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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

In 1942, the military acquired 4,480 acres in Wakulla County, Florida to establish the Sopchoppy Precision Bombing Range for air crews from Dale Mabry Army Airfield, Marianna Army Airfield, and Thomasville Army Airfield to practice dropping sand-filled, 100-pound practice bombs. The Army cleared a triangular area that was easily visible from the air and constructed a target consisting of a set of concentric rings. Personnel in three nearby spotting towers would observe the bomb drops and score the pilots.

When World War II ended, the Army no longer needed the range, and the military disposed of the land. This Formerly Used Defense Site is about four miles west of Sopchoppy in Wakulla County, Florida within the Apalachicola National Forest.



ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS

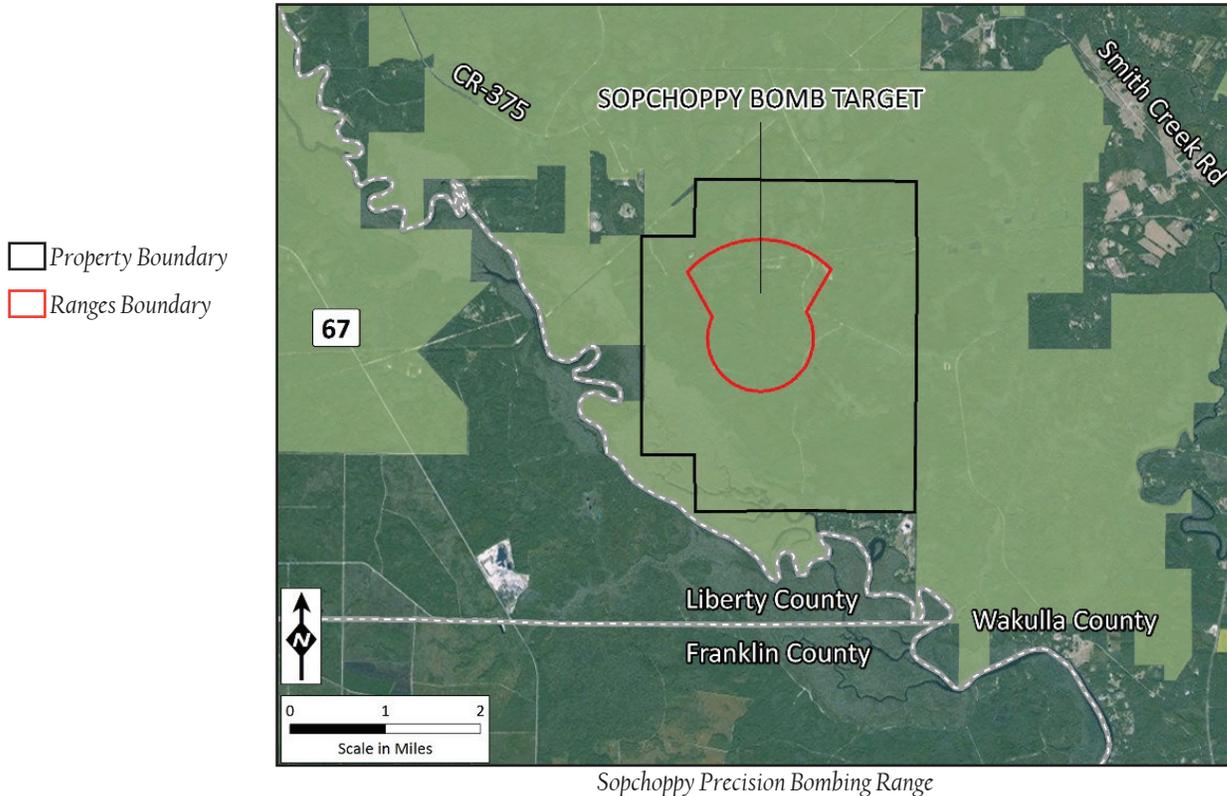
The Corps has evaluated the site several times over the years to determine if anything remains from the military's training. Most of the land was not actively used for munitions training and was used for administration buildings, living quarters and related support structures. The area designated as the bombing range, which includes the target and a buffer area, comprises 765 acres. The Corps completed a Site Inspection in 2009 to determine if further evaluation of the site may be necessary. No munitions were found, but the team did identify a fin from a practice bomb. Because our primary concern is protecting people and the environment, the Corps will conduct a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study at a future date to determine if anything further

FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES | Sopchoppy Precision Bombing Range

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 Sopchoppy Precision Bombing Range. 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 Sopchoppy Bombing Range 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. **Recognize** the object you found could be dangerous. **Retreat** from the area without touching the object, but make note of its location. **Report** it by calling 9-1-1.



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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