



2012 Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI) Challenge: A New Model to Accelerate and Expand Base Buffering Outcomes Georgia and Florida Pilot Program

Goal: The Department of Defense's (DoD) Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI) may provide up to \$5 million in additional FY12 funding for land transactions in the States of Georgia (Forts Benning, Stewart, and Gordon only) and Florida (Eglin Air Force Base and Camp Blanding only) that limit incompatible development in the vicinity of these military bases or relieve current or anticipated environmental restrictions on military testing, training, or operations.

The purpose of this pilot program is to encourage projects that conserve land at a greater scale and test promising ways to finance land protection that will help the REPI program meet its ambitious goals with limited funding.

The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities will administer the application process (receive proposals, coordinate reviews, etc.) for this pilot program.

Background: REPI helps fund partnerships between the Military Services and private conservation groups and state and local governments to address the need for compatible land use and conserved natural landscapes in support of military readiness. REPI has a long and successful history of partnerships in Georgia, Florida, and around the country. However, the challenges of conserving the large acreages necessary to adequately buffer military bases threatened by near-term incompatible development remain daunting. For this reason, the REPI staff now seeks proposals that will help accelerate land conservation efforts through innovative partnerships and financing. In particular, the REPI program seeks to harness the creativity of the private sector to access and leverage unconventional sources of funding, attract additional philanthropic sources, and take advantage of market-based approaches to secure the most land at the least cost. Select installations in the states of Georgia and Florida have been identified as potential locations for this pilot program. This pilot program may also advance the goals of the Partnership for Southern Forestland Conservation (www.pfsfc.org), of which DoD is a founding member.

Award

Criteria: DoD will consider committing up to \$5 million in FY12 REPI funds through existing 10 USC §2684a agreements for projects in Georgia (Forts Benning, Stewart, and Gordon only) and Florida (Eglin Air Force Base and Camp Blanding only) that:

- Conserve large parcels of land in a manner that benefits the mission of installations named in this document by protecting, sustaining, or enhancing range and installation missions, and facilitating their continuing capabilities for military test, training and operations;
- Conserve important natural resources in a manner that will enhance mission operations. Importance may be measured in terms of ecosystem function, regulatory status, and relationship to military mission activities;
- Conserve lands that have an effect on mission. Priority will be given to projects in areas already targeted by installations for buffering for encroachment purposes. 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 have considered the proposed action and support that the proposed action may have on regulators;
- Attract at least a 1:1, and preferably a higher, match, to include other federal, state, local, or private funds;
- Illustrate the multiple values of working forestland, e.g., to create and/or retain rural jobs, protect important habitat, etc.;
- Attract multiple and diverse partners who bring financial support and an increased constituency for REPI; and
- Model promising strategies to finance conservation, including market-based incentives and partnerships with private investors and landowners that could extend to other states.

Funded projects must close by September 30, 2012. Under no circumstances will extensions be granted for the use of these DoD funds after this date.

Geography: Funding is limited to the States of Georgia (Forts Benning, Stewart, and Gordon only) and Florida (Eglin Air Force Base and Camp Blanding only).

Timing: Proposals may be submitted through the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities electronic application process at any time, but no later than April 13, 2012 (see contact at end of document). DoD intends to obligate funds by May 31, 2012.

Eligibility: Proposals may be submitted by non-profits; for-profit corporations; local, state, and federal agencies; and REPI partners. Applicants that are not current REPI partners must provide evidence that the proposal is supported by an existing REPI partner (see list below); REPI partners are the only entities that are eligible to receive REPI funds via existing agreements.

This pilot program 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; governments, corporations, private investors, and conservation groups are welcome to participate in this process. If you are not currently a REPI partner in Georgia or Florida and would like to learn more about participating in this pilot program, please contact Ms. Nancy Natoli at the address below.

REPI Partners at the target sites for this pilot program:

- Ft. Benning: The Nature Conservancy, Georgia Chapter
- Ft. Stewart: The Georgia Land Trust
- Ft. Gordon: The Central Savannah River Land Trust
- Eglin Air Force Base: The City of Niceville, Okaloosa County, and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Camp Blanding: the Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Fund uses: Funds will be consistent with existing partnership agreements and support the purchase of conservation or other restrictive easements or fee interests in land.

Process: Potential applicants are welcome to contact Ms. Nancy Natoli with preliminary project ideas. Informational meetings will be held on the following dates:

January 24, Tallahassee, Florida, 1-4 p.m. (Location TBD)

January 25, Atlanta, Georgia, 1-4 p.m. (Location TBD)

Please RSVP to phowell@osiny.org to register for these sessions, schedule meetings with REPI staff to discuss project ideas, and to receive additional information.

Interested parties are strongly encouraged to attend one of these sessions. Each will include a general presentation on the goals for this pilot project and also provide the opportunity for a private meeting with REPI staff to discuss project ideas.

Funding The intention of this pilot program is to make a single award of up to \$5 million. Funding is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. If an appropriate project is not forthcoming, potential funding will be redirected to other priorities.

Contacts: Projects: Ms. Nancy Natoli, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Installations and Environment); Nancy.Natoli@osd.mil.

For application materials, please contact: Peter Stangel, U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities; peter@usendowment.org; 404-915-2763.