form will be available on the Endowment website.

**Timing:** Full proposals are due by 8 P.M. EDT on Friday, May 29, 2015.

DoD intends to announce REPI Challenge award recipients in June 2015.

Ideally, the selected project would close within six months after funds are obligated to the successful applicant.

**Eligibility:** Proposals may be submitted by eligible entities as described in the 10 U.S.C. § 2684a authorization: private conservation groups and state, and local governments.

Note: eligible entities that are not currently REPI Program Partners should be aware that if you are selected to submit a full proposal, you must begin negotiations with the appropriate Military Service to become a REPI Program Partner while your full proposal is being reviewed. This will include negotiating a cooperative agreement or similar arrangement and the process will begin once you are selected to submit a full proposal. You will begin this negotiation without knowing the outcome of your 2015 REPI Challenge application. The 2015 REPI Challenge is designed to encourage conservation at greater scale, and ideally, the use of new and diverse sources of funding. Innovative partnerships that bring new ways of thinking to the REPI process are strongly encouraged; state and local governments, corporations, private investors, and conservation groups are welcome to participate in this process.

**Funding:** The intention of the REPI Challenge is to make multiple awards of up to $8 million in total. Funding is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. Funds will be consistent with existing partnership agreements and support the purchase of conservation or other restrictive easements or fee interests in land. If an appropriate project is not forthcoming, potential funding will be redirected to other priorities.
Contacts: Installation-specific questions on priority lands, incompatible use threats, and natural resource conservation needs should be directed to the appropriate Military Service contact below:

Army: John Housein john.g.housein.civ@mail.mil
Marine Corps: Lynn Landers lynn.landers@usmc.mil
Navy: Tony Danesi tony.danesi@navy.mil
Air Force: Scott Spencer scott.spencer@pentagon.af.mil

Questions on the application process should be directed to:

Peter Stangel, U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities; peter@usendowment.org; 404-915-2763

General questions on the 2015 REPI Challenge, or on engaging with other federal or state agencies, should be directed to:

Kristin Thomasgard-Spence, Office of the Secretary of Defense; kristin.j.thomasgard-spence.civ@mail.mil; 571-372-6835

Resources: REPI Program website: www.repi.mil

REPI Webinars are a valuable resource for learning about past REPI Challenge winners, Sentinel Landscapes projects, innovative finance techniques, and best practices.

Sentinel Landscapes Partnership website: www.sentinellandscapes.org