

The DEP and the Navy sign partnership agreement

Story and photos by ENS Mark C. Jones

A groundbreaking partnership was formed Thursday, Aug. 19 between the Fla. Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Navy. In a formal ceremony, Rear Admiral David L. Brewer, III, Vice Chief of Naval Education and Training, and Secretary David Struhs, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), [signed](#) a unique partnership agreement to enforce environment regulations on Northwest Florida naval bases with more cooperation and communication. This agreement is the first of its kind between an environmental agency and the Department of Defense.

Rear Adm. Brewer began the ceremony with a [speech](#) comparing the joint venture to a marriage. “It is going to take trust and commitment to make this work successfully,” said Brewer. “We have to tackle these issues hand in hand instead of sword in hand.” The agreement will create a team of officials from the Pensacola area bases and the DEP.

The [vision](#) of this endeavor is to achieve ecological protection and environmental compliance in the greater Pensacola area while maintaining all national defense requirements. This will improve compliance and prevent violations at Pensacola area bases.

Though the formal signing was Thursday, the agreement officially started last March. Since then, there have been several instances in which the partnership has worked effectively. In one instance, the DEP and the Navy worked together to clean up 21 drums of hazardous waste. The waste had been sold to a local farmer by the Navy. The farmer left the drums unattended, and they proceeded to corrode and contaminate the surrounding ground. Prior to the partnership, there would have been a lot of wasted time trying to figure out who was at fault and who should clean up the waste. Instead, both sides took the initiative and the problem was resolved quickly and efficiently.