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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. 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

During World War II, the U.S. Army Air Forces School of Applied Tactics leased 2,232 acres to establish a satellite training facility. The site, known as Leesburg Air Service Center, was in Sumter County, Florida, approximately five miles southeast of the City of Wildwood. The Army constructed a tent camp on 587 acres, along with a rifle range, and an ordnance storage area. Another area was designated for a hand grenade court where troops trained between 1943 and 1945.

As the war effort began to diminish, the site was no longer needed, and by 1946, all of the leases were terminated. The land comprising the former Leesburg Air Service Center is primarily privately owned and includes residential, agricultural, and recreational areas.



ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS

The Corps has assessed the site a number of times over the years to determine if there are any potential munitions-related items resulting from the Army's training. Through historical research, the Corps determined where the hand grenade court was, and based on this information, the Corps created a 25-acre project area which includes the actual training location and a safety buffer around it. The Corps completed a Site Inspection in 2012 to determine if further evaluation of the site may be necessary

FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES | Leesburg Air Service Center

based on the past military use of the property. While no munitions or munitions debris (expended small arms and/or pieces of munitions) were found during the Site Inspection, because your safety is our highest priority, the Corps will conduct a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study to determine if anything remains in the area from the Army's training, and if so, 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 former Leesburg Air Service Center. 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. Since the potential risk at the former Leesburg Air Service Center is low, the Corps has not yet scheduled the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study, but we will notify the public when we anticipate initiating further studies.

While the possibility of encountering munitions is low, always use caution in areas where the military has trained. Remember and follow the 3Rs of Explosive Safety. **R**ecognize the object you found could be dangerous. **R**etreat from the area without touching the object, but make note of its location. **R**eport it by calling 9-1-1.



□ Approximate Boundaries of Grenade Court

SAFETY FIRST: REMEMBER THE 3Rs

If you are on a Formerly Used Defense Site, do not pick up anything that you did not put on the ground. 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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