



RCW Management at Ft. Stewart



Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) Management at Fort Stewart

Integrating Readiness and Conservation

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Report Documentation Page

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RCW Management at Ft. Stewart



Important Terms

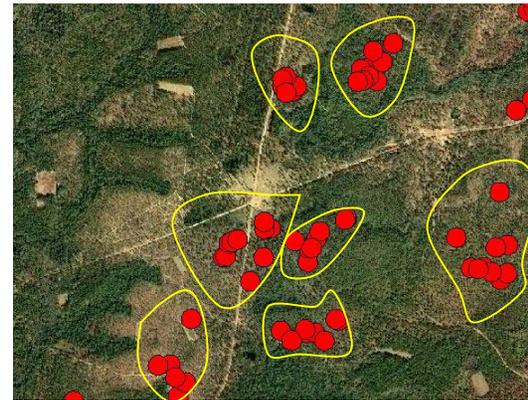
RCW – Red-cockaded woodpecker

Group – A family of RCWs, usually 2-5 birds



Potential Breeding Group (PBG) – A group of 2 or more RCWs

Cluster – The aggregation of cavity trees where an RCW group roosts each evening



Recruitment Cluster – A cluster created with artificial cavities

Supplemental recruitment cluster (SRC) – A cluster with no training restrictions



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RCW Biology / Ecology

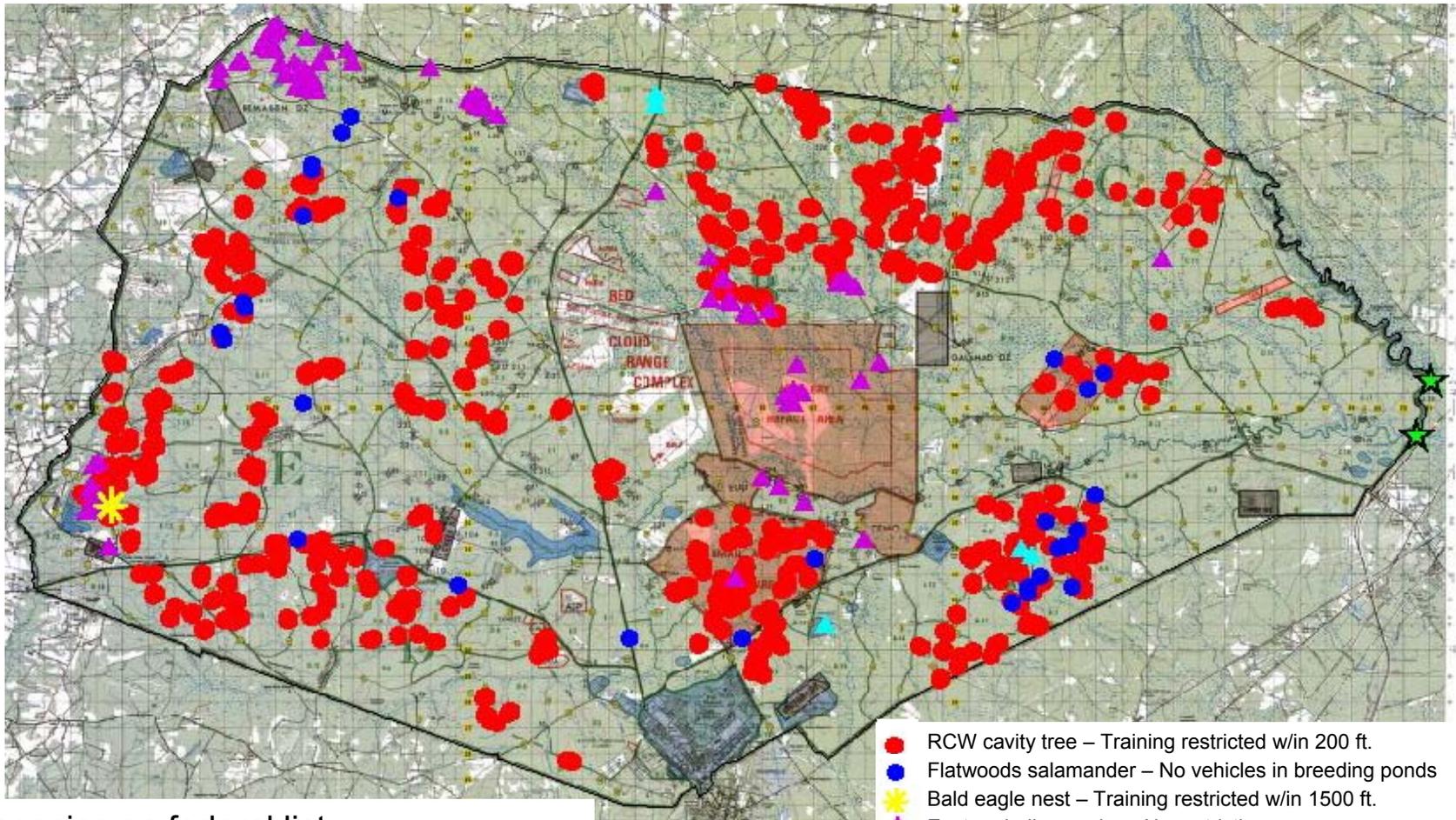
- Non-migratory
- Lasting pair bonds
- Long-lived
- Cooperative breeders
 - Only 1 breeding female per group / cluster
 - Male offspring may disperse or stay as “helpers”
- Excavates cavities in **live** pine trees
 - 80 years or older
 - Open landscape, maintained by frequent growing-season fire
 - Requires 120-300 acres of pine forest for foraging w/in ½ mile of cluster



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Threatened & Endangered Species Distribution



- RCW cavity tree – Training restricted w/in 200 ft.
- Flatwoods salamander – No vehicles in breeding ponds
- ★ Bald eagle nest – Training restricted w/in 1500 ft.
- ▲ Eastern indigo snake – No restrictions
- ▲ Wood stork – No restrictions
- ★ Shortnose sturgeon – No restrictions

- 6 species on federal list
- Essential recovery population for RCW



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RCW habitat requirements are very mission compatible



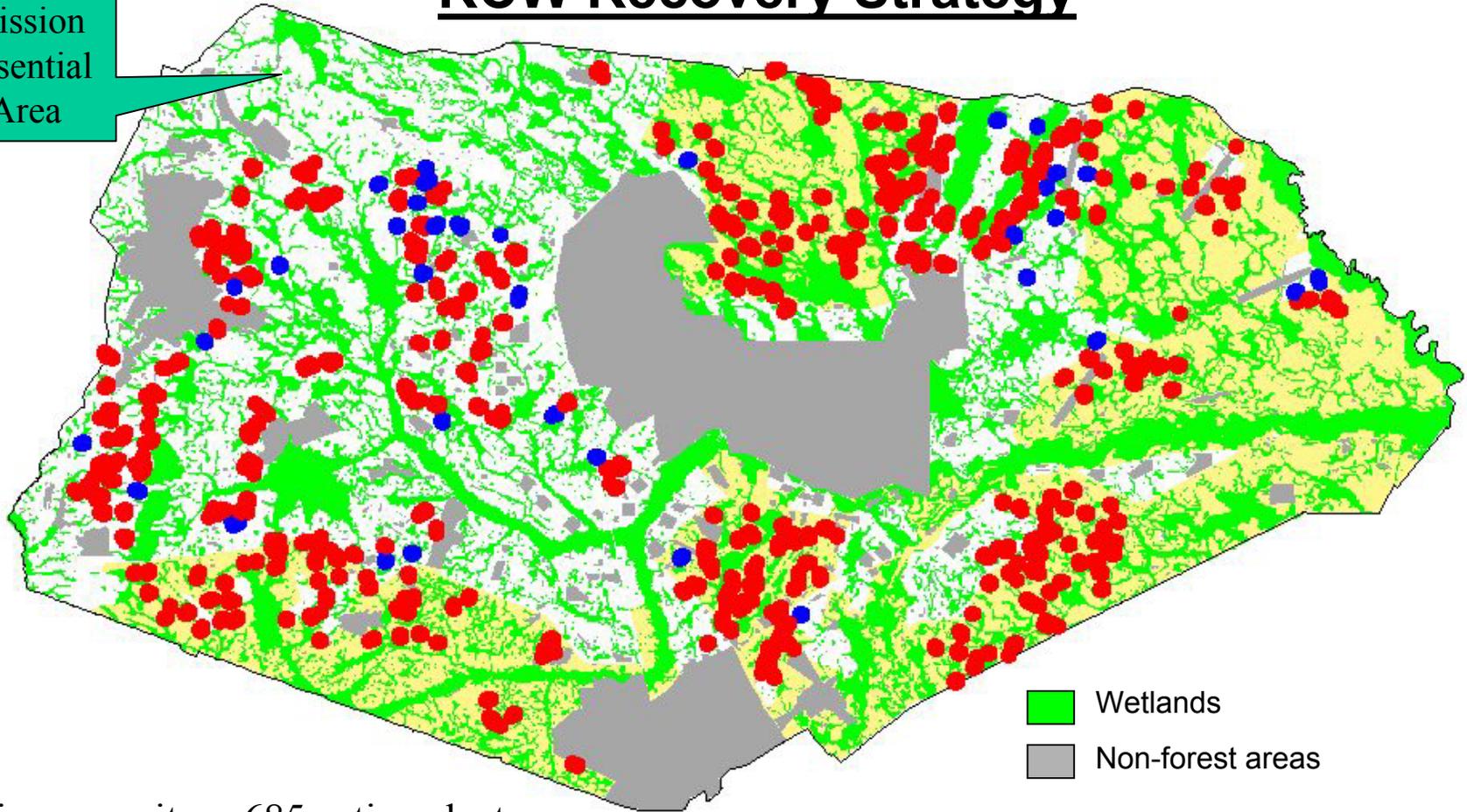


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RCW Recovery Strategy

Mission Essential Area



-  Wetlands
-  Non-forest areas
-  Marked RCW trees
-  Unmarked RCW trees – NO RESTRICTIONS

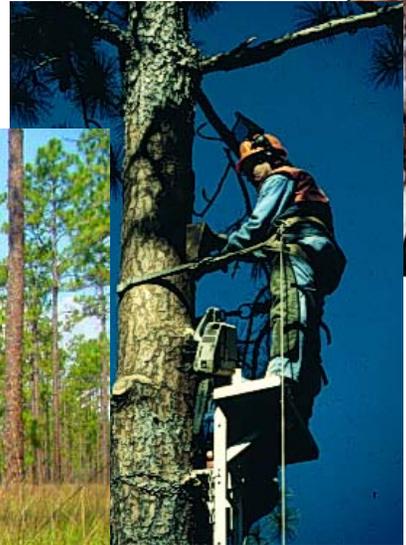
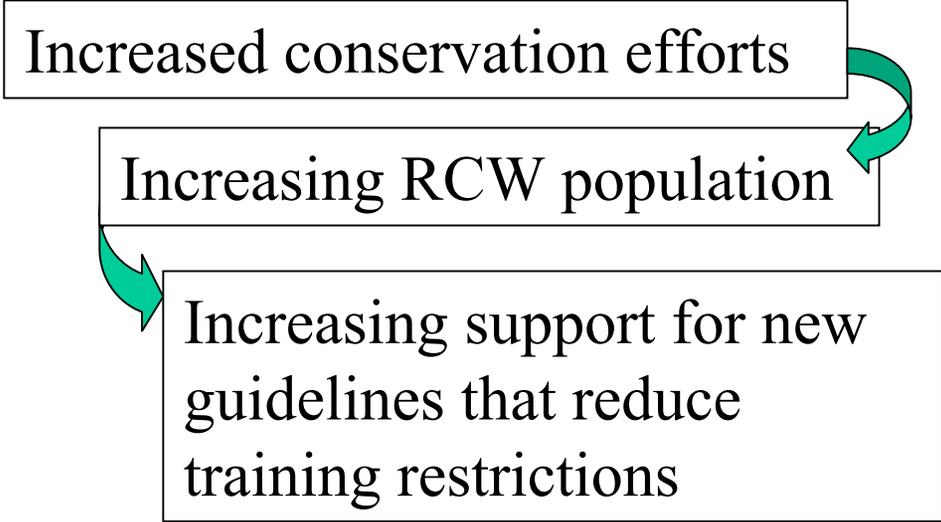
- Carrying capacity = 685 active clusters
- Recovery = 350 PBGs = 400 active clusters
- No restrictions on new clusters in mission essential areas



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RCW Recovery = Relief from Training Restrictions





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Integrating “Single Species” and “Ecosystem “ Concepts

- ESA purposes are to provide for conservation of **both** :
 - threatened and endangered **species** (TES) and...
 - the **ecosystems** upon which TES depend
- Manage ecosystems on a landscape scale
 - Prescribed fire
 - Longleaf / wiregrass restoration
- Address single species requirements as needed
 - Artificial cavities
 - Translocation



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Prescribed burn every 1-3 years on a landscape scale



Protect RCW cavity trees to prevent accidental ignition

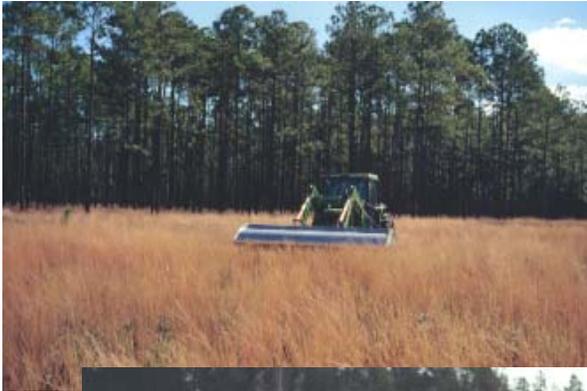




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Wiregrass Restoration





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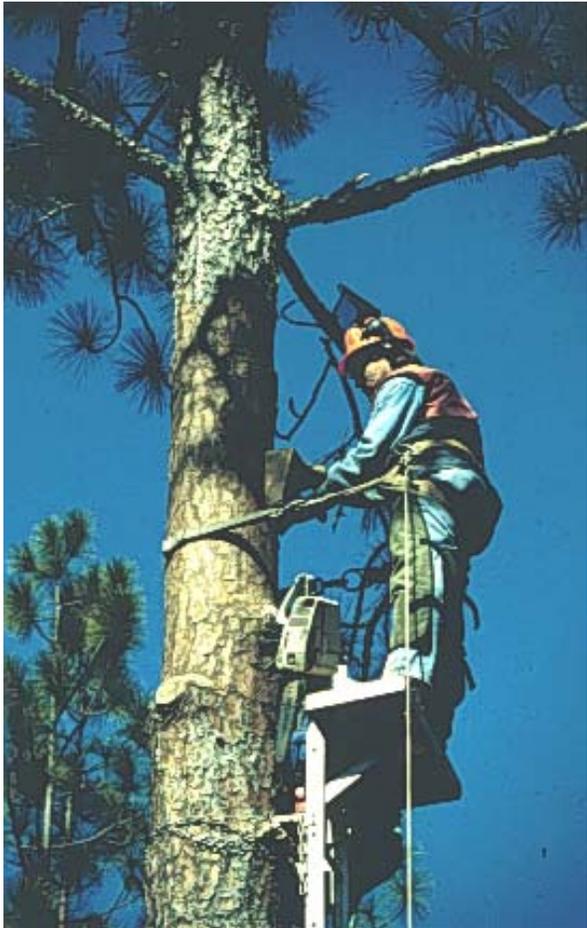


Artificial nest boxes have long been recognized as an essential tool for managing cavity-nesting birds





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- 1192 artificial cavities currently in place
- 555 active



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Translocation

- Translocation of juvenile RCWs within the installation helps accelerate population growth



- Translocation to other forests helps stabilize critically small populations
- 93 RCWs exported since 1996

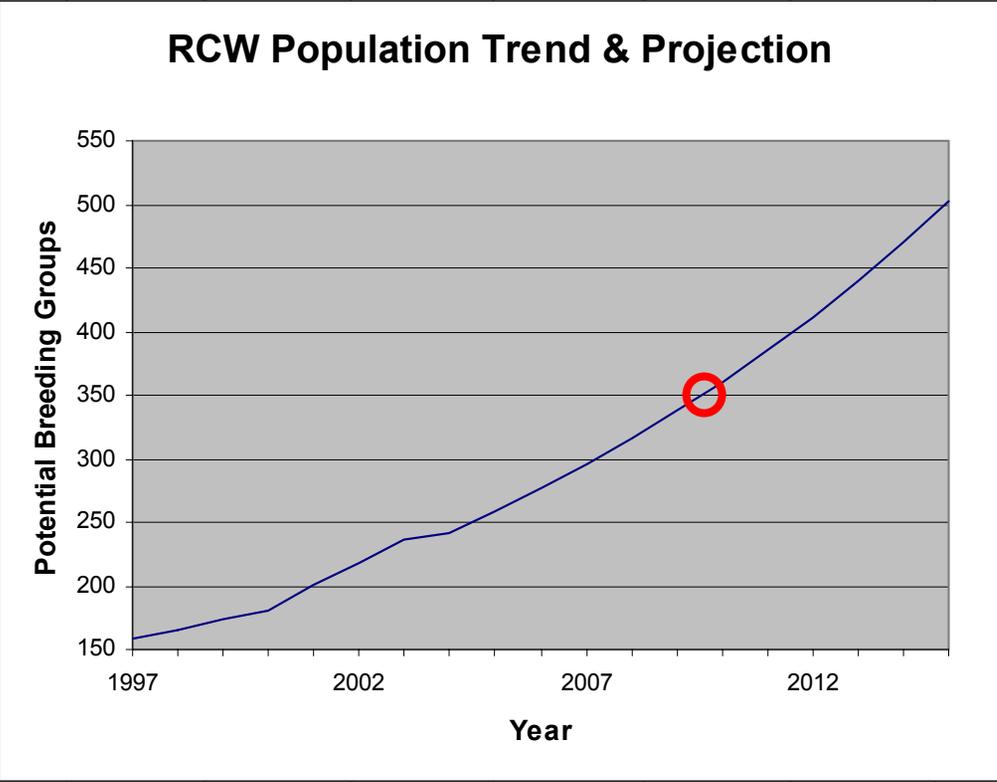


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Population growth in response to proactive management

Year	# Potential Breeding Groups	
1997	158	
1998	165	
1999	174	
2000	181	
2001	201	
2002	217	
2003	236	
2004	242	
2005	259	*
2006	276	*
2007	295	*
2008	316	*
2009	337	*
2010	360	*
2011	385	*
2012	412	*
2013	440	*
2014	470	*
2015	502	*



* - Number of potential pairs projected based on average annual increase in previous 5 years

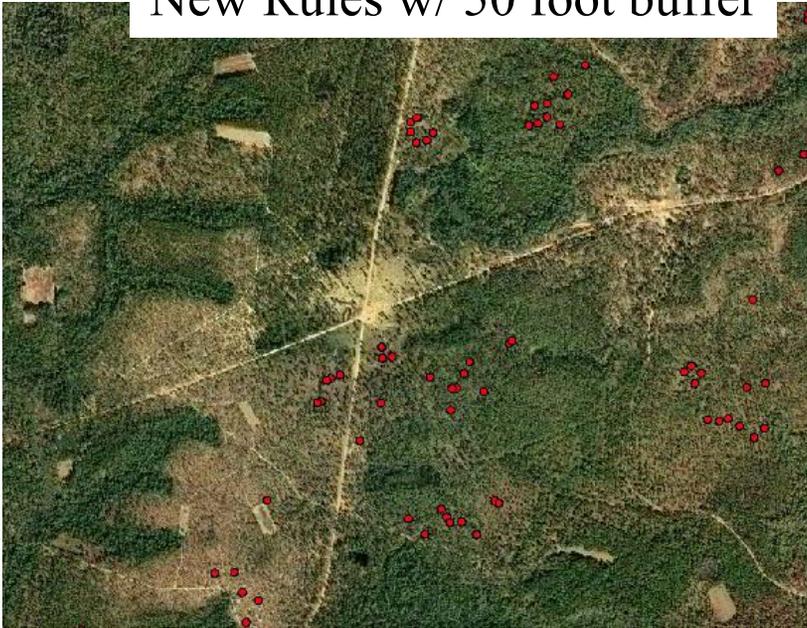


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Training Restrictions Reduced

New Rules w/ 50 foot buffer



Old Rules w/ 200 foot buffer



- 1996 RCW Guidelines significantly reduced training restrictions in existing clusters
- Over 87,000 acres of maneuver land set aside as “mission essential”
 - ✓ **No** training restrictions in new clusters that become established in these areas
 - ✓ Since 2001, RCWs have moved into 37 unprotected clusters



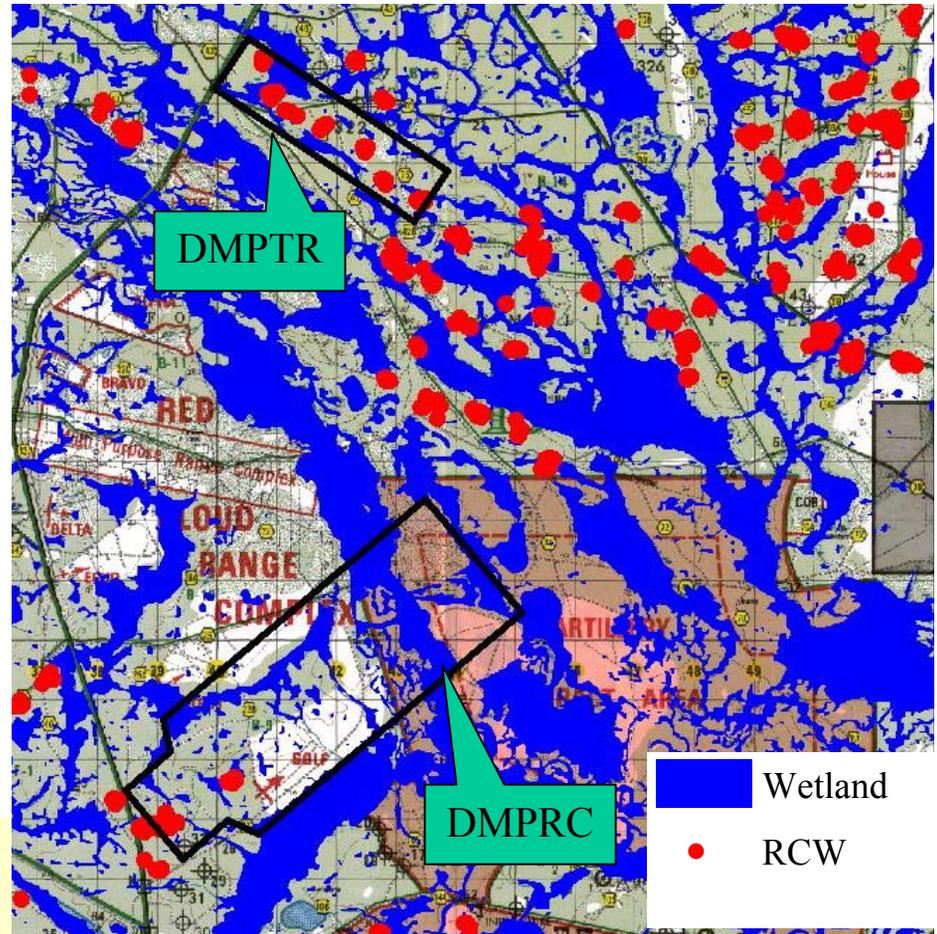
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Project Site Selection

More RCWs = More Flexibility

- DMPTR and DMPRC will provide state of the art live fire facilities for armor and mech infantry
- Siting consolidated with similar facilities
 - ✓ More efficient
 - ✓ Minimize conflict with maneuver
 - ✓ Preserve options for future
- Siting as shown impacts:
 - ✓ 8 RCW clusters
 - ✓ over 100 acres of wetland
- COE and FWS are supportive because:
 - ✓ our wetland bank mitigates wetland losses
 - ✓ our RCW population has increased by 114 clusters and is continuing to grow



**★ Projects are on track for FY 07 and 08 ...
planning and proactive management pays !!**



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The Way Ahead - ACUB Partnerships Will Help Ensure Sustainability

