

Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS)

Rapid population growth in the Southeastern United States is resulting in increasing urban sprawl. The conversion of land into developed communities has resulted in the loss of agricultural land, critical wildlife habitats, and working landscapes such as farms, forests, and fisheries. Sprawl has also increased encroachment on military installations, hindering the military's ability to train effectively. It is essential for communities to engage in the sustainable use of natural resources to balance and optimize the health and safety of the environment and surrounding communities, while promoting economic development and military readiness.

In 2005, state environmental and natural resources officials from across the Southeast partnered with the Department of Defense and other federal agencies to form SERPPAS. The mission of SERPPAS is to seize opportunities and solve problems in value-adding ways that provide mutual and multiple benefits to the partners, sustain the individual and collective missions of partner organizations, and secure the future for all the partners, the region, and the nation. SERPPAS works to prevent encroachment around military lands, encourage compatible resource-use decisions, and improve coordination among regions, states, communities, and military services. Partners include:

- Alabama
- Florida
- Georgia
- Mississippi
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Office of the Secretary of Defense and Military Services
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- U.S. Geological Survey

Non-governmental organizations and others are also involved in the implementation of specific projects.

SERPPAS focuses on interdependent resource sustainability and protection of ecosystems across boundaries. To accomplish this, members identified a number of projects to address the following key areas/issues:

- Building working relationships among states, communities and the military to improve conservation, the economy, quality of life, sustainability, and military readiness
- Promoting compatible use of military, agricultural, and forestry lands
- Mapping resources and identifying interested stakeholders
- Examining policy and promoting projects to support the mission of SERPPAS, including maintaining working lands
- Promoting resource use (land, air, water, and the frequency spectrum) that is both compatible with and complementary to military, community, and environmental requirements
- Preserving the longleaf pine habitat, including the protection of species – such as the red-cockaded woodpecker and the gopher tortoise – forests, farmlands, and recreational areas



SERPPAS combines an effective working relationship with a good Geographic Information Systems (GIS) map to result in multiple and mutual benefits for all partners. For more information about SERPPAS, visit: www.SERPPAS.org.