



# Fort Jackson

## Environmental News

### February 2015

#### Required Training Opportunities:

**17-18 March - Environmental Compliance Officer Course (ECOC)** will be held in the Safety Center Classroom, 3240 Sumter Street. To register for the course, contact Pearline Jackson, Environmental Division (ENV), at 751-5011 or [pearline.jackson.civ@mail.mil](mailto:pearline.jackson.civ@mail.mil). Include the attendee's full name, rank, job title, name of unit/activity, telephone number, and e-mail address. This certification is good for three years and is offered bi-monthly. *Note: Walk-ins are welcome, availability permitting.*

**Administrative ECOC** - A shorter electronic ECOC is available for administrative organizations/personnel on Fort Jackson. This certification is good for three years and is available at <http://jackson.armylive.dodlive.mil/files/2014/08/Electronic-Admin-Training-Jan-2015.pdf>. For more information, contact Lisa McKnight, ENV, at 751-5971 or [lisa.a.mcknight11.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:lisa.a.mcknight11.ctr@mail.mil). *Note: It is mandatory that all organizations, including administrative organizations, have a trained primary and alternate ECO.*

**9 April - Hazardous Substance (HS) Management** class will be held in the ENV conference room, 2563 Essayons Way. This 2.5 hour class is required for all personnel who manage hazardous waste (HW) or controlled waste, or have a potential for HW generation or HS violations. The class is an annual requirement offered quarterly and also upon request. Contact Heather Thomas, ENV, at 751-4231 or [heather.s.thomas8.civ@mail.mil](mailto:heather.s.thomas8.civ@mail.mil) to schedule training.

**Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures (SPCC)** training is required annually for all personnel involved in oil handling, transfer, storage, or maintenance of oil equipment. Contact Mark Merritt, ENV, at 751-9511 or [mark.d.merritt6.civ@mail.mil](mailto:mark.d.merritt6.civ@mail.mil) to schedule training.

#### Save-the-Date:

**18 February, 0900-1500 - Shred Day at Fort Jackson Recycling Center.** Bring your confidential papers to be shredded. This is a great step in the prevention of identity theft and helping the planet at the same time by recycling. For more information, call 751-4208.

**18 April - Green Initiative (GI) Day** - This super fun day celebrates Earth Day (22 April), and it is FREE! You don't want to miss the Recycling Regatta!! For more information, call 751-5971, or be on the lookout for future flyers and e-mail notices.

## “Extinction: Lessons From the Past”

One hundred years ago, a twenty-nine year old bird named Martha sat in an enclosure at the Cincinnati Zoo. This bird had lived in captivity her entire life and, during the last four years of her life, had become the last of her kind. In a cage on September 1, 1914, the last known living Passenger Pigeon breathed her last and, with that final breath, the last remaining Passenger Pigeon was gone. The last of a species that numbered nearly 5 billion at the time of European settlement of North America died and the most numerous bird species on the face of the planet was no more. How could a creature with a population that large simply vanish? Worse yet, how could this extinction happen during a period of about 100 years?

Less than four years later, in the same enclosure at the Cincinnati zoo, another bird representing the end of an entire species died. Incas, the last known Carolina Parakeet, fell lifeless and, with him, the only parrot species native to North America was no more. During this same timeframe, many other species were being driven to extinction and animals that were once common were disappearing at an alarming rate. Why were we losing these creatures? What was the driving force behind such tragedy?

During the bulk of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the United States, people were pushing westward and industrial progress never seen before was driving the consumption of natural resources. The land of plenty, the land of untold resources, was being stripped to build more, make more, and have more. Both of these birds were aggressively hunted, but it was habitat destruction that doomed them to the pages of history books. The guns of hunters may have taken out so many, but it was the axe that relegated these wonderful birds to the words of stories from generations now gone.

As a naturalist, I seek to study nature and marvel at the connections that are found there. Whether it is the relationship between predator and prey or the relationships between plants and insects that count on them, the ties that bind in the natural world still amaze me. The strongest tie is the one that binds flora or fauna to habitat. Upsetting that balance even in the smallest way often causes a series of dominos to fall and, ultimately, places great stresses on organisms.

Looking out over the landscape of Fort Jackson, we are home to an endangered bird. The Red-cockaded Woodpecker resides within the piney woods of the installation and is here due to the protection of the longleaf pine habitat afforded by the fort. The reasons for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker's population decline to the point of being listed as endangered are not very different from the causes of the Passenger Pigeon and the Carolina Parakeet becoming extinct. The mass destruction of the open longleaf pine forests of the American southeast had a terribly detrimental effect upon the bird, along with other species that call the forests home. When we manage for the protection and conservation of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, it is the habitat that we seek to manage and protect first.

Across so many military installations, the protection that came along with being isolated from urbanization and industry buffered many sensitive plants and animals from habitat destruction that would have removed them from the landscape. We should take pride in the protection that we afford these fragile organisms. That very protection has not only allowed these organisms to survive, it has provided something that generations of people in the 19<sup>th</sup> century could not see.

How depressing it is to think of these creatures that we've lost to human ignorance and destructive behavior. How I'd like to tell those that stole those creatures from us what they wrought, taking away any chance we would ever have to enjoy Passenger Pigeons and Carolina Parakeets. We will never see the beauty of the birds on the wing and delight in the spectacle of their colors and numbers; but, we have protected things like the Red-cockaded Woodpecker and have given future generations opportunities that were robbed from us. It is our duty to conserve and protect natural resources for our children and grandchildren. It is our duty to instill a sense of stewardship in those that will follow behind us and ensure they understand the value of what we have and, more importantly, the value of what has been lost. We must strive to never allow this to happen again. Because extinction is forever.