

CHANGE WAS THE OVERWHELMING THEME ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL FRONT. ARMY HOUSING IS CHANGING, HOW THE ARMY MANAGES IT TRAINING LANDS IS CHANGING EVEN THE WAY SOLDIERS FIGHT AND TRAIN IS CHANGING. AND THE U-S ARMY'S ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM HAS A HAND IN ALL OF IT. JAVIER HERNANDEZ JOINS US WITH MORE ON THIS YEAR'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEADLINES, JAVIER...?

JAVIER: THANKS. ULTIMATELY THE MISSION OF THE ARMY'S ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM IS TO SUPPORT THE WAR FIGHTER. WE ENSURE SOLDIERS HAVE QUALITY TRAINING LANDS THAT CAN SUPPORT REALISTIC TRAINING NOW AND IN THE FUTURE. WITH THAT IN MIND ARMY LEADERS JOINED THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE IN PETITIONING CONGRESS TO CLARIFY FOUR ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS.

AS PART OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR 2003, PENTAGON OFFICIALS ASKED CONGRESS TO REVIEW A HAND FULL OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS AND HOW THEY ARE APPLIED TO THE MILITARY.

"WE ARE FOCUSING ON NARROW UNIQUE MILITARY ACTIVITIES, NOT ASKING FOR EXCEPTIONS BROADLY STATED.." HONORABLE RAY DUBOIS, DEPUTY UNDER SECDEF (I&E)

IN OCTOBER CONGRESS ANNOUNCE IT WOULD CLARIFY THE MIGRATORY BIRD ACT BUT WAS AGAINST ANY OTHER CHANGES TO CURRENT LEGISLATION.

IN NORTH CAROLINA, LEADERS AT FORT BRAGG PARTNERED WITH THE NATURE CONSERVANCY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO SAVE A 25-ACRE STRETCH OF RARE LONG LEAF PINE FOREST. THE LAND WILL ACT AS A BUFFER AGAINST ENCROACHMENT AND SAFE HAVEN FOR THE ENDANGERED RED-COCKADED WOOD PECKER.

IN EUROPE ARMY LAND MANAGERS ARE USING GRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS OR G-I-S TO MANAGE TRAINING AREAS. THESE TOOLS ILLUSTRATE DATA THROUGH COMPUTER GRAPHICS AND SIMULATIONS. “WE WORK WITH A LOT OF G-I-S OPERATORS FROM THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT AS WELL. (CUT) WE MAKE SURE WE’RE READING OFF THE SAME SHEET OF MUSIC.”– NATHANIAL WHALEN, USAEUR ITAM PROGRAM MANAGER

ARMY OFFICIALS SAY THAT SOON MOST D-O-D PERSONNEL WILL USE SOME FORM OF G-I-S- IN THEIR DAY TO DAY DUTIES.

THE STRYKER WAS FIELDED THIS YEAR. AND AS SOLDIERS LEARN TO FIGHT WITH THE NEW VEHICLE ARMY LAND MANAGERS WILL STUDY THE LONG-TERM IMPACTS OF THE LIGHTER FASTER WHEELED VEHICLE.

“THIS IS SO NEW TO US AND EVERYBODY ELSE, THAT WE NEED TO GET A HANDLE ON WHAT THE LAND USE PATTERNS ARE FIRST OF ALL AND SECOND OF ALL WHAT’S THE IMPACT THEY HAVE ON THE RESOURCES.” – PETE NISSION, DIR, DPW

WHILE SOME SOLDIERS RECEIVE NEW EQUIPMENT OTHER SOLDIERS RECEIVE NEW HOUSING. THE RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE IS EFFORT TO RAISE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR SOLDIERS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

“WHAT WE HAVE FOUND IS THAT TRADITIONAL PROCESSES RESULTED IN A BACK LOG OF MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR. WE WERE NOT ABLE TO MAINTAIN THE QUARTERS THAT WE HAVE IN THE MANNER THAT SOLDIERS REALLY DESERVE. “ –RHONDA HAYES, ARMY RCI COORDINATOR

UNDER THE PLAN A DEVELOPER WOULD LEASE THE LAND, BUILD NEW HOMES AND MANAGE THE COMMUNITIES LIKE OFF POST HOUSING. SOLDIERS AT TWENTY-EIGHT POSTS CAN EXPECT THE R-C-I. THE ARMY

SAYS THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE SOLDIERS WILL NOTICE IS THE LEVEL OF
CUSTOMER SERVICE.

AND THAT'S YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL WRAP UP FOR 2002 FROM
WASHINGTON I'M JAVIER HERNANDEZ.