

## **VIRGINIA SENTINEL LANDSCAPES: A PARTNERSHIP TO MEET MILITARY, WORKING LANDS CONSERVATION AND RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES**

The Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry and the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs jointly propose seeking Sentinel Landscape designations for two critical, geographic regions within Virginia. A Sentinel Landscape designation strategy can help meet national security objectives while enhancing retention, expansion and conservation of working forest and agricultural lands.

### **Sentinel Landscape Background**

The Sentinel Landscapes Partnership was created to sustain military readiness, reduce the effects of incompatible development around military installations, preserve working forests and agricultural lands and protect wildlife habitat by focusing on areas where these priorities overlap. The military, government agencies, including the Departments of Defense, Agriculture and the Interior (DoD, USDA and DOI), NGOs, and other partners coordinate their conservation and working lands programs in support of ranching, farming, forestry, and conservation practices compatible with the military installations in partnership with the landowners in the landscape.

### **Benefit for Virginia**

Agriculture and forestry are two of Virginia's biggest economic drivers. In addition, the Commonwealth has significant military infrastructure, the result of billions of dollars of investment by DoD. Virginia's 2017 Regional Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) of six major military installations and their surrounding jurisdictions recognized incompatible land uses that threaten the military mission also endanger Virginia's working lands - farms and forests - which are vital to sustaining agricultural productivity, safeguarding natural resources and maintaining a rural way of life. A Sentinel Landscape designation can act as a driving force in the creation of a landscape-scale national security and conservation corridor that ensures the security of the Nation's capital, prioritizes conservation of working lands and contributes to the health of the Chesapeake Bay, and enhances compatible rural economic development opportunities.

### **Process for Sentinel Landscape Designation**

To apply for the next round of Sentinel Landscape designations, applications must be submitted by November 1, 2019. Applications will be evaluated on the characteristics of the land, needs of the military, desires of individual landowners, and partnership objectives. In addition, a proposed Landscape must have:

- An anchor military installation with a military mission that benefits from compatible land uses outside of the installation's boundaries;
- A defined landscape associated with the anchor installation where Federal, state, local, and private programs and efforts can be coordinated to support voluntary conservation and landowner involvement; and
- Articulated goals and outcomes that promote and sustain compatible land uses for military operations while providing tangible benefits to conservation and working lands within the defined Landscape.

Over the course of the summer, staff representing both Secretaries will be working to finalize the Sentinel Landscape boundaries, identify partner organizations, and reach consensus on locally-driven desired goals and objectives. Critical to a successful application and subsequent project will be strong working relationships among partners, a team approach, and a focus on economically-driven solutions that enhance compatible natural resources uses in support of military readiness while also enhancing working lands.

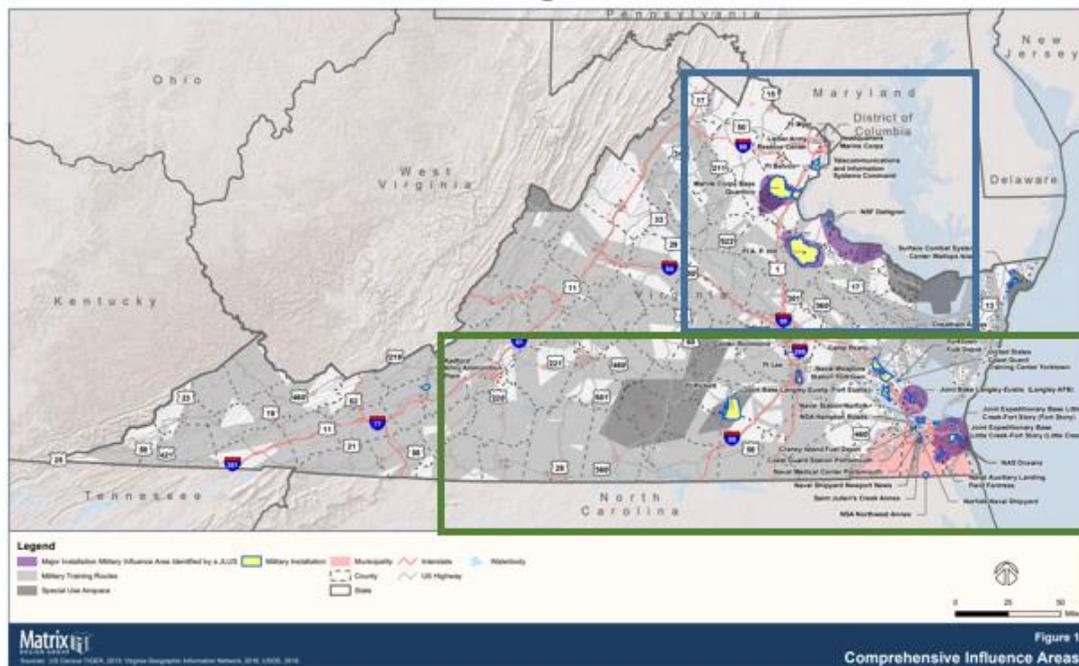
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## Defining Virginia's Sentinel Landscapes

The map in Figure 1 identifies the approximate geographic areas under current consideration as Virginia's two Sentinel Landscapes. These landscapes were drawn from areas identified in Virginia's 2017 Regional JLUS as "Comprehensive Influence Areas" from a military perspective and through discussions held among state officials and Virginia military installation representatives.

- Marine Corp Base Quantico (MCB Quantico) will serve as the anchor installation for the area identified in blue. Other military installations within this Sentinel Landscape may include Fort Belvoir, Fort AP Hill and Naval Support Activity South Potomac.
- Joint Base Langley-Eustis will serve as the anchor installation for the area identified in green. Other military installations within this Sentinel Landscape may include Naval and Coast Guard bases in the Hampton Roads area and Fort Pickett.

Figure 1.



Maryland and North Carolina have already created Sentinel Landscapes and the Commonwealth's efforts would align with and potentially connect to those areas. This would create a key, landscape-scale, national security and conservation corridor that enhances the security of the Nation's capital.

### Interested in Partnering?

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