

Military base among last habitat for butterflies

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An undeveloped stretch of native prairie in south Puget Sound offers one of the few habitats in the world where a two-inch colorful checkered butterfly thrives. It also happens to be the main artillery impact range for Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

The Army's Stryker combat brigade and other troops regularly practice military maneuvers and live-fire training on acres of scenic, open grassland where a small population of Taylor's checkerspot butterfly feed on nectar of native blooms, mate and lay eggs.

The butterfly's listing as a federal endangered species last fall has the potential to cause major restrictions on training.

That has the Army working to boost the numbers of butterflies, once found at more than 70 sites in Puget Sound, Oregon and British Columbia but are now reduced to 14 sites.

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