

PROPOSED PLAN



APRIL 2020

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

The U.S. government acquired Water Island in 1944 for a coastal defense installation. Water Island is the smallest of the U.S. Virgin Islands and is approximately 1,800 feet from St. Thomas, south of Charlotte Amalie. The Army constructed barracks, gun emplacements, watch towers, underground bunkers, and various other structures, and the installation became known as Fort Segarra. The Army constructed Battery 314 at the top of a hill in the southern portion of the island and the 818th Anti-Motor Torpedo Boat Battery at Druif Point and Providence Point. The batteries were not completed before the end of World War II, and the guns were never installed. The Army deactivated the 818th Battery in 1945 and Fort Segarra in 1946. The Army used Fort Segarra again between 1948 and 1950 for tests associated with the San Jose Project. Most of the land comprising this Formerly Used Defense Site is now privately owned.

ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS

The Corps has conducted a number of investigations of the former Fort Segarra over the years, and a removal action to search for and remove any munitions-related items was completed in 2009. In addition to the removal action, the Corps installed signs at the public ferry and deep water docks to make sure the public is aware of the military's use of the island. The Corps conducted a review in 2012 to see if the remedial action implemented in 2009 was still effective in protecting people from potential risks associated with the military's use of the island. That led to the Corps replacing the two signs.

While no munitions or munitions debris have been identified in more than 20 years, to ensure public safety, the Corps conducted a Remedial Investigation to determine if anything from the military's training remains in the area and to identify appropriate future actions. During the recently completed Remedial Investigation, the team analyzed all the available data from various

FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES | Fort Segarra

sources including historical documents, reports from the Department of Interior, and the Corps' previous investigations. The Corps did not identify any munitions at Fort Segarra nor any other hazard associated with the military. No guns were installed in the fort, and no munitions training was conducted there. While limited chemical warfare materiel and chemical agent use is documented, previous studies and investigations confirmed that the few chemical warfare materiel related items on Water Island were removed, and environmental sampling verified that chemical agents are not present at the site.

PROPOSED PLAN

The next step in the federally mandated process the Corps follows is the Proposed Plan. It summarizes the Remedial Investigation and provides the basis for supporting the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Since there are no hazards or risks associated with the military's use of the fort, no further action is warranted. The Preferred Alternative presented in the Proposed Plan is No Action. Please see the Proposed Plan for further information.



YOUR OPINION MATTERS

The Corps encourages you to comment on the Proposed Plan during the public comment period. Please submit your comments no later than 5:00 p.m. on July 6, 2020, by calling 800.710.5184, emailing FUDS.Florida@usace.army.mil, or mailing your comments to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, ATTN: Frank Araico (PM-M), 701 San Marco Boulevard, Jacksonville, FL 32207. Mail postmarked by July 6, 2020, will be accepted. Public comments received during this period will be considered in the final decision-making process.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District
800.710.5184
FUDS.Florida@usace.army.mil
www.saj.usace.army.mil/FortSegarra

Project documents are available at the Corps' website:
www.saj.usace.army.mil/FortSegarra

