Fort A.P. Hill Ceremony Marks New Partnership
To Conserve Virginia Habitat, Open Space

The nation's military installations are key to ensuring well-trained troops. And frequently, those same installations can serve as hubs to help maintain self-sustaining populations of wildlife and plant species. The Rappahannock River National Wildlife Refuge recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with its neighbor across the river, Fort A.P. Hill, to work together with interested landowners in a new effort under the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program.

The Rappahannock River has always been important habitat for migratory birds, especially eagles and waterfowl, and native fishes such as shad, herring, striped bass, and alewife. "Fort A.P. Hill's compatible use buffer program fits hand-in-glove with the Refuge's land conservation objectives," said Refuge Manager Joe McCauley. "Many of the highest priority tracts targeted as buffer areas are within the Refuge boundary, and we have a ready-made partnership to help the Fort, the Refuge, and willing sellers come together."

The Refuge's long-standing partners, who also signed the MOU with Fort A.P. Hill, include The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation.

Military installations need space to meet their training operations requirements. Tad Davis, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health, said, "These buffers let us protect this precious resource we have…the land where we establish facilities and train."

Senator John Warner said in a statement: "This partnership will create an important buffer for Fort A.P. Hill, and will add to the conservation of open spaces across the Commonwealth. This is truly a 'win-win' for Virginia and the Army."

The partnership will also help continue public wildlife recreation in the area, and the region's economic vitality through such activities as farming, forestry, commercial fishing and tourism.