

News Release

Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office
1387 S. Vinnell Way, Boise, Idaho 83709
208-378-5243 www.fws.gov/idaho



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 23, 2014

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Meggan Laxalt Mackey
(208) 378-5796, margaret_laxalt_mackey@fws.gov

Idaho Army National Guard: Colonel Timothy Marsano
(208) 422-5268, timothy.d.marsano.mil@mail.mil

Idaho Army National Guard's Orchard Combat Training Center Honored for Collaborative Sagebrush-steppe Conservation

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Presents Military Conservation Partner Award

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today presented the national Military Conservation Partner Award to the Idaho Army National Guard's Orchard Combat Training Center (IDARNG OCTC).

The award, established by the Service in 2005, recognizes military installations that demonstrate excellence in conservation, and a commitment to working with partners to achieve stewardship of fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats. Only one installation of the hundreds in the United States receives the Fish and Wildlife Service award each year, including all branches of active and reserve installations.

The IDARNG has actively worked to conserve Idaho's native sagebrush-steppe habitat through research, funding, proactive fire management and other conservation efforts at the training site, while still fully implementing its military mission. The OCTC contains high-quality sagebrush-steppe habitat that supports one of the largest known populations of the rare slickspot peppergrass, a plant found only in Idaho's Snake River Plain, and proposed for protection under the Endangered Species Act. Since 1991, IDARNG has been a leader in the conservation of slickspot peppergrass, working with state, federal, Tribal and other partners.

"The Idaho National Guard's Orchard Combat Training Center has the distinction of being the very first National Guard or reserve installation to receive this recognition for conservation excellence. This is a significant achievement for the State of Idaho and the Idaho Army National Guard," said Michael Carrier, the Service's Idaho State Supervisor. "IDARNG's best management practices have influenced conservation success beyond OCTC's boundaries across Idaho's landscape. This recognition is well-earned."

Since the 1990s, the Idaho Army National Guard has implemented rapid response fire suppression action; emphasized the conservation and restoration of native plants; and worked with partners to increase knowledge about native plants and slickspot peppergrass. The OCTC’s 1998 Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan (INRMP) and subsequent 2004 and 2013 updates emphasize the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of native sagebrush-steppe habitat and the species that depend on it.

“We’re proud to accept this honor today,” said Major General Gary L. Sayler, Idaho Adjutant General. “It’s an acknowledgment of the balance we work each day to achieve, using state and federal lands, to train our troops for combat while at the same time protecting natural and cultural resources.”

For more information, please visit <http://www.fws.gov/idaho> or <http://nationalguard.idaho.gov>

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information, visit www.fws.gov, or connect with us through any of these social media channels:



– FWS –