

[This week's Northwest Guardian](#)

[News](#) [Sports](#) [Weekend](#) [Community Ledger](#) [Viewpoint](#) [Education](#) [Transitions](#) [Health Beat](#) [Sustainability](#) [Across DOD](#) [JBLM](#)

Search the Northwest Guardian for:

[Print](#) [E-Mail](#)

JBLM golf courses go for the green

BY DEAN SIEMON
Northwest Guardian

Published: 01:45PM June 22nd, 2017

The fifth annual Joint Base Lewis-McChord Green Golf Classic June 15 at Eagles Pride Golf Course continued to put a spotlight on the sustainability efforts not only at Eagles Pride, but also Whispering Firs Golf Course on McChord Field.

The event featured a golf tournament paired with an environmental summit. Back in 2012, Eagles Pride received certification from the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program — becoming just the fifth Department of Defense golf course to do so.

While several participants came out for a round of golf, the event also served as an educational tool.

“There’s a lot of good work that sometimes goes unadvertised,” said Cathy Hamilton-Wissmer, of the Directorate of Public Works’ sustainable program on JBLM.

A lot of the sustainable efforts at both golf courses on JBLM have been through partnerships between DPW and JBLM’s Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation. Topics covered included the use of propane-powered mowers that reduced air pollution and the forest ecosystem restoration that started in 2015.

All of these efforts have three main criteria to meet before they are implemented on either Eagles Pride or Whispering Firs.

“It needs to improve play, reduce costs and help improve our environmental stewardship,” said David Wienecke, JBLM golf course environmental manager.

One of the major efforts that started about five years ago was the soil biota study on Eagles Pride. This was partly funded by the installation and also by Western Washington Golf Course Superintendents Association, which also had representation at the environmental summit.

In three different spots on the golf course, the in-house made “black gold” compost, sand and a mixture of both were placed in plots of land — about 72 in total. The focus of the study has been to look at cost and labor efficiencies of replacing the compost with chemicals some golf courses have used in the past.

The study has been led by Nathan Stacey, a graduate assistant at Washington State University’s Research and Extension Center in Puyallup. While they are still working on analyzing all of the data collected from soil samples, the soil that has received the compost mixture has seen an increase in its volumetric water content.

“Meaning that there is more water in the (soil) system,” Stacey said. “As you add organic matter, it will hold more water.”

That means it could reduce irrigation-related costs, but there could be some concerns with oversaturation that could easily turn the ground into what Stacey described as “a muck.”

The field for the golf tournament included a combination of service members, veterans who are regulars at the courses and superintendents from civilian golf courses throughout the area.

“We try that as superintendents of golf courses,” said Mike Goldsberry, superintendent of Wing Point Golf and Country Club in Bainbridge Island. “Part of what we do is being stewards of the land.”

Technical Sergeant Matthew Thomas and Senior Airman Nino Vaccaro — both of the 62nd Maintenance Squadron — were among the first to tee off from the recently remodeled 14th and 15th holes. Eagles Pride's entire blue course was closed to renovation to improve the storm water system through a permit by the Environmental Protection Agency.

“Sustainability is important; now that we’re seeing it and living it, it’s really cool,” Vaccaro said.

Dean Siemon: 253-477-0235, @deansiemon

THE NORTHWEST GUARDIAN - To suggest story ideas or submit copy contact us at:
Building 1010, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington 98433 or call 253-477-0183 or 253-477-0182
For advertising information call: Bernie Fernandez 253-597-8504
© Copyright 2011 Northwest Guardian | Feedback at: NWGEditor@nwguardian.com