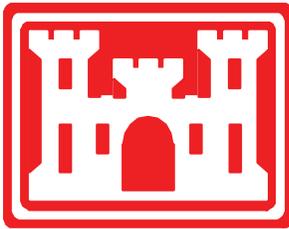


FINAL DECISION DOCUMENT
WITHLACOOCHEE CHEMICAL WARFARE SERVICES FIELD TRIALS
AND AIR TO GROUND BOMBING AND GUNNERY RANGE
REMAINING LANDS MRS

FINAL DECISION DOCUMENT



**FORMER WITHLACOOCHEE CHEMICAL WARFARE
SERVICE FIELD TRIALS AND AIR TO GROUND
BOMBING AND GUNNERY RANGE**

REMAINING LANDS MRS

SUMTER AND HERNANDO COUNTIES, FLORIDA

FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITE PROJECT NUMBER: 104FL007801

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District
701 San Marco Boulevard
Jacksonville, Florida 32207**

September 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) prepared this Decision Document (DD) to describe the Department of Defense (DoD) decision for the Remaining Lands Munitions Response Site (MRS), Project Number I04FL007801, at the former Withlacoochee Chemical Warfare Service Field Trials & Air-to-Ground Bombing & Gunnery Range (hereafter the Withlacoochee Site) Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS). The site is located in Sumter and Hernando Counties, Florida.

The Secretary of Defense designated the Secretary of the Army as the Lead Agent for DoDs FUDS Program, regardless of which DoD Component previously owned or used the property. The Secretary of the Army further assigned to USACE execution responsibilities for the Program. The USACE, Jacksonville District, is the lead agency for investigating, reporting, evaluating remedial actions, and implementing remedial actions at the former Withlacoochee Site. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is the lead regulatory agency for the site.

Based on recommendations in the Remedial Investigation (RI), the Withlacoochee Site was recommended to be divided into two MRSs based on the potential for human receptors to come into contact with munitions and explosives of concern (MEC). The two resulting MRSs became the Remaining Lands MRS (17,991 acres) and the Test Areas MRS (249 acres). This DD presents the decision for the Remaining Lands MRS.

Based on results of the RI of the Withlacoochee Site, an explosive safety hazard is not anticipated within the Withlacoochee Site Remaining Lands MRS; and a risk assessment identified no unacceptable risks to human health or the environment due to munitions constituents. Therefore, USACE determined that no action is necessary to protect public health or welfare or the environment.

The decision was selected in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), 42 U.S. Code § 9601 et seq., as amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986, and, the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan, 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 300 et seq., as amended.

The FDEP was consulted in developing the decision.

Based on extensive investigation and coordination with the lead regulator, this site is protective of human health and the environment. Since no remediation is planned, there will be no cost, the statutory requirements of CERCLA §121(b) are not relevant, and no five-year reviews are required.

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AND AIR TO GROUND BOMBING AND GUNNERY RANGE
REMAINING LANDS MRS

ATTACHMENT

- Figure 1 Site Location Map
Figure 2 Remaining Lands MRS

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CWM	Chemical Warfare Materiel
DD	Decision Document
DERP	Defense Environmental Restoration Program
DoD	Department of Defense
FDEP	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
FFS	Florida Forest Service
FS	Feasibility Study
FUDS	Formerly Used Defense Sites
FWC	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
MC	Munitions Constituents
MD	Munitions Debris
MEC	Munitions and Explosives of Concern
MRS	Munitions Response Site
msl	mean sea level
NCP	National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan
PA	Preliminary Assessment
RI	Remedial Investigation
SARA	Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act
SLRA	Screening Level Risk Assessment
T&E	Threatened and Endangered
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
WMA	Wildlife Management Area

PART 1: DECLARATION

1. SITE NAME AND LOCATION

Site Name: Former Withlacoochee Chemical Warfare Service Field Trials & Air-to-Ground Bombing & Gunnery Range, Remaining Lands Munitions Response Site (MRS), (hereafter referred to as Remaining Lands)

Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS) Project Number: I04FL007801

Federal Facility Identifier: FL49799F721500

The Remaining Lands MRS is comprised of 17,991 acres within the 18,240 total acres of the former Withlacoochee Site (Figure 1). The Remaining Lands MRS is comprised of what land remains of the Withlacoochee Site after the Test Areas MRS (249 acres) was carved out based on locations of potential hazards presented by munitions remaining in the Test Areas Munitions Response Site (MRS). The Test Areas MRS is addressed in a separate Decision Document (DD), under FUDS Project No. I04FL007802. The Two MRSs are shown in Figure 2.

The former Withlacoochee Site is located approximately 18 miles northeast of Zephyrhills, in Sumter and Hernando counties, Florida.

The site is now part of the Richloam Wildlife Management Area of the Withlacoochee State Forest. The Florida Forest Service (FFS) manages the site for timber, and the public uses it for recreation. It also includes the Florida Bass Conservation Center offices and the Richloam State Fish Hatchery.

2. STATEMENT OF BASIS AND PURPOSE

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Jacksonville District, prepared this DD to describe the Department of Defense (DoD) decision for the Remaining Lands MRS. The Secretary of Defense designated the Secretary of the Army as the Lead Agent for DoD's FUDS Program, regardless of which DoD Component previously owned or used the property. The Secretary of the Army further assigned to USACE execution responsibilities for the Program. USACE is the lead agency for investigating, reporting, and evaluating response actions; and implementing remedial actions at the Test Areas MRS.

The decision for the Remaining Lands MRS is No Action. This decision was made in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), 42 U.S. Code § 9601 et seq., as amended by the Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act (SARA) of 1986, and, to the extent practicable, the National Oil and

FINAL DECISION DOCUMENT
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REMAINING LANDS MRS

Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP), 40 CFR Part 300 et seq., as amended.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) is the lead regulatory agency. The FDEP has actively participated throughout the investigation process, has reviewed this DD, and was consulted in the development of this decision.

3. DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED REMEDY

USACE has determined no remedial action is necessary within the Remaining Lands MRS.

4. STATUTORY DETERMINATIONS

USACE, as the lead agency, has determined no remedial action is necessary within the Remaining Lands MRS. Based on the information currently available, the decision is protective of human health and the environment. The CERCLA §121(b) requirements are not applicable because of the No Action decision.

Because no hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or explosive hazards were detected, the site has no restrictions on use, and Five-Year Reviews are not necessary at the Remaining Lands MRS, pursuant to the NCP, 40 CFR §300.430 (f)(4)(ii).

5. AUTHORIZING SIGNATURES

This DD presents the No Action decision for the Remaining Lands MRS. The USACE Jacksonville District is the lead agency under the Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) at the former Withlacoochee Site FUDS and developed this DD consistent with CERCLA, as amended by SARA, and the NCP. This DD will be incorporated into the existing Administrative Record file, which is available for public review at the EC Rowell Public Library located at 85 East Central Avenue in Webster, Florida.

This document, presenting the No Action recommendation with a present worth cost estimate of \$0, is approved by the undersigned pursuant to Memorandum, DAIM-ZA, September 9, 2003, Subject: Policies for Staffing and Approving Decision Documents, and to Engineer Regulation 200-3-1, *Formerly Used Defense Sites Program Policy*.

APPROVED:

MCCALLISTER.LARRY,
DWAYNE.1144889661

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LARRY D. McCALLISTER, Ph.D., PE, PMP, SES

Date

**Director of Regional Business, Military, IIS, and
Environmental Programs**

PART 2: DECISION SUMMARY

1. PROJECT NAME, LOCATION, AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The former Withlacoochee Site is located approximately 18 miles northeast of Zephyrhills in Sumter and Hernando Counties, approximately 45 miles west of Orlando, Florida. The site covers approximately 18,240 acres within the Richloam Tract of the Withlacoochee State Forest. Hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, camping, horseback riding, hiking and bicycling are popular recreational activities within the Richloam Tract. Several highways pass near the site and many secondary roads and trails run throughout the entire Withlacoochee Site.

The Withlacoochee Site is a FUDS property; the DoD has not occupied or used any portions of the property after declaring it excess in 1946. Buildings and structures that do exist within the site include a few residential properties and those buildings occupied by the Florida Bass Conservation Center. Figure 1 shows the former Withlacoochee Site boundaries.

The Remaining Lands MRS consists of 17,991 acres within the Withlacoochee Site. This MRS was separated out from the Test Areas MRS, which make up the remaining 249 acres located at different areas throughout the formerly known Chemical Use Area #1 and Chemical Use Area #2. These areas are presented in Figure 2.

The USACE, Jacksonville District, is the lead agency under the DERP for this FUDS (Site Project Number: I04FL007801). The FDEP supports this Decision Document and was consulted in the development of this Decision Document and decision.

2. PROJECT HISTORY AND ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

2.1 Project History

Between October 1943 and the fall of 1946, the military used approximately 18,240 acres to create the Withlacoochee Chemical Warfare Service Field Trials and Air-to-Ground Bombing and Gunnery Range (Withlacoochee Site). The site had two distinct purposes—as a practice range for conventional munitions and as a testing area for chemical agents and munitions. The Army Air Force constructed targets for strafing, dive and skip bombing and rockets. The Chemical Warfare Service conducted field trials to determine the effectiveness of chemical agents.

The site, approximately 18 miles northeast of Zephyrhills, is now part of the Richloam Wildlife Management Area of the Withlacoochee State Forest. The FFS manages the site for timber, and the public uses it for recreation. It also includes the Florida Bass Conservation Center offices and the Richloam State Fish Hatchery.

2.2 Previous Investigations

In 1950 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers investigated the site, removed munitions and recommended surface use only in some areas. Subsequently, the Corps completed a number of additional studies, which included historical records research and site visits. The site was divided into three areas and a Remedial Investigation (RI)/Feasibility Study (FS) was recommended. The Withlacoochee Site consisted of one MRS, the Chemical Use Area. For the convenience of conducting the RI, the MRS was separated into three units: the Chemical Use Area #1 and Air-to-Ground Bombing and Gunnery Range (16,960 acres) and two geographically separate areas known as Chemical Use Area #2 (640 acres) and Chemical Use Area #3 (640 acres).

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted a chemical warfare materiel (CWM) Scoping and Security Study, which evaluated and prioritized 91 suspected CWM sites nationwide. The project began in Fall 2002 and was completed by December 2007. The former Withlacoochee Site was one of the sites evaluated. In January 2003, the project team conducted a site visit to evaluate current conditions and confirm previous findings. During the visit, the team toured the site and met with two people familiar with historic DoD operations. Both interviewees recounted hearing of former encounters with munitions (including chemical) or munitions debris (MD). The final report, issued in August 2007, recommended that a RI be conducted at the site.

The USACE St. Louis District prepared a Preliminary Assessment (PA) for the former Withlacoochee Site to update the Archives Site Report. The intent of this report was to compile the information obtained through historical research at various archives and records holding facilities. The PA has been instrumental in obtaining information regarding the property boundaries of the FUDS. The PA uncovered hundreds of reports and memos regarding the Chemical Warfare Service field trials that were helpful in identifying potential MEC and CWM that might be encountered during the RI field activities. Following the completion of the PA, one of the scientists (Harold Johnston) who worked at the site during the field trials found a copy of a 1945-era map that showed the locations of 15 test areas. Prior to this discovery, only the location of the “Non-Persistent Forest” had been identified.

A RI was conducted on the project site from February 2012 to February 2014 to characterize the former Withlacoochee Site with regard to location, concentration, and nature of MEC, and possible munitions constituents (MC) contamination. Within the Remaining Lands MRS, the field team conducted a geophysical survey of approximately 315 miles of transects and 5.8 acres of grids, and investigated 446 anomalies. The RI did not find any MEC and only minimal MD (one piece of fragmentation imbedded in a tree). 133 samples were collected during the RI and were analyzed for chemical agents and their breakdown products, explosives, and select metals (antimony, arsenic, barium, copper, lead, manganese, nickel, and zinc). A baseline risk assessment was conducted using the data collected. Using the results of these investigations, the risk assessment concluded that no unacceptable human health or ecological risk due to MC remains at the Remaining Lands MRS.

2.3 Enforcement Activities

There have been no CERCLA enforcement activities at this project site.

3. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

In accordance with CERCLA, DoD, and U.S. Army regulations, the USACE Jacksonville District has kept the local community involved throughout the RI process. A Public Involvement Plan was developed and community involvement was facilitated through public notices and meetings, which allowed members of the community to provide comments and recommendations during the site characterization and decision process.

A community meeting was held at the Florida Bass Conservation Center on August 2012 in preparation of the Remedial Investigation field effort. The meeting included a presentation, fact sheet distribution, and an opportunity for project team members to answer questions from community members.

A notice was placed in the local newspaper on June 24, 2016 to solicit comments on the Proposed Plan and determine the community interest in having an additional public meeting. The notice also included the notification of a public comment period that ran from 24 June to 26 July, 2016.

The Proposed Plan was made available to the public prior to the comment period through the Administrative Record file located at the EC Rowell Public Library located at 85 E. Central Avenue in Webster, FL.

No comments were received from members of the public during the comment period.

4. SCOPE AND ROLE OF RESPONSE ACTION

No MEC hazards are anticipated at the Remaining Lands MRS and the risk assessment identified no unacceptable risks to human health or the environment for MC. Consequently, no response action is necessary within Remaining Lands MRS.

5. PROJECT MRS CHARACTERISTICS

The Remaining Lands MRS consists of 17,991 acres within the Withlacoochee Site. Based on results of previous investigations and the recent RI, no complete MEC exposure pathways are present at Remaining Lands MRS. Based on the lack of MC contamination discovered during the RI, no complete MC exposure pathways are present at Remaining Lands MRS.

The following sub-sections provide an overview of site surface and subsurface features, sampling strategies, and potential constituents of contamination identified for the entire Withlacoochee Site.

5.1 Site Features

The land surface of the Withlacoochee Site is essentially flat with a gentle east to west slope. The highest land elevations (at approximately 100 feet above mean sea level) occur along the eastern site border and steadily drop to about 80 feet along the western site border. The surrounding terrain is primarily cypress swamp and dense forests. The flat terrain is conducive to extensive wetland conditions, with water ranging in depth from shallow puddles to deeper swamps and ponds.

The State of Florida supports 114 federally-listed Threatened and Endangered (T&E) species consisting of 59 animals and 55 plants. Seventeen of these federally-listed species are known to exist in Sumter and Hernando Counties. No T&E species were observed during the RI field effort.

5.2 Sampling Strategy

During the RI within the Remaining Lands MRS, the teams searched along approximately 315 miles of transects and in 79 grids and dug up 446 metallic objects to identify them. No MEC items were found. MD was limited to one piece of MD imbedded in a tree.

Additionally, the team collected 133 soil samples throughout the Remaining Lands MRS.

5.3 Constituents of Concern

No known contaminants or constituents of concern have been identified at the Remaining Lands MRS. No chemical warfare agents or volatile organic compounds were detected in any sample.

A majority of the samples collected within the MRS contained concentrations of arsenic above U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Primary Remediation Goals, fewer with concentrations above FDEP's residential limit (direct contact). Arsenic occurs naturally in the environment and is prevalent throughout Florida; it is also associated with agricultural uses. Arsenic was not a component of the munitions and chemicals tested at the site. Based on the concentrations discovered, a risk assessment for arsenic was conducted and it was determined that arsenic was not present in concentrations exceeding risk levels.

Barium was detected in 6 samples near the ATG Range significantly above the project-established background concentrations and the FDEP residential limit, but well below the commercial/industrial level. Barium was a very minor component of primer materials, spotting charges, and rocket motors used in some munitions tested at the site. Based on the concentrations discovered, a risk assessment for barium was conducted and it was determined that barium was not present in concentrations exceeding risk levels.

Copper was detected in one sample at the location of the MEC destruction (former Chemical Use Area # 3) at a level above the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's residential limit

but well below their commercial/industrial limit.

A baseline MC risk assessment conducted during the RI followed a phased approach starting with a screening level risk assessment (SLRA) and moving toward a more complex, site-specific risk assessment. In addition, the baseline risk assessment evaluated the magnitude of the risk at the site and the primary causes of that risk. Based on results of the baseline MC risk assessment and a review of the MC risk assessment objectives, there are no unacceptable human health and ecological risks at the Test Areas MRS.

Data collected during the previous investigations and the RI were sufficient to characterize the site. The data were used to support a risk assessment approach as agreed to by the project team. Results of the RI indicate that there are no hazards within Remaining Lands MRS. There is no evidence of any impact to the soil and water within the boundaries of the Remaining Lands MRS.

5.4 MEC Contamination

No MEC pathways are currently identified for either human or ecological receptors at Remaining Lands MRS.

6. CURRENT AND POTENTIAL FUTURE LAND AND RESOURCE USES

6.1 Land Uses

Currently, the FFS manages the Richloam Wildlife Management Area (WMA), which comprises the Remaining Lands MRS. Timber harvesting has been in operation for 40 years with constant planting of pine trees in areas of cleared hardwoods. As part of its management of the WMA, the FFS maintains road access by cleaning drains along both sides of the sand and gravel roads, occasionally re-placing culverts. Occasional sign posts and wire fences are maintained in a few areas. Timber management includes planting pine trees and conducting controlled burns of the understory vegetation to prevent buildup of combustible materials. In addition to timber management, the public uses the WMA for hiking and hunting – for which a number of primitive camping sites have been established.

Since 1965, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has leased a portion of the WMA for the Richloam State Fish Hatchery. The hatchery covers 180 acres within the MRS and includes 63 out-door ponds, the Florida Bass Conservation Center offices, and a visitor's center that were constructed in 2007. In addition, there are two employee residences just north of the hatchery.

A small plot (160 acres) of privately owned land remains undeveloped in the northwest section of what was formerly known as Chemical Use Area #2. A right-of-entry was not obtained for this property, but because the area is forested, not fenced, and contained within the WMA,

property use is assumed to be the same as the rest of the WMA – timber harvesting, hiking, and hunting.

Future use of the property is expected to remain the same as current use.

6.2 Groundwater and Surface Water Use

Five types of wetlands occupy the majority of the site. Some of these wetlands are seasonal and some are semi-permanently flooded. The Little Withlacoochee River, a tributary of the Withlacoochee River, flows through the site in a northwest course. Almost the entire area surrounding the Withlacoochee Site drains into the Little Withlacoochee River. Discharge from the Little Withlacoochee River is into the Withlacoochee River which ultimately flows into the Gulf of Mexico some 53 miles northwest of the site. Surface water is present as scattered ponds and standing water in wetlands varying with precipitation rates.

The surficial aquifer is comprised mainly of undifferentiated sand and clayey sands. The thickness of the surficial aquifer in Sumter County ranges from 0 to approximately 60 feet and is estimated to be approximately 20 feet in the vicinity of the site. The principal water-bearing aquifer in the west central Florida Peninsula is the Floridan aquifer system and is the primary source of potable water within the county. The upper portions of the Floridan aquifer system in the county is made up of rocks from the Ocala Group, Avon Park Limestone and the Lake City Limestone and is considered to be unconfined throughout most of Sumter County. Throughout the county recharge to this aquifer ranges from high to moderate. The top of the aquifer is generally less than 50 feet in most areas of the county and estimated to be between 60 and 80 feet above mean sea level (msl) in the area of the Withlacoochee Site. The potentiometric surface within the Floridan aquifer generally dips to the northwest with the surface ranging from approximately 40 feet above msl along the Withlacoochee River Valley west of Lake Panasoffkee (northwest Sumter County) to between 90 and 100 feet above msl in the area of the Green Swamp surrounding the Withlacoochee Site. Water leaves the Floridan aquifer system through natural movement down gradient (westward) and subsequent discharge via upward movement through springs, lakes, and wells

No wells were identified and are unlikely to be located in Chemical Use Area #2 and Chemical Use Area #3. No wells were identified in Chemical Use Area #1; however, due to the existence of the fish hatchery and the employee residences onsite, it is possible that wells are located within Chemical Use Area #1.

There are 23 documented water wells known to exist within a 2-mile radius of the Withlacoochee Site. There are 11 wells reported within the Withlacoochee Site boundary. Five of these wells are classified as “potable”, while the rest are classified as non-potable, groundwater monitoring wells, aquifer test wells, or not reported.

7. SUMMARY OF SITE RISKS

Based on results of previous historical investigations and the RI, no complete MEC exposure pathways are present at the Remaining Lands MRS. Based on the lack of MC contamination, no complete MC exposure pathways are present at Remaining Lands MRS. The absence of complete MC exposure pathways also means that unacceptable risks to human health or the environment as a result of exposure to MC are not anticipated at this MRS.

8. DOCUMENTATION OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

The Proposed Plan was released for public comment on June 24, 2016. The Proposed Plan identified No Action as the Preferred Alternative. There were no comments from the public, therefore no changes to the Proposed Plan were made.

PART 3: RESPONSIVENESS SUMMARY

This Responsiveness Summary summarizes all comments for the Proposed Plan received from the public and FDEP regarding the decision and general concerns related to the Site.

1. STAKEHOLDER ISSUES AND LEAD AGENCY RESPONSES

Part 3 of this DD describes the activities used to solicit community input. A public comment period was held between June 24 through July 26, 2016. No written comments were received during the comment period. Letters, along with a Proposed Plan fact sheet were sent to members of the Richloam Sportsman Association to invite them to the meeting, to explain the recommended alternatives and to encourage them to submit comments.

1.1 Florida Department of Environmental Protection Comments

The FDEP was consulted in the development of the no action decision.

1.2 Public Comments

No comments were received from the public.

2. TECHNICAL AND LEGAL ISSUES

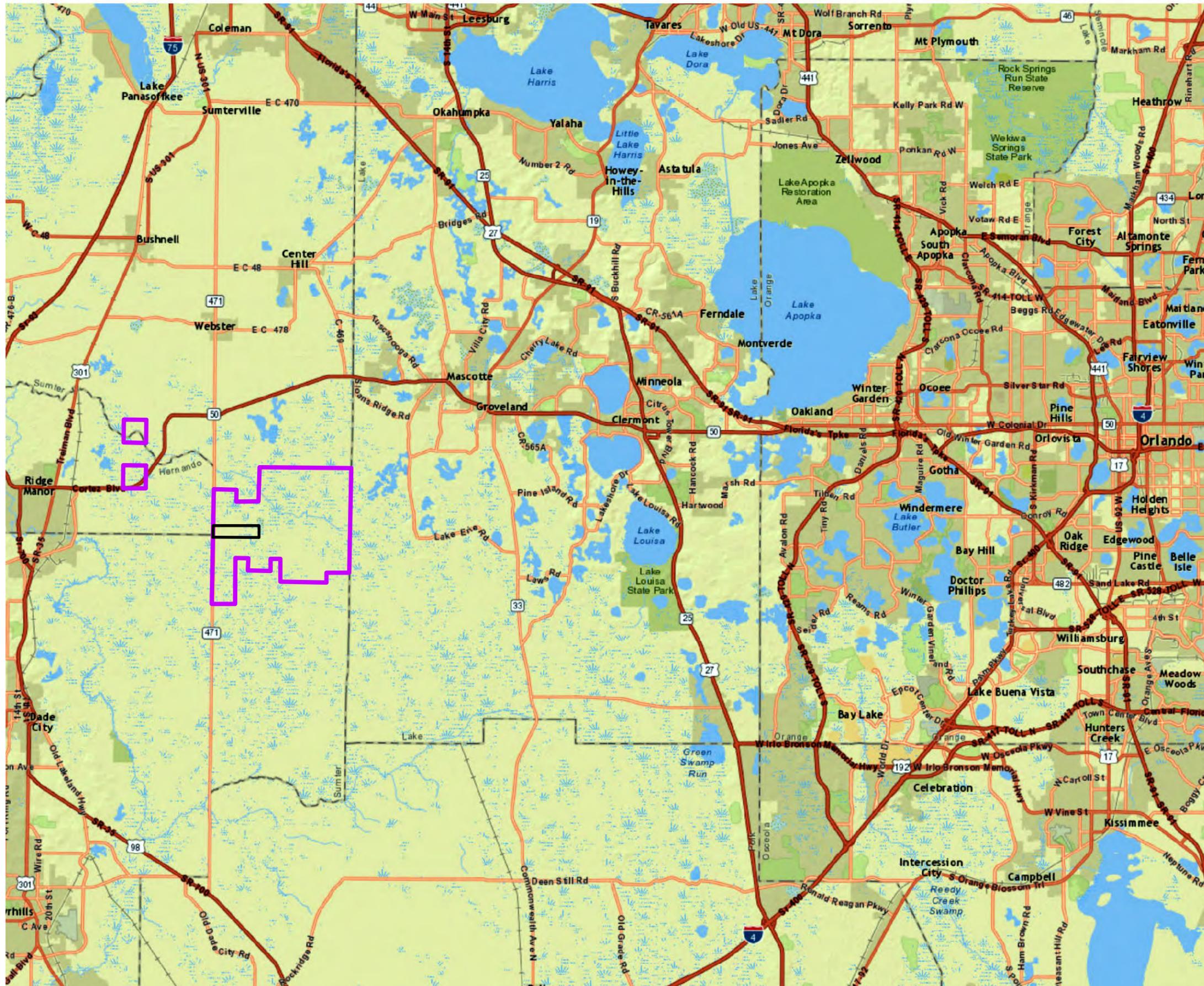
No technical or legal issues have been identified.

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REMAINING LANDS MRS

ATTACHMENT

Figure 1

Withlacoochee Site Location
 Withlacoochee CWS Field Trials and
 ATG Bombing and Gunnery Range
 Sumter and Hernando Counties, Florida



Legend

- MRS Boundary
- Air-to-Ground Bombing and Gunnery Range

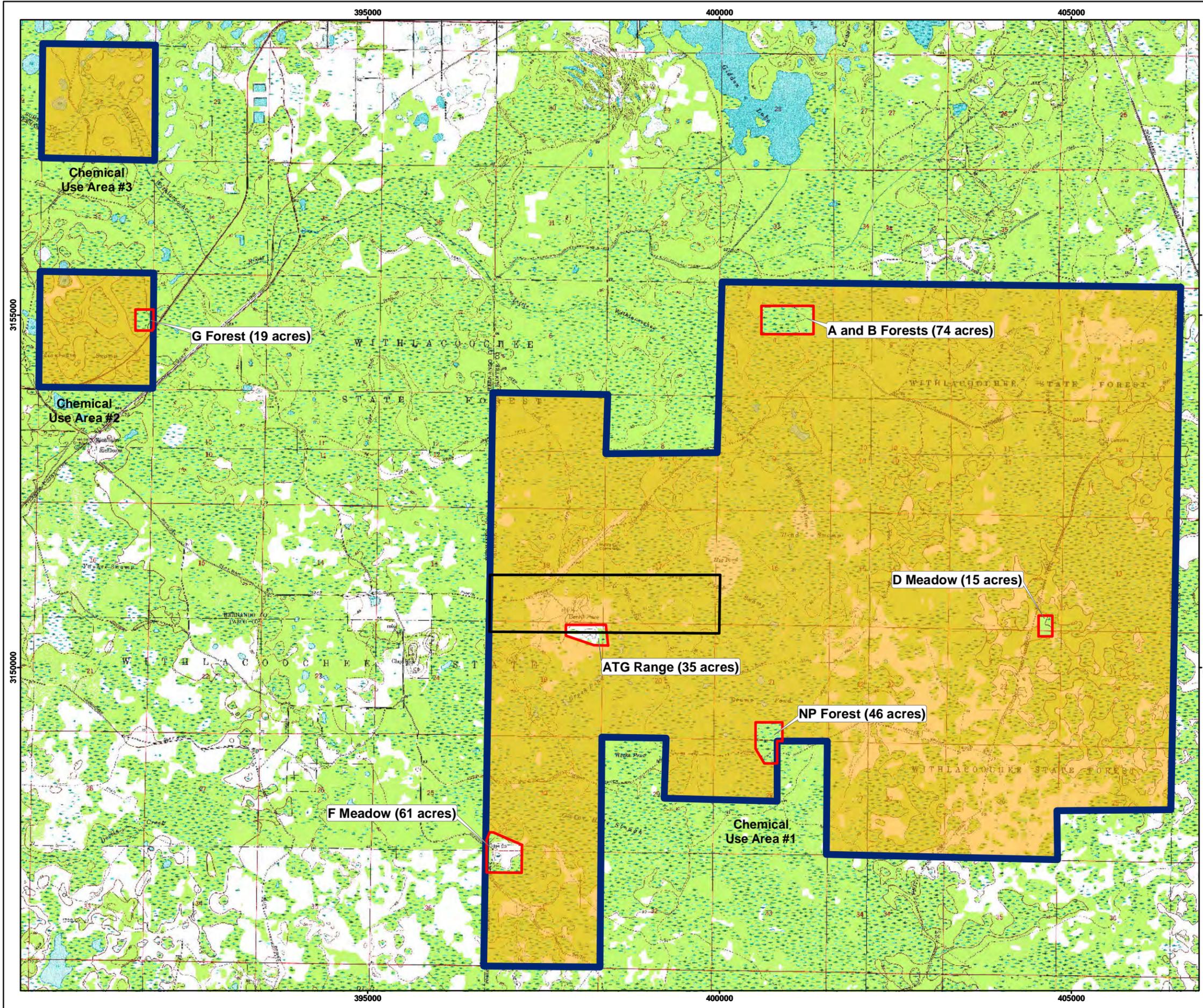
Image: USGS 7.5' Topo Quadrangles, Date Unknown.
 Projection: UTM Zone 17 NAD83, Map Units in Meters



USA Environmental		U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS HUNTSVILLE CENTER	
DESIGNED BY: BT	Withlacoochee Site Location		
DRAWN BY: BT			
CHECKED BY: DS	SCALE: As Shown	PROJECT NUMBER: 747826.05000	
SUBMITTED BY: JC	DATE: June 2016	PAGE NUMBER:	
	FILE:		

Figure 2

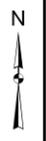
Remaining Lands MRS
 Withlacoochee CWS Field Trials and
 ATG Bombing and Gunnery Range
 Sumter and Hernando Counties, Florida



Legend

- Test Area MRS (250 Acres)
- Remaining Lands MRS (17990 Acres)
- Air-to-Ground Bombing and Gunnery Range
- MRA Boundary

Image: USGS 7.5' Topo Quadrangles, Date Unknown.
 Projection: UTM Zone 17 NAD83, Map Units in Meters



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DESIGNED BY: BT	Withlacoochee CWS Field Trials and ATG Bombing and Gunnery Range		
DRAWN BY: BT			
CHECKED BY: DS	SCALE: As Shown	PROJECT NUMBER: 640138.0002.747826.06000.LABOR	
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