DCERP

Defense Coastal/Estuarine Research Program

DoD EPA DOE SERDP
Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program

NAVFAC Naval Facilities Engineering Command Engineering Service Center

Background:

The Department of Defense (DoD) utilizes over 25 million acres of land, including coastal and estuarine areas, for weapons testing and the training of military personnel. The DoD is committed to the responsible stewardship of its resources, and has established a wide range of policies to manage these large and diverse areas to ensure their sustainability.

In 1997, the Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program (SERDP) sponsored a major workshop that focused on identifying ecosystem research needs as they relate to military land use and management concerns. Participants agreed that conducting relevant research benefits DoD ecosystem management practices while addressing basic science questions, and that conducting research on military lands with active operations is feasible. A site focusing on terrestrial ecosystem issues was established at Ft. Benning, GA, in 1999. A site focusing on estuarine and coastal needs is now being developed. A formative workshop for this new initiative, entitled the Defense Coastal/Estuarine Research Program (DCERP), was held in February 2004, in Atlantic Beach, NC. The outcome was a framework to address diverse ecosystem research needs and for developing a long-term monitoring strategy.

Selecting Camp Lejeune:

The host site for DCERP is Camp Lejeune, NC. This installation provides an ideal research platform in that, within the base boundaries, there are 14 miles of beach along the Atlantic Ocean, including five miles available for training; coastal dunes adjacent to the primary landing zone for amphibious assaults; and longleaf pine stands in which red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) clusters are established.

Additionally, Camp Lejeune is home to numerous state and federal species of concern as well as eight federally listed threatened and endangered species (TES), including the green sea turtle, loggerhead sea turtle, piping plover, American alligator, and American bald eagle.

Finally, proximity to the New River estuary and watershed offers many research opportunities in the areas of hydrodynamics, water quality, TES, and invasive species.

At Camp Lejeune, installation personnel have begun laying the groundwork for a comprehensive monitoring program, known as the Camp Lejeune Integrated Operations Network (CLION). This system is intended to function as a fully integrated and operational network of security, safety, meteorological, oceanographic, and acoustic/ seismic sensors.

DCERP Workshop Recommendations:

Following are general recommendations derived from the 2004 DCERP workshop:

- Investigate spatial and temporal scales
- Develop indicators and thresholds
- Address water quality issues
- Better understand impacts of RCW management

SERDP is making a long-term commitment (greater than 10 years) to the monitoring and research opportunities at Camp Lejeune through this DCERP effort. For additional information about DCERP, please contact: SERDP-DCERP@hgl.com.