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BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL

Report To The Congress

OF THE UNITED STATES

DOD Can Increase Revenues Through Better Use Of Natural Resources It Holds In Trust

The Department of Defense manages almost 25 million acres of land throughout the United States and its possessions. DOD policy requires all military bases to manage these lands, encompassing vast natural resources, under the multiple-use principle, consistent with the military mission. Multiple uses include forestry, agricultural leasing, fish and wildlife programs, and recreation.

This report discusses how DOD can improve its natural resources program and achieve additional revenues of over \$3 million annually through:

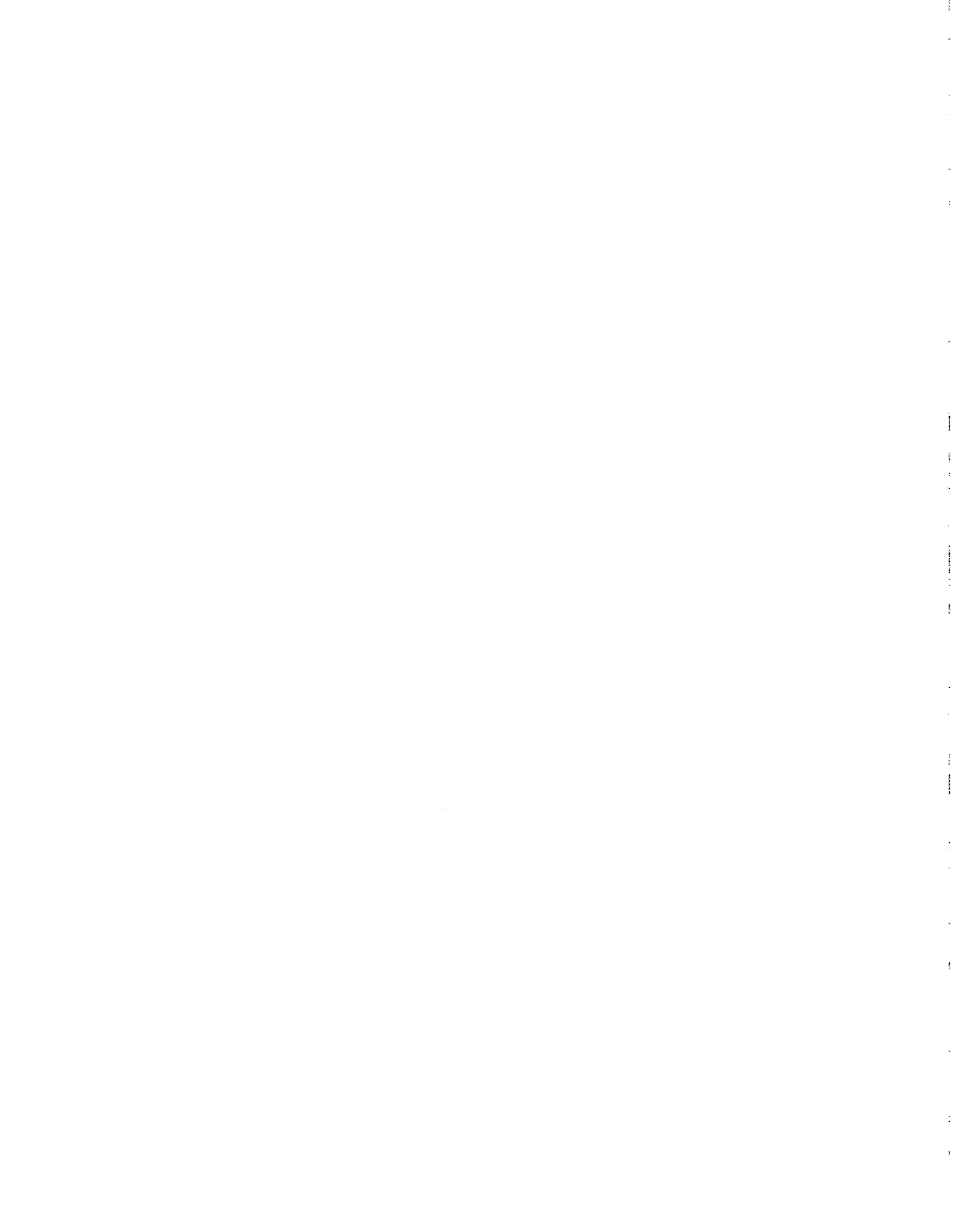
- Greater emphasis on planning for the effective use of land and natural resources.
- Innovative planning and administration to increase forest productivity.
- Increased efforts to identify and lease land for agriculture.
- Greater emphasis on providing opportunities for public outdoor recreation on military bases.
- Assessing more equitable user fees for hunting and fishing on military lands to finance fish and wildlife programs.



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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON D.C. 20548

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To the President of the Senate and the
Speaker of the House of Representatives

This report discusses the Department of Defense's effectiveness and efficiency in managing land on military bases and points out where the Department can increase revenues and improve the multiple uses of its land.

We are sending copies of this report to the Director, Office of Management and Budget, and to the Secretary of Defense.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles A. Bowsher".

Comptroller General
of the United States

D I G E S T

Almost 25 million acres of land throughout the United States and its possessions are managed by the Department of Defense (DOD). DOD requires all military bases to manage these lands, encompassing vast natural resources, under the multiple-use principle. This means that bases must exercise a balanced, coordinated management of all resources, applying the best combination of developmental and protective land uses, consistent with the military mission. (See pp. 1 and 2.)

Some bases have successfully applied the multiple-use principle, but DOD and the military departments have not ensured that all bases fully employ this principle. Many bases give land management only cursory attention, and some of those achieving integrated multiple use are not achieving its maximum benefits. Poor planning, lack of coordination, and management inattention hinder a more productive, responsible combination of land uses. (See pp. 5, 6, 14, and 20 to 22.)

GAO made this review to determine to what extent DOD can increase revenues and improve the multiple uses of land under its control. GAO estimates that DOD can achieve additional revenues of over \$3 million a year through better planning, management, and use of the natural resources it holds in trust. (See pp. 4, 7, 16, and 23.)

FORESTRY PROGRAMS COULD
BE MORE PRODUCTIVE

The forest is one of the most important natural resources managed by DOD and represents a substantial source of revenue. In fiscal year 1980, military bases managed 2.3 million acres of forest and sold \$12.3 million worth of timber and related products. GAO found that most DOD forestry programs were generally well managed. Forestry plans for these programs were better prepared, more current, and more useful than those for other base resources. (See p. 5.)

However, several forestry plans lacked a system for monitoring program effectiveness. Some plans were outdated, and others had not been properly reviewed and approved. In addition, inadequate coordination, poor planning, and general management apathy have prevented timber sales from reaching and maintaining maximum benefits. (See pp. 5 and 6.)

At one base, lack of coordination resulted in severe curtailment of forestry activities. Although the situation is now improving, the base estimates it lost \$1.4 million in timber sales during a 3-year period. Overreaction to potential difficulties concerning threatened wildlife at another base caused military officials to cancel forestry programs unnecessarily, eventually resulting in lost revenues of \$453,000. Disagreement over DOD requirements and confusion over program priorities have severely restricted timber sales at two other bases. And finally, many bases have overlooked the potential revenues and other benefits available through the sale of forestry byproducts, such as firewood, pine straw, and resinous stumps. (See pp. 7 to 12.)

AGRICULTURAL LEASING SHOULD BE EXPANDED

Many DOD lands suitable for grazing or crops can be leased while DOD continues to use them for military purposes. Such leases provide significant revenues, reduce maintenance costs, and conserve natural resources. In fiscal year 1980 over 1 million acres were leased for farming and grazing, generating \$12 million in rental proceeds and other benefits. (See p. 14.)

However, lack of management emphasis and guidance has prevented several bases from achieving the maximum benefits of the leasing program. In many cases, resource management plans are not adequate, complete, or current. Some bases lack current soil and water conservation plans essential to identifying leasable lands. At six bases GAO identified 37,000 acres that could be leased to others for over \$1 million in annual fees and improvements. (See pp. 14 to 18.)

RECREATION AND FISH AND WILDLIFE PROGRAMS COULD BE IMPROVED AND MORE SELF-SUPPORTING

DOD lands contain large areas of scenic wilderness, woodland, and waterways rich in wildlife

and recreational resources. To help design and administer sound management plans for these resources, DOD encourages its bases to enter cooperative agreements with appropriate State and Federal agencies. DOD also encourages them to collect hunting and fishing fees to help support these programs. (See pp. 19 and 20.)

Many bases, however, have not entered cooperative agreements and have failed to use available technical expertise when planning and managing these valuable resources. As a result, plans are often inadequate or nonexistent; consequently, military managers can neither gauge program effectiveness nor identify potential recreational areas. (See pp. 19 to 22.)

Most bases do not charge user fees but rely on appropriated funds to support recreation and fish and wildlife programs. Moreover, of the bases that collect user fees, most charge only nominal amounts. For example, of the 192 bases allowing hunting and fishing in fiscal year 1980, 108 assessed no fees while the remainder collected mostly small amounts, some as low as \$2 to \$3 a person annually. As a result, the primary beneficiaries of these programs pay little or nothing for their use, while most costs are shifted to the general taxpayer. In fiscal year 1980, bases spent about \$3.7 million in appropriated funds to support these programs but collected only \$0.9 million in user fees. A more equitable practice would require these programs to be more self-supporting, where possible, by passing more of the operating costs along to the user. By beginning to charge user fees at those bases without them and by increasing existing fees, GAO estimates that military bases could collect an additional \$2.2 million annually. (See pp. 19, 20, and 22 to 25.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

GAO makes several recommendations to the Secretary of Defense to ensure effective management and optimal use of DOD lands and natural resources. In particular, the Secretary should direct the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force to:

- Require military bases to develop and maintain adequate plans and cooperative agreements. (See pp. 12, 18, and 25.)

- Accelerate the production of forest products when possible. (See p. 13.)
- Identify periodically all land available for leasing and require the maximum leasing of agricultural land consistent with the military mission. (See p. 18.)
- Assess more equitable user fees, where possible, for hunting and fishing. (See p. 26.)
- Identify all opportunities for outdoor recreation and implement feasible programs. (See p. 26.)

AGENCY COMMENTS

DOD generally agreed with GAO's conclusions and recommendations and provided information to update, clarify, or correct data presented in the draft report. This information did not affect the report's conclusions and recommendations and has been incorporated in the report.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DOD	Department of Defense
GAO	General Accounting Office

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Nearly 25 million acres of land throughout the United States and its possessions have been set aside for the use of the Department of Defense (DOD). These lands, of which about two-thirds (16.3 million acres) are undeveloped, contain vast natural resources helpful to our economy and quality of life-- timber, croplands, grasslands for grazing, waterways rich in fish and wildlife, and scenic beauty. As shown below, the services share responsibility for managing these lands.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Undeveloped</u>
	------(acres)-----	
Army	11,867,000	8,890,200
Navy/Marine Corps	3,542,000	1,601,400
Air Force	<u>9,280,000</u>	<u>5,763,500</u>
Total	<u>24,689,000</u>	<u>16,255,100</u>

To ensure optimal use of its lands and their natural resources, DOD requires its military bases to manage these valuable assets under the multiple-use principle, consistent with the military mission.

MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

Fundamental public land management policies and procedures have been prescribed by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701). This act enabled the Congress to set a common and challenging goal for managing public lands and associated resources in a manner which best meets the present and future needs of the American people. Such management must strike a balance between competing and usually conflicting objectives, such as

- using and developing resources,
- protecting and conserving resources,
- maintaining the quality of the environment, and
- maintaining compatibility with the military mission.

To reconcile these objectives, the act requires that public lands be managed according to the multiple-use/sustained-yield principle, unless otherwise specified by law. This means that bases must exercise a balanced, coordinated management of all resources, applying the best combination of developmental and

protective land uses. Such management must be sufficiently flexible to adapt to changing needs and conditions while safeguarding the long-term interests of future generations. It must ensure that neither the productivity of the land nor the quality of the environment is permanently impaired. Sustained yield, as an objective, requires a management that achieves and indefinitely maintains high production of renewable resources within the limits of multiple land use.

The act pertains to public lands managed by the Secretary of the Interior; however, DOD land management policies and procedures are similar to those prescribed by the act. In a November 1978 directive concerning the management, conservation, and use of natural resources, DOD defined multiple use as "a conscious, coordinated management of the resources, each with the other, without impairment of the productivity of the land or water." The directive requires all DOD installations to:

- Protect, conserve, and manage the watersheds and natural landscapes; the soil, the forest, and timber growth; and the fish, wildlife, and endangered species as vital elements of an optimum natural resources program.
- Use and care for natural resources in the combination that best serves the present and future needs of the United States and its people.
- Provide the optimal development of and access to land and water areas.

Meeting these management objectives is a complex, difficult task. Use and development are not usually compatible with protection and conservation nor, sometimes, with the military mission. For example, harvesting timber conflicts with preserving an area's wilderness characteristics. Even achieving a balance among uses is difficult, because using one resource often limits the use, development, or protection of others. Intensive grazing, for instance, reduces the forage and cover available to wildlife and may adversely affect the land's watershed by reducing ground cover.

DOD has made resolving such conflicts and determining the best possible combination of uses of discrete land areas the primary purpose of the natural resources management plan required of each DOD base. To do so, each base must identify existing resources and their potential uses, and assess their relative values. By performing these tasks, bases can identify conflicting uses and program the most advantageous combination of all uses.

BENEFITS OF MULTIPLE LAND USE

To satisfy DOD land use policy, military bases operate programs for forestry, fish and wildlife, agricultural leasing, and outdoor recreation, in addition to making military use of the

land. Frequently, the same land is used concurrently for timber production; grazing; hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreation; and for military exercises. In all, a substantial amount of unimproved land is being put to multiple uses. In fiscal year 1980, the services used the land for various activities, as shown below.

	<u>Total unimproved</u>	<u>Forestry programs</u>	<u>Fish & wildlife programs</u>	<u>Agri-cultural leasing</u>	<u>Military use only</u>
	----- (acres) -----				
Army	8,890,200	1,433,200	8,627,700	828,300	262,500
Navy	753,300	157,400	748,400	158,700	4,900
Marine Corps	848,100	114,400	848,100	3,400	a/0
Air Force	<u>5,763,500</u>	<u>583,900</u>	<u>4,946,500</u>	<u>185,400</u>	<u>817,000</u>
Total	<u>b/16,255,100</u>	<u>2,288,900</u>	<u>c/15,170,700</u>	<u>1,175,800</u>	<u>1,084,400</u>

a/ Marine Corps records indicate that all its unimproved lands are included in its fish and wildlife program.

b/Since some lands are included in more than one program, the totals will not add up across.

c/Acres used for outdoor recreation were not available. Some bases have camp sites, trails for hiking and jogging, sightseeing tours, and other types of recreation, but the primary form of outdoor recreation--hunting and fishing--is provided by the fish and wildlife programs.

The desirability of multiple-use/sustained-yield land management has been demonstrated many times. Many DOD installations have shown that this principle provides substantial benefits without impairing the military mission. In fiscal year 1980 alone, DOD realized a profit of over \$25 million from timber sales, agricultural leases, and hunting and fishing fees. These land-use revenues decrease base maintenance costs and fund improvements, thus decreasing tax outlays, while the American people gain greater enjoyment of public lands at less cost. In addition, the land is improved through use.

Both the agricultural leasing and forestry programs are good examples of this. Lands used for crops and grazing produce food and other worthwhile products, while military forests provide lumber for building, pulpwood for paper, chemicals for personal and household needs, and wood for energy. Military bases doubly benefit from these programs, which decrease their maintenance

costs and make improvements to the land that will benefit other natural resource programs and enhance military training.

In light of such benefits, it is essential that military land managers apply the multiple-use/sustained-yield principle. Only through wise use and conservation can DOD and the American public obtain optimum benefits from these valuable resources.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

Our objectives were to (1) evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of public land management by DOD because of the significance of the land, its resources, and the revenue it generates and (2) present a comprehensive evaluation of DOD compliance with the multiple-use/sustained-yield principle, which, until this review, had not been made.

We focused on DOD's implementation of land-use planning and management and its compliance with sections of the U.S. Code addressing forest management, leasing, fish and wildlife management, and outdoor recreation. We reviewed these and other laws and regulations on management of DOD land, as well as agency records and internal audit reports. We also interviewed agency officials to discuss the preparation of plans, the funding process for the natural resource programs, and several management problems.

Our review included visits to 17 military bases, 2 divisions of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, 2 major Air Force commands, and 1 district of the Army Corps of Engineers. We chose these sites because they provided a wide variety of environments and natural resource programs and because several were suggested by military headquarters as good examples of multiple use of DOD land. (See app. I for a complete list of sites visited.)

Along with overall statistical data on DOD's natural resource programs, we obtained the number of people hunting and fishing at each base during fiscal year 1980. To illustrate the potential value of fish and wildlife programs as a source of revenue, we used these figures to estimate how much money could be collected by charging hunting and fishing fees at bases currently not charging such fees and by increasing existing fees at bases charging nominal fees. To simplify our estimate, we used an annual fee of \$6 for separate hunting and fishing permits and \$10 for combination permits. These amounts are commensurate with fees charged by many States. Actual fees may vary with the availability of fish and game on each base, demand for these resources, and other factors unique to a particular area.

Through tours of bases and discussions with base officials, we identified land which, we believe, could be leased for agricultural use without disrupting military operations. To estimate fees and/or improvements available from leasing this land, we used the average price per acre received for land being leased on the bases or adjacent areas.

CHAPTER 2

BETTER PLANNING AND COORDINATION

COULD IMPROVE FOREST MANAGEMENT

AND INCREASE REVENUES

The forest is one of the most important renewable natural resources managed by the military departments. It represents a substantial source for the timber our Nation needs and produces significant revenues. In fiscal year 1980, 157 military bases managed 2.3 million acres of forest and sold \$12.3 million worth of timber and related products. After deducting \$7.5 million in operating expenses, these bases realized a profit of \$4.8 million.

DOD requires the military services' forestry programs to be self-sustaining, that is, operating expenses should not exceed receipts. At the end of each fiscal year, military departments must deposit their net receipts into the Miscellaneous Receipts Account, U.S. Treasury.

Managing the forest while giving due consideration to the military mission and other natural resources can be difficult. Although most DOD forestry programs were generally well managed, in several instances, more creative planning, intensive management, and better coordination with military operations could have improved forestry programs and increased production. The House Committee on Appropriations has also noted ¹/ that DOD could generate considerably more production from its forestry programs if its wooded lands were more intensively managed.

We found that, in some cases, forestry plans were inadequate and did not provide management the monitoring tools to ensure that objectives were met effectively and promptly. In addition, we found that bases could increase production by

- accelerating timber sales wherever feasible and
- selling forest byproducts, such as pine straw, posts, firewood, and resinous stumps.

FORESTRY PLANS LACK EFFECTIVE OVERSIGHT, CURRENCY, AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS

The primary objective of forestry programs is to grow and harvest forest products under the multiple-use/sustained-yield principle, consistent with the military mission. Forestry plans at the bases we visited generally were better prepared, more current, and more useful than those for other base resources,

¹/Report No. 95-1398.

perhaps because forestry programs have been established for years and are self-sustaining. However, some plans (see table below) had not been properly reviewed, approved, or updated, and several lacked a system for monitoring program effectiveness.

	No. of bases	Forest acres	Defects of forestry plan		
			Inadequate review/ approval	Not current	No mon- itoring system
Air Force	4	a/480,485	1	0	4
Army	5	250,421	3	1	3
Marine Corps	2	100,140	2	0	2
Navy	<u>3</u>	<u>9,376</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	<u>b/14</u>	<u>840,422</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>12</u>

a/220,000 acres of the total currently are used solely for military tests.

b/Of the 17 bases visited, 14 had forestry programs.

Failure to monitor program efforts seems the most common problem of forestry planning. Some major commands do not even require a monitoring system, but its omission has serious consequences for the effective management of any program. Without a parallel review of planned and actual accomplishments, managers cannot determine what objectives have not been met. As a result, they can neither gage program effectiveness nor identify needed adjustments.

Omitting adequate review/approval also imperils good management of resource programs. Review and approval of plans help to ensure that forestry personnel can perform their duties without interference. Internally reported instances of unnecessary interference by mission officials indicate that review and approval chains at each base should include at least the base's parent command or another independent command, such as the Air Force Engineering Services Center.

To achieve the optimally balanced uses of the public lands it manages, DOD requires all bases to develop overall natural resource management plans. The bases use these overall plans to coordinate forestry programs with other natural resource programs, such as fish and wildlife.

SOME BASES UNNECESSARILY RESTRICTED TIMBER HARVESTING

DOD could obtain considerably more production from forestry programs at military bases if barriers to good programs were eliminated. Inadequate coordination and a general lack of

management emphasis have led to declining timber sales at some bases. Specific problems include:

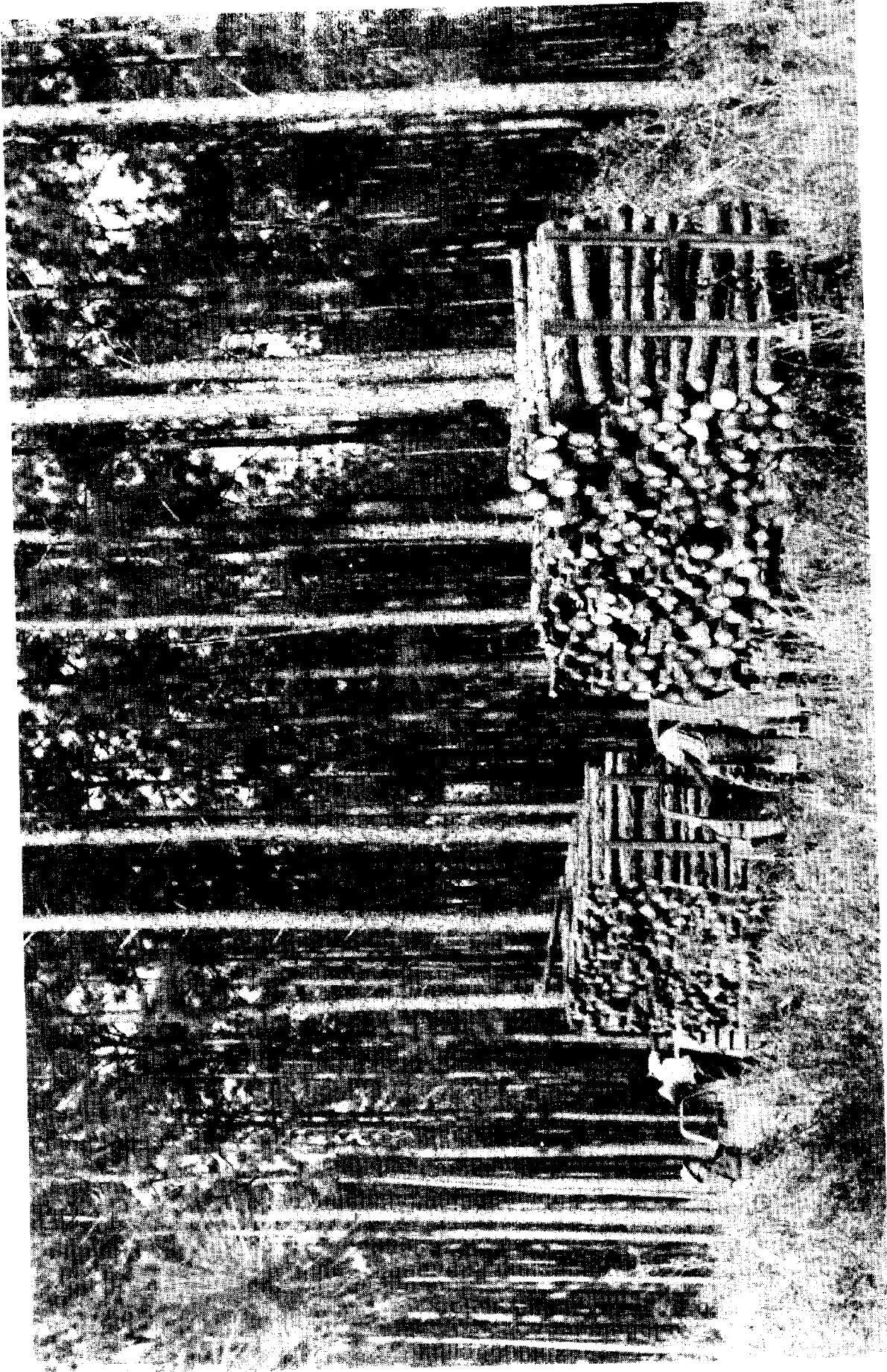
- Inadequate coordination with mission requirements.
- Unnecessary delays in seeking advice and assistance concerning an endangered species.
- Misunderstanding and unclear forestry program objectives.

As a result, the Nation may have lost millions of dollars in forestry proceeds. These problems are not insurmountable, however. For example, through creative planning and close coordination, some military bases have reconciled conflicts with mission or endangered species requirements, enabling them to continue and increase harvesting timber.

Inadequate coordination reduces timber sales

In April 1980, DOD auditors reported that unnecessary interference by officials at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, significantly restricted the forestry program. Apparently, operations officials at the base arbitrarily determined, without coordinating with forestry managers, that forestry practices conflicted with weapons testing. Accordingly, the base restricted forestry management to 186,000 of its 406,000 wooded acres and cut timber sales by an estimated \$400,000 in fiscal year 1979. Not only were timber sales drastically cut, but other actions proposed by forestry personnel were often delayed or denied. Under such conditions, base foresters were unable to effectively program personnel and equipment. As a result, the Air Force estimates that Eglin's timber proceeds have decreased by \$1.4 million during the 3 years ended September 30, 1981.

The situation at Eglin has improved substantially since the base first imposed the partial ban on forestry. According to an official of the weapons test planning unit, much of this interference with the forest program had been caused by a previous testing officer. Since his departure from Eglin, operations and forestry personnel have resumed closer coordination, and plans to improve some timber stands previously restricted to test operations have been approved. Although mission officers still regard these stands as necessary cover for ground troop training and for testing antipersonnel detection systems, the Deputy Commander agreed that, in this instance, reforestation was needed. At the time of our review, further consultations with forestry planners were scheduled and the Deputy Commander agreed to approve certain reforestation methods that would not impair training and weapons testing. Therefore, more harvesting and reforestation are seen for the future.



HAULING PULPWOOD FROM AN AIR FORCE BASE

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Unnecessary delays in seeking
advice and assistance concerning
an endangered species restricted
timber harvests

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 protects various plants and animals that are threatened with extinction. Before an installation can cut timber in an area sheltering an endangered species, the act requires it to formally consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Fort Bragg, North Carolina, is an example of the unproductive situation which can arise when an installation unnecessarily delays consultation.

In 1978, according to DOD auditors, Fort Bragg significantly curtailed timber harvesting as it prepared a formal request to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for a biological survey and legal consultation on the base's endangered Red-cockaded woodpecker. However, later that year, base personnel, assuming that the wildlife agency would significantly restrict military training in nesting areas, refused consultation and continued its ban on all timber harvesting. This action had a doubly negative effect, serving to delay joint development of a recovery plan for the endangered woodpecker and, as discussed below, to unnecessarily reduce timber sales.

In October 1979 the situation began to change when a new base commander requested the formal consultation. The Fish and Wildlife Service's biological opinion, issued 1 year later, placed stringent restrictions on land use but did allow some harvesting of timber. It will take 6 to 8 years under the recovery plan before harvesting can reach its former levels, and the unfortunate delay in requesting the consultation has already cost the forestry program an additional 2 years in revenues. We estimated total losses of \$453,000 in timber revenues during fiscal years 1979 and 1980 due to this delay.

A similar situation faced the Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, but its handling of the circumstances was markedly different and more productive than that of Fort Bragg. Camp Lejeune promptly requested formal consultation and, in compliance with the biological decision, marked off the habitat of the endangered woodpecker while continuing to harvest timber around it. Moreover, Camp Lejeune's timber revenue for fiscal years 1979 and 1980 significantly increased over previous years. Thus, its compliance with the Endangered Species Act had no adverse effects on its forestry program.

Misunderstanding and unclear
forestry program objectives
restrict timber harvesting

The Naval Weapons Station, Yorktown, Virginia, has scheduled low harvests based, in part, on a misinterpretation

of DOD forestry regulations. As a result, the station is unnecessarily losing revenues in timber sales.

Erroneously assuming that the Yorktown forestry program had to be self-sustaining, ^{1/} forestry personnel have tried to plan harvesting so that proceeds will be available in future years to pay forestry expenses. To do so, they have scheduled small timber harvests over a period of many years, rather than rapidly accelerating cutting of the mature forest stands. Consequently, for the past 3 years Yorktown's annual harvest has averaged only 130 acres. At this rate, the station will need more than 50 years to cut over its entire forest.

Unfortunately, the practice of small annual harvests is inappropriate to Yorktown's forest, most of which is already mature and ready for harvesting. A base forester estimates that annual timber losses from age and disease may almost equal the amount harvested each year. If the station does not significantly increase its annual harvests, it will lose substantial revenues. Yorktown has increased the harvest planned for fiscal year 1980 to 225 acres, but that figure is still too small to prevent losses. Other land uses would also permit much greater harvesting: neither the military mission nor the other natural resource programs would be adversely affected.

In another case, disagreement between officials over the objectives of a base's forestry program has halted all harvesting there. The forestry agent of the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River, Maryland, disagrees with the Naval Facilities Engineering Command forester, who administers Navy timber sales, as to whether aesthetics or timber production should take priority in the forestry program. No timber harvesting has occurred since this conflict began in fiscal year 1978.

DOD representatives told us on September 3, 1981, that efforts are now underway to correct the misunderstanding at Yorktown. A computerized forest inventory system is being developed which should surface such problems in the future. They also told us that the disagreement at the Patuxent River Naval Air Station has been resolved and timber harvesting is scheduled for fiscal year 1982.

^{1/}DOD regulations require that the overall forestry programs of military departments be self-sustaining, but that requirement does not extend down to each individual installation.



HARVESTING TIMBER AT A NAVY BASE

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

FOREST BYPRODUCTS OFFER
POTENTIAL SOURCES OF INCOME

Forest byproducts, such as firewood, posts, pine straw, and resinous stumps could be important sources of income. Their disposal also reduces maintenance costs and fire hazards. Nevertheless, of the 14 bases we visited with forestry programs, only 7 were marketing byproducts:

<u>Base</u>	<u>Byproduct</u>
Avon Park Air Force Range, Fla.	Stumps
Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.	Fence posts and stumps
Quantico Marine Corps Base, Va.	Fence posts and railroad ties
Fort A.P. Hill, Va.	Fence posts
Fort Huachuca, Ariz.	Mulch and sawdust
Fort Bragg, N.C.	Fence posts, stumps, and pine straw
Fort Campbell, Ky.	Fence posts

Fort Bragg led in marketing forest byproducts. In fiscal year 1980 it sold 293 cords of pine posts, 3,647 tons of pine straw, and 539 tons of resinous stumps. These sales, by allowing consumers to harvest the byproducts, also saved the base the cost of thinning and clearing forest stands. In addition, harvesting pine straw left those areas less susceptible to wildfires, a recurring forestry problem.

Recent emphasis on energy conservation may give firewood, if fully exploited, the greatest revenue potential of all forest byproducts. Only a few of the bases we visited have attempted to sell firewood. Fort Bragg, for example, sold 424 cords of firewood in fiscal year 1980. Two other bases--Eglin and Wright-Patterson--sold firewood permits at nominal fees for removal of noncommercial hardwoods. In this way, Eglin raised \$15,375 in fiscal year 1980.

A few other bases allow free removal of firewood from harvested timber areas. For example, the Quantico Marine Corps Base near Washington, D.C., issues free firewood permits for an annual average of 2,000 truckloads of firewood. It is currently studying a suggestion to charge \$25 for a 6-week harvesting permit.

CONCLUSIONS

DOD does not have an adequate system to ensure that forestry plans are developed and updated and is not achieving optimal use of its forests. This lack of emphasis from top management leads to indifference at departmental and base levels; as a result, forest use is often underplanned.

We found (1) unnecessary interference by mission officials, (2) inadequate planning and coordination regarding the habitats of endangered species, (3) lack of management emphasis on potential forestry sales, and (4) failure to manage forest byproducts as an additional source of program income. Although it can be difficult to manage forest areas effectively when the military mission takes priority, present programs could achieve more in revenues and conservation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure conscientious, timely, optimal management of the forest land entrusted to DOD, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense strongly promote the development and use of forestry plans that comply with DOD's stated policies and objectives. In particular, the Secretary should direct the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force to:

- Maintain updated forestry plans for bases with clearly stated objectives, priorities, and monitoring systems.
- Prevent unnecessary restrictions on timber harvesting.

--Accelerate timber harvesting wherever possible.

--Aggressively pursue the market for forest byproducts as a source of additional income.

AGENCY COMMENTS

DOD generally agreed with our conclusions and recommendations and provided information to update, clarify, or correct data presented in the draft report. This information did not affect the report's conclusions and recommendations and has been incorporated in this chapter and in chapters 3 and 4.

CHAPTER 3

AGRICULTURAL LEASING IS A VALUABLE

SOURCE OF REVENUE AND SHOULD BE EXPANDED

Under the concept of multiple land use, areas of DOD land required to support the military mission may also be leased to others for agricultural purposes. ^{1/} Grazing and cropland leases provide significant revenues, reduce maintenance costs, and conserve natural resources. During fiscal year 1980, 118 military bases leased a total of 1,175,800 acres to others for agricultural uses, generating \$12 million in rental proceeds and other benefits.

Even though DOD recognized the importance of agricultural leasing nearly 20 years ago and encouraged it as a means of achieving savings in managing military property, the full potential of leasing is still not being realized. With proper planning and management emphasis, bases can lease additional acreage while using these lands to support other natural resource programs and military operations. At the 17 bases we visited, we identified about 37,000 additional acres of land which could be leased for agriculture without disrupting the military mission. We estimate these additional leases could increase annual lease fees and/or improvements by as much as \$1 million.

BASES VARY IN EMPHASIS ON AND PREPARATION FOR AGRICULTURAL LEASING

An important first step in identifying leasing opportunities is to develop and keep current, soil and water conservation plans. These plans guide the base commander in managing the entire natural resources of the base, particularly in leasing lands for range and crops. To be of greatest value, soil and water plans should observe modern conservation practices and be applied continuously. Yet, at some bases, management has not emphasized the importance and benefits of such plans. Of the 17 bases we visited, 4 had no soil and water conservation plans, and 9 others were using outdated plans--some of them unchanged since 1960. For example, one division of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command had only 6 current plans of the 51 for which it was responsible.

Management emphasis on agricultural leasing itself is also lacking. While 12 of the bases we visited were leasing varying amounts of land, some had not identified lease opportunities and

^{1/}DOD property is leased under authority contained in 10 U.S.C. 2667. Section 2667 authorizes the Secretaries of the military departments to lease nonexcess property when it is determined to be in the public interest or will promote national defense.

others were leasing only nominal acreage. Lands leased at the 12 bases ranged from 132 to 96,205 acres for a total of 197,286 acres. In fiscal year 1980, rental income and improvements to the land valued at \$1.6 million were received from these leases, as the following table shows.

Acres Leased and Benefits Received
at Selected Military Bases
FY 1980

	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Rental payments and value of improvements</u>
Camp Pendleton, Calif.	33,580	\$ 528,455
Fort Campbell, Ky.	5,847	324,379
El Toro Marine Corps Air Station, Calif.	1,252	246,591
Avon Park Air Force Range, Fla.	96,205	165,108
Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif.	53,453	163,041
Oceana Naval Air Station, Va.	921	70,994
Fort Bragg, N.C.	400	48,508
Fallon Naval Air Station, Nev.	3,865	43,740
Fort Pickett, Va.	1,150	12,000
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio	132	9,185
Patuxent River Naval Air Station, Md.	329	6,677
Fort A.P. Hill, Va.	152	2,194
Total	197,286	a/\$1,620,872

a/Includes cash rental receipts of \$978,163. The improvements, valued at \$642,709, include such things as building fences, diggings ponds, clearing land, and reseeding areas.

In addition to the above benefits, the bases did not have to use appropriated funds for maintaining the land leased. Additionally, some bases required that lessees leave a portion of their crops in the field to sustain wildlife. Leasing, therefore, provides benefits in several ways. Maintenance costs are reduced, improvements to the land are made, wildlife habitat is improved, and the land is used to grow a needed commodity.

Some of the bases we visited were leasing significant acreage without impairing the military mission. Avon Park Air Force Range, Florida, used for extensive military training, was leasing 96,205 acres of its total 106,210 acres for cattle grazing. Camp Pendleton was leasing 1,549 acres for production of flowers and vegetables and 32,031 acres for sheep grazing for a total value of \$528,455. Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, was leasing over 50,000 acres for cattle grazing.



GRAZING CATTLE AT AN AIR FORCE BASE

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Additional leasing is possible
at some bases

While some bases have done quite well in leasing land for agriculture, the leasing program can be expanded. Through tours of the 17 bases and discussions with base officials, we identified over 37,000 acres of land which, in our opinion, could be leased for agricultural use without disrupting military operations. As the following table shows, these additional leases could increase annual fees and improvements by an estimated \$1.1 million.

Revenue Potential of Leasable Land

	<u>Acres</u>	Value (note a)
Fort Campbell, Ky.	19,153	\$1,034,300
Fort Huachuca, Ariz.	17,000	24,000
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio	500	35,000
Quantico Marine Corps Base, Va.	230	12,900
Fort A.P. Hill, Va.	126	7,100
Fallon Naval Air Station, Nev.	80	1,400
Total	<u>37,089</u>	<u>\$1,114,700</u>

a/Represents sum of estimated lease fees and values of maintenance improvements, based on the average price per acre received from land being leased on the bases or adjacent areas.

Fort Campbell, Kentucky, had an estimated 25,000 acres of farmland available for leasing but had not yet decided how much should be leased. While awaiting that decision, the land manager elected to lease, on a rotating basis, about 5,000 acres each year to improve hunting conditions. He felt that this area would be small enough to avoid most crop damage from military training. However, leases are made with the understanding that military training has priority over other land uses and may result in damage for which the Government is not liable. Moreover, the base had not formally analyzed what part of the total open area could be leased without being subject to significant military use. In view of these facts and the need for farmland in that area, we suggested that Fort Campbell evaluate the situation and determine whether more land could be economically leased. Although the base has not made a final decision, it has leased some additional land since our November 1980 visit.

Fort Huachuca, Arizona, had an estimated 17,000 acres of rangeland suitable for cattle grazing. The base has received inquiries from potential lessees concerning this land. Fort Huachuca officials, including the acting base commander, believed that military training would not prevent using the land for cattle grazing and agreed to consider leasing the area.

At one time, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, leased about 630 acres to others for agricultural uses. In recent years, however, this amount has decreased to 132 acres. The base removed some land from the leasing program when hunters complained that lessees were not leaving enough food or cover for wildlife. However, proper planning and management emphasis should enable Wright-Patterson to expand its leasing program. The base can require lessees to follow certain practices, including leaving a portion of their crops to support wildlife. This procedure has already proven successful at other bases. DOD representatives told us they would study the feasibility of restoring the lease acreage at Wright-Patterson.

Additional incentive may be needed
to encourage more leasing

Our estimates of additional lease potential cover only the bases we visited, which account for 7 percent of all DOD lands. Consequently, much more leasing should be possible.

An important factor which contributes to the apparent lack of management emphasis on leasing is the disincentive associated with funding for the program. Unlike the forestry and fish and wildlife programs, where income derived can be used to continue program operations, income derived from agricultural leases on

military land cannot be used by the services. ^{1/} In addition, the salaries of personnel directly involved in lease management generally are paid with base operation and maintenance funds. Consequently, some officials regard leasing as not worth the additional effort, inconvenience, or expenditure.

One possible way to resolve this problem would be to establish a special fund for agricultural leasing receipts, as is done with forestry proceeds. These funds could then be used to finance program salaries and equipment. This way, local commanders would not have to use operation and maintenance funds on the program and might be more likely to support and extend agricultural leasing.

CONCLUSIONS

Inadequate planning and lack of management emphasis are preventing DOD from achieving the full potential of the agricultural leasing program. Some military bases have failed to (1) develop and update soil and water conservation plans, (2) identify land available for leasing, and (3) expand the agricultural leasing program to its full potential.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Secretary of Defense actively promote the agricultural leasing program. In particular, the Secretary should direct the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force to establish procedures to:

- Update and improve base soil and water conservation plans.
- Develop and implement a system to identify periodically all land available for leasing.
- Require the maximum leasing of agricultural land consistent with the military mission.

We also recommend that the Secretary of Defense determine the feasibility of operating the leasing program similar to the forestry program and seek legislative changes in the program if warranted.

^{1/10} U.S.C. 2667 requires that money rental received from a lease be deposited into the Miscellaneous Receipts Account, U.S. Treasury. However, the services may require lessees to provide maintenance, repairs, and protection to leased property as part or all of the monetary considerations for the lease.

CHAPTER 4

FISH AND WILDLIFE AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

PROGRAMS COULD BE IMPROVED AND

MORE SELF-SUPPORTING

Military lands contain vast areas of scenic wilderness, woodland, and waterways rich in fish, wildlife, and recreational resources. Many of these resources, being important locally, regionally, and nationally, must be integrated into any land use plan or program, particularly one that may affect the environment. Military bases manage these assets through two programs: fish and wildlife (primarily to develop and maintain fishing and hunting opportunities) and outdoor recreation (generally camping, hiking, swimming, etc.).

To help design and administer sound management plans for these resources, DOD encourages its bases to enter cooperative agreements with the U.S. Department of the Interior and State agencies, as authorized by the Sikes Act. ^{1/} These agreements provide bases the technical assistance to:

- Survey fish and wildlife populations and habitats.
- Protect, restore, and control fish and wildlife populations.
- Identify opportunities to expand recreational land use.
- Develop management plans for recreation and fish and wildlife programs.

Despite DOD's policy on such matters, many bases made no cooperative agreements with Interior and State agencies concerning their fish and wildlife and recreational resources. Of those bases we visited, a sizable number have seriously inadequate plans for managing these resources, and several have none at all. As a result, military land managers can neither gage program effectiveness nor identify potential recreational areas.

The Sikes Act also permits, and DOD encourages, bases to collect hunting and fishing fees and apply them to base fish and wildlife programs. Fees are also permitted for other forms of outdoor recreation. Despite this encouragement, most bases fail to charge any user fee. Instead, they support their fish and wildlife programs primarily with appropriated funds. In fiscal year 1980, military bases spent \$3.7 million of appropriations on these

^{1/16} U.S.C. §§ 670 (a), (c).

programs, but collected only \$930,000 in user fees. Consequently, the general taxpayer, rather than the primary beneficiaries, bears most of the financial burden while a backlog of needed resource programs and projects grows each year, delayed for lack of money.



WILDLIFE FOOD PLOT AT A MARINE CORPS BASE

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Unless military bases devise good management plans with technical assistance from specialists and implement sound management practices, they cannot ensure optimal land use and may risk losing valuable resources through neglect or improper use. In addition, the bases may soon be forced to find other funds for their fish and wildlife programs, if extensive Federal budget cuts reduce the appropriated funds made available to resource managers.

SOME BASES HAVE NOT DEVELOPED
COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS AND
ADEQUATE MANAGEMENT PLANS

To meet its objective to obtain optimal multiple use of public lands, DOD requires all military bases to:

- Seek the aid of Federal, State, and local agencies in developing inventories of fish, game, and recreational resources and detailed plans for their use.

--Enter cooperative agreements with those agencies for managing recreation and fish and wildlife programs.

Despite DOD's desire for effective planning and management through cooperation with fish and wildlife agencies, some bases have relied upon their own expertise to plan and administer wildlife and recreation programs. As a result, DOD has no assurance that its lands are being optimally managed in the public's best present and future interests.

A number of the many bases with fish and wildlife and recreation programs have no management plans at all, while many others have plans that are outdated or incomplete. Several of the fish and wildlife plans we reviewed lacked objectives, priorities, and/or adequate review and approval, and nearly all lacked a monitoring system (see table below). Without a monitoring system, managers cannot readily determine program effectiveness nor identify needed adjustments.

Shortcomings of Military Fish and Wildlife Plans

<u>Service</u>	<u>Bases visited</u>	<u>Lacked plan</u>	<u>Lacked cooperative agreement</u>	<u>Review/ approval inadequate</u>	<u>Not current</u>	<u>Lacked objectives</u>	<u>Lacked priorities</u>	<u>Lacked monitoring system</u>
Air Force	4	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
Army	5	1	1	1	2	2	4	5
Marine Corps	4	0	1	0	0	1	1	2
Navy	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	<u>17</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>12</u>

Military bases give even less attention to their outdoor recreation plans. Most of these plans lacked any systematic method of identifying new lands areas to include in their programs (see table below).

Problems of Selected Military Outdoor Recreation Plans

<u>Service</u>	<u>Bases visited</u>	<u>Lacked plan</u>	<u>Lacked cooperative agreement</u>	<u>Technical assistance not used</u>	<u>Did not identify public recreation opportunities</u>
Air Force	4	0	0	1	0
Army	5	4	3	4	4
Marine Corps	4	3	4	4	3
Navy	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
Total	<u>17</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>11</u>

We pointed out similar planning deficiencies in a previous report to the Secretary of Defense. ^{1/} Since that report, Interior and DOD have entered into new cooperative agreements for fish and wildlife and outdoor recreation programs. However, significant numbers of bases with fish and wildlife or outdoor recreation programs have failed to form cooperative agreements with Federal and State agencies. In fiscal year 1980, 258 bases operated fish and wildlife programs (see table below). Of these, only 156 (60 percent) entered into cooperative agreements with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and State agencies. Air Force and Navy bases account for 90 (88 percent) of the 102 bases without agreements.

Cooperative Agreements for Military
Fish and Wildlife Programs

	<u>Bases with fish and wildlife programs</u>	<u>Bases without agreements</u>	
		<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Air Force	73	39	53
Navy	97	51	53
Army	79	11	14
Marine Corps	<u>9</u>	<u>1</u>	11
Total	<u>258</u>	<u>102</u>	40

Recreation programs fared no better. According to Interior records, as of March 10, 1981, only 74 military bases (59 Air Force, 14 Army, and 1 Navy) had entered agreements on outdoor recreation. The Air Force requires its bases to develop such agreements, while DOD encourages but does not specifically require such action for public outdoor recreation programs. These differences are reflected in the far greater participation of Air Force bases in recreational program agreements.

As shown in the tables on page 21, of the 17 bases we visited, 4 lacked cooperative agreements for fish and wildlife programs and 11 had no agreements concerning outdoor recreational programs. Moreover, only four of the recreation programs received technical assistance from State and Federal specialists.

DOD LOSES SUBSTANTIAL REVENUES
THROUGH FAILURE TO CHARGE MORE
EQUITABLE USER FEES

Although a few bases operate their fish and wildlife programs primarily by fees from hunters and fishermen, most rely on

^{1/}CED-77-106, Aug. 3, 1977.

appropriated funds. During fiscal year 1980, military bases used \$3.7 million in appropriations for fish and wildlife programs. Other recreational resources, such as camp sites, are also provided free of charge or for a nominal fee. Again, operating expenses are provided primarily by base operations and maintenance funds and Sikes Act appropriations. Some of the fish and wildlife expenses are incurred in protecting endangered species and other nongame wildlife. But most of the fish and wildlife programs are operated primarily for hunting and fishing.

This reliance on appropriated funds unnecessarily burdens the general taxpayer, rather than placing the costs on those who directly benefit from the fish and wildlife programs. Collecting higher fees could reduce considerably the reliance on appropriated funds. For example, in fiscal year 1980, if bases had charged \$6 for each annual hunting or fishing permit and \$10 for a combined annual permit (such fees are commensurate with those charged by many States), they could have collected additional fees of \$2.2 million. These additional revenues would have reduced their use of appropriated funds that year by 58 percent.

The Office of Management and Budget has advised all Federal activities to impose user fees which recover program costs whenever those programs provide separately identifiable recipients special benefits beyond those realized by the general public. 1/ Further, the Sikes Act has authorized DOD to charge such fees for hunting and fishing, and DOD has encouraged its bases to do so. Bases are to use these fees solely to support their fish and wildlife programs. In a previous report, 2/ we pointed that user fees are both desirable and equitable, providing sources of program operating funds from those who use those programs. In our opinion, bases are expected to recover the costs of their fishing and hunting programs (which account for most fish and wildlife program costs) from the primary beneficiaries of these programs rather than from the general taxpayer.

Despite DOD's encouragement to charge fees, many military bases (108) allowing hunting and fishing charge no fees, and many others (76) charge extremely low fees, some as low as \$2 to \$3 a person annually. At the same time, bases report a substantial backlog of needed fish and wildlife projects and must rely on limited appropriations to finance existing programs. During fiscal year 1980 alone, DOD bases spent \$1.5 million of Sikes Act appropriations in addition to about \$2.2 million in operations and maintenance funds to manage their fish and wildlife programs. Consequently, the taxpayers carry the weight

1/Bureau of the Budget (now Office of Management and Budget) Circular A-25 (Sept. 23, 1959).

2/"The Congress Should Consider Exploring Opportunities to Expand and Improve the Application of User Charges by Federal Agencies" (PAD-80-25, Mar. 28, 1980).

of these programs, while the primary beneficiaries pay a disproportionately small amount for their use.

By beginning to charge user fees at those bases without them and by increasing existing fees, fish and wildlife programs would have a much firmer and fairer base, while bases could direct appropriated funds to other priorities. For example, using an arbitrarily constructed fee schedule, we estimate that bases in fiscal year 1980 could have collected from users most of the \$2.2 million they spent on fish and wildlife programs out of operations and maintenance funds. Applying a single fee structure (annual fees of \$6 for hunting or fishing permits, \$10 for combined permits) to the services' 1980 user figures, we estimate that 192 military bases that allow hunting and fishing would collect nearly \$2.2 million in additional fees.

Of the 15 bases we reviewed with fish and wildlife programs, 5 charged no fees at all, 9 charged relatively low fees of varying amounts, and 1 charged a fee comparable to the above. Had all these bases collected fees of \$6 and \$10, as described above, they could have reduced their use of appropriated funds by \$324,000 in fiscal year 1980 (see table below).

Estimate of Increased Revenues Possible With More Equitable Fees

	<u>Operations and maintenance funds used</u>	<u>Sikes funds used</u>	<u>Total appropriations used</u>	<u>Total fees collected</u>	<u>Additional revenues available</u>
Marine Corps:					
Quantico, Va.	\$ 32,000	\$ 3,200	\$ 35,200	\$ 14,400	\$ 63,800
Camp Pendleton, Calif.	46,500	30,000	76,500	21,600	4,400
Camp Lejeune, N.C.	(a)	30,000	30,000	14,900	15,300
Air Force:					
Avon Park Range, Fla.	0	44,000	44,000	b/0	40,200
Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif.	127,400	0	127,400	4,500	3,800
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio	0	7,000	7,000	22,800	7,000
Army:					
Fort Bragg, N.C.	101,300	0	101,300	23,100	14,800
Fort Huachuca, Ariz.	114,500	35,000	149,500	3,000	12,100
Fort A.P. Hill, Va.	99,100	65,000	164,100	c/0	90,300
Fort Campbell, Ky.	22,000	0	22,000	82,800	1,200
Fort Pickett, Va.	45,400	0	45,400	0	60,000
Navy:					
Patuxent Naval Air Station, Md.	6,000	4,000	10,000	1,800	5,400
Yorktown Naval Weapons Station, Va.	15,100	12,500	27,600	0	5,500
Oceana Naval Air Station, Va.	25,000	0	25,000	0	200
Total	\$634,300	\$230,700	\$865,000	\$188,900	d/\$324,000

a/Operations and maintenance funds used, but records not available to determine specific amount.

b/Hunting fees collected by the State, no charge for fishing. Fees collected are used in the fish and wildlife program at Avon Park Range.

c/Plans to charge hunting and fishing fees beginning fiscal year 1982.

d/Actual fees may vary among bases according to availability of fish and game, demand for these resources, and other factors unique to a particular area or State.

The cost of collecting fees and controlling permits should be negligible for most bases, which are already staffed and equipped to issue permits/collect fees for State licenses or issue free base permits. Setting more equitable fees should further offset costs. Moreover, such fees do not seem to deter participation. For example, Eglin Air Force Base charged \$12 for its combination permits and \$10 for hunting only, yet sold 11,450 fishing and hunting permits in fiscal year 1980 and used the revenues as its primary funding for fish and wildlife activities.

CONCLUSIONS

DOD is not achieving optimal use of recreational and fish and wildlife resources on public land it holds. Although it requires each base to prepare comprehensive multiple-use plans for managing these resources, it has not emphasized the importance of such plans. The apparent lack of DOD attention to these matters has resulted in indifference among military bases, leading many to devise inadequate resource plans or to make none at all. The same situation exists concerning cooperative agreements, and arises from the same lack of emphasis. These agreements, which should be providing the technical expertise necessary to identify, program, and administer the optimal use of these resources, are all too seldom arranged. Moreover, many bases are not fully exploring opportunities to extend recreational enjoyment of public lands within military reservations. As a result, DOD cannot ensure that public lands are managed in accordance with congressional goals and its own objectives.

The failure of many bases to charge user fees has also impeded land-use objectives. A backlog of needed fish and wildlife projects, such as habitat development and maintenance, has accumulated through lack of implementation funds. Yet some bases have ignored user-fee financing, relying instead upon appropriated funds to maintain their existing fish and wildlife programs. Rather than collecting sufficient fees from the specific beneficiaries to make these programs more self-sustaining, the bases are passing most costs along to the general taxpayer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure conscientious, timely, optimal management of fish and wildlife and outdoor recreational resources on DOD lands, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense strongly promote the development and use of natural resource management plans that comply with DOD's stated policies and objectives. In particular, the Secretary should direct the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force to:

- Require military bases to develop and update effective cooperative agreements and management plans for fish and wildlife and outdoor recreation programs.

--Assess more equitable user fees, where possible, for hunting and fishing to finance fish and wildlife programs.

--Identify all opportunities for public outdoor recreation and implement feasible programs.

AGENCY COMMENTS AND OUR EVALUATION

In commenting on our recommendation that DOD assess more equitable user fees for hunting and fishing, DOD stated that, while it agreed that user fees should be commensurate with the value of the resource, the estimated potential average of \$6 for hunting and \$10 for combination hunting and fishing annually appears excessive. DOD further stated that, while a \$12 fee appears reasonable at a base with valuable resources, it believed a \$10 fee would essentially close participation at small bases near areas with abundant, no-cost public hunting and fishing.

We used the \$6 and \$10 fees in estimating an amount on potential collections at the 15 bases we visited, but we did not intend that these fees be considered as DOD standard fees. We recognize, as pointed out by DOD in its comments, that actual fees may vary with the availability of fish and game on each base, demand for these resources, and other factors unique to a particular area.

LOCATIONS VISITEDDEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of Defense, Real Property and Natural Resources
Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics, Washington, D.C.

Army

Department of the Army, Office of the Assistant Secretary
of the Army, Installations, Logistics, and Financial
Management, Washington, D.C.

Natural Resources Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,
Washington, D.C.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Norfolk District, Norfolk,
Virginia

XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg, Fort Bragg, North
Carolina

Headquarters 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and
Fort Campbell, Fort Campbell, Kentucky

Headquarters, U.S. Army Garrison, Fort Pickett, Virginia

Headquarters, U.S. Army Garrison, Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia

Headquarters, Fort Huachuca, Arizona

Navy

Department of the Navy, Installations and Facilities,
Office of Assistant Secretary of the Navy Manpower, Reserve
Affairs and Logistics, Washington, D.C.

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Washington, D.C.

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Atlantic Division,
Norfolk, Virginia

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Western Division,
San Bruno, California

Naval Regional Finance Center, Washington, D.C.

Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia Beach, Virginia

Naval Air Station, Fallon, Nevada

Naval Air Station, Patuxent River, Maryland

Naval Weapons Station, Yorktown, Virginia

Air Force

Department of the Air Force, Base Utilization, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, Washington D.C.

Department of the Air Force, Air Force Logistics Command, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio

Department of the Air Force, Headquarters Tactical Air Command, Langley Air Force Base, Virginia

Eglin Air Force Base, Florida

Vandenberg Air Force Base, California

Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio

Avon Park Air Force Range, Florida

Marine Corps

Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Facilities Planning and Programming Section, Facilities Branch, Washington D.C.

Marine Corps Air Station, El Toro, California

Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina

Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, California

Marine Corps Development and Education Command, Quantico, Virginia

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C.



MANPOWER
RESERVE AFFAIRS
AND LOGISTICS

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

9 OCT 1981

Honorable Milton J. Socolar
Acting Comptroller General
of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Socolar:

This is in reply to your letter to the Secretary of Defense regarding your draft report, "DOD Can Increase Revenues and Improve the Multiple Uses of Its Land," (Code 945454 - OSD Case #5775).

The Department of Defense generally agrees with the General Accounting Office's finding that, although DOD has a policy for multiple use of natural resources, additional emphasis on planning and management is needed in forestry, agricultural outleasing, wildlife and outdoor recreation resource programs. The report and recommendations are concurred with subject to the specific comments inclosed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James N. Juliana".

James N. Juliana
Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Manpower, Reserve Affairs & Logistics)

GAO note: The page references in this appendix refer to page numbers in the draft report.

GAO Draft Report, "DOD Can Increase Revenues and Improve the Multiple Uses of its Land" (Code 945454)

1. Specific comments on recommendations:

a. Page 20. Recommendation: "Maintain updated forestry plans for each installation with clearly stated objectives, priorities, and monitoring systems." This should be revised to state it applies only to installations which have a forest resource to manage. In many cases, major updating of natural resource plans have been delayed pending publication of new guidance in the form of joint service technical manuals. Preparation of these manuals required more time than expected; however, publication is anticipated within the next six months. Most installations are expected to proceed with major plan revision at that time.

b. Page 20. Recommendation: "Prevent unnecessary restrictions on timber harvesting." Concur with this recommendation in principle with the following comment: The primary purpose for military forest land is to support the installation military mission. The installation commander must retain his authority to determine the compatibility of his mission with forest management activities and direct changes be made as appropriate. Guidance and assistance will be given to installations in making these determinations to assure unnecessary restrictions are minimized.

c. Page 28. Recommendation to seek legislative changes which would permit operating the leasing program similar to the forestry program. The potential benefit from implementation of this recommendation is great and the need for such legislation should be strengthened. If expenses for management of the leasing program could be funded from receipts, it would encourage more effort and participation in this program. The report basically recommends increased effort on planning and management. In order to implement this recommendation, additional resources will normally be required. Any means of providing resources to support the program which will not utilize operations and maintenance funds will be instrumental in meeting the objectives of the report.

2. Specific comments on report:

a. Pages 1 and 2. The DOD land management policies and procedures are very similar to those prescribed by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 USC 1701). The report states that even though the Act pertains primarily to public lands administered by the Secretary of the Interior, DOD has applied provisions of the Act to its lands. Actually the Federal Land Policy and Management Act has had little impact on the DOD program since its policies and procedures were in effect long before the Act became law. This should be clarified.

b. Page 18, Fort Bragg Forestry Program. The endangered Red Cockaded woodpecker is widely dispersed on Fort Bragg and most forested areas are affected by protection measures. Even if former levels of harvesting are reached, and the woodpecker population is stabilized, it is very doubtful that accelerated timber harvesting will be achieved as recommended. Constraints on forest management imposed by the endangered species will prevent maximum timber production.

c. Page 18. Marketing of forest byproducts is felt to be more significant than the report implies, especially the selling of firewood. For example, of the Air Force bases visited, Wright-Patterson and Vandenberg should be added to the list of bases marketing byproducts since both have firewood sales programs. In addition, over half of the Army installations with forestry programs currently sell firewood. The statement "only a few bases have attempted to sell firewood" should be revised.

d. Page 25. It is true that military training has priority over other land uses and leased areas are subject to damage from mission activities. Even though a lessee is made aware of this potential, any damages to crops or interference with the lessee's use of the land is compensated, usually in reduced rental. This requirement places additional demands on installation managers and reduces the interest in leasing areas which are subject to military maneuvers such as ground training.

e. Page 26. The report states that agricultural outleasing at Wright-Patterson AFB has been reduced during the past few years from 630 to 132 acres. Before restoring the lease acreage, consideration must be given to the potential bird/aircraft strike hazards of outleasing additional acreage near the runways and the hunting benefits lost versus agricultural benefits gained. The 498 acres in question provide the majority of the 1020 visitor days of hunting each year at the base.

f. Page 34. The data provided in Table 3 showing the number of installations without cooperative agreements is misleading. As an example, 12 of the Air Force bases without agreements are in Category III, unsuitable for the propagation of fish and wildlife. Also, one of the Army installations without agreements is in Category III. This classification is made by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and state fish and wildlife agency and indicates that the resource is minimal and does not justify management effort. Wildlife management on three of the Army installations, as shown without agreements, is performed primarily by the states. Formal arrangements exist between the installation and the state, and a cooperative agreement is not felt to be appropriate.

Fourteen Alaskan Air Command Air Force stations (radar sites) should not require agreements because management is not feasible due to the remote location and few personnel on the stations. These stations should be deleted from the number of bases with fish and wildlife programs.

A review of the Army's records shows that after deleting Category III installations and installations with programs managed primarily by states, only one of the 83 installations is without an agreement.

g. Page 37. The report indicates that the taxpayers absorb the majority of costs of the fish and wildlife program and that fee collection for hunting and fishing should be increased to help make the program more self supporting. This concept is supported, but the report should point out that much of the fish and wildlife expenses are for protecting endangered species and other non-game wildlife as mandated by law. Because non-game programs give minimum

benefits to hunters and fishermen, wildlife programs should not rely totally on user fees for support. While it is agreed that user fees should be commensurate with the value of the resource, the estimated potential average of \$6.00 for hunting and \$10.00 for combination hunting and fishing annually appears excessive. While a \$12.00 fee appears reasonable at an installation with valuable resources, a fee of \$10.00 would essentially close participation at small installations near National Forests and other areas with abundant, no cost public hunting and fishing.

Another aspect which should be considered is that funds are currently requested and appropriated specifically to provide recreation opportunities for the military. Accordingly, user fees should not be charged with the sole intention of making the program, particularly non-game portion, self supporting.

h. Page 39, Table 4. The table indicates that hunting fees were collected by the State of Florida for Avon Park Air Force Range. The table should be clarified to show that these fees (approximately \$20,000) were used in the fish and wildlife management program at Avon Park.

i. Page 15. The Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, Virginia was cited for losing revenues in timber sales due to misunderstanding of Navy policy and DOD forestry regulations. Efforts are underway to correct this misunderstanding. Computerized forest inventory would normally surface such problems and an inventory system is in developmental stages. The timber harvests are being coordinated with wildlife habitat management.

j. Page 15. Under the same subheading, the Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland was cited for halting timber harvests. It should be noted in the final report that the cited disagreement between forestry officials was resolved before the GAO investigation at Patuxent River. A harvesting contract has been awarded and harvest will begin early in FY 82.

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