Press Release

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Fort Drum Public Affairs

Fort Drum awarded for achievements in environmental restoration

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- Brenda Lee McCullough, director of U.S. Army Installation Management Command – Readiness, visited Fort Drum on Oct. 1 and presented the Secretary of the Army Environmental Award to the garrison commander and environmental restoration team.

Fort Drum was recognized for the following accomplishments:

\*Closing two legacy petroleum contamination sites and one State Superfund site, ahead of schedule;

\*Advancing the cleanup of three additional sites to the final remedial stages;

\*Accelerating the cleanup schedule of the Oasis Site jet fuel spill by five years;

\*Proactively and expediently forming a collaborative team to investigate potential impacts of emerging environmental contaminates for the purpose of safeguarding Fort Drum’s drinking water supply; and

\*Implementing innovative, green technologies that have enhanced biodegradation of contamination, reduced energy usage, decreased greenhouse gas emissions and protected waterways.

These actions amounted to a cost savings of more than $12 million.

The team is composed of members of Fort Drum Public Works, Baltimore District Army Corps of Engineers and Arcadis (remediation contractor).

“This is the first time we have been recognized with this award, and it’s an honor,” said Jim Miller, Fort Drum Environmental Division chief. “We are well-known for our cultural resources and natural resources programs, and this shows that we have gotten better in another area of our Environmental Division.”

Brian Shedd, from the Baltimore District Army Corps of Engineers, said that, achievements aside, it was the cohesiveness of the team that he found remarkable.

“It was never about one person or one technology,” he said. “The real story was the galvanizing of the team – just the sheer adaptiveness of everyone working together from different organizations.”

The Fort Drum’s installation restoration program (IRP) launched in the mid-1980s when the U.S. Army Environmental Hygiene Agency identified 72 areas of concern (AOCs), to include petroleum fueling and storage locations, sanitary landfills, pesticide and hazardous waste storage points and maintenance facilities.

Petroleum has been the contaminant of greatest concern for the Fort Drum IRP, and several former fuel-dispensing facilities and other sites have undergone varying levels of investigation and remediation since the early 1990s.

But it was the Oasis fuel spill in April 2006 at Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield that not only raised the alarm about environmental contaminants on post, but has since been the team’s greatest accomplishment. Using different remediation techniques and an aggressive approach by the restoration team, the cleanup is on track for completion five years ahead of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation-approved schedule.

In 2018, the Fort Drum IRP managed remediation work at four active sites, while continuing to perform long-term monitoring and maintenance at two closed, former landfills.

The goal is to achieve NFA (no further remedial action) status at the remaining active sites by 2025, adding to the 50 sites already closed, but also to restore the roughly 350 acres of encumbered land to its fullest usable potential.

“These kind of contaminants can be found all the over the country, and Fort Drum stepping up its cleanup efforts is a huge achievement,” Shedd said.

Fort Drum was among five installations, two teams and one individual recognized with a Secretary of the Army Environmental Award – the highest honor conferred by the Army in the field of environmental science and sustainability.

Fort Drum was previously awarded in 2004 and 2010 for natural resources conservation, and in 2006 and 2009 for cultural resources management.

“There is tremendous progress being done that most people aren’t aware of,” said Kurt Hauk, Fort Drum Public Works director. “This award highlights our successes as we continue on with the work.”

Photo Caption: Brenda Lee McCullough, U.S. Army Installation Management Command-Readiness, presents the Secretary of the Army Environmental Award to the Col. Jeffery Lucas, Fort Drum garrison commander, and environmental restoration team Oct. 1 during a visit to Fort Drum. Back row: Command Sgt. Maj. Roberto Munoz, Fort Drum garrison senior enlisted adviser; Kurt Hauk, Fort Drum Public Works director; Amy Dixon, installation restoration program manager; James Miller; Environmental Division chief; Brian Shedd, Wayne Davis and Scott Forbes, representing the Baltimore District Army Corps of Engineers; Jaime Marhevsky, Fort Drum geospatial data manager; Andy Vitolins, Arcadis (remediation contractor); and Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Dennison, IMCOM G-9. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

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