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## Sustainable Forestry Program

# Forestry supports JBLM's mission

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Visitors to Joint Base Lewis-McChord are often surprised by the prevalence of trees and greenery on a military installation.

The healthy forests on JBLM are a welcome sight from urban development.

The sustainable forestry program is carefully cultivated with great attention to detail. Planting all of the trees and maintaining the forests for access to training is no accident.

"Trees are planted on a two-year cycle," said Bruce McDonald, a JBLM forester. "We order trees one to two years in advance from select, approved nurseries through the Army Corps of Engineers contract. On JBLM, one type of tree we plant is ponderosa pine, grown from our own seed, collected by our forestry staff. We also plant Douglas fir, cedar and white pine. Usually we plant about 300 trees per acre."

When planting trees in the spring and fall, the hole is dug, the tree is put into the ground, staked and netted to keep the deer from eating them. The following year, staff come back out to inspect and count survivors.

By the third year, the JBLM Directorate of Public Works forestry team will ask, "What do the trees need?" Usually the answer is brush removal.

By the fifth year, the height of the tree will be measured to determine if it is tall enough to be above the competing brush. Plantation locations, maps, number of trees and other data is tracked on computers using a geographic information systems software.

The tall, straight Douglas fir trees grown here are excellent for telephone poles, and a rough average of up to 20 poles per acre have been harvested.

"Dead trees are not good for poles or lumber — some dead trees are used for firewood." McDonald said.

The JBLM forestry program is self-supporting. Money from the timber harvest pays for the forestry program on the base.

After subtracting the program cost, 40 percent of net revenues are sent to Pierce and Thurston counties to support schools and roads, while the balance supports Department of Defense forestry programs of all the armed forces at other installations.

Forestry conducts a wide range of support activities such as removing noxious weeds such as Scotch broom, English ivy and English holly.

"A good wintertime activity — you can spot the green ivy when everything else is brown," McDonald said.

Scotch broom is especially a problem as it can outgrow the young trees. Scotch broom can outgrow the seedlings causing them to die unless it is mowed or herbicide is applied to remove.

In 2002, JBLM became the first federal ownership in the U.S. to be certified as a sustainable forestry operation by Forest Stewardship Council. It has been recertified multiple times since.



Directorate of Public Works  
Bruce McDonald, a JBLM forester, points out a young cedar tree, netted, staked and planted in a shady area on Joint Base Lewis-McChord April 9.

More information  
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Bruce McDonald  
JBLM forester

Being certified, JBLM's forestry program must meet specific criteria that cover a broad spectrum of biological, economic and social considerations. All of this while maintaining forests that benefit military training.

DPW's forestry program is a vibrant partner in maintaining the mission, supporting the environment and providing for the community on JBLM.

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