

Training Year 2024
Camp Edwards



STATE OF THE RESERVATION REPORT

Camp Edwards is proud to present its Annual State of the Reservation Report for Training Year 2024. 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 2024 (October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024). 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 programs, remediation, and other significant military and civilian projects. Many activities took place during the year and a few are highlighted here.

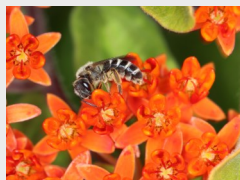
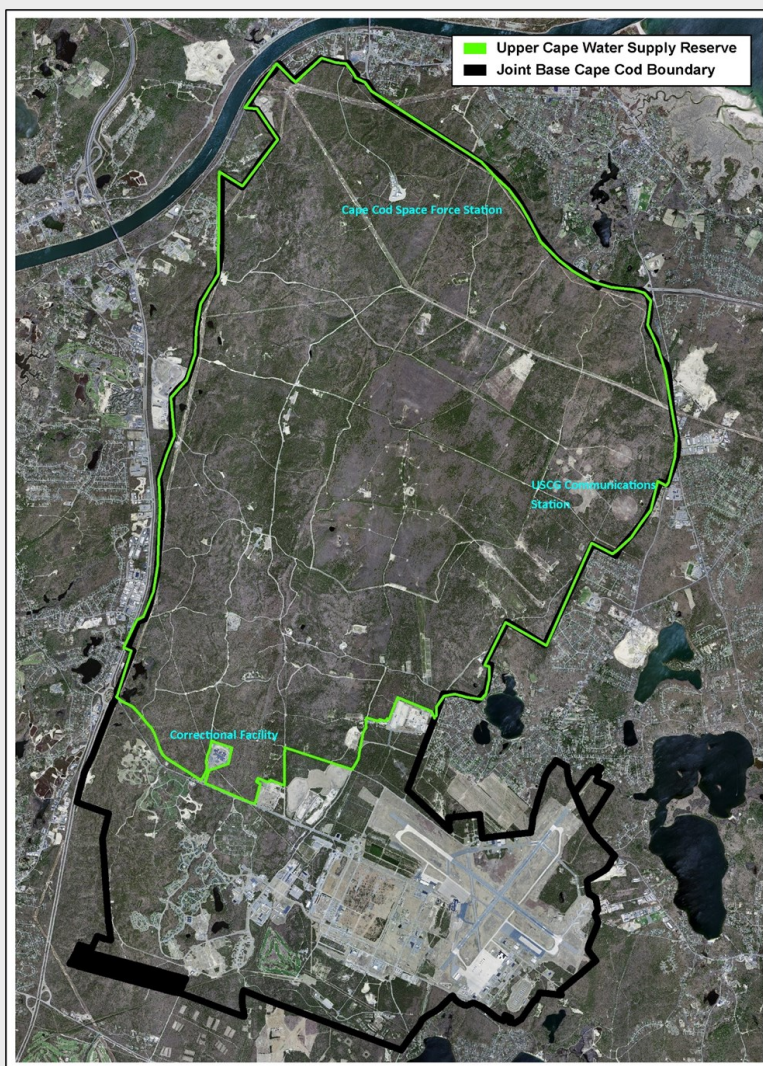
Massachusetts Army National Guard Camp Edwards Training Site

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 Office Training Corps training.

Camp Edwards' Training Area is home to 50 state and federally listed 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, and training simulators.



The complete, unabridged Annual State of the Reservation Report for TY 2024 is available on the Publications page on Camp Edwards's website: <https://campedwards.ng.mil/Publications/>

THE REPORT AT A GLANCE

2024

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 2024, at least one training area or range was in use on 209 calendar days.

During TY 2024, Camp Edwards supported required training, including weapons qualification, land navigation, and maneuvers. Fourteen MAARNG units were projected to conduct their annual training at Camp Edwards, but 22 units actually completed their training at the site. One of the primary reasons for unit relocations was the unexpected lack of availability or scheduling conflicts at other training sites. For instance, the MAARNG's 1-182 Infantry unit's training shifted to Camp Edwards due to a priority unit's need to use Vermont's Camp Ethan Allen Firing Range, resulting in the 1-182 Infantry being bumped from the range and losing valuable training time. Camp Edwards' busy training year is reflected in the number of military personnel training days counted, the highest over the last 10 years.

Besides MAARNG Soldiers, other military entities, such as the MA Air National Guard, US Army, US Army Reserve, US Marine Corps Reserve, and US Navy, used the training areas. The training area was also used by civilian organizations including the Civil Air Patrol, Falmouth Police, the Sea Cadets, and environmental remediation and restoration contractors.

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.



A Massachusetts National Guard Soldier competes in the day to night land navigation event during the 2024 Best Warrior Competition at Camp Edwards. *Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Eaton, MANG Public Affairs*

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.

This year, no exceedances of the OMMP standards were found in soil. India Range had an exceedance for antimony in porewater (rainwater through soil), which is consistent with past exceedances on that range. This exceedance has been declining and poses no hazard to the environment. This has been coordinated with the EMC. India and Tango ranges also had an action level exceedance for lead in groundwater. Communication and coordination with the EMC has occurred, and the MAARNG will resample both groundwater monitoring wells for lead in March 2025 and report the results to the EMC.

Echo Range and India Range

In TY 2024, a lysimeter was installed beneath a bullet pocket on the backstop berm on India Range. Lysimeters collect rainwater percolating through the backstop berms used to collect projectiles on a range. Placing a lysimeter under bullet pockets on Tango and India Ranges could better evaluate if any metals from projectiles percolate through the berm from the bullet pocket and guide future decisions on berm maintenance.

Groundwater was not sampled in 2024 on Echo Range due to a compromised groundwater monitoring well. The well was abandoned in accordance with MassDEP procedures and a new well will be installed in March 2025. Placement of the new well was coordinated with the US Army Corps of Engineers and the EMC.



Lysimeter installation under a bullet pocket on the India Range backstop berm. *Photos by MANG Environmental & Readiness Center*

Range Operations and Control Area

Camp Edwards began upgrading the Range Operations and Control Area (ROCA) support facilities on India, Sierra, and Tango ranges during TY 2024. Upgraded (or new) facilities include range towers, ammunition break-down buildings, equipment storage, bleacher overhangs, and covered mess areas. Construction began in May 2024 and is expected to be complete in early 2025.

Multi-Purpose Machine Gun Range

During TY 2024, bids were received to build a Multi-Purpose Machine Gun Range. Several bids were received, however, at the end of the Federal Fiscal Year in September 2024, no contract was in place and without a construction contract in place, the military construction funding previously authorized for the range was lost.

Camp Edwards Quick Facts TY 2024

- Home to 50 state and federally listed species living in a variety of habitats
- 670 acres in the Training Area/Reserve and the Cantonment area underwent prescribed fire over twelve days
- The Twelve-spotted Tiger Beetle (state-listed), was observed in the Training Area/Reserve for the first time in 2024.
- Camp Edwards conducted numerous outreach activities, including six public base tours for more than 150 community members.
- Twenty-two National Guard units trained at Camp Edwards during the year—its highest training use in the last 10 years.



Massachusetts National Guard Soldiers compete in various elements of the 2024 Best Warrior Competition at Camp Edwards. From left, a Soldier competes in the day to night land navigation event; the 12-mile ruck event, and the pistol match event at Echo Range. *Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Eaton, Massachusetts Army 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 Natural Resources Program 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.



USFWS Honors Natural Resources Program's Conservation Work

In September 2024, the US Fish and Wildlife Service awarded Camp Edwards with the 2024 Northeast Region Military Conservation Partner Award, which honors significant conservation achievements made through cooperating with USFWS and other partners. The award covers all military installations and facilities of the USFWS Northeast Region from Virginia through Maine. A presentation ceremony and tour were held in November. The award recognizes the strong investment in partnership and regional conservation from the Natural Resources Program team and the agencies leadership. More information is available here: <https://www.fws.gov/press-release/2024-11/camp-edwards-recognized-significant-conservation-achievements> and <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/486066/cape-cod-military-installation-recognized-environmental-stewardship>

Rare Species

Camp Edwards has 50 state-listed and federally listed species. The Natural Resources Program in TY 2024 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 (MESA) on Camp Edwards. During TY 2024, the Natural Resources Program completed a complex federal Endangered Species Act Consultation for Camp Edwards, supporting Soldier training, facilities management, and conservation, while establishing a bat conservation zone on base.

Restoration Activities

In TY 2024, the Natural Resources Program intentionally focused on maintenance in restoration areas and planning for future projects. One restoration effort was the C-14 Coppice Thinning project. After a successful 2018 forest thinning harvest in Training Area C-14, hardwood stumps regenerated, overstocking the unit with bushy coppices that shaded out the understory, blocked line of sight, hindered dismounted maneuver, and complicated future prescribed fire operations. The long-term habitat goal is an open, patchily distributed Pitch Pine-Oak woodland with Scrub Oak understory. The woodland condition is dominated by widely spaced, large, and relatively old Pitch Pine with periodic fires resetting the Oak midstory. This project applied a successful strategy to manage coppice regeneration on an additional 13 acres.

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At the conclusion of this final 13 acres, the entire original harvest site had been maintained with this method. This project will slow the total rate of coppice regeneration on the site, preserving the habitat and military training benefits.

Deer and Turkey 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 2024 deer hunting season at Camp Edwards was September to late December 2023 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, 77 deer were harvested for 853 hunter-days. Camp Edwards held a six-day spring turkey hunt in May with 135 hunters taking 13 turkeys. A youth hunt was held in April with seven youths taking five turkeys. A mentored adult turkey hunt was held, but no turkeys were taken. In October, a two-day fall turkey hunt resulted in three turkeys taken.

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 Natural Resources Program is in the process of updating its IWFMP expected to be completed in 2025. 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. Seven wildland fire trainings were conducted during TY 2024 and were focused on building the skill sets of the Camp Edwards Prescribed Burn Team and partner agencies so as to increase wildland fire operational capacity and safety.

During TY 2024, 596 acres of the Training Area/Reserve and 64 acres in the grassland within the Cantonment Area at Camp Edwards were burned with prescribed fire. The 670 total acres were burned during a total of 12 burn days and averaged 55 acres/day.



Papillose Nut-Sedge

Camp Edwards currently supports five state-listed rare plant species, one of which, Papillose Nut-sedge, was first discovered on Camp Edwards in 2023--the largest population in the region of this state-endangered plant. The plant is thriving on a maintained small arms range. During TY 2024, the Natural Resources program conducted surveys for the plant and finalized an amendment to the Conservation and Management Permit that includes survey and management activities in support of the plant. *Photographs by Natural Resources Program, Erin Hilley, left and Jake McCumber, right*



Ecosystem Resilience

Camp Edwards continues to be very active in developing a resilient ecosystem for long term climate resilience and diverse natural communities. A resilient system can withstand and recover from stressors and impacts like droughts and severe storms, wildfires or major forest pest outbreaks. In the pine barrens, a resilient condition has lower tree density which allows for healthier trees and more vigorous understory – both of which sequester and store more carbon. This condition has lower fire risk and greater biodiversity, meaning that goals and objectives are aligned for landscape management and well informed by monitoring efforts.

Camp Edwards has been active with climate resilience and ecosystem management outreach and interagency coordination. In TY 2024, the Camp Edwards Natural Resource Program Manager gave the initial talk at a summer speaker series in Falmouth, hosted by Highfield Hall and the Woodwell Climate Research Center. The talk focused on what resilience means relative to climate change and ecosystems, how that relates to biodiversity, ongoing successes managing resilience in southeastern Massachusetts, and the challenges of meeting ecosystem needs while maintaining ready and trained Soldiers.



Butterfly Milkweed and Wild Indigo are well inter-mixed with Little Bluestem and other grasses and forbs in the Camp Edwards Cantonment area. One of more than eighty nest boxes supports increasing populations of Eastern Bluebird and Tree Swallow.
Photo by Natural Resources Program

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:

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Scan the QR Code for the
Final State of the Reservation
Report for TY 2024

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