

Sustainability crucial to mission accomplishment now and in the future

by DECAM

Each person has an affect on how the earth's resources are used. The impact of daily living and operational requirements on the earth is substantial and rapidly increasing as the population of Fort Carson and beyond continues to grow.

In fall 2002, Fort Carson set out on a path of sustainability, which is a way of living and operating with a consideration for how the installation impacts the region and ultimately the world. During the first annual sustainability conference in 2002, stakeholders from Fort Carson and around the Pikes Peak Region gathered to develop 25-year goals to sustain Fort Carson and the region into the future.

The sustainability goals developed address such issues as reducing energy use and researching renewable energy sources; conserving water; ensuring purchases support sustainability; reducing automobile dependency; reducing air pollution and waste generation; ensuring training ranges can continue to support military training; building more environmentally-friendly facilities; and how Fort Carson can integrate more successfully with the local community.

For Fort Carson, sustainability means whatever it takes to ensure resources are used in a manner that does not jeopardize future missions. That mission includes well-being, as it relates to Soldiers and families; society, as it relates to the community that supports the installation; nature; and the economy. All four areas are equally important to overall sustainability:

Nature: Without continuing excellent natural resources, Fort Carson can't meet its mission or provide a healthy place for families to live and Soldiers to train.

Society: Fort Carson is working with stakeholders who represent diverse interests and organizations of the community to ensure the region accommodates the needs of everyone.

Economy: Efforts to purchase locally and make sound procurement decisions that support the economy have been made through the sustainability program.

Well-being: Fort Carson is concerned about its Soldiers, their families and the people who work on the installation and wants to ensure they have the resources they need to be happy and healthy.

There are a number of benefits to having a sustainable Fort Carson. Operating sustainably:

- Facilitates long-term mission accomplishment.
- Optimizes military training.

- Provides for the well-being of Soldiers and families.
- Minimizes or eliminates negative impacts from Fort Carson operations.
- Provides mutually beneficial relationship with local communities, without which Fort Carson could not succeed.
- Aides in national security.
- It is ultimately the right thing to do.

Hand-in-hand with sustainability efforts is the development of a post-wide Sustainability Environmental Management System. The SEMS is a set of management processes and procedures that will allow organizations and units to analyze, control and reduce the negative impacts their activities have on the sustainability of the environment, the economy, society and the well-being of Soldiers and their families. Once the negative impacts of activities have been determined, initiatives will be put in place to achieve greater sustainability in those areas.

To get an idea of how an individual can impact the earth, log on to <http://www.myfootprint.org>. The website has a short ecological footprint quiz that shows how much land and water resources each person uses by how they consume products, dispose of waste and what method of transportation they use.

For more information about sustainability or SEMS efforts, contact the sustainability planner at 526-9777.