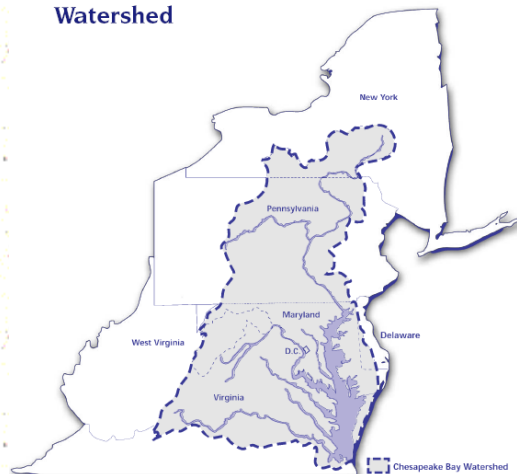


The Chesapeake Bay Estuary and Watershed

The Chesapeake Bay is the nation's premier estuary supporting a commercial seafood industry, shipping for commerce, natural habitat for wildlife, and recreational opportunities for residents and visitor's alike.

The watershed, comprising some 64,000 sq. mi.

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed



in six states, receives about half its water from the ocean and the remaining half from rainfall. Approximately 16 million people live within the Chesapeake Bay water shed.

The people living within the watershed, including personnel at JBLE-Langley, play an important role in this ecosystem and the actions we take have direct consequences on the Bay.

To Learn More About Chesapeake Bay

Chesapeake Bay Program
(800) YOUR BAY, www.chesapeakebay.net

Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network
(866) 229-9297, www.baygateways.net

Virginia Dept. Conservation & Recreation
(804) 786-1712, www.dcr.state.va.us

Natural Resources at JBLE-Langley

In 1916, Langley Airfield was established as a government-sponsored aviation research and development center under an agreement between the Army, Navy, and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). JBLE-Langley is now the oldest continuously active air base in the United States.

In 1948, the United States Air Force was created and Langley Airfield became Langley Air Force Base. The base is now home to HQ ACC and the 1st FW. About 12,000 active personnel are stationed at JBLE-Langley. NASA's Langley Research Center—the oldest NASA facility—is located next door.

Conservation of the natural resources under its stewardship is an integral part of the Air Force mission. The 1st Fighter Wing makes the maximum effort practicable, consistent with its mission, to conserve the soil, water, landscapes, wetlands, wildlife, and outdoor recreational assets as essential elements of its Natural Resources Program.

While there are many ways to access and enjoy the natural resources at JBLE-Langley, the purpose of this brochure is to highlight those resources near the newly-restored Nature Walk in the hope that it will foster general interest in and awareness of their values.

For more information concerning the natural resource assets or natural resources program at JBLE-Langley, please contact:

633d Civil Engineering Squadron (633 CES),
Environmental Management Flight (CEAN),
Natural Resources/Conservation Element
at (757) 764-3906

JBLE-Langley

633 CES/CEAN



Nature Walk & Trail Informational Brochure



The Langley Nature Walk

At 1680-ft , the Langley Nature Walk is the longest wooden structure on the base. Part of a larger nature trail system in the North Base Support Area, it provides base personnel, and the general public, an opportunity to access and enjoy a largely pristine natural area - largely undisturbed since colonization.

Originally constructed in 1992 using volunteer labor and \$30,000 of DoD Legacy Program funds to pay for the lumber, the walk is a place where people can convene to watch wildlife, enjoy nature, relax and take in the scenic views.



The Nature Walk was destroyed in 2003 - a casualty of the flooding wrought by Hurricane Isabel. In 2006, the Nature Walk was rebuilt, using contract labor, under the Wing's hurricane recovery program.

Today, the Nature Walk is back and users can enjoy scenic views, and observe the plants and wildlife in bottomland hardwoods (forest) and wetland (marsh) habitats as well as a constructed wetland.

The Langley Nature Trail



Complementing the Nature Walk is a short Nature Trail. The entrance to the Langley Nature Trail is located behind the Base Ed Center across from the entrance to the R/V

storage area. The Trail extends through bottomland hardwoods which form the transition between wetland areas and the higher elevations landward. Located at intervals along the Trail, interpretive signs illustrate the more common plants and animals who benefit from the habitat afforded by the trees.

Bottomland Hardwoods

The forested area around the Nature Walk and Trail is also called a bottomland with a distinct suite of hardwood trees such as oak, sweetgum, maple, and ash together with the minor hardwoods Black Cherry, Mulberry and Hackberry. These areas are typically found within the floodplain of rivers and creeks and flood periodically so that the soil is saturated for some part of the year.

These areas also filter pollution in storm water runoff, and prevent soil erosion. Bottomland habitat is rapidly disappearing nationwide - succumbing to the pressures of development. Protecting the remaining habitat is important.



Wildlife potentially visible from the Trail includes: Opossum, Grey Squirrel, Muskrat, Bobwhite, Raccoon, White-tailed Deer. Plant species visible along the trail include: Sassafras, Sumac and Poison Ivy.

Wetlands

Wetlands are combinations of land and water. The plants and animals living there are specially adapted to the twice daily changes of the tide. As you enter the Walk, the habitat transitions from Bottomland (forested area), to the high marsh zone (flooded by extremely high tides) to the low marsh zone (flooded by every high tide).



The dominant plant type in the low marsh zone is smooth cordgrass, whereas saltmeadow cordgrass, black needlerush, and saltgrass (marsh elder) prevail in the high marsh zone. The high marsh is threatened by the weed *Phragmites australis*, but the Air Force has initiated a multi-year effort to control its spread.

Birds you may see from the Nature Walk include: colonial water birds (terns and herons), waterfowl (ducks), and raptors (osprey and bald eagles).

The tidal wetlands visible from the Walk also provide wintering homes for migratory birds and other wildlife, including non-migratory birds. Fish and shell fish (including the Blue Crab), use the wetlands as spawning grounds.

Besides habitat, wetlands provide other valuable services to the base including: absorbing excess water, protect uplands from storm damage of wind and waves, filter storm water and mix oxygen into the water.



Economically, wetlands provide opportunities for fishing, crabbing and hunting. Other recreational activities include hiking, bird watching, photography and wildlife study.



Constructed Wetland

Just inside the north entrance to the Nature Walk, if you look to your left - towards NASA and the MSA, is a constructed wetland. This 60,000 sq. ft. rectangular marsh was carved out of the surrounding wooded area in 1987 to compensate for the impacts earlier construction projects had on wetlands elsewhere on the base.

This wetland is a shining example of the Air Force and 1st Fighter Wing commitment to natural resource conservation management.

