

Partnerships/Support for the Military -- Caesar Creek Lake, Ohio

Partnerships and Support for the Military -- Caesar Creek Lake hosted the fifth course session of "Operational Entomology" presented by the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine, Medical Entomology Branch based from Wright Patterson Air Force Base (WPAFB) in August. The course curriculum focuses on insect identification, disease vectors, risk assessment, trapping & control that potentially effect troops deployed throughout the world. Airmen learn how to trap, identify and test for infectious diseases carried by mosquitoes, biting flies, ticks, filth flies, and other ectoparasites so they can detect and prevent infectious diseases that can spread quickly through camps and bases.

WPAFB partnered with Caesar Creek because of the variety of habitats and diverse eco-zones where trapping and field exercises can be conducted. The attendees have included students from Guam, Germany, Japan, and Alaska as well as the continental United States. The course is a mandatory course for Airmen who work as Public Health Technicians on military bases. Six sessions totaling over 100 students were taught at the Corps of Engineers Learning Center at Caesar Creek Lake in 2014.

Throughout the history of military strategy, disease and prevention of disease has been in the forefront of military leaders' minds. Diseases such as malaria, encephalitis, and dengue fever can damage the active readiness of any military force. Knowing the disease and the source helps with treatment methods and controlling the species of insects that may be causing the infections.

This is the second year Caesar Creek Lake has hosted the "Operational Entomology" classes. Captain Leah Chapman, one of key instructors for the course, spoke about the interest of using Caesar Creek Lake for the course:

"Our active duty military students are able to use the beautiful park lands with many water features for collection of arthropod disease vectors such as ticks, mosquitoes, and other biting flies. Instructors lecture in the visitor center classrooms, which are well-equipped for classes and are also well-lit for insect identification."

The Learning Center offers a classroom experience with 3000 sq. ft. of space and tables and chairs to seat a hundred people. The Learning Center is also equipped with an audio visual system designed for a classroom or lecture style of setup. The area around the Learning Center also offers a variety of landscapes that make the location prime for trapping specific types of insects that have the possibilities of carrying certain diseases.

"Without the Army Corps of Engineers allowing us to use their facilities at Caesar Creek, we would have to travel much further for adequate field sites," said Capt. Chapman.

Capt. Chapman also spoke about the partnership benefits for the Caesar Creek staff as well, "In return, our classes trap arthropod vectors and pests. We have them tested for disease and pass any positive results to the park staff."

The Caesar Creek staff believes that this partnership is important in supporting our nation's military whenever possible. This was expressed by Russell Curtis, USACE, Park Ranger for Caesar Creek Lake, "It's important to support our military and their mission. Any time we can facilitate the education of our

troops and airmen then we should, because the things that these folks learn here could literally save someone's life down the road."

Both the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Caesar Creek Lake and the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine at Wright Patterson Air Force Base expect to continue this partnership well into the future. As said by Capt. Chapman, "We are grateful for this partnership that saves us both time and money, and we look forward to it continuing well into the future."



"Operational Entomology" August 2014 class participants on the Caesar Creek Lake Overlook Area



The Public Health Technicians are exposed to techniques to set collection traps that can be used across the world.



They collected arthropods, ticks, mosquitoes, and biting flies that will be identified and tested for disease in the Learning Center at Caesar Creek Lake



Multiple types of traps are utilized for collection