

## **SECTION 7 OUTDOOR RECREATION MANAGEMENT**

### **7.1 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND OVERALL MANAGEMENT GOALS**

The outdoor recreation program at CSSA addresses consumptive (hunting) and non-consumptive (fishing) natural resource-based recreational activities. The program emphasizes natural resources-based activities, and does not address outdoor activities associated with physical fitness. Recreational opportunities at the installation include fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing. The overall goal of the outdoor recreation program is to allow maximum use of CSSA for natural resources-based activities in a manner that does not interfere with mission activities or impact other program areas, such as rare species management. Providing recreational opportunities provides quality of life benefits to military personnel and their families, which may indirectly enhance military recruitment objectives. In addition, participation in these activities tends to increase natural resources awareness and fosters good stewardship of the land.

### **7.2 PROGRAM STATUS AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

#### **7.2.1 Access for Outdoor Recreation**

In accordance to the Sikes Act, public access to the installation for natural resources-associated outdoor recreation is allowed to the extent that:

- The use is not inconsistent with the needs of fish and wildlife resources; and
- The use is subject to requirements necessary to ensure safety and military security.

CSSA is a closed facility, therefore, access to outdoor recreation areas are extremely restricted. Access to CSSA for outdoor recreation is limited due to safety issues associated with the small arms range in the East Pasture and issues associated with former ranges and historical military activities, as well as to ensure that recreational activities do not interfere with the military mission.

#### **7.2.2 Outdoor Recreation Areas**

Designated outdoor recreation areas at the installation include picnic grounds, hunting and fishing areas, and outdoor-use areas adjacent to on-base residential housing.

Currently, fishing is the only non-consumptive outdoor recreation program at CSSA. Additional future activities may include birding or enhancement of family use areas.

#### **7.2.3 Hunting Program**

Hunting is the primary outdoor recreational activity at CSSA. The installation maintains a hunting plan (Appendix D), which defines the following goals for the program:

- Maintenance of deer population numbers;

- Improvement of the overall health of the deer herd while allowing for more vegetation diversity;
- Improvement of recreational opportunities for installation employees; and
- To provide excess meat to charitable institutions.

The Wildlife Management Committee establishes hunting and management guidelines at CSSA, and also supports:

- Stocking of fish and crawfish ponds;
- Purchase of feed for turkey and quail;
- Maintenance of deer stands;
- Gathering volunteer work crews;
- Supplemental pasture feeding of deer during summer and winter stress periods; and,
- Maintaining water levels in the inner cantonment ponds (“D” & “W” tanks) and wildlife water stations at various inner and outer cantonment locations.

Hunting at CSSA is primarily for native white-tailed deer and exotic axis deer, turkey, dove, and quail. Regulations for hunting white-tailed deer and other game animals at CSSA are consistent with regulations of the State of Texas. Axis deer are not regulated by the State of Texas, but CSSA restricts axis deer hunting to the white-tailed deer season. The entire deer population is confined by 8- to 10-foot security perimeter fence. There are 45 deer stands at the installation (Figure 7.1). The deer stands can be moved to different areas, if necessary.

With the exception of creating a hunting database, all projects associated with the hunting program will be addressed by projects listed in Section 5, Fish and Wildlife Management. Data gathered will be obtained directly from hunters, and will include target game species, size, sex, antler metrics, and age (if possible). The database will track progress throughout the hunting season to meet harvest and carrying capacity goals established from spotlight counts and other census surveys.

#### **7.2.4 Fishing Program**

There is no cohesive fishing program in operation at CSSA, yet there is strong interest in recreational fishing at CSSA ponds. A general policy of catch and release is followed at CSSA. With the exception of creating a fisheries database, all projects associated with improving the fishing program will be addressed by projects listed in Section 5, Fish and Wildlife Management. Data gathered will be obtained from recreational fishing, and include species, size, weight, and sex (if possible). Dates and amounts of stocking activities will be incorporated in the database. The database will help quantify sources and effects of future fish die-offs, and may be linked to hydrological and climate data.

### **7.3 PROJECT AND GOALS SUMMARY**

Table 7.1 lists outdoor recreation projects.