



DECEMBER 2017

### 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

In 1828, the military acquired land to construct a fort to protect Pensacola Bay and the Pensacola Navy Yard. Construction on the fort began in 1829 and was completed in 1834. It is one of the largest brick forts built in the United States. Between 1890 and the 1940s other structures, concrete gun batteries, and a rifle range were added around the island; however, as more advanced weapons were developed, especially during World War II, the Fort Pickens Military Reservation became obsolete. The War Department declared the site surplus in 1948, and they transferred the land to Escambia County. In 1971, it became part of the Gulf Islands National Seashore.



This Formerly Used Defense Site comprises 1,168 acres at the west end of Santa Rosa Island in Escambia County. The former Military Reservation includes the original pentagonal brick fort as well as the outlying batteries and facilities the military constructed over the years.

## ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS

The Corps has conducted several investigations over the years, including a Preliminary Assessment in 2007 and a Site Inspection in 2010. While no munitions were identified during these investigations, the Site Inspection team found munitions debris (pieces from munitions). To ensure public safety, the Corps is following the process required by law to evaluate the former Fort Pickens Military Reservation. Currently, the Corps is doing a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study that involves a number of steps designed to identify the target locations and to determine if any munitions remain from the training. Crews will use digital metal detectors on paths (called transects) to map metallic objects underground and in the water. Technicians will analyze the data to identify potential target locations. Based on the analysis, the team will dig the metallic objects that appear to be munitions-related. If teams find munitions or munitions debris, they will collect soil samples in those locations.

The Remedial Investigation will encompass 1,168 acres on land within the national park as well as 137,297 acres in the Gulf of Mexico offshore from the park. You may see crews on land or in boats using digital metal detectors or other equipment to search for potential munitions. Teams will establish a safety zone around where they are working, so access to some areas may be temporarily limited during the investigation. The fieldwork is being carefully coordinated with the National Park Service to protect the environment and historic/archeological features.

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 to address 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 remedial action. 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.



*Digital Metal Detection on Beach*



*Digital Metal Detection from Boat*

### SAFETY FIRST: Remember the 3Rs

While the potential of finding munitions is low, always use caution in areas where the military has trained. Remember and follow the 3Rs of Explosive Safety: Recognize, Retreat, Report.

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

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

**REPORT** - Call 911 immediately.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Documents are available at:  
Gulf Breeze Library  
1060 Shoreline Drive, Gulf Breeze, FL  
Telephone: 850-981-7323

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