



COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNITS
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Infantry and Habitats: Creating the Recovery Credit System

In this CESU research and technical assistance project, Texas A&M University and the Department of Defense partnered with private and non-profit organizations in order to meet the needs of army training at Fort Hood while complying with the Endangered Species Act. The project implemented a resource-based case study of land use and endangered species habitat that helped establish the Recovery Credit System.



■ **Soldiers survey burning brush as part of Army training.** While the landscape they look upon provides a diverse setting for army training, it also functions as a habitat for the endangered golden-cheeked warbler. Researchers and scientists worked together to develop and assess the Recovery Credit System that promotes incentive-based conservation partnerships to meet military land use and conservation efforts in compliance with the Endangered Species Act. *(Brian Hays, TAMU)*

The Texas A&M University's Institute of Renewable Natural Resources conducted research with the Department of Defense in order to examine military training needs under the purview of the Endangered Species Act. The interagency project

partnered with private and nonprofit organizations to establish and assess a Recovery Credit System that aimed to offset the temporary effects of infantry training upon endangered species habitats. Researchers determined that a Recovery

Gulf Coast Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

■ Project Partners

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■ Project Reports

*Third Party Evaluation of the Recovery
Credit System Proof of Concept*
(Robertson Consulting Group, Inc.,
March 2010)

■ Project Type

Research

Technical Assistance

Credit System allowed private landowners to develop their property, in contractual agreement with the Department of Defense, to conserve and enhance habitats for endangered golden-cheeked warbler while also allowing military training to continue within compliance of the Endangered Species Act. Recovery Credit System contracts with private landowners ensured the development and conservation of 2,200 acres of golden-cheeked warbler habitat.

A National Model

A third-party group evaluated the study and determined that the Recovery Credit System was a feasible, efficient, and effective federal/non-federal partnership that allowed resource managers to conserve endangered species habitats and provided flexibility that allowed federal agencies to meet their missions and comply with the Endangered Species Act.



■ **On the road to recovery.** Numerous federal and non-federal partners came together to develop the Recovery Credit System to protect the habitat of the golden-cheeked warbler (*Dendroica chrysoparia*) while allowing the Department of Defense to complete Army field training with live ammunition. (Steve Maslowksi/USFWS)



Stepanie Guerra wrote this project spotlight in August 2011. It was part of an education project between Colorado State University and the CESU Network National Office. Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units provide research, technical assistance, and education to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies and their partners. Their broad scope includes the biological, physical, social, cultural, and engineering disciplines needed to address natural and cultural resource management issues at multiple scales and in an ecosystem context. There are seventeen CESUs, each composed of federal agencies, a host university, and partner institutions, which are linked together in a CESU network. For more information, see www.cesu.org or contact Dr. Thomas E. Fish, CESU National Coordinator, at tom_fish@nps.gov.