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**Plan for Training Ranges Safeguards the Environment
and Enables Restoration Efforts**

PITI, Guam – The Navy and Marine Corps on Guam reiterated today the plan for the live-fire training range complex at Northwest Field on Andersen Air Force Base (AAFB) includes strict measures to protect cultural and natural resources and to restore 1,000 acres of land on Guam.

On Aug. 25 (ChST), Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Pacific awarded a \$78 million firm-fixed-price contract to Black Construction Corp., a Guam-based company, for the design and construction of the live-fire training range complex on 700 acres of Department of Defense (DoD) property at Northwest Field.

The range complex is to include multiple live-fire training ranges and supporting structures. This project also provides for the rehabilitation and widening of Route 3A from Potts Junction to the entry control point of the range complex.

“Following extensive work to meet the DoD mission, while focusing on responsible use of natural resources and protection of cultural resources, the Marine Corps is pleased to see this contract awarded,” said Officer in Charge of Marine Corps Activity Guam (MCAG) Col. Brent Bien. “We are committed to Guam, and our forward presence here will play an essential role in strengthening the military’s ability to maintain regional security and protect the nation’s interests in the Pacific.”

With the July 2017 favorable biological opinion for the Marine Corps relocation written in consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife, the Department of the Navy (DoN) is committed to restoration efforts focusing on recovery habitats for threatened and endangered species. To satisfy this commitment, the Navy has agreed to restore an acre of land for every acre that is to be developed. The landscape-level measures are designed to return the area to its previous state before the introduction of invasive plant and animal species. In total, the DoN plans to restore 1,000 acres.

“This deliberate focus on protection and restoration is consistent with our commitment to the One Guam and Green Guam pillars set forth by the Secretary of the Navy in the Marine Corps relocation to Guam,” said NAVFAC Marianas Commanding Officer Capt. Stephanie Jones. “These efforts are absolutely vital to support the construction of the range complex.”

The Navy will establish a controlled area in 307 acres of Northwest Field designed to prevent the passage of wild pigs and deer thereby ensuring protection of native plant species. Additionally, invasive plant species will be removed and native species planted in their place. Long-term monitoring will take place when restoration is complete.

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2-2-2 Plan for Safeguarding and Restoring

The hayun lagu tree (*Serianthes nelsonii*) is among the endangered plant species located in the range complex area. Strict measures are in place to protect this tree, including a 100-foot buffer area of native vegetation and extensive monitoring for invasive plants. There are approximately 32 saplings from the mature tree, including one that is now more than 15-feet tall, at the Guam National Wildlife Refuge. The Navy is committed to out-planting and maintaining an additional 30 saplings from this tree at forest enhancement sites located on the military base.

Range management also includes clearing of expended munitions in accordance with the Marine Corps' Range Environmental Vulnerability Assessment and Operational Range Clearance program standards. In addition, monitoring wells will be constructed within the range complex, designed to enable protection of water aquifers in the area.

"Taken as a whole, the implementation of natural resource conservation measures and other restoration offsets that are part of the Marine Corps relocation would have a net-positive benefit to all protected species habitats affected by development," said MCAG Public Works Department (PWD) Environmental Director Al Borja. "These requirements reflect environmental stewardship efforts by the Navy and Marine Corps team in collaboration with our regulatory partners."

In terms of cultural resources, extensive surveys, identification and recording of all resources during pre-construction have been completed. "We have taken precautions to ensure cultural artifacts and other resources in the range complex area are being handled appropriately," said MCAG Cultural Resource Manager Ronnie Rogers. "Procedures remain in place for the potential identification of future findings."

Rogers said it is a significant part of their procedures to consult with the State Historical Preservation Officer (Guam SHPO) regarding management of any discovered artifacts or other resources. Should a resource be discovered within a range area, it will be temporarily placed in a sanctioned curation facility pending availability of a suitable cultural repository.

"As a result of the 2015 Record of Decision (ROD) and advocacy by the Navy, Congress authorized DoD funding for the Guam Cultural Repository," said Rogers. "This will serve to curate and store cultural artifacts and resources."

The Guam National Wildlife Refuge Ritidian Unit will remain open and access will not be impacted through construction. Limited access to the area will be in place following construction and only when the ranges are in use. According to the 2015 ROD, range training may not exceed 39 weeks per year.

"Access restrictions are not anticipated until sometime in 2023," said MCAG Public Affairs Officer Maj. Timothy Patrick. "When the ranges are in use limited access will be an important precautionary measure intended to ensure public safety within the range complex and its extended surface danger zone."

This contract is among those awarded after the signed 2015 ROD for the transfer of approximately 5,000 U.S. Marines to Guam.