

# Think tank studies military encroachment

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A Rand Corp. study found the U.S. Defense Department's effort to provide land buffers near its bases is effective in relieving "encroachment" pressures.

Department officials asked the non-profit research organization to assess the effectiveness of its Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative created in 2003 to assist military bases with encroachment issues that threaten their overall readiness.

Encroachment refers to factors such as suburban sprawl, complaints of noise and air pollution, threatened and endangered species, competition for air space and radio frequency, and water quality and supply.

"As a whole, the Defense Department's attempts to remedy this problem have proved beneficial to the military, the environment, and the overall quality of life of these communities," said Beth Lachman, a Rand research analyst. "However, more can and should be done in terms of funding and planning to expedite the process before the opportunity to buffer these surrounding lands is lost."

The Rand study focused on six U.S. military bases: Eglin Air Force Base and Naval Air Station in Florida; Fort Carson in Colorado; Fort Stewart in Georgia; South Carolina's Marine Corps Air Station and the Naval Air Station Fallon in Nevada.

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