INTRODUCTION

The United States Army in Europe (USAREUR) has implemented a comprehensive and effective environmental program with the overall goal to integrate environmental stewardship into all military activities. On military lands, natural habitats must be managed and protected while simultaneously supporting military mission requirements. USAREUR’s pro-active natural resources management and the implementation of the Integrated Training Area Management concept proved that environmental protection and military land use are not mutually exclusive but, on the contrary, of a symbiotic relationship. The European Union’s “Flora, Fauna, Habitat Directive” is one of the new challenges facing the military in Europe. Army natural resources managers are challenged to keep the Army in legal compliance while simultaneously preventing or minimizing negative impacts of environmental legislation on the effective conduct of its military training mission.

USAREUR’s environmental stewardship is built on four pillars: Compliance, Prevention, Restoration, and Conservation.

The objective of the compliance program pillar is to attain and sustain compliance with all host nation and U.S. requirements; Restoration is to remediate contaminated sites as effectively as resources permit to protect human health and the environment; Prevention adopts and implements management approaches, procedures, and operations to minimize all environmental contamination and pollution; and finally, Conservation is to conserve, protect, and enhance natural and cultural resources.

The overall goal of the U.S. Army’s environmental program is to integrate environmental stewardship into all military activities.

THE LEGAL BASIS

U.S. Army Europe operations are governed by the NATO Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) which is the international agreement designed
to serve mutual interests of both, the Army and the Host Nations. It outlines relationships on matters from criminal jurisdiction to customs, taxes and other civil and legal matters. The most recent German Supplementary Agreement to the NATO SOFA is significant because it dictates German law is applicable on our installations. This along with EU regulations and host nation-implemented EU directives (because they are considered valid Host Nation (HN) requirements), and applicable US law and Department of Defense policy - Final Governing Standards (FGS) - make up the body of environmental program guidance from which we derive our requirements.

The Final Governing Standards are a comprehensive set of country-specific, substantive, environmental provisions. They are developed by comparing and adopting the more protective requirements of the Overseas Environmental Baseline Guidance Document “OEBGD” and HN environmental standards, and applicable international agreements. They consist of 18 environmental protocols:

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One of the FGS key compliance requirements for protocol # 13, Natural Resources, is that natural habitats of indigenous species must be protected. For that purpose the U.S. Army in Europe has established and implemented integrated natural resources management plans for all its installations. These plans contain specific provisions and guidelines for the protection of natural habitats on military lands. The plans are called “integrated” because they are closely coordinated with military trainers to assure they are in support of and not in conflict with the military training mission. The plans consist of three volumes: (1) general information about the installation, (2) natural resources protection in cantonment areas, and (3) management and protection of natural resources, flora and fauna species and their habitats on military training areas and other mission lands. The integrated natural resources management plans will also serve as the basis for the Flora, Fauna, Habitat (FFH) Management plans, which have to be implemented in accordance with the European Council Directive 92/43. Since this EU directive, which was incorporated