

Proactive Options with Neighbors for Defense-installation Sustainability: PONDS™

A web capability to support installations & communities working together

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Regional Planning Needs

Urban development near and around military installations can encroach upon the installation and disrupt its functions and training capabilities. Nearby communities may be concerned about safety, noise, night training, flight zones and other impacts from military activities. Regional issues such as water quality and availability, air quality, and habitat for threatened and endangered species can affect the long-term sustainability of both the installation and surrounding communities.

Background

The population of U.S. cities has increased over the past several decades, as has the amount of urbanized land – often at a rate greater than the population increase. These developments continue to expand into previously rural, undeveloped areas. Economic growth near military installations is often driven by the economic impact of the installations on the local area and region. The combined forces of population growth, development of previously rural areas, and economic expansion have spurred the development of new urban areas, especially suburban communities, near active military installations.

Because many installations and communities did not anticipate the land use conflicts that would occur, little has been done resolve them. Recently, the military as well as states and local communities have initiated programs to proactively deal with conflicts. The Department of Defense (DoD) created the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) Program which was authorized by Congress in 1985. The purpose of a JLUS is to encourage compatible development and planning measures between an installation and neighboring communities. States and municipalities can mitigate land use conflicts by working with neighboring installations and amending zoning and building codes.

The Proactive Options with Neighbors for Defense-installation Sustainability program (PONDS™) was initiated to provide needed guidelines and information to military installations and neighboring communities that are facing land use issues with each other, private landowners or other Federal agencies. A great deal of

information exists on the web, in libraries and government offices on this subject but there is no central information repository to educate the military and neighboring communities on land use mitigation strategies.

The PONDS™ Approach

The purpose of the PONDS™ website is to provide military and neighboring communities with a central information source to help resolve land use conflicts, and thereby avoid constraints to the mission. The web-based database contains information on urban land use issues such as encroachment, water conservation, threatened and endangered species, and noise. The PONDS™ website is an information sharing hub for DoD installations and neighboring communities who are seeking proven solutions for resolving land use conflicts.



Please visit the PONDS™ website at:
<https://ff.cecer.army.mil/ponds/home.htm>



A searchable database allows users to find relevant case studies, examples, and articles related to land conflict resolutions and land mitigation strategies within and outside of DoD installations. In addition to military installations, case studies are collected from Federal agencies, the private sector, and non-profit organizations. It is searchable for military or non-military examples, by region (via color-designated map), or by location, type of study, stakeholder, mitigation strategy employed, or topic (using dropdown lists). Example topics include resources such as water, air, and threatened and endangered species or land use issues such as sprawl and encroachment.

Experts in the field have provided written guidance for those addressing similar situations in their own locales. The Requirements section is divided into Federal, state and local requirements. Hot links in this section convey the user to relevant guidelines available from the American Planning Association (APA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and other Federal, state, and local institutions. Land Use Initiatives include efforts (military and non-military) that provide tools and strategies for proactively managing land use issues such as the JLUS and the Private Lands Initiative (PLI).

The Organizations and Agencies section links to relevant government agencies and other organizations that deal with planning, Smart Growth, sustainability, and other issues relevant to this project. These groups may be stakeholders, mediating agencies, or interested parties featured in the case studies or in mitigating land use issues.

The user-friendly website requires no prior experience. The universal menu bar gives easy access to essential categories: Search Database, Requirements, Land Use Initiatives, Organizations & Agencies. The search page allows users to explore both the PONDS™ site and the World Wide Web. A “Comment” button allows website users to contact the PONDS team with questions, comments, or suggestions for articles or case studies for the database.

PONDS™ is part of a larger ERDC effort called “Sustainability, Encroachment, and Room to Maneuver” (SERM), which is an integrated part of the Fort Future™ Program. The purpose of SERM is to develop “new tools and approaches to help maintain the traditional and future operations planned for installations. The program is developing tools, data, and analyses to support decision-making at national, regional, and local scales.” Fort Future™ is a research program designed to produce capabilities critical to the Army’s ability to transform its installations in the

tight timeframe required to support our emerging forces.

Develop Collaborative Solutions

It is critical to resolve conflicts that limit or impact an installation’s ability to perform its mission. The PONDS™ tool can help military installations and local communities who are currently facing land use conflicts. PONDS™ website has been proven useful for installation sustainability planning, regional planning, and local community planning.

Installations and nearby communities can use military articles and case studies as examples of partners working together to resolve land use conflicts that pertain to military land use. Non-military articles provide examples of how to resolve problems that contribute to land use conflicts (such as sprawl), and of techniques to resolve these conflicts (such as Smart Growth guidelines and community design standards). The PONDS™ website offers help to all installations, communities, and land planners who seek ways to improve the quality of life in their region.

We encourage installations and neighboring communities to invest the time and effort to proactively work together to shape the future. Collaborative regional planning can help identify solutions to ensure the long-term sustainability of installations and their neighboring communities. **Please contact us to contribute success stories to the database.**

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