

Training Year 2025
Camp Edwards



STATE OF THE RESERVATION REPORT

Camp Edwards is proud to present its Annual State of the Reservation Report for Training Year 2025. The Annual Report, a combined effort of military and civilian staff at Camp Edwards and beyond, is mandated by Massachusetts law, and details military activities and environmental management within the Camp Edwards Training Area/Upper Cape Water Supply Reserve. It covers compliance with environmental laws and standards, including the Environmental Performance Standards, for Training Year 2025 (October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025). The Annual Report discusses the activities and accomplishments of the Massachusetts Army National Guard in the Training Area/Reserve including military training activities, environmental resource management, and information on proposed projects. It provides insights into small arms range usage, environmental management and remediation programs, and other significant military and civilian projects. Many activities took place during the year and a few are highlighted here.

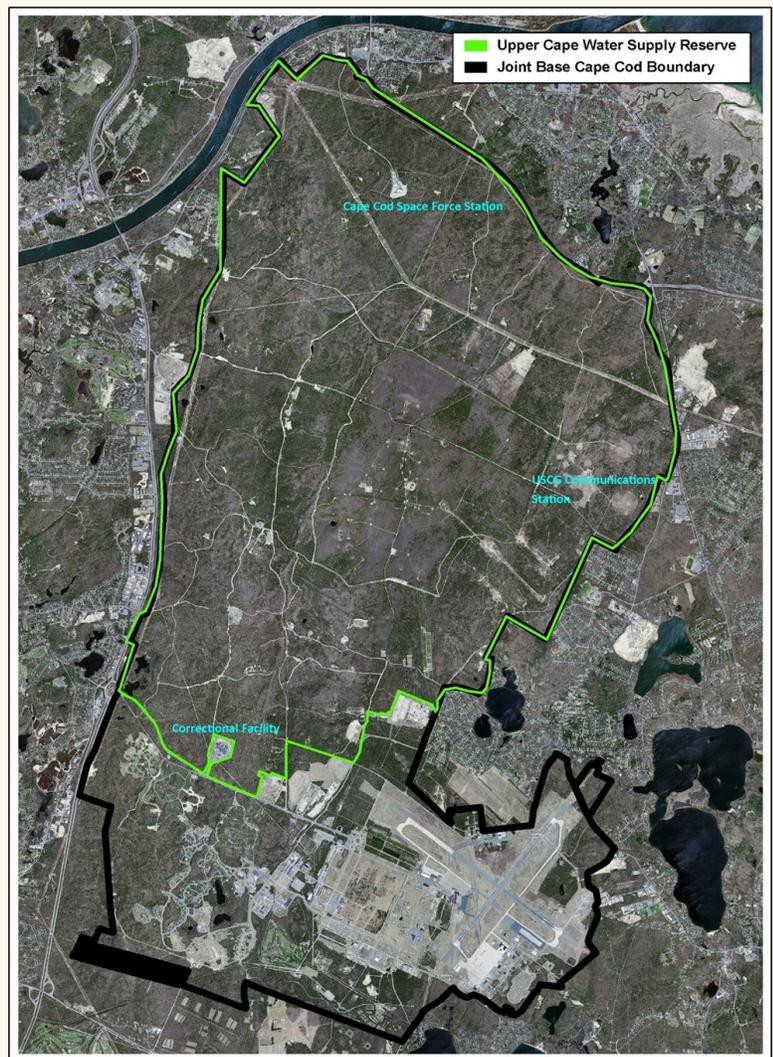
Massachusetts Army National Guard Camp Edwards Training Site

The Massachusetts Army National Guard Camp Edwards Training Site (Training Area) on Joint Base Cape Cod (JBCC) is the major training area for Army National Guard Soldiers in the Northeast. The 14,886 acres of the northern portion of JBCC support military readiness with training areas, small arms ranges, battle positions, observation posts, and training roads. Training includes land navigation, bivouacs, meteorological data collections, engineer/infantry/artillery skills training, driver training, Officer Candidate School and Reserve Officer Training Corps training.

Camp Edwards' Training Area is home to 51 rare and endangered species living in a variety of habitats. Camp Edwards Natural Resources and Training Lands Program staff is responsible for maintaining and enhancing Soldier training lands in the Training Area through ecosystem conservation, stewardship and partnership.

The Upper Cape Water Supply Reserve, established by Chapter 47 of the Acts of 2002 as public conservation land dedicated to water supply, wildlife habitat protection, and compatible military training, is co-located with the Camp Edwards Training Area. The Environmental Management Commission (EMC), also established by Chapter 47, oversees compliance with the Environmental Performance Standards in the Training Area/Reserve. Environmental Performance Standards are a set of standards specifically created to protect the resources in the Training Area/Reserve.

The remainder of Camp Edwards lies in the southern portion of JBCC outside the Reserve. This area is used for additional training as well as base administration, barracks, classrooms, training simulators, and conservation.



The complete, unabridged Annual State of the Reservation Report for TY 2025 is available on the Publications page on Camp Edwards's website: <https://campedwards.ng.mil/Publications/>



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

2025

Military and Civilian Use of Camp Edwards

The Massachusetts Army National Guard (MAARNG) has 5,625 Soldiers, many of whom conduct their annual training and other training sessions at Camp Edwards each year. In TY 2025, at least one training area or range was in use on 223 calendar days.

During TY 2025, Camp Edwards supported standard National Guard training such as weapons qualification, land navigation and maneuvers. In addition, TY 2025 was a busy year for mobilization training at Camp Edwards. The 26th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade and two other units deployed during the training year, conducting their pre-mobilization training at Camp Edwards; one of the main purposes of National Guard training sites is to ensure Soldiers can meet their premobilization requirements and conduct mobilization activities.

A number of training events happened in the Camp Edwards Cantonment Area with some Training Area/Reserve involvement such as **Best Warrior Competition**, during which Soldiers test their physical fitness, tactical proficiency and mental agility.



Left: A Soldier conducts pistol marksmanship on Echo Range during Annual Training at Camp Edwards in July 2025. Right: Soldiers participate in the Air Assault Course. Photographs courtesy Massachusetts National Guard Public Affairs.

Regional Cooperation 25 was a US Central Command sponsored command-post and field training exercise where military personnel from nations including Mongolia, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and others in the region spent two weeks participating in training exercises, such as basic maneuver training in the Training Area/Reserve. Camp Edwards also hosted the **Garrison Commanders Leadership Course**, teaching new Garrison Commanders and Sergeant Majors how to run garrison training centers, as well as the **Air Assault Course**, which included rappelling and sling loading operations.

Besides MAARNG Soldiers, other military entities, such as the US Air Force, the MA Air National Guard, US Army, US Army Reserve, US Coast Guard Reserve, and the US Navy used the training areas. The training area was also used by civilian organizations including the Civil Air Patrol, Eversource, and environmental remediation and restoration contractors. There were also public deer and turkey hunting seasons during TY 2025.



From left: Walsh's Digger Bee; a Soldier rappelling; Festive Tiger Beetle; Soldiers marching in the Training Area/Reserve.

Small Arms Ranges

Camp Edwards has four operational active small arms ranges: Echo (Combat Pistol/Military Police Qualification Course, 15 firing lanes), India (25-meter with 20 firing positions), Tango (25-meter with 32 firing positions), and Sierra (automated 300-meter pop-up modified record of fire range). Lima Range is a 40mm practice grenade range using the M781 40mm Training Round.

Since its approval for use, nearly 2.9 million rounds of copper ammunition have been fired for training purposes at various ranges within Camp Edwards. In addition to copper rounds, 380,000 copper-clad, lead-based rounds (including 9mm and 12-gauge ammunition) have been utilized since 2019. Over 15,000 40mm training rounds have been fired at Lima Range.

Range Monitoring and Maintenance

Operations, Maintenance, and Monitoring Plans (OMMPs) outline range-specific monitoring to protect the environment. OMMPs are living documents reviewed and updated with the EMC Environmental Officer. Best Management Practices outlined in OMMPs are functioning as intended and are protective of the environment.

The MAARNG annually collects soil, porewater, and groundwater samples from Camp Edwards small arms ranges for analysis. Samples are analyzed for antimony, copper, and lead and other substances that may make these metals mobile in soil. The yearly sampling results are provided to the EMC's Environmental Officer and documented in the State of the Reservation Report.

No exceedances of the OMMP standards were found in soil this year. An exceedance of antimony in porewater (rainwater through soil) was found at India Range—a known issue consistent with past exceedances on that range, which the MAARNG monitors closely and coordinates with the EMC. This exceedance continues to decline and poses no hazard to the environment.

A challenge for this year's range sampling was the 21-year low in groundwater levels across southeastern Massachusetts, as reported in the State of the Reservation Report by the US Geological Survey. At Echo, Sierra and Tango ranges there was not enough water to collect groundwater samples. The MAARNG contracted and scheduled a new round of sampling for the groundwater wells and lysimeters (porewater collection) where there was not enough water for sampling and will provide the EMC Environmental Officer with the results when received.



Tours and Outreach

In 2025, Camp Edwards continued its popular public tour program. Now in its fifth season, the tours saw strategic improvements, focusing on the realities of Soldier training, and which overflowed onto an extensive waitlist. Approximately 105 community members attended. A key goal this year was connecting with the student population: providing specialized tours for Massachusetts Maritime Academy students, local 5th graders, Cape Organization for Rights of the Disabled youth, and an overnight stay for a Cub Scout pack.

Beyond JBCC, Camp Edwards' leadership engaged with local and state officials, providing annual updates to Upper Cape selectboards and briefing Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. Thanks to meetings between leadership, Camp Edwards established communication channels and developed a working relationship with the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe. A draft Memorandum of Understanding has been submitted to the National Guard Bureau to cement the relationship and open opportunities for collaboration.

Camp Edwards and the Natural Resources and Training Lands Program (NRTLTP) engaged in numerous conservation activities, including popular bird and butterfly tours, presentations, and partnerships with regional conservation groups. *Photographs courtesy Massachusetts National Guard Public Affairs*

Environmental Program Management

The Annual State of the Reservation Report provides detailed information about the various resource management activities conducted by Camp Edwards in the Training Area/Reserve.

The NRTLTP is responsible for the integration of conservation and training. The program manages for a diversity of natural communities, plants, and animals using an ecosystem-based conservation approach. This approach supports high-quality habitat for both rare and common species and a sustainable military training site. A particular emphasis is on maintaining and restoring earlier successional habitats, such as grasslands, shrublands, and pine/shrub savannahs. These habitats hold significant conservation value and are rapidly disappearing off-post due to natural processes and development. Overall ecosystem management with a variety of habitat maturity and composition is crucial for plant and animal diversity, healthy natural communities, and Soldier training as well as climate and natural resource resilience efforts.

A range of tools, including mechanical restoration, prescribed fire, resource monitoring, and invasive plant management, are employed within the Training Area/Reserve to manage for a healthy, sustainable ecosystem and ensure the protection of wildlife habitats and species.

Monitoring and research continue to develop and support informed management and integration of these multiple objectives. Rigorous vegetation and moth study designs were developed for long-term monitoring. Breeding bird surveys continue to show positive or stable trends for Species of Greatest Conservation Need while more targeted efforts such as Eastern Whip-poor-will monitoring and research continue to show a strong, positive association with soldier training and habitat management. The entirety of Camp Edwards, especially within the Training Area/Reserve, is managed for wildlife habitat – including small arms ranges and other military training venues that provide critical open field habitat for a wide variety of pollinators and other fauna within the greater pine barrens mosaic.

Rare Species

Camp Edwards has 51 rare and endangered species. The NRTLTP in TY 2025 undertook extensive rare species monitoring and management efforts. This includes numerous efforts documenting and reporting wildlife and plant species listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act on Camp Edwards.



Left: A color-marked Frosted Elfin with a purple dot over a teal one. Right, Ms. Thornton and NRTLTP staff evaluating and marking a captured Frosted Elfin during the life history research effort.

Photographs by Jake McCumber, Natural Resources and Training Lands Program

For TY 2025, there was a significant focus dedicated to research of the Frosted Elfin butterfly conducted by a master's student from the University of Connecticut. Alexandra Thornton conducted an intensive three-month study of Frosted Elfin life history at Camp Edwards. Her work, under permit from MassWildlife, included mark-recapture studies of both adult butterflies and caterpillars, documenting all life-stages, including tracking individuals from observed egg-laying through pupation. The Frosted Elfin butterfly is an at-risk species currently under federal review for protection under the Endangered Species Act due to significant population loss and fragmentation of remnant populations. This butterfly is primarily associated with savannah habitats, feeding exclusively on either Sundial Lupine or Wild Indigo. At Camp Edwards, where Wild Indigo is abundant, the Frosted Elfin has been the subject of annual monitoring since 2018 and the NRTLTP will continue to monitor and manage for the butterfly in the years to come, playing an active role in recovery and conservation efforts.

Additional rare species highlights included permitting and initiation of an effort to introduce the state-listed New England Blazing Star into the grasslands of Camp Edwards. This striking flower has been notably absent from the base where suitable habitat and management are abundant. Numerous other rare species efforts were conducted during the year including surveys for clam shrimp, New England cottontail rabbits, tiger beetles, box turtles, and rare plants, among others. There was also a significant acoustic survey effort to record and identify bats throughout Camp Edwards.

Prescribed Fire

Prescribed fire is wildland fire originating from a planned ignition in accordance with applicable laws, policies, and regulations. Prescribed burning is the most effective, efficient and natural tool to reduce wildfire hazard and hazardous fuel (vegetation) accumulation, maintain and/or restore healthy conditions in fire-maintained environments, and reduce risk and vulnerability from pests, drought, and other hazards. It is used in the Training Area/Reserve to meet the goals and objectives outlined in the Camp Edwards Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan and Integrated Wildland Fire Management Plan (IWFMP) and support military readiness.

The NRTLTP is in the process of updating its IWFMP. In addition to the IWFMP, prescribed burn plans are required for each fire application and are authorized under permit by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.

Prescribed burn teams undergo yearly training. Eleven wildland fire trainings were conducted during TY 2025 and were focused on building the skill sets of the Camp Edwards Prescribed Burn Team and partner agencies to increase wildland fire operational capacity and safety. To enhance military wildfire training, about \$70,000 from the Fiscal Year 2025 Congressional Interest Wildland Firefighting funds was awarded for the 179th/180th Engineer Firefighting Detachments at Camp Edwards to buy wildland fire equipment and provide soldiers with training and hands-on experience through prescribed burns at the camp.

During TY 2025, 702 acres of the Training Area/Reserve and 108 acres in the grassland within the Cantonment Area at Camp Edwards were burned with prescribed fire. The 810 total acres were burned during a total of 10 burn days and averaged 81 acres/day within five different training areas and four grassland units.



Black-lining operations on a 3-acre grassland burn in preparation for follow up prescribed burning in March 2025. Photograph by Joel Carlson, Natural Resources and Training Lands Program

Stewardship Through Soldier Training

The core mission of the NRTLTP is to maintain and enhance soldier training lands and opportunities through ecosystem conservation, stewardship, and partnership. The soldier training mission is highly compatible with conservation, but it is also the essential element that provides for conservation success.

Soldier training requires substantial land area for both direct training use and buffer area around training activities, and that land requires access restrictions for safety and effective training. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of soldier training and training lands is the driver for conservation funding and partnerships, including those established under the Sikes Act (<https://www.denix.osd.mil/biodiversity/sikesact/>).

Recreational Hunting

Camp Edwards, in partnership with the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and the Environmental Police, is open to recreational deer and turkey hunting each year. This hunt maintains a harvest level that is compatible with a healthy deer herd and ecosystem. A variety of hunting opportunities are offered for the hunting community including the deer and turkey youth days, archery, and military and first responder sportsmen hunt.

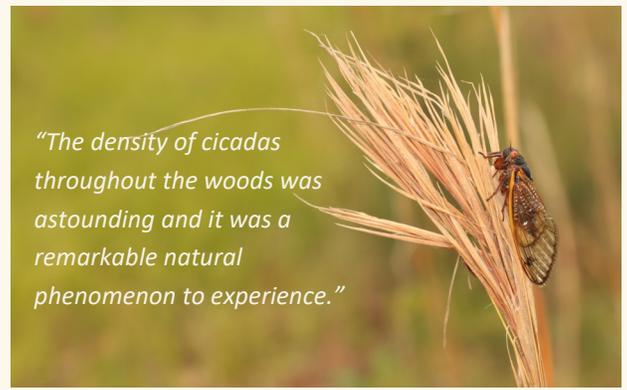
The TY 2025 deer hunting season at Camp Edwards was September to late December 2024 and included a three-day hunt by paraplegic sportsmen, a one-day youth hunt, a three-day archery season, a one-day hunt for military and first responder sportsmen, a six-day shotgun season, and a two-day primitive firearms (muzzleloader) season. In total, 81 deer were harvested. Camp Edwards held a six-day spring turkey hunt in May in addition to a one-day youth turkey hunt and a one-day adult mentored turkey hunt. In all, 28 turkeys were harvested during those hunts.

Residents interested in receiving email notifications about prescribed burns at Camp Edwards can sign up to be alerted the day before a planned burn (weather permitting). To be added to the list, please contact:
Emily.d.kelly2.nfg@army.mil

Ecosystem Resilience

Camp Edwards and the NRTLTP are actively developing a resilient ecosystem for long-term environmental resilience and diverse natural communities that can withstand impacts like drought, severe storms, wildfires, and major forest pest outbreaks. The NRTLTP manages tree density to promote healthier trees and more vigorous understory, which sequesters and stores more carbon. The NRTLTP also participates in outreach and interagency coordination related to resilience and ecosystem management—discussions that focus on what resilience means relative to ecosystems, how that relates to biodiversity, the ongoing successes managing for resilience in southeastern Massachusetts, and the practical and social challenges faced in meeting the ecosystem needs with ever tightening timelines.

Camp Edwards received a Natural Hazards Risk Assessment as the culmination of a multi-year project with Woodwell Climate Research Center. While this effort was required to shift focus somewhat based on federal standards, the resulting predictive hazard evaluation is extremely helpful and will aid in long-term decision making and management planning.



Periodical Cicada

The most significant insect event of the year was the emergence of the Periodical Cicada, or Pharaoh Cicada (*Magicalcada septendecim*), which has a 17-year life cycle. In New England, one of the two populations is found on Upper Cape Cod, with JBCC covering about a quarter of this range. Adult cicadas began emerging on May 18 at Camp Edwards, activity peaked in late May/early June, with extreme activity levels recorded in mid-June. By early July, the emergence ended, though they left evidence of their presence via egg-laying damage, which is temporary with no long-term harm to the trees. A survey effort was conducted and a report developed summarizing effort and observations.

For Additional Information

To learn more about Camp Edwards and the Annual State of the Reservation Report, please visit Camp Edwards's website at: <https://campedwards.ng.mil/>

More information is also available through:

Massachusetts Army National Guard Camp Edwards Training Site

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Scan the QR Code for the
Final State of the Reservation
Report for TY 2025

The complete, unabridged Annual State of the Reservation Report for TY 2025 is available on the Publications page on Camp Edwards's website: <https://campedwards.ng.mil/Publications/> and the Environmental Management Commission's website noted above.