

FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES | Lee Field Naval Air Station

Landfill Areas 1 and 3 Proposed Plan



APRIL 2019

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. The Department of Defense is committed to protecting people and the environment and improving public safety by cleaning up these sites if hazards from the former military operations remain. 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. The Corps conducts 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. We partner with stakeholders throughout the process, including congressional representatives, state and local governments, regulatory and environmental agencies, and affected property owners.

BACKGROUND

The former Lee Field Naval Air Station, now Reynolds Industrial Park, comprised about 1,560 acres on the west side of the St. Johns River in Clay County, Florida. The Navy began acquiring the property in 1940 and used it until the early 1960s. During World War II, the Navy and Marines used it to train pilots. Following the war, the Navy used it to deactivate ships. The deactivation process involved maintaining and preserving the ships to prevent deterioration during inactive periods. This provided a large reserve fleet of ships that could be easily reactivated on short notice. The military constructed piers to provide permanent berthing facilities for the reserve fleet as well as runways, hangars, utility systems, fuel storage tanks, office buildings, barracks, mess halls and family housing.

When the Navy no longer needed the Lee Field property and facilities, they declared the property as excess and deeded it to the City of Green Cove Springs. The city sold it in 1965 to Mr. J. Louis Reynolds who developed it into an industrial park. In 1981 Clay County Port, Inc. purchased the property and continues to manage it as an industrial park.

ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS

The Corps has been evaluating two undeveloped areas within the industrial park known as Landfill Areas 1 and 3. Landfill Area 1 is about 6.2 acres on the south side of Wildwood Road, and Landfill Area 3 is about 7.4 acres on the north side of a dirt road that connects County Road 209 with Wildwood Road. The Florida Department of Transportation recently acquired the land contiguous to these two areas for a new toll road.

The Corps concluded a Remedial Investigation in November 2018. The purpose of the Remedial Investigation was to characterize the nature and extent of potential military-related environmental impacts. During the various phases of the investigation, the Corps reviewed historical records, dug test pits, and collected more than 400 samples from the soil, sediment, surface water, and groundwater. The team compared the results to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's screening levels and completed Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessments to evaluate the potential impacts to people and the environment. Metals are naturally present in the environment, so it is normal to detect them in soil and groundwater samples.

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Generally, the amounts detected in samples collected from Landfill Areas 1 and 3 were below the appropriate Florida Department of Environmental Protection's screening level (groundwater/surface water/sediment cleanup target levels and the soil cleanup target level for industrial areas).

In Landfill Area 1, petroleum compounds and arsenic were detected above industrial screening levels in one subsurface soil sample (between two and four feet deep). Chlorobenzene, a common solvent used for adhesives, rubber, and paints, was detected in one well at levels above the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's groundwater cleanup target level.

At Landfill Area 3, nothing was detected in the soil and sediment above the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's screening levels. Chlorinated hydrocarbons (used in insecticides and solvents) and chloroethene were detected above the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's groundwater cleanup target level in a localized area.

The Corps concluded, based on the results of the risk assessments, there is no unacceptable risk to people and the environment at the current and most reasonably anticipated future land use in the two landfill areas.

PROPOSED PLAN AND PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The next step in the federally mandated process is a Proposed Plan. The Proposed Plan presents the recommendations and alternatives to address areas of concern. Since there is no unacceptable risk at Landfill Areas 1 and 3 attributable to the Department of Defense, the recommendation in the Proposed Plan is no further action.



YOUR OPINION MATTERS

The Corps encourages you to comment on the Proposed Plan during the public comment period. Please submit your comments no later than 5:00 p.m. on June 4, 2019, by calling (toll free) 800.710.5184, by emailing FUDS.Florida@usace.army.mil or by mailing your comments to US Army Corps of Engineers, ATTN: Andrew Rebman (CESAJ-PM-M), 701 San Marco Boulevard, Jacksonville, Florida 32207. Mail postmarked by June 4, 2019, will be accepted. Public comments received during this period will be considered in the decision-making process.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit:

Project documents can be viewed at:
Green Cove Springs Library
403 Ferris Street, Green Cove Springs, Florida 32043
Telephone: 904.284.6315

Contact:

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