

Fort Hood

TEEA 2017 Winner: Civic/Community



Army post leads the way in sustainability.

When you think of Fort Hood, what comes to mind? Most people probably think about tanks or helicopters, colossal firing ranges, and training areas. However, would you have thought about the environmental projects that make this Army post a leader in sustainability?

Fort Hood approaches sustainability from many fronts. For example, the post installed new meters to monitor and manage electricity use. At one point, Fort Hood had only three electric meters for the entire installation. Today, it boasts a system that monitors 533 facilities, giving Fort Hood the ability to pinpoint and address high consumption. This system controls heating, ventilation, and air conditioning at 29,161 locations on post.

To continue reducing Fort Hood's energy needs, energy-efficient buildings are in the works. Fort Hood's new medical center is a gold-certified LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) building, which also reduces water use.

In addition to reducing energy consumption, Fort Hood is broadening its energy portfolio by implementing the Army's largest, and first, hybrid renewable energy project. The post estimates that about 50 percent of its energy will come from the 132-acre photovoltaic array and off-site wind turbines once the project is complete.

Conserving water is another of Fort Hood's continuing efforts. One project that reduced water use was an upgrade to the drinking water system, allowing remote control of equipment. This new system helps the post to maintain (and even improve) water quality while minimizing system flushes, saving about 96 million gallons of water each year.

Another project that saves drinking water involved switching a portion of Fort Hood's irrigation system to collected rainwater, saving about 25 million gallons of drinking water each year. These and other projects successfully reduced water use by almost half—from 2,063 million gallons in 2007 to 1,147 million gallons in 2016.

Besides energy and water initiatives, Fort Hood invests in projects that maintain and enhance species and ecosystems on the installation. In 1993 seasonal restrictions were put in place to protect habitat for endangered species in more than one third of the training areas, amounting to protection of 70,151 acres. Because of the success of these projects, Fort Hood no longer needs these training restrictions.

Based on the post's long-standing successes, it makes perfect sense that the Army selected Fort Hood to pilot a waste reduction initiative. To increase the collection of recyclables, the installation made recycling easier by switching to a single-stream program. Fort Hood reduced food waste by sending old baked goods to local pig farmers, sending about 146,000 pounds in just one year. Fort Hood also started a composting program, which collects about 624 tons each year. With a new composting facility planned, the post expects this composted amount to increase.

In 2009, Fort Hood created a partnership with eight surrounding communities to promote environmental sustainability. In one year, the post sponsored 83 community events where residents could receive helpful information on how they can improve the environment.

We can all learn from Fort Hood's desire to improve the community and its lead-by-example philosophy. The Army's nickname for Fort Hood is "The Great Place" and the installation's environmental projects show us how it truly is making itself, and the surrounding communities, greater!