

DEP Recognizes Eglin Air Force Base for 74 Percent Recycling Rate



On July 23, 2014, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection recognized Eglin Air Force Base (Okaloosa County) for recycling over 16,000 tons of waste material to achieve a 74% recycling rate for Fiscal Year 2013. Eglin AFB is a 724 square mile military reservation in the Florida Panhandle that employs over 17, 000 military, civilian and contract employees. The reservation is also home to more than 100 protected and endangered mammals, birds, reptiles and plants.

Eglin operates a Qualified Recycling Program to meet Presidential Executive Orders and Department of Defense mandates for solid waste diversion and pollution prevention. The program began in 1993 with one drop off point for office paper. It now has nearly 1,200 collection points at 400 locations. The center retrieves and ships cardboard, all paper, tin and aluminum cans, plastic, glass, used oil, oil filters, toner cartridges, steel drums and brass ammunition casings. The Recycling Center employs 10 personnel and is totally self-sustaining. Eglin's recycling efforts saved the refuse hauling contract over \$100,000 in refuse disposal costs in Fiscal Year 2013.

To encourage recycling Eglin offers a variety of outreach programs for the base population. There are recycling contests and static displays at every base open house. Earth Day events highlight recycling, and Eglin sponsors "Marsville" annually where fifth grade students from local schools prepare individual recycling and pollution prevention projects for display and visit a hangar on base to build large plastic shelters as if they were on Mars. The concept of living remotely on Mars strongly emphasizes the

need for waste minimization, reuse and recycling. Eglin also observes America Recycles Day in November with static displays at base retail stores and a popular can collection contest.