

August 2004



# Natural Resources



## *Threatened and Endangered Species*

### **ENDANGERED SPECIES MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The **Endangered Species Management Plan for Fort Hood; FY 2001-05** identifies 26,000 hectares of Endangered Species Habitat on the installation. Because Section 9 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 prohibits activities that have potential for disrupting breeding behavior of endangered or threatened species, military training could be limited on much of Fort Hood. The presence of endangered species has been characterized as 'encroachment' on training opportunities in testimony before the House National Security Committee. However, Fort Hood succeeded in gaining approval from USFWS to rescind training restrictions, other than those that would permanently alter habitat, on 7,752 hectares of habitat in the western maneuver training areas that are vital to large-scale mechanized training.

#### Rare & Endangered Species on Fort Hood

- Black-capped Vireo
- Golden-cheeked Warbler
- *Texabama croton*
- *Plethodon* Salamander
- Texas Horned Lizard
- 18 endemic karst invertebrates



*Plethodon* Salamander

#### **BIRDS**

Among its 283 bird species, Fort Hood has the largest breeding populations of two endangered songbirds, the Black-capped Vireo and the Golden-cheeked Warbler. The installation is the only site to meet and exceed regional recovery goals for both species, making it a leader in the recovery of both species, while successfully integrating endangered species protection with the military training mission. Other birds with threatened or endangered status are the bald eagle, the peregrine falcon, and the whooping crane. These birds do not breed on Fort Hood, but either winter here or pass through during migration.



#### **KARST FEATURES**

Fort Hood has an extensive network of over 150 limestone caves, called "Karst formations" which are home to 18 endemic invertebrates and a plethodontid salamander that is found nowhere else. Several caves also harbor bat colonies, including cave myotis.

#### **RARE PLANTS**

Fort Hood has over 850 plants species, including 11 ranked as G3 (21-100 occurrences; either very rare or local throughout range). One of these plants is the "*Texabama croton*", described as one of the rarest shrubs in the United States.





## *Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan*

### **Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan**

**(INRMP):** developed in cooperation with installation staff, federal and state government agencies, and non-governmental organizations. The primary goal of the INRMP is to reverse declines in herbaceous vegetation and water quality and increases in erosion and sedimentation that have resulted from heavy maneuver training and overgrazing of the most frequently used training areas. INRMP Activities include: -859 flood-water/sediment retention basins; 150 hardened stream crossings; 30 hardened hillside access points; hard surface staging areas; firing points; travel lanes on ranges; diversion terraces and grassed waterways; improving 150 miles of training area access roads; blocking eroding trails and stream fords; establishing buffers along riparian zones and establishing perennial vegetation on critically and potentially eroding areas; controlling invasive woody species; establishing permanent excavation sites, and; implementing schedules for rotational training and grazing.

Fort Hood succeeded in gaining approval from USFWS to rescind training restrictions on 7,752 hectares of habitat in the western maneuver training areas that are vital to large-scale mechanized training

## *Species Management*

**Forest Management:** Management of woody vegetation, when required to limit invasive species and to reduce fire hazard to endangered species habitat, is accomplished by mechanical clearing or prescribed burning when the needed fine fuel load is available.

**Game and Fisheries Management:** Fort Hood's fishing and hunting programs provide an estimated 60,000 angler days and 17,000 hunter-days annually. In 2000-01, 9 bucks and in 2003-04 7 bucks placed in the Texas Wildlife Association's (TWA) annual big buck competition. Twenty five lakes are actively managed for game fishing, including stocking over 17,000 fish annually. More than 30 lakes and ponds are also actively managed for control of aquatic vegetation and rough fish.



**Pest Management:** Fort Hood's Integrated Pest Management Program strives to integrate education, surveillance, and poison-free chemical control methods to prevent and control pests that may adversely affect the health or comfort of personnel or damage structures, property, or natural resources.

