

# **AFCEC expands USFWS partnership to support two additional installations**

By Jennifer Schneider

AFCEC Environmental Directorate

A successful conservation law enforcement partnership, or CLEP, between the Air Force and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will undergo further expansion in fiscal 2023, increasing the number of officers from nine to 12.

Additional conservation law enforcement officers, or CLEOs, will be added to the conservation teams at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, and Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey.

AFCEC originally partnered with the USFWS to kick off the CLEP in 2019, placing six USFWS officers across five installations: Beale and Edwards Air Force bases, California; Eglin AFB, Florida; Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey; and Kirtland AFB, New Mexico. In 2020, an additional officer joined JBMDL while the Barry M. Goldwater Range in Arizona received its first two officers.

“The program brings a multitude of benefits to both the USFWS and the Air Force by increasing protection of natural and cultural resources,” said Karla Meyer, Air Force natural resources subject matter expert at the Air Force Civil Engineer Center Environmental Quality Technical Support Branch. “In addition to ensuring compliance with safety zones and installation rules, these officers help project visitor safety and preserve recreational access opportunities.”

To participate in the program, officers undergo 17 weeks of intensive training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, followed by five weeks of specialized federal wildlife officer basic training and 10 weeks of field training with experienced federal wildlife officers.

Participating installations have been pleased with success of the program and its officers.

One of the officers was recently highlighted at the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association Training Conference at Spokane, Washington, in March. Officer Terrance Butler, a USFWS CLEO at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, received NMFWA’s 2022 Natural Resource Conservation Management Enforcement Award for his work in support of the base.

According to base officials, Officer Butler has improved compliance with hunting and fishing regulations, decreased trespassing incidents and increased the base’s hunting and fishing program revenue during his time at JBMDL. He has also taken steps to help protect the bald eagle population on base.

“These awards are our way of honoring the trail-blazing volunteers, natural resource managers, and Military members preserving our national heritage on Military lands,” according to the NMFWA awards website. “These are the people who inspire us, change the world one plant or animal or brick at a time – and they remind us that it is still possible to accomplish great things one step at a time.”

AFCEC aims to continue expanding the program to additional installations in the future.



Caption: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Association Conservation Law Enforcement Officer Team and Air Force Civil Engineer Center Environmental Quality Technical Support Branch members pose with Officer Terrence Butler, who received the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association's 2022 Natural Resource Conservation Management Enforcement Award.



Caption: Officer Terrance Butler (right), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Officer at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, poses with Michael Luna, JBMDL natural resources manager, with his 2022 Natural Resource Conservation Management Enforcement Award from the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association.