

Environmental Fact Sheet

NAVAL WEAPONS STATION SEAL BEACH, DETACHMENT CONCORD

U.S. Department of the Navy, Engineering Field Activity West • February 1999

The Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach, Detachment Concord (NWSSB Det Concord) has generated this fact sheet to inform the public about environmental investigations and subsequent cleanup underway at the facility. This fact sheet contains general information about environmental activities and upcoming public involvement opportunities related to the site environmental cleanup. Future fact sheets will focus on specific areas or sites.

THE BACKGROUND

NWSSB Det Concord encompasses nearly 13,000 acres in north-central Contra Costa County, California. NWSSB Det Concord is the major naval munitions facility on the west coast and has operated as a shipping port for ammunition and weapons since 1942.

An environmental investigation is underway to identify and eliminate or minimize environmental contamination that may have resulted from past operations at NWSSB Det Concord. The environmental effort is carried out under the Department of Defense's Installation Restoration Program.

The Installation Restoration Program environmental team includes representatives from the Navy, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), the California Environmental Protection Agency's Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), and other federal and state agencies.

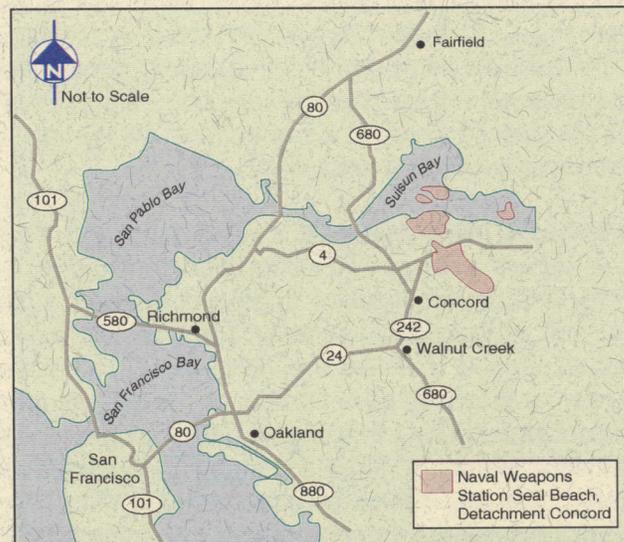
In December 1994, the NWSSB Det Concord was placed on the U.S. EPA National Priorities List. The National Priorities List is an inventory of sites that the U.S. EPA has identified under the Superfund law that require investigation and possibly long-term environmental cleanup.

THE NAVY'S ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANUP PROGRAM

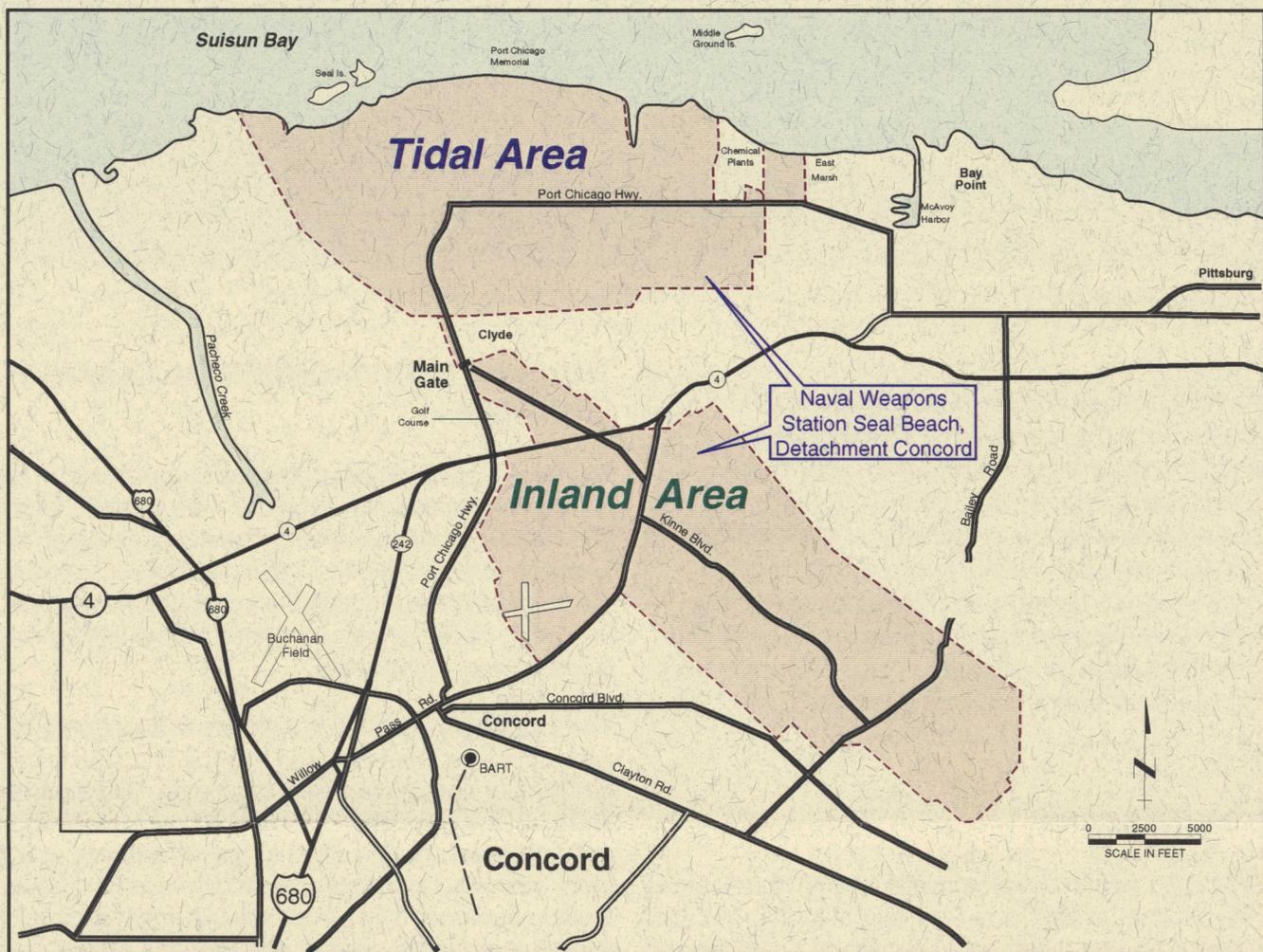
The Navy's environmental cleanup program, known as the Installation Restoration Program, was initiated to identify and clean up environmental contamination caused by past waste handling practices. These practices occurred before the potentially hazardous nature of these wastes was fully understood and before environmental regulations for their disposal were established.

The Installation Restoration Program follows a step-by-step approach (see chart on page 3). The first step is called a preliminary assessment/site inspection. During the **preliminary assessment**, information on use, storage, and spills of known or suspected hazardous substances is gathered, primarily from historical records and interviews with facility personnel. The Navy uses this information to determine if a particular area or site requires further study to confirm the release of contaminants to the environment.

NWSSB Det Concord Vicinity Map



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Naval weapons Station Seal Beach, Detachment Concord Site Map

If the preliminary assessment indicates further study is necessary, a **site inspection** is conducted. A site inspection involves verifying a suspected release of contaminants to the environment by physical sampling. If contaminant releases are confirmed, a remedial investigation and feasibility study may be necessary.

The **remedial investigation** is a full investigation of a site to determine the nature and extent of contamination. During the remedial investigation stage, groundwater, surface water, soil, and biological samples are collected and analyzed, as needed, to determine the types of contaminants and how far they may have spread. A risk assessment is also performed during this phase. If the risk assessment determines there is no threat to human health or the environment, the site will be recommended for "no action" through a **proposed plan** and **record of decision (ROD)**.

A **feasibility study** is conducted concurrently with the remedial investigation to evaluate possible cleanup alternatives. Each alternative is evaluated for effectiveness, cost, technical feasibility, and protection of human health and the environment. Once the remedial investigation and feasibility study are completed, a **proposed plan** for cleanup is produced. During the public comment period, a public meeting is held to address significant community concerns. Public input is solicited throughout the entire remedial investigation/feasibility study process and especially at milestones such as the proposed plan.

The next step involves preparing a final **remedial action plan** and a **Record of Decision**. These documents provide the reasoning behind the selection of a particular cleanup alternative. After the remedial action plan and Record of Decision have been formally reviewed, approved,

and signed by the regulatory agencies, the remedial design/remedial action phase begins.

During the **remedial design**, the specific construction documents are prepared for the selected cleanup alternative. The **remedial action** is the final step of the Installation Restoration Program where the cleanup action is performed and appropriate monitoring of a site occurs.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANUP ACTIVITIES AT NWSSB DET CONCORD

NWSSB Det Concord is divided into two geographical areas called the Tidal Area and the Inland Area.

The Tidal Area includes about 6,077 acres of mainland adjacent to Suisun Bay and 1,571 acres of land on six islands in Suisun Bay. The Tidal Area is used for receiving, inspecting, and storing munitions transported to and from off-site locations.

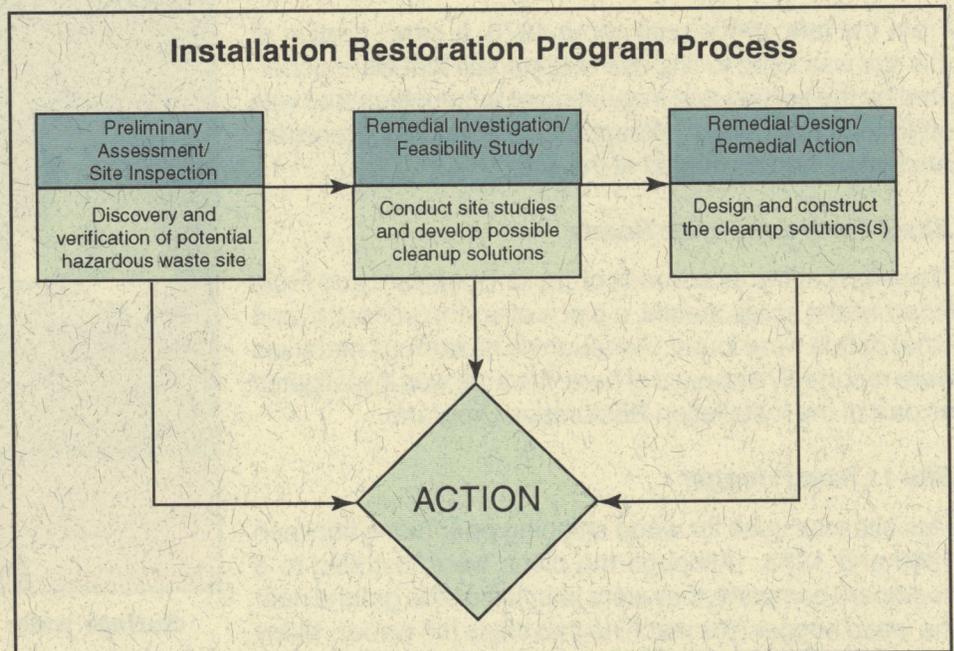
The Inland Area is located south of the Tidal Area and encompasses about 5,200 acres. The Inland Area contains various facilities for munitions storage, munitions inspection and maintenance, administration, public works, supply, and housing.

The environmental investigation and cleanup effort at NWSSB Det Concord has four groups of sites: Litigation Area Sites, Tidal Area Sites, Inland Area Sites, and Solid Waste Management Unit Sites. The grouping of these sites occurred because sites were discovered and evaluated for further action at different times and under different regulatory programs. The Litigation Area Sites and the Tidal Area Sites contain parcels of land located in the Tidal Area of the naval weapons station. The Inland Area Sites and the Solid Waste Management Unit Sites contain parcels of land located only in the inland portion of the naval weapons station.

LITIGATION AREA SITES

The Navy purchased the Litigation Area sites in the late 1970s to provide a buffer zone for the munitions handling operations at NWSSB Det Concord. After the Navy purchased the land, it was discovered that the sites had been contaminated by former property owners and owners of adjacent property. These sites are referred to as the Litigation Area sites because of the extensive legal actions pursued by the Navy against those property owners to recover cleanup costs.

Much of the Litigation Area is considered to be environmentally sensitive because it includes wetland areas that provide habitat for threatened and endangered animal species. As a result, the Litigation Area was subdivided into two areas: one where highly contaminated soil required removal to avoid causing significant damage to the environment and another where removal of contaminated soil was expected to cause more environmental damage than the contaminated soil itself. The contaminated soils were removed from the most damaged areas, and the remaining areas are being monitored to ensure that any residual contaminants that are present do not pose a significant threat to the environment. The Navy's monitoring program includes annual sampling and field investigations of the sites for a 5-year period, after which the Navy and the regulatory agencies will evaluate all the data and determine if monitoring plan revisions and further response actions are necessary. The 5th year of monitoring for these sites will begin in April 1999.



TIDAL AREA SITES

Four Tidal Area sites (Sites 1, 2, 9, and 11) are currently undergoing investigation. These sites are located in or adjacent to wetland areas.

Site 1 Tidal Area Landfill

The Tidal Area Landfill covers approximately 13 acres and is estimated to contain approximately 33,000 tons of waste. The landfill served as the primary disposal area for NWSSB Det Concord from approximately 1944 to 1979. In addition to household garbage from the base and surrounding communities, hazardous materials were also reportedly disposed of in the landfill. The Navy, in consultation with EPA and DTSC, has determined that the landfill should be "capped" in order to protect people, plants, and animals from the contaminated soils and refuse. The Navy has prepared a feasibility study (FS) to evaluate the various ways to cap the landfill. In early 1999, the Navy will issue its proposed plan for public comment and the Record of Decision (ROD), which outline the proposed approach to capping the landfill. A fact sheet will be distributed during this same timeframe.

The Navy is currently in the final stages of completing a remedial investigation for the following sites: 2, 9, and 11. Based on the results of the remedial investigation and all prior environmental investigations, the Navy and the regulatory agencies, with input from the community, will decide how to address the sites.

Site 2 R Area Disposal

From the late 1940s until about 1976, a small portion of this site was used to dispose of materials that were generated by the sorting and inspection of ammunition that was off-loaded from ships. Weapons were painted, stenciled, renovated, and packaged at the site.

Site 9 Froid and Taylor Roads

This site is at the crossroads of Taylor Boulevard and Froid Road where scrap metals, a piece of spent ordnance, and other debris were found. Although no hazardous materials were reportedly disposed of here, the area was investigated as part of the Installation Restoration Program.

Site 11 Wood Hogger

This site was used for wood chipping operations between 1969 and 1973. Although the chips were first sold to a fiberboard company, they were later left on the ground near the wood hogger (the machine that chips the wood). Many

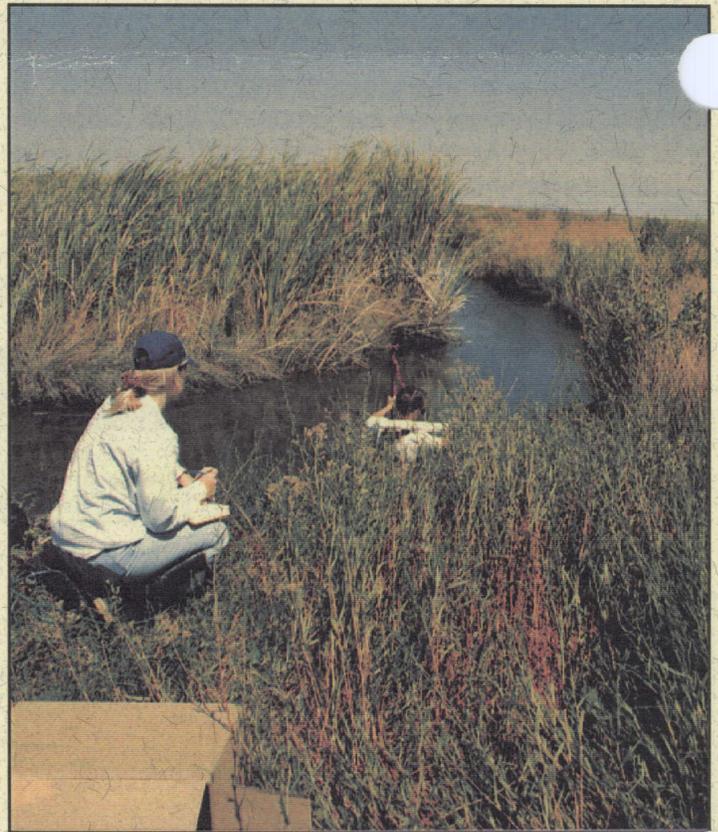
of the wood chips were alleged to have come from ammunition crates that were treated with a potentially hazardous chemical to preserve the wood.

INLAND AREA SITES

The Navy has conducted extensive investigations and completed a remedial investigation in the Inland Area, including collecting and analyzing soils, sediment, and groundwater to see if they contain any contaminants and if those contaminants pose a threat to people, plants, and animals. The results of those investigations show that these sites do not pose such a threat; therefore, the Navy will propose that no further action be taken at these sites. A proposed plan (in fact sheet format) for the Inland Area sites, elaborating on the "no action" recommendation, will be available for public comment early in 1999.

Site 13 Burn Area

This site was once used for the destruction of live ammunition. The area was also briefly used for fire-fighting training, where napalm and fuel oil were ignited and extinguished by firefighters. The residual fuels and napalm wastes from these activities have been removed and disposed of off site.



Surface water was sampled in the litigation area.



Some portions of the litigation area are considered environmentally sensitive.

Site 17 Building IA-24

This site consists of Building IA-24, a facility used to store and maintain forklifts. This maintenance included steam cleaning the forklifts and their batteries to remove oil and grease. The steam cleaner formerly released contaminated wash water through a pipeline into Seal Creek; however, the steam cleaning area has not been used since 1988. The site also contained two underground storage tanks that once held diesel fuel. The tanks have been removed and replaced with aboveground fuel storage tanks.

Site 22 Building 7SH5

This site consists of Building 7SH5, which once housed facilities to repair missile wings and fins. Missile repair included paint stripping, cleaning, and painting the missile parts and required the use of several types of cleaning solvents and paint thinners.

Site 27 Building IA-20

This site consists of the area north of and adjacent to Building IA-20, which formerly housed a chemical laboratory and materials testing laboratory. The chemical laboratory was primarily used to test oils and hydraulic fluids and to develop new weapons test methods. The materials testing laboratory evaluated the structural integrity and dynamics of ordnance casings, shells, and missiles.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT UNIT SITES

The solid waste management units (SWMUs) under investigation are SWMU Sites 2, 5, 7, and 18, located within the operations area of the Inland Area. These are sites where hazardous waste has been generated, treated, stored, or disposed of in the past. A fifth SWMU site (Site 29) is Building IA 25, a former manufacturing and testing facility. These SWMU sites are currently undergoing a site inspection (SI) to determine whether past activities have contributed to releases at the sites, and, if so, the sources and extent of the contamination.

Sunday: Closed

Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Thursday: 12 noon to 8 p.m.

Central Library/Pleasant Hill
Contra Costa County Library
1750 Oak Park Boulevard
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523-4497
Phone (925) 646-6434

Detailed information and documents from the Installation
Restoration Program for NWSB Det Concord can be
found in the information repository at:

INFORMATION REPOSITORY

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**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT
NWSB DET CONCORD, PLEASE CONTACT:**

The Navy has established a Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) for NWSB Det Concord to provide a forum in which community members, the Navy, and regulatory agencies can discuss response actions and approaches. The RAB includes local community members representing diverse interests and backgrounds. RAB community members serve in an advisory capacity to review and comment on technical documents and provide input throughout the response action process. The RAB is intended to supplement the formal public comment period on the proposed (response action) plan to ensure community involvement at every step. RAB meetings are held the third Thursday of the month on an as-needed basis at 7:00 p.m. at the Clyde Community Center, 109 Wellington Avenue, Clyde, California. The meetings are open to the public and advertised in the *Contra Costa Times* Community Meeting bulletin board. We encourage you to attend the RAB meetings and learn more about environmental activities at NWSB Det Concord.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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Address Correction Requested