

2026 SERPPAS Principals Meeting

20th Anniversary

April 28 – 29, 2026

Pinehurst, NC

AGENDA

Meeting Purpose

To honor and reflect on the 20th anniversary of the partnership and consider ways we are and will continue to address the important challenges and opportunities affecting national defense, natural resources, working lands, and installation resilience in the Southeast.

Meeting Objectives

1. To remember and honor the breadth and depth of the impact SERPPAS has had in its first 20 years and acknowledge and affirm the values and culture of the Partnership.
2. To acknowledge the approved and newly revised SERPPAS Strategic Plan.
3. To identify significant future military and partner challenges/opportunities and ways the SERPPAS Partnership is, or could be, addressing them.

Meeting Outcomes

Principals are clear on the value, purpose, and path forward for the Partnership and feel they have influenced the direction for the years ahead. Principals have affirmed interest in dedicating their agency's time and resources in support of exploring one or more of the future challenges.

Monday, April 27, 2026 - Travel Day & Welcome Reception

1730 – 1930 Welcome Reception

Location: The Paddock at Red's Corner, 901 SW Broad Street, Southern Pines, NC 28387

Tuesday, April 28, 2026 – Day 1 Business Meeting and Mobile Meeting

0800 – 0815 Welcome & Process Review

DOW Principal Co-Chair, Ms. Kristin Thomasgard, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of War for Environmental Management & Restoration, Office of the Assistant Secretary of War (Energy, Installations and Environment)

State Principal Co-Chair, Mr. John Nicholson, Chief Deputy Secretary, North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality

Mr. Bob Farren, Director of Golf Course Management and Grounds, Pinehurst Resort and Country Club

0815 – 0905 Honoring SERPPAS History – 20 Years of Partnership

Moderator: Dr. Roel Lopez, Director, Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute

Honorable Alex Beehler, Independent Consultant, former Acting Deputy Under Secretary Defense (I&E)

Mr. Bill Ross, Retired (Former Secretary of North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources)



Southeast Regional Partnership for
Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS)



Purpose: To remember and honor the breadth and depth of the impact SERPPAS has had in its first 20 years and acknowledge and affirm the values and culture of the Partnership.

0905 – 1000 SERPPAS Today

Ms. Addie Thornton, SERPPAS Coordinator

Ms. Shannon Deaton, Division Chief of Habitat Conservation, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

Mr. Wade Hinton, Assistant Secretary of State, State of Mississippi

Principals Round Robin

Purpose: To paint the picture of the partnership today, using the newly revised Strategic Plan, and invite Principals to weigh in on what resonates the strongest for them.

Principals Engagement: What part of the plan most resonates with you or your agency?

1000 – 10:15 State Mission Brief – North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

Mr. Kyle Briggs, Executive Director, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

Purpose: To feature the mission of a State Partner and the progress being made in partnership with the military.

1015 – 1035 Refreshment Break

1035 – 1105 North Carolina Sandhills – Bringing Together Conservation and The Army

Mr. Jeff Marcus, The Nature Conservancy

Mr. Pete Campbell, Retired USFWS, Former Executive Director of the Fort Bragg Regional Land Use Advisory Commission (RLUAC)

Honorable Tad Davis, Retired Garrison Commander, Fort Bragg, former PDASD(EI&E)

Purpose: To help tell the story of the Army's involvement in the conservation of the longleaf pine ecosystem, which inspired SERPPAS and has resulted in many conservation successes.

1105 – 1135 Military Mission Brief – Fort Bragg

Colonel K. Chad Mixon, Garrison Commander Fort Bragg, or **Ms. Catherine Miller**, Deputy Garrison Commander, Fort Bragg

Purpose: To feature the mission of the focal installation and highlight encroachment challenges and partnerships.

1135 – 1155 Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape – Supporting the Military Mission through Collective Action

Mr. Chris Baillie, Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape

Purpose: To provide an overview of the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape partnership and its support of the military mission across the landscape.

1155 – 1200 Staging for the Mobile Meeting

Mr. Jeff Marcus, The Nature Conservancy

Purpose: To provide the context and content for the mobile meeting.

1200 – 1245 Lunch

1300 Buses depart for Mobile Meeting



1330 - 1630 **Mobile Meeting, Paint Hill Farm**

Purpose:

- Showcase an on-the-ground project where the partners have worked together to protect the military mission – Readiness and Recreation project supporting Fort Bragg
- Learn more about the property, the State Park, and topics important to the sandhills related to encroachment concerns and land conservation around Fort Bragg, fire management, and species management
- Allow time for connections, learning, and engagement with local partners and partners active in the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape

1700 **Buses return from Mobile Meeting**

1830 – 2030 **Dinner at The Pine Crest Inn**

Location: 50 Dogwood Rd. Pinehurst, NC 28374

Purpose: To allow space for attendees to connect and build relationships, while celebrating important milestones marked by the 20th anniversary of the partnership.

Wednesday, April 29, 2026 – Day 2 Business Meeting

0800 – 0815 **Welcome & Reflections**

Ms. Kristin Thomasgard, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of War for Environmental Management & Restoration, Office of the Assistant Secretary of War (Energy, Installations and Environment)

Mr. John Nicholson, Chief Deputy Secretary, North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality

0815 – 0820 **Opportunity Ahead: Shedding Light on Challenges Ripe for SERPPAS Engagement**

Ms. Erica Rohr, DOW Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program

Purpose: To provide context for the rest of the morning, raising awareness on regional needs or challenges that provide opportunities for SERPPAS to be involved.

0820 – 0855 **Military Training Operations: Changing Needs and a Partnership Approach**

Colonel Gregory Pace, Deputy Commander, MCIEAST-MCB Camp Lejeune

Mr. Dale Kruse, MCIEAST

Purpose: To socialize the Marine Corps Installations East Maritime Center of Excellence (MCoE) construct across SERPPAS agencies for awareness and support to create distributed training opportunities in the Southeast US.

Background: The Marine Corps is a naval expeditionary warfighting organization that is modernizing at a time when the character of war is shifting rapidly. As II Marine Expeditionary Force and other MCIEAST tenant commands modernize, supporting Distributed Operations and providing waterborne training locations with access to existing Marine Corps range and training area complexes and public trust waterways are crucial to supporting this training. The MCoE capitalizes on existing USMC ranges and training areas within the region and develops opportunities on other DOW and federal and state-owned properties. SERPPAS support of this distributed training emphasizes the value of these partnerships and the benefit that public lands provide to national security, and underscores how SERPPAS can continue to accomplish its mission to sustain and advance mission-compatible landscapes essential to military readiness in the Southeast.

Principals Engagement:

- How do the other military services anticipate training or testing operations to change across the landscape that would be important for SERPPAS partners to be aware of?



0855 – 0950 Working Forests Under Threat

Moderator: Mr. Johnny Sabo, State Forester and Director, Georgia Forestry Commission

Mr. Deon Nelson, Perimeter Solutions, formerly with the National Alliance of Forest Owners

Ms. Jennifer Oelke-Farley, DOW Natural Resources Program

Ms. Laura Calandrella, Executive Director, Keeping Forests

Purpose: To raise awareness of this issue, the impacts to defense compatible landscapes in the Southeast, and to understand Principals' willingness to support exploring ways SERPPAS might address.

Background: Declining forest product markets across the Southeast are driving mill closures, reducing economic opportunities for landowners, and leaving working forests increasingly vulnerable to development. As forestlands are converted or poorly managed, the Department of War loses compatible buffer lands essential for training and testing, states face economic and land stewardship challenges, and federal partners confront growing risks to listed species, ecosystem services, and sustainable timber supply. These pressures are further complicated by emerging global regulations, shifting supply chains, and increasing natural disasters. This session will highlight the shared risks of declining markets and explore opportunities for SERPPAS partners to influence solutions. Potential strategies include advancing new markets such as mass timber, bioenergy, and sustainable aviation fuel; prioritizing conservation around mills, military buffers, and private lands; and leveraging tools such as the SERPPAS Good Map to identify critical overlap with Sentinel Landscapes. By elevating this issue to the SERPPAS Principals, partners can align around a vision that sustains working forests, strengthens regional economies, safeguards military readiness, and delivers lasting conservation outcomes.

Principals Engagement:

- *What might a role for SERPPAS be in addressing this challenge?*
- *Any thoughts on how SERPPAS might support actions being taken by partners to address the challenge?*
- *Would your agency support SERPPAS exploring how the partnership could add value to addressing this issue?*

0950 – 1010 Refreshment Break

1010 – 1110 Linking Landscapes, Readiness, and Wildlife: A Regional Corridor Concept

Moderator: Mr. Buck MacLaughlin, Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute

Ms. Mallory Dimmit, Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation

Mr. Chuck Flink, Director, NCSU Pappas Program

Mr. Josh Daskin, NatureServe

Ms. Kelly Homan, Auburn University

Purpose: This session will help us learn from Florida and other's on the benefits of connected landscapes, engage Principals in dialogue around the concept, and take the pulse on how supportive SERPPAS leadership would be to exploring the idea further.

Background: The idea of connectivity of the landscape at scale has been a goal for many states in the Southeast and is identified as an objective in the SERPPAS Strategic Plan. Wildlife corridors facilitate movement and reduce isolation of populations while also allowing for viable home ranges, reducing human-wildlife conflicts, and allowing for resilient pathways in a changing and shifting environment. For example, the Florida Wildlife Corridor is a statewide network of terrestrial and aquatic areas making up 18 million acres that support both wildlife and people and is anchored by two Sentinel Landscapes. Most states in the southeast have also begun to include the development of wildlife corridors into their State Wildlife Action Plans. They typically identify high-quality habitat for priority species or biologically rich areas that are



currently or projected to be at risk of fragmentation. Alignment of landscape-scale planning and funding with the goals of each state's corridor, along with existing designated Sentinel Landscapes, Longleaf Implementation Team areas, South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative State Implementation Teams, and other SERPPAS priority landscapes, opens the possibility to establish a landscape in the southeast that has the capacity to withstand future changes while supporting the needs of local landowners, communities and national defense.

Principal's Engagement:

- *What are SERPPAS Partners already doing related to wildlife corridors?*
- *Do you think SERPPAS should have a role in pursuing the creation of a regional wildlife corridor?*
- *What makes pursuing a regional corridor an opportunity?*
- *How relevant is this idea to your agency?*
- *Is your agency addressing it in some way now?*

1110 – 1155 Visualizing Connections

Purpose: To visualize the value of the connections regional corridors might make, especially relative to the 3 topics just highlighted. The point is not to think about where corridors might be on the map as much as to more deeply understand the value, challenges, and opportunities of the concept and the possible SERPPAS role. A regional corridor could:

- Promote working landscapes
- Protect DOW test and training areas
- Assure threatened species are cared for
- Provide targeted recreation access
- Benefit from the use of Sentinel Landscapes as anchors
- Get ahead of the development/fragmentation pressures occurring throughout the SE

Principals Engagement:

- *What are the challenges and opportunities of pursuing a regional corridor for the above benefits?*
- *What are the important elements of a valuable corridor to consider?*

1150 - 1200 Closing Remarks

SERPPAS Principal Co-Chairs

Lunch is served immediately after for those who opted-in.

