



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Free Guided Tours of Rare Regal Fritillary Butterfly Habitat to be Offered at Fort Indiantown Gap

Annville, PA – During the month of July, Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) wildlife staff will provide free guided tours of the only population of the rare regal fritillary butterfly in the eastern United States at Fort Indiantown Gap (FTIG), near Annville, Lebanon County.

Reservations are required and attendance is limited. All attendees, including children, must register online at www.ftig.isportsman.net/ButterflyTours.aspx to obtain a free permit. To attend a tour, you must present a permit for the specific date and time slot of that tour.

Guided tours will be offered on July 1, 2, 8, and 9. Departure times will be 10 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and noon each day. Tours will be conducted rain or shine and no rain dates will be provided.

“These tours allow the public to see this rare butterfly and its associated grassland habitat on military training ranges, as well as the many other natural wonders on the 17,000-acre military installation,” said John Fronko, director DMVA Bureau of Environmental Management. “Staff will also highlight a variety of animals and plants found at Fort Indiantown Gap and how the military presence on the installation is vital to the persistence of these species and their ecosystems.”

Attendees will be required to caravan from the meeting location to the tour location in their personal vehicles. Tours will last approximately one hour plus driving time. Meeting location and parking information will be provided after obtaining a permit.

Visitors of all ages and abilities are welcome to attend. Tours will be on foot on gravel roads and mowed paths; wandering off the path, into the fields, or away from your tour guide is prohibited. Please bring drinking water and wear appropriate clothing and footwear for uneven terrain. There will be little or no shade on the tour route.

Like many military installations, FTIG has a diverse population of plants and animals. It is home to 49 species of mammals, 143 species of breeding birds, 37 species of reptiles and amphibians, 35 species of fish, more than 800 species of plants, and many notable species of invertebrates including 86 species of butterflies and more than 500 species of moths. Many of these plants and animals are rare and considered species of conservation concern. These species persist at FTIG because it provides an assortment of high-quality habitats. This includes rare early successional ecosystems such as grasslands, thickets, shrub lands, and young forests which were created and maintained from disturbances caused by military training, fires, and conservation efforts. The installation is home to 1,000 acres of scrub oak and pitch pine barrens and over 4,500 acres of native grassland habitat – the largest in the state.

Fort Indiantown Gap, which serves as headquarters to the DMVA and the Pennsylvania National Guard (PNG), is the only live-fire, maneuver military training facility in Pennsylvania. The 17,000-acre installation balances one of the region’s most ecologically diverse areas with a military mission that annually supports nearly 18,000 PNG personnel and more than 113,000

additional personnel from other branches of service, multinational partners and interagency partners at the federal, state and local level.

General inquiries about the tours can be emailed to RA-DMVA-Wildlife@pa.gov or call (717) 861-3299.

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