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### DEFENSE ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION PROGRAM FOR FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES

Across the country, the Department of Defense acquired properties, often during times of war, to use for military training, testing and demonstrations. When no longer needed, many of these properties were cleaned up according to the best practices available at the time and then transferred to other owners such as private individuals or other government entities. These Formerly Used Defense Sites can range from privately owned farms to National Parks. They also include residential, industrial and educational properties. We are committed to protecting people and the environment and improving public safety by cleaning up these properties. The Defense Environmental Restoration Program for Formerly Used Defense Sites was established to evaluate and, if necessary, to remediate Formerly Used Defense Sites. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) manages the program on behalf of the Department of Defense.

Congress passed the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, also known as Superfund, in 1980 and the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act in 1986. These laws give the Corps the authority for certain cleanup activities and dictate the process we must follow. We conduct investigations to determine the potential risk to people and the environment from the military's use of the property. Public involvement and community participation are important components of the process. The Corps partners with stakeholders throughout the process, including congressional representatives, state and local governments, regulatory and environmental agencies, and affected property owners.

### BACKGROUND

The Fort Pierce Naval Amphibious Training Base was a 19,280.48-acre site that extended approximately 25 miles from near Vero Beach to near Jensen Beach and included North and South Hutchinson Islands. The military acquired the site during World War II for the Navy to create a training facility. The Navy constructed more than 450 buildings and other improvements, such as roads and water and sewer systems. By January 1943, detachments of Scouts and Raiders began arriving.

The base fulfilled two primary missions during World War II. Its original mission was amphibious training, including training for Naval Underwater Demolition Teams. Amphibious training missions included use of high explosive rockets, bombs, anti-aircraft guns and small arms. During 1943, the Joint Army-Navy Experimental and Testing Board was established to develop and test procedures for breaching and removing beach fortifications expected to be encountered in Europe and Japan. Beaches were fortified along the northern portion of the base, and a variety of ordnance was tested against these fortifications.

By 1946, the site was no longer needed, and the land was returned to the original owners. Much of the area comprising the former base has been developed and includes residential, commercial, governmental and educational facilities.

### ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS

Over the years, the Corps has conducted a number of investigations to evaluate if any military-related materials remain at the site. We completed a Site Inspection in 2015 and concluded that a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study is necessary for three project areas: Project 02 Engineer Board Area, Project 03 Naval Demolition Research Area, and Project 05 Offshore Obstacle Area. Project 02 is on North Hutchinson Island in Indian River County and comprises approximately 473 acres. Munitions have been

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located in this area following the War, most recently being a Tiny Tim found in January 2017 during construction on a previously undeveloped parcel. Project 03 is 1,712 acres on North Hutchinson Island in both Indian River and St. Lucie Counties. Munitions have been found in this area as well, with the most recent ones found during a beach barrier removal project in 1998. The Offshore Obstacle Area (Project 05) is 3,895 acres in the Atlantic Ocean, east of North Hutchinson Island in Indian River and St. Lucie Counties. The Corps identified and removed munitions in this area during investigations conducted in 2014 and 2015.

The purpose of a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study is to determine if anything remains in the area from the military's training, and if so, in what amounts and locations.

The fieldwork will include searching for munitions and collecting environmental samples to test for metals and explosives. The Corps' contractor will tow a digital metal detector to locate buried metallic objects. Then technicians will analyze the data to create maps showing the location and amount of buried metal. These are called density maps. The density maps will indicate where crews need to dig "grids" based on the amount of metal in the ground. Grids are square or rectangular areas of various sizes (such as 25' x 25' or 50' x 50') where munitions experts dig up metallic objects to determine what they are.

Once the fieldwork is complete, the team will analyze the data, draft a report and make recommendations. The results will be summarized in a document called a Proposed Plan which will present the alternatives for addressing what, if anything, remains on the site. The alternatives can range from no further action being necessary to educating the public about the site to conducting a removal action to search for and remove munitions. When the Proposed Plan is ready, the Corps will present it at a public meeting, and the public will have at least 30 days to review and submit comments on the plan.



### SAFETY FIRST: Remember the 3Rs

Because of how the military used the site, there could potentially be buried munitions. These could be dangerous and may not be easily recognizable. Never touch, move or disturb something you think may be a munition. Remember the 3Rs.

**RECOGNIZE** - The item you found could be dangerous.

**RETREAT** - Do not touch it in any way, and leave the area.

**REPORT** - Call 911 immediately.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the Corps: Call 866.279.4880 or Email [FUDS.Florida@usace.army.mil](mailto:FUDS.Florida@usace.army.mil)

Project documents can be viewed at:

Fort Pierce Branch, St. Lucie County Public Library  
101 Melody Lane, Fort Pierce, FL 34950  
Telephone: 772-462-1615

Indian River County Main Library  
1600 21st Street, Vero Beach, FL 32960  
Telephone: 772-770-5060

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