



2023 Secretary of Defense

Environmental Awards

Environmental Quality, Industrial Installation
Robins Air Force Base

Introduction

Robins Air Force Base (AFB) is the largest single-site industrial complex in Georgia, employing a workforce of almost 24,000 civilians, contractors, and military members. The installation is home to the 78th Air Base Wing, supports a wide range of aircraft, engines, missiles, software, avionics, and accessories components and is one of three U.S. Air Force Air Logistic Complexes (ALCs), known as the Warner-Robins ALC. Robins AFB is located east of the City of Warner Robins and west of the Ocmulgee River in Houston County, Georgia. The Warner-Robins ALC is responsible for the management and repair of the C-130 Hercules, F-15 Eagle, C-17 Globemaster III, C-5 Galaxy, C-5M Super Galaxy, Boeing F-15E Strike Eagle, RQ-4A Global Hawk, and

Sirosky HH-60G Pave Hawk aircraft. The Warner-Robins ALC supports maintenance requirements during peacetime and any wartime emergency demands.

The installation is situated on 6,935 acres, with 2,200 acres of protected wetlands and 350-400 acres of upland forest, including hardwoods and planted pines. Among the species of plants and animals on the installation, there are 400 plant species, 39 mammals, 110 birds, 60 fish, 34 reptiles, 26 amphibians, and 411 insects. The species of most concern is the Ocmulgee Skullcap, a rare herbaceous perennial plant. In addition, there are 58 archaeological sites, including 16 that are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places on Robins AFB. The installation is currently in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office on

improvements to support the continued usability of Building 125, utilized by the 402nd Aircraft Maintenance Group for C-5 work, while maintaining its historic qualities.

Background

Robins AFB employees are committed to environmental excellence, the stewardship of community resources, and the sustainability of installation-wide operations. Within the 78th Air Base Wing's Civil Engineer Group, the Environmental Management Branch is responsible for ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local environmental laws and the stewardship of natural and cultural resources. Through effective compliance measures, pollution prevention strategies, and a robust Qualified Recycling Program (QRP), the Environmental Management Branch is equipped to effectively manage a depot-level Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste Program, Clean Air Act Title V Major Source Air Quality Program, Water Quality Program, and Natural and Cultural Resources Program. The Water Quality Program manages three National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permits and numerous Storage Tanks, The Natural and Cultural Resources Program manages several state-listed rare plant species, National Register of Historic Places-eligible archaeology sites, and coordination with 13 affiliated Native American Tribes. Ensuring environmental compliance, protecting natural and cultural resources, and maximizing pollution prevention and sustainment efforts is the main goal for Environmental Management as they work hand-in-hand with mission partners to sustain mission readiness. The Environmental Management Branch maintains the complex balance between mission accomplishment and safeguarding human health and the environment.

Accomplishments

Environmental Management

The Environmental Management System Program Manager and Inspections Program Manger partnered with Robins AFB Unit

Environmental Coordinators and developed a plan to reduce federal and state inspection findings and deficiencies. The more robust plan allowed the team to conduct 40% more horizontal inspections for hazardous waste, hazardous materials, and solid waste management and storage, and spills throughout Robins AFB during 2021 and 2022 than previous years. This approach increased the overall visibility of programs with the highest potential to cause federal or state Notices of Violation (NOVs) and resulted in a more robust and effective Commander's Inspection Program. The self-inspections reduced findings by 38% over the two-year period and ensured Robins AFB remained environmentally compliant. This initiative also significantly decreased the Warner-Robins ALC operations downtime due to instances of non-compliance.

The Robins AFB Environmental Management Branch maximized utilization of Microsoft Teams to increase meeting and training participation, worker safety, and continual reduction of vehicle emissions throughout Fiscal Years (FYs) 2021 and 2022.

Water Quality

The Water Quality Program manages three National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits and two Stormwater Permits. These permits cover ten outfalls, four wastewater treatment plants and drinking water. Increased stormwater inspections in addition to annual samples for municipal separate storm sewer system and quarterly outfall samples reduced the risk for environmental enforcement penalties averaging over \$400K per day. In addition, in cooperation with the Spills Program Manager, the Water Quality Program Manager fully mitigated six spill clean-ups with no significant environmental damage or NOV.

Fuel Storage Tanks

The Environmental Management Branch furthered the underground storage tank (UST) reduction goal by removing three 15,000-

gallon fuel tanks from the old Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) Fuel Service Station without any environmental issues. Currently, Robins AFB has a total of only eight USTs, with three of those (two 4,000-gallon and one 6,000-gallon USTs) awaiting removal.

Air Quality

Due to the nature of its mission as an ALC, Robins AFB has a wide variety of air emission sources located throughout the facility managed under a Clean Air Act Title V Major Source Operating Permit. The primary emission sources include painting and de-painting operations, solvent cleaning, and combustion sources such as boilers and diesel-powered emergency generators. Other sources include jet engine testing, chromium electroplating and anodizing, small fuel burning equipment, and various volatile organic compound sources such as fuel storage and distribution operations. The Robins AFB Air Program Manager successfully coordinated a modified Title V Air Permit to double the aircraft paint capacity in support of the Warner-Robins ALC C-130 Hercules aircraft mission expansion. The permit enabled the modification of the Paint/De-paint Facility, Building 59D, to a full-capacity paint facility, previously identified as an addition to Building 59B. Furthermore, Robins AFB's due diligence and proper program management and oversight of the complex Air Quality Program has had zero Clean Air Act violations from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) in over 30 years!

Hazardous Waste and Hazardous Materials

The Robins AFB Environmental Management Sustainment Program artfully managed and disposed of the large influx of hazardous waste removal orders in 2022. A 65% increase of hazardous waste occurred over 2021 due to the national incinerator backlog and rejected waste disposal contract line-item numbers. The Sustainment Program creatively found

methods to store and manage hazardous waste and expired hazardous materials throughout Robins AFB and expanded the treatment, storage, and disposal facility (TSDF) capacity by 47% without hindering the Warner-Robins ALC mission and maintaining compliance with hazardous waste and hazardous materials management requirements. The installation worked with the Georgia EPD to obtain appropriate language to safely stage expired hazardous materials until proper disposition. Furthermore, Robins AFB increased the storage capacity for flammables in the TSDF.

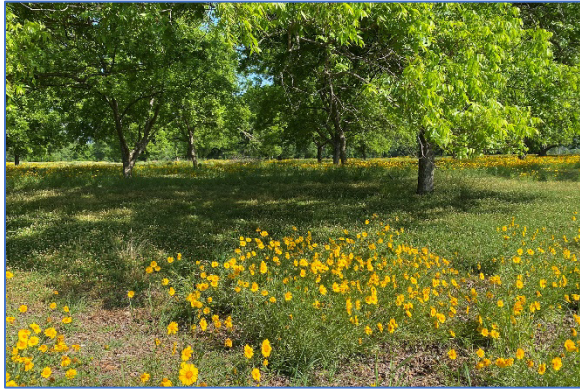
The Environmental Management Sustainment Program assisted with the massive transition of hazardous materials procurement to the centralized Third-Party Logistics contract, saving over \$175M. Robins AFB also implemented an automated hazardous materials approval process after a seven-year delay in March 2022. The installation had previously only used SharePoint to manage the hazardous materials approval process.

Natural and Cultural Resources

Robins AFB's robust Natural and Cultural Resources Programs strives for environmental stewardship, leading to the 29 consecutive Tree City USA recognition for its urban forest management strategies. Additionally, the Team has maintained zero NOVs over 30 years due to proactive goals and objectives outlined in the Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan and Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan.

Specific goals for the Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan are:

Goal 1: Manage forests to maintain or enhance the existing level of native plant species diversity and forest structure and improve urban forest recruitment and vertical stratification to achieve long-term sustainability in concert with competitive uses and management emphasis area focus.



Tree City USA Installation

Robins AFB has been recognized as a Tree City USA installation for 29 years promoting sound environmental stewardship.

Goal 2: Apply sound ecosystem management principles and the best available science to achieve and maintain healthy population levels, ecologically balanced composition, and sustainable productivity of game and non-game fish and wildlife species in aquatic and upland habitats and control nuisance wildlife.

Goal 3: Protect individuals and sustain or increase existing population levels of federal and state native threatened and endangered plant and animal species and habitats, conserve other special status species and habitats, and promote population growth through active management.

Goal 4: Protect jurisdictional wetlands and Waters of the U.S. to sustain “no net loss” and prevent degradation of existing quality, function and value of wetland, surface water, and floodplain resources.

Goal 5: Maintain grounds using practices that conserve existing ecosystem integrity, optimize wildlife value, enhance biodiversity at community and landscape levels, and that support bird/wildlife aircraft strike hazard reduction, force readiness and mission effectiveness.

Goal 6: Provide high quality natural resource-related outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities that promote the mental, physical, and social well-being of installation personnel, and others subject to availability,

consistent with the military mission and security policies and with minimal impact on sensitive natural resources.

Goal 7: Encourage better utilization and conservation of installation natural resources through effective management and communication that is responsive to customer needs and consistent with the Air Force mission.

Goal 8: Use the geographic information system and coordinated planning to facilitate informed and effective natural resources management and decision-making, and to promote natural resource education.



Natural Resources Pollinator Area

Designated installation friendly habitat area for pollinators. A beautiful representation of balancing Robins AFB’s commitment to the Air Force mission and sustaining the installation’s natural resources.

Environmental Restoration

The Robins AFB Restoration Program Managers manage the \$28M Robins AFB Optimized Remediation Contract (ORC) that

includes 19 complex environmental restoration sites with a 7-year period of performance (2020-2027). The ORC has met all regulatory requirements to date and continues to maintain excellent working relationship with the installation, regulators, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers contracting agent.

The Restoration Program Managers maintains the Administrative Record for the installation, ensuring all required documentation is added to the Air Force electronic Administrative Record website. Georgia EPD has commended Robins AFB for providing access to the Administrative Record, which improves open communication and access to information.

Waste Reduction Efforts



Dedicated QRP Support Manager

Mr. Darryl Mercer has energetically supported the QRP or many years. He works hand-in-hand with installation environmental program managers to ensure success of the Robins AFB QRP.

The Integrated Solid Waste Management Program teamed with a recycling provider to conduct three electronic equipment and components (E)-cycling events. These events provided Robins AFB personnel with a means to discard personal items safely. Each E-cycling event averaged a turn-in of 5,000 lbs of electronic waste, or E-waste. These events diverted approximately 15,000 lbs of E-waste a year to the Robins AFB QRP! In addition, the Robins AFB Freebie Program diverted usable expired hazardous material to reuse within various installation

organizations and resulted in over \$8K of avoided disposal costs.



E-cycling Event

Environmental Compliance Team members volunteered for multi-annual installation E-cycling events. These events collect an average of approximately 15,000 lbs per year of recycled materials.



Recycled Electronics

Each Robins AFB E-Cycling event diverts approximately 5,000 lbs of waste to the QRP.

NEPA Planning, Analysis, and Implementation

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Program Manager leveraged in-depth Air Force Form 813, Environmental Impact Analysis Process, subject matter expert training to better screen document development and incorporate guidance into all environmental programmatic reviews throughout all Robins AFB organizations. The Robins AFB NEPA Program implements the Environmental Impact Analysis Process to support environmentally informed decision-making for major Federal actions.

An Environmental Assessment was recently completed that analyzed environmental impacts of three new mission beddowns. This effort opened the way to: 1) permanently increase troop safety for the Kingpin mission by relocating it to the continental U.S., 2) ensure modernized electronic warfare and electromagnetic spectrum dominance by establishing a Spectrum Warfare Group, and 3) improved the readiness of the E-11A Battlefield Airborne Communication Node mission by establishing a stateside unit. The Environmental Assessment also jump-started future installation-wide area planning, engaged community planners ahead of schedule, and assured unity of effort for three new mission beddowns.

Community Relations

Robins AFB has consistently continued sound environmental stewardship through community relationships and educational awareness. The Environmental Management Branch has partnered with Keep Warner Robins Beautiful (KWRB) for 27 years to promote environmental awareness and sustainment beyond the installation's boundary. The Robins AFB Environmental Management Branch has hosted multiple Earth Day clean-up events across the installation and beyond in the City of Warner Robins. The Scout Lake clean-up event resulted in the collection of more than two tons of trash and promoted conservation and environmental consciousness.

The Environmental Management Branch championed a Great American Cleanup event and partnered with KWRB to rehabilitate the 19th century Bryant Family Cemetery. Volunteers removed debris, carefully cleaned gravesites, and trimmed shrubbery surrounding the site. Robins AFB has utilized social media such as Facebook, installation marquee signs, and Splash page to maximize public outreach to over 24,000 employees

throughout the installation and ensured its populace and the local community were aware of environmental activities in FY2021 and 2022. As a result of these efforts, the Robins AFB Environmental Management Branch received the 2022 KWRB Community Partnership Award.



Waterways Clean-up at Scout Lake

The Environmental Management Branch sponsored a clean-up at Scout Lake. The Environmental Management team gathered over 15 bags of trash and debris – one of many teams that contributed to more than 2 tons of trash removal.

The Robins AFB Restoration Program Managers conducted quarterly Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) meetings to provide local community updates on restoration progress at Robins AFB. Attendees included local officials, federal and state regulators, installation environmental and legal representatives, interested community members, and restoration contractors. EAB members frequently provided positive feedback that they were well-informed and satisfied with the restoration progress at Robins AFB. In addition, the Robins EAB maintains a website with access to fact sheets, slides, meeting minutes, charter, and mission information. Another document available on the website is the updated Environmental Restoration Community Relations Plan, which includes the results of interviews with the City of Warner Robins mayor and two other community members.