

Directorate of Public Works-Environmental

News Release
October 19, 2006



Media Inquires: Christine Luciano
DPW ENV Outreach Coordinator
Phone: 254-286-6664

First Army installation in Texas recognized as a Tree City USA

By Christine Luciano



Fort Hood became the first Army installation in Texas to be recognized a Tree City U.S.A. by The National Arbor Day Foundation at a ceremony at the Marvin Leath Visitor Center.

“It is an honor that the Texas Forest Service and the National Arbor Day Foundation has recognized Fort Hood’s commitment to providing and caring for trees as a vital component of this place we call home,” Garrison Commander Col. Victoria Bruzese said during the ceremony.

“This Tree City recognition gives us the chance to reflect on the many benefits of the trees around us and their significance to our environment, our community, our Soldiers, and their families,” she added.

Fort Hood Garrison Commander Col. Victoria Bruzese speaks about Fort Hood's recognition a Tree City U.S.A community.
Photo by: Michelle Wallace, FHFH Communications Manager

Two years ago, Col. Bruzese came to Fort Hood and challenged the Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division to make the installation a Tree City U.S.A.

Acting on Bruzese’s challenge, Laura Sanchez, DPW’s Natural Resources Agronomist approached the Texas Forest Service in March 2005 and worked with the agency to help Fort Hood become recognized as a Tree City USA.

Sanchez worked with different departments throughout the installation to meet Tree City’s four standards.

“The Natural Resources Branch organized a Tree Board made up of individuals throughout the installation who were involved in the tree management process and the responsibility of tree care,” Sanchez said. The Tree City standards also require a community tree ordinance, an Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation signed by the Garrison Commander, and implementation of a community forestry program.

“This is quite an honor for Fort Hood,” Eric Copeland, Texas Forest Service regional forester, said. “Texas is a big state with 22 million people with over 1500 communities. Out of those communities only 56 are Tree City U.S.A. communities.”

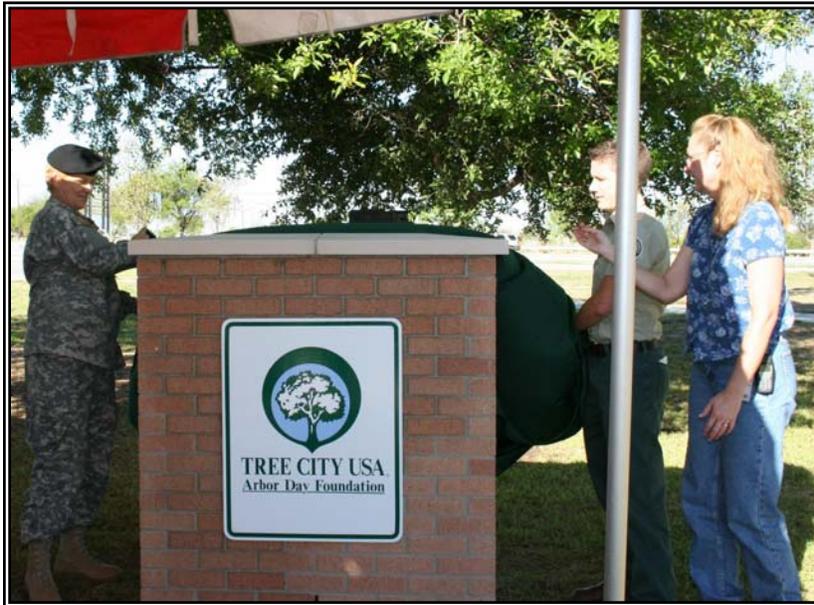
“There are several Air Force bases in Texas that have been recognized as tree cities, but Fort Hood is the first Army installation in Texas and has a population larger than all of these Tree City Air Force bases combined,” Copeland said.

Copeland presented Bruzese and Sanchez with a plaque recognizing the installation as a Tree City U.S.A.

Traditionally recipients of the Tree City U.S.A award also plant a tree, but because of the lack of rain, Bruzese made a promise to plant a tree on Earth Day.

“Fort Hood applauds the Texas Forest Service and the National Arbor Day Foundation for the great work they do in their nationwide effort in urban forestry,” Bruzese said. “And I would like to thank all the Fort Hood personnel who contributed to this project and helped us to achieve this wonderful recognition.”

“Fort Hood’s recognition was made possible through the assistance and cooperation of many partners, supports, and volunteers to include DPW Environmental, DPW Maintenance, and DPW Engineering, Fort Hood Family Housing, Sportsmen’s Center, BLORA, Courses of Clear Creek, and the Fort Hood campuses of Central Texas College and Killeen ISD,” Roderick Chisholm, Director of DPW, said.



Garrison Commander Col. Victoria Bruzese, Texas Forest Service Regional Forester Eric Copeland, and DPW’s Natural Resources Agronomist Laura Sanchez unveiled the Tree City monument located in front of the Marvin Leath Visitor Center.
Photo by: Michelle Wallace, FHFH Communications Manager

Copeland, Col. Bruzese, and Sanchez then unveiled the Tree City U.S.A monument located in front of the Marvin Leath Visitor Center.

“This Tree City U.S.A monument will be a visible reminder of the installation’s commitment to conservation, urban forestry, and natural resources,” said Chisholm.

The Tree City U.S.A. program is sponsored by The National Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters, the USDA Forest Service, and the Urban and Community Forestry Program.

The Tree City U.S.A. Ceremony was also the setting for the signing of the Installation Natural Resource Management Plan.

“Every Army installation is required to develop an INRMP, and it must be coordinated and accepted by the state’s natural resource agency and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,” John Cornelius, Chief of Natural Resources, said. “The INRMP signing is a culmination of 7 years of effort to get Fort Hood to the point where all parties are prepared to sign.”

“The Tree City U.S.A. recognition and INRMP signing are both examples of Fort Hood’s commitment to the environment and to the state of Texas,” Bruzese said.