



## ARMY COMPATIBLE USE BUFFER PROGRAM

# ACUB

### FORT LEWIS ACUB



The Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program creates land conservation partnerships between the Army and outside organizations to protect land from development that is incompatible with the military mission.

#### INSTALLATION BACKGROUND

Fort Lewis encompasses 87,000 acres in the Pacific Northwest on Puget Sound, Wash., adjacent to McChord Air Force Base. Live fire exercises and maneuver training events are conducted by units stationed at Fort Lewis, as well as by units mobilizing or deploying from the installation. Fort Lewis holds live fire events up to the platoon level for Stryker units, as well as combat support and combat service support units. Units also conduct parachute operations and field operations for logistical, engineering, transportation, medical, and military police training.

In the mid-19th century, prairies covered 150,000 acres in the southern Puget Lowlands. Today, only 20,000 acres of prairie remain, with two-thirds of them on Fort Lewis. These native prairies are disappearing due to land development, invasion of exotic plants, and conifer forest invasion in the absence of fire. Many species of plants and animals occur only in these prairies, making Fort Lewis a true island of biodiversity.

In 2002, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) added four Puget Lowland species to its roster of candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The candidate species include the Mardon skipper butterfly, Taylor's checkerspot butterfly, Streaked Horn Lark, and the Mazma pocket gopher. Each of these species inhabits the unique prairie ecosystem, and all are present on Fort Lewis. In order to protect habitat and prevent further population declines that may cause ESA listing, the USFWS could impose training restrictions on large portions of training lands on Fort Lewis.

#### For more information

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## OBJECTIVE

The Fort Lewis ACUB program is taking a proactive approach to land stewardship. The ACUB partners are acquiring privately owned parcels containing native prairie at various locations in the vicinity of Fort Lewis. The Army is funding land management activities to restore and enhance newly protected areas and existing, publicly owned prairies. This allows Fort Lewis to assist in the recovery of candidate species away from on-post training lands. The prairie preservation acts as a conservation safety net for the prairie and associated species while deterring incompatible development and preventing future training restrictions on Fort Lewis.

## PRIMARY PARTNER: THE NATURE CONSERVANCY, WASHINGTON CHAPTER

The mission of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. Through the ACUB program, The Washington Chapter of TNC is working toward recovering candidate species living in the southern Puget Lowlands while conserving the remaining prairie ecosystem of the area. For more information on the Washington Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, visit <http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/washington/>.



For more information on ACUB accomplishments,  
funding and other stakeholders  
please view the ACUB website at  
<http://aec.army.mil/usaec/acub/acub00.html>

