International Environmental Management Systems Assessment and Implementation

Topic
U.S. (Army) Military Environmental Management Systems

Background
Sustainable development is an area of great interest to me because it provides a way to develop, change and progress with consideration of the environment, economy and social structure. Since living on three military bases within the last three years, I am interested in learning about the environmental management systems in place at American military bases, specifically the branch of the Army. Development is included within the Army’s environmental management plan. The environmental management system (EMS) approach at Army bases may serve as a model in helping other organizations develop their own EMS plan.

Army Environmental Development
In researching the U.S. Army EMS, it is assumed that the Army progressed through the four levels of development as described in the Environmental Management Tenets article whereby an organization begins, in most cases, at the point of insensitivity to the need for environmental compliance. Perhaps as the Army arrived at a state of awareness of the need for environmental compliance as problems arose from contamination, pollution or external pressure from governmental and non-governmental organizations. In most cases, it is expected that environmental policies and requirements were the significant factor in becoming sensitized to environmental compliance. The Army has reached the stage of enlightenment, as it is expected that its environmental policies require complete compliance with legal requirements. It is most likely, that the Army created the U.S. Army Environmental Center, at this stage. To reach certainty, the Army has a long way until it will

The USAEC, started over twenty-five years ago, is the developer and of the Army EMS. The USAEC Mission includes the following elements:

- Integrate, Coordinate and Oversee Implementation of the Army’s Environmental Programs for the Army Staff
- Provide a Broad Range of Environmental Products and Services to HQDA, MACOMs and Commanders Worldwide
- Provide Leadership, Focus, Direction and Innovative Solutions to the Army’s Future Environmental Challenges
- Develop and Sustain a Value-Based Team of World-Class Environmental Professionals Dedicated and Empowered to Accomplish the Mission
Legal Compliance
The following categories are considered in the EMS of the Army:
- Environmental Compliance
- Conservation Management
- Environmental Considerations and Documentation
- Environmental Restoration
- Pollution Prevention

Performance
In order to demonstrate its management and audit procedures, the Special Programs
Branch provides services which includes: Environmental Reporting Systems
(Environmental Quality Report, Installation Status Report and Environmental Program
Requirements Report) Environmental Compliance Assessment System Program and the
Chesapeake Bay Program Support.

External Communication
The Army demonstrates an open dialogue with local, national and international audiences
with regard to the environmental impact of their activities. For instance, each year the
Army celebrates Earth Day by presenting environmental awards to installations, teams
and individuals for preserving endangered species and conserving natural resources. One
recent award recipient was Fort Jackson. As the Army's large installation, the base was
recognized for its conservation of natural resources as it converted more than 4,000 acres
of land to Longleaf Pine and doubled the number of endangered Red-cockaded
woodpeckers on post. Educational programs, web site information and

Army and Sustainable Development
Army installations are being recognized for their sustainable development practices by
government and non-government organizations. For instance, the Best Manufacturing
Practices (BPM) Center awarded a The Letterkenny Army Depot (LEAD) Recycling
Program with a “Best Practice” title. The base program was established and developed to
recover scrap from waste streams, prevent pollution, and conserve natural resources. The
program has utilized excess buildings and equipment for a successful, award winning
recycling/reuse program generating $360 thousand in annual cost avoidance.

In addition, the Army has initiated discussions with Habitat for Humanity and other
agencies, such as Housing and Urban Development and the Environmental Protection
Agency, to determine the viability of either moving houses scheduled for demolition off
the installations, or deconstructing to salvage building materials. The Army is also
focusing on building deconstruction and reuse of salvaged materials through Habitat for
Humanity's "Restore" initiative, a program that raises funds through the sale of used
construction materials

At Fort McCoy in Wisconsin, the materials from over 73 buildings have been salvaged
through a new program, saving the installation more than 70 percent on demolition and
disposal costs while cutting the amount of landfilled waste 85 percent. Fort McCoy
received the Army's 1993 Outstanding Resource Management Organization Award for their efforts in making the salvage program possible.

According to *Fine Homebuilding Magazine*, in a dismantlement vs. demolition feasibility study, the Army also figured the downside to dismantling. For instance, the Army's study reports that it takes longer to dismantle an old building than it does to raze it; that the job is more labor-intensive and is potentially more hazardous to workers; and that the market for recycled timbers is in its infancy.

Based on the previous examples of sustainable development practices within the Army, it appears as if these are the exception rather than the rule. In order to achieve the level of certainty, the Army must make these practices the rule for all installations world-wide. As a result, the Army will benefit from the incredible amount of resources, time and money saved. The impact of this ‘certainty’ would have a global impact on the environment, economy and communities.

Sources

*Commander’s Guide to Environmental Management* ([internet](http://aec.army.mil/prod/cmdgde/ch_02.htm))

*Army Environmental Portal* ([internet](https://aerp.apgea.army.mil/wdbctx/aerp/aecportal.home))

*Best Manufacturing Practices* ([internet](http://www.bmpcoe.org/bestpractices/internal/lead/lead_11.html))

*Building Salvage Success Story at Fort McCoy*. Dana Finley

*Good Defenses Make Good Lumber, Fine Homebuilding Magazine*