

CHAPTER 12

PUBLIC ACCESS, OUTDOOR RECREATION, AND ENFORCEMENT

12.1 Public Access

The Marine Corps permits public access to natural resources to the extent appropriate and consistent with the military mission and safety and security requirements. Camp Lejeune is an amphibious and mechanized infantry training installation with several impact areas and a large number of live-fire ranges and other training/maneuver areas. The extensive daily military training that takes place on Camp Lejeune requires it to be a closed military installation, granting only controlled access within its boundaries based on mission requirements. This is for both safety and military security reasons.

For the most part, the general public is allowed access to the base if accompanied by a Marine civilian staff, or if they are participants in the sponsorship program associated with hunting, fishing and trapping. However, there are opportunities for the general public to participate in outdoor recreation aboard Camp Lejeune without accompaniment or sponsorship. The majority of these non-accompanied special events such as the Sand Jam, Maynia Carnival, and the 4th of July fireworks celebration, and are administered by the AC/S, MCCA. The general public can also gain access to Camp Lejeune for bicycle road races and concerts, or for a self-guided cultural resources tour. MCCA also manages, coordinates and operates recreational activities such as the equestrian facilities, golf course, and developed campgrounds on Base.

Boat launching facilities for military personnel, civilian employees and guests are available at ten locations. These locations are Onslow Beach Bridge, Mile Hammock Bay, Sneads Ferry Bridge, Mill Creek, French Creek, Rhodes Point, Town Point, Weil Point, Maple Landing and Everett Creek (BO 5090.115) Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Regulations).

OBJECTIVE REC1: Manage access of general public to Camp Lejeune's conservation program.

- **Action 12-1:** *Promote general public awareness of conservation-based recreational opportunities on Camp Lejeune.*
- **Action 12-2:** *Provide boat-launching access to the general public in accordance with base access procedures and subject to security requirements.*
- **Action 12-3:** *Provide hunting and fishing opportunity to general public*

12.2 Natural Resource-Based Outdoor Recreation

Recreational activities that are natural resources-dependent (e.g., hunting, fishing, and trapping) are under the management of the AC/S, Installations and Environment, Environmental Management Division (EMD). The Conservation Law Enforcement Section, EMD, administers enforcement actions related to hunting, fishing, trapping, firewood gathering and off road recreational vehicle (ORRV) driving. MCASNR has its own Conservation Law Enforcement staff to enforce conservation policies and laws.

Operational forces training takes precedence over all outdoor recreation activities on Camp Lejeune. Outdoor recreational activities are permitted within training areas when not scheduled for military use or other land management activities, such as prescribed fire and intensive natural resource surveys. In unexpected instances such as the terrorist attacks of 9/11, security measures may temporarily postpone or cancel outdoor recreational activities.

Camp Lejeune, as authorized by MCO 5090.2A, has an established program for issuance of permits and collection of fees for access to natural resource dependent outdoor recreation activities. Fees or proceeds from hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses are used only for funding, or supplementing the funding of fish and wildlife management programs. The fee schedule specific to Camp Lejeune is contained in BO 5090.115. All recreational activities, including fishing, hunting, and trapping at Camp Lejeune are subject to applicable federal laws, state laws, and Base regulations.

Camp Lejeune is designated as a North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Wildlife Cooperator Agent. Cooperator agent status permits Camp Lejeune to provide hunters with an authorization number to legally possess an animal. The Base maintains three separate Agent numbers to correctly manage the pattern of animal harvests.

12.2.1 Recreational Hunting

Recreational hunting, fishing and trapping are important components of game and sport fisheries management programs at Camp Lejeune. From the earliest dove season to late season quail and rabbit hunting, recreational hunting takes place from the first week in September until the end of February each year. A spring wild-turkey season that extends from mid-April to mid-May provides additional recreational opportunity. Recreational fishing takes place year-round. Participant numbers fluctuate annually, but approximately 1200-1500 individual hunting and fishing permits are issued each year to military personnel, their dependents, civilians serving Camp Lejeune and civilian guests. Hunting dates and season lengths correspond to the annual framework established by NCWRC, which sets hunting dates and season lengths.

Administering the recreational hunting program on Camp Lejeune is a complex undertaking due to the acreage of off-limits areas such as dud-producing impact areas and coordination required to prevent conflicts with scheduled military training exercises.

Safety is an important factor in any hunting program, but even more so on an active military installation such as Camp Lejeune. BO 5090.115 regulates hunting, fishing, trapping, and access to natural resources based recreation. Base Bulletin 1711 (Hunting Seasons) is published annually and contains within-year changes to hunting season dates, harvest and possession limits, and procedures for the safe conduct of hunting on Base. Hunting season dates conform to the published North Carolina Inland Fishing, Hunting, and Trapping regulations digest, available on the worldwide web at www.ncwildlife.org.

Access for the general public to hunting, trapping and fishing is based on a sponsorship program and a generalized quota system that limits the number of hunters within a given hunting area, generally for safety reasons. Military personnel that are active duty, retired and reservists on active duty, as well as civilian employees of Camp Lejeune (defined as civil service and non-appropriated fund employees), are granted access to the hunting, fishing, and trapping program. Both of these groups may sponsor other non-affiliated persons for access to hunting, fishing and

trapping opportunities on Base. Reservists not on active duty and dependents of military and civilian personnel are granted access, but are not eligible to sponsor non-affiliated persons. The Conservation Law Enforcement Office controls rights to access Base and ensures consistency with military requirements.

In addition, each year the Commanding General invites hunt clubs to participate in several Commanding General Invitation Deer Hunts in the Greater Sandy Run Area (GSRA). The invitations are offered to those hunt clubs that historically hunted on GSRA before GSRA was acquired by Camp Lejeune and are willing to reciprocally invite Marines and sailors to hunt on hunt club owned or leased lands.

Throughout the nation, recreational opportunities are limited for disabled veterans, military dependents with disabilities and other persons with disabilities. With the passage of the Disabled Sportsmen's Access Act in 1999, opportunities have been greatly improved where programs have been altered to better accommodate disabled persons and adaptive equipment made available to assist disabled persons into the field on public owned lands. Federal, state, and private, not-for-profit organizations are championing access improvements and opportunities for disabled persons throughout the Armed Forces. Adaptive equipment in the form of a mechanized, elevating stand, and pop-up blinds are available for use on Camp Lejeune by disabled persons.

12.2.2 Recreational Fishing

Camp Lejeune contains approximately 80 miles of creeks and tidal estuaries that connect with New River and the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. Most of this water is salt or brackish in nature and represents approximately 26,000 acres in surface area. Surf and pier fishing opportunities are available at the Onslow Beach Recreation Area. Riseley Pier, Camp Lejeune's one ocean fishing pier, is available for individual use and scheduled fishing events throughout the year. Eligible surf fishermen (refer to Section 12.1 above) have access to approximately 1.7 miles of beach. Access by vehicle is controlled by BO 11017.1f which provides use regulations and information related to off-road vehicle access at Onslow Beach. Base Order 5090.115 contains general fishing regulations for Camp Lejeune. Base Bulletin 1709 (Fishing Pond Regulations), published annually, provides pond specific regulations.

OBJECTIVE REC2: Provide mission compatible hunting and fishing opportunities for military personnel and their dependents, civilian employees, and their sponsored guests.

- **Action 12-04:** *Provide hunting and fishing opportunities to authorized patrons.*
- **Action 12-05:** *Create designated disabled person hunting areas.*
- **Action 12-06:** *Enforce BO 5090.115*
- **Action 12-07:** *Sponsor an annual youth fishing event*
- **Action 11-02:** *Maintain current wildlife openings.*
- **Action 11-05:** *Maintain NCWRC Wildlife Cooperator Agent Status for data reporting.*
- **Action 11-09:** *Maintain shoreline vegetation to promote access for fishing*
- **Action 11-11:** *Stock game fish within managed Base ponds*
- **Action 11-12:** *Maintain shoreline depths and water control devises*

12.2.3 Onslow Beach and Off-road Recreational Vehicle Use.

Onslow Beach and Brown's Island cover approximately 11 nm of beachfront, which includes the associated primary and secondary dune systems grading to maritime shrub-scrub and tidal salt marsh along the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. Onslow Beach is separated from Brown's Island by Brown's Inlet. Brown's Island is a primary Impact Area and is off-limits to all personnel.

The beach ecosystem is extremely dynamic, influenced by both natural and man-made processes. Activity levels on Onslow Beach vary in intensity and nature. Recreational uses, military training, and conservation activities overlap spatially and temporally. These competing uses sometimes create logistical, environmental, and safety issues. Also, the beach provides habitat for several species protected under the ESA in addition to several species of concern identified by the state of North Carolina.

Military training operations at the beach range from daily exercises by 2nd AAVB and Joint Armed Services training to periodic, large-scale training such as the quarterly CAPEX which includes simulated explosives on the beach, inland artillery fire; 2 LCAC; and 10-12 AAV landings. Military use of near and offshore areas within Onslow Bay is critical to meeting training standards and combat readiness.

Onslow beach represents a valuable recreational opportunity, especially for off road recreational vehicles (ORRVs). With the increased proportion of 4 x 4 vehicles among the general population and Base personnel, the number of individuals that drive recreationally on Onslow Beach and the Base as a whole has increased significantly. This has created a condition of incompatible use as ORRVs transit through designated military training areas and nesting habitats of sensitive, declining and/or threatened or endangered species. To ensure the future use of Camp Lejeune's military training areas without threat of regulatory closures or significant operational safety concerns, controls on ORRV access have been implemented. ORRV use aboard the installation is limited to certain sites and uses to ensure compatibility with the training mission, public safety, and the conservation of natural resources (see BO 11017.1f).

OBJECTIVE REC3: Provide mission compatible and safe ORRV access to Onslow Beach.

- **Action 12-08:** *Monitor beach ORRV use.*
- **Action 4-32:** *Enforce BO 11017.1f.*

12.3 Conservation Law Enforcement

The Conservation Law Enforcement Section enforces all conservation laws and administers the hunting, fishing and trapping and the ORRV enforcement programs. The section consists of five to seven officers, a full-time administrative specialist and license agent, and is augmented seasonally by contract non-enforcement employees. Conservation officers work closely with program managers for land and wildlife resources, threatened and endangered species, forestry, and archaeology, and provide enforcement for these programs.

The Conservation Law Enforcement officers enforce safety rules pertaining to participation in natural resources recreation activities. Conservation officers enforce trespassing for any purpose,

theft of government property and vandalism, as well as hunting and fishing regulations. As established in BO 11015.8E, Base Conservation Law Enforcement Officers shall coordinate the selling/issuing of firewood permits and the enforcement of firewood regulations.

Authority to enforce conservation laws on Camp Lejeune is granted by MCO 5090.4 (Conservation Law Enforcement Program), the Base Commanding Officer, the Commanding Officer of MCASNR, and the USFWS. Conservation officers are authorized to enforce any conservation law, federal, state, and local on Camp Lejeune. Conservation officers are further authorized to enforce any law within the enforcement jurisdiction of the USFWS in any location when with a USFWS agent. Prosecution of violators is through the Special Assistant United States Attorney in federal magistrate court or Conservation Hearing Officer in Base court.

MCO 5090.4 requires training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) for officers hired after October 2003. The Natural Resources Police Training (NRPT) course is the recommended course by the USFWS. The 2003 MOA For Cooperative Law Enforcement between the USFWS and USMC sets training minimums for USMC conservation officers as the MOA commissions those conservation officers as USFWS deputy agents. Conservation officers also attend in-service training at various DOD installations annually, as well as specialty environmental law enforcement training by the US Parks Service and US Department of Justice. In addition, MCO 5090.4 and the USFWS MOA list firearms training requirements with which conservation officers must comply. MCO 5090.4 also establishes standards for appropriate firearms and uniforms for conservation enforcement.

OBJECTIVE REC4: Maintain an effective and safe enforcement program integrated with conservation management and the military mission.

- **Action 12-09:** *Send CLEOs to FLETC/NRPT as necessary.*