



FEBRUARY 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 1943, the Army leased two non-contiguous sites on Sand Key in Pinellas County for training air crews. Air crews from Pinellas Army Airfield used the 177.8-acre site, north of the causeway in Belleair Beach, as an air-to-ground gunnery range, dropping practice bombs and rockets at targets on the beach. Soldiers from Drew Field used the 2.5-acre anti-aircraft gunnery range, south of the causeway in Belleair Shores, to practice firing machine guns on the beach at aerial targets towed over the Gulf of Mexico. Once World War II ended, the Army no longer needed the site, and the leases were terminated in January 1947.



## ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS

The Army and Navy conducted a number of investigations in the Gulf near the former air-to-ground gunnery range from the 1960s through the early 1990s. The Corps also has completed a number of investigations. After a thorough analysis in 1996, the Corps determined there is no remaining risk associated with the anti-aircraft gunnery range and a low risk associated with the air-to-ground gunnery range. Community awareness activities were implemented to make sure those living in or visiting the area would know about the historical training and what to do should someone see something thought to be munitions-related. No one has reported finding anything since that time.

While no munitions or munitions debris have been identified in more than 20 years, to ensure public safety, the Corps is conducting a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study to determine if anything from the military's training remains in the area and to identify appropriate future actions.

Once the team has analyzed all the available data, they will draft a report and make recommendations. The results will be summarized in a document called a Proposed Plan which will present the alternatives for addressing 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.



Former Pinellas Air-to-Ground Gunnery Range

## 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:  
Largo Public Library  
120 Central Park Dr., Largo, FL  
Telephone: 727-587-6715

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District  
Toll-Free 866-279-4880  
FUDS.Florida@usace.army.mil  
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