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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 Brooke Military Reservation is located in San Juan, Puerto Rico and consists of the Spanish-built El Morro and San Cristobal Fortresses. The Spanish began construction of the fortresses during the 16th century. El Morro was designed to protect San Juan from sea-based attacks. San Cristobal was built to guard the city from land-based attacks.

The government first obtained the land for Fort Brooke Military Reservation from the Spanish by the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898, following the Spanish-American War. On June 30, 1903, an Executive Order reserved a 98.83-acre area that included the El Morro and San Cristobal Fortresses and associated works and improvements for military purposes. Additional property was acquired between 1906 and 1951, totaling the site to approximately 115 acres where extensive housing and support buildings were constructed on-site through World War II. During World War I and II, the military mounted three 4.72-inch guns and a gun emplacement with four 155-mm guns, along with improvements to the fortresses which included the addition of bunkers and pillboxes (concrete guard posts). Munitions used or stored on-site included 4.7-inch ammunition and early 1900s Coast Artillery ammunition. The artillery range consisted of approximately 86,000 water acres.

The land was determined to no longer be needed by the military, and between 1941 and 1978 it was turned over to the National Park Service, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Coast Guard as park facilities, public buildings, and government offices. The National Park Service manages the majority of the land portions of Fort Brooke as the San Juan National Historic Site.

ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS

The Corps has evaluated the site several times over the years to determine if anything remains from the military's use. Through historical research and sites visits, the Corps identified the munitions known or suspected to have been used, stored, or buried at

FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES | Fort Brooke Military Reservation

the Fort Brooke Military Reservation. In 2010, the Corps completed a Site Inspection to determine if further evaluation of the site may be necessary based on the past military use of the property. No munitions or munitions debris (expended small arms and/or pieces of munitions) was found at the site. Munitions debris does not pose an explosive hazard, and no munitions or explosive materials have been identified within the Fort Brooke Military Miliary Reservation as part of the Corps investigation. However, because safety is our primary concern, the Corps will conduct a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study to determine what may be present in what amounts and locations. This is known as characterizing the nature and extent of potential military-related materials.

The Corps uses a tool called the Munitions Response Site Prioritization Protocol to evaluate the risk to people and the environment at Formerly Used Defense Sites, such as the Fort Brooke Military Reservation. This tool helps the Department of Defense prioritize studies or remediation (if necessary) for properties across the country. Sites that have a higher potential risk to people and the environment are addressed first. The Corps has not scheduled the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study for the Fort Brooke Military Reservation due to its lower prioritization score, but we will notify the public when we anticipate initiating further studies.



Source: Google Earth 2019

SAFETY FIRST: Remember the 3Rs

Because of previous military training, munitions may potentially be present. 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 of explosive safety.

RECOGNIZE - The object you found could be dangerous.

RETREAT - Leave the area without touching or moving the object.

REPORT - Call 9-1-1 immediately.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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