

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New England District (USACE) provides ongoing support and updates to the community about efforts to preserve and protect the formerly used defense site.

This Fact Sheet provides information about ongoing work and efforts to help the community be more informed about the beneficial reuse of the refuge and park area formerly used as the Charlestown Naval Auxiliary Landing Field (CNALF).

Introduction

CNALF is actively being investigated under the Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) as Formerly Used Defense Site Project Number D01RI0008. USACE has been tasked with performing a Remedial Investigation (RI) in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) to understand the nature and extent of chemicals of potential concern and munitions and explosives of concern relating to former U.S. Navy operations.

Background

During World War II, between 1940 and 1942, the Navy acquired approximately 630 acres for the CNALF in Charlestown, Rhode Island. Pilots, flight crews, and support personnel trained extensively at the landing field. The area also served as a support facility to Quonset Point Naval Air Station located in North Kingstown on Narragansett Bay.

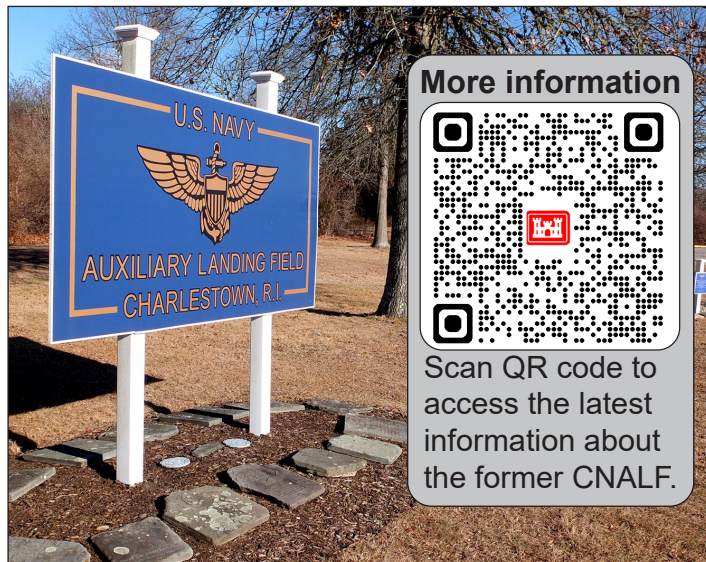
CNALF closed in the 1970s with ownership of the land transferring to the Town of Charlestown and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1981 to be used for the benefit of the community and the citizens of Rhode Island. Today, the CNALF site serves as two areas for recreation and conservation: Ninigret Park and Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge.

Environmental Investigations

The RI consists of the collection, testing, and evaluation of surface and subsurface soil samples,

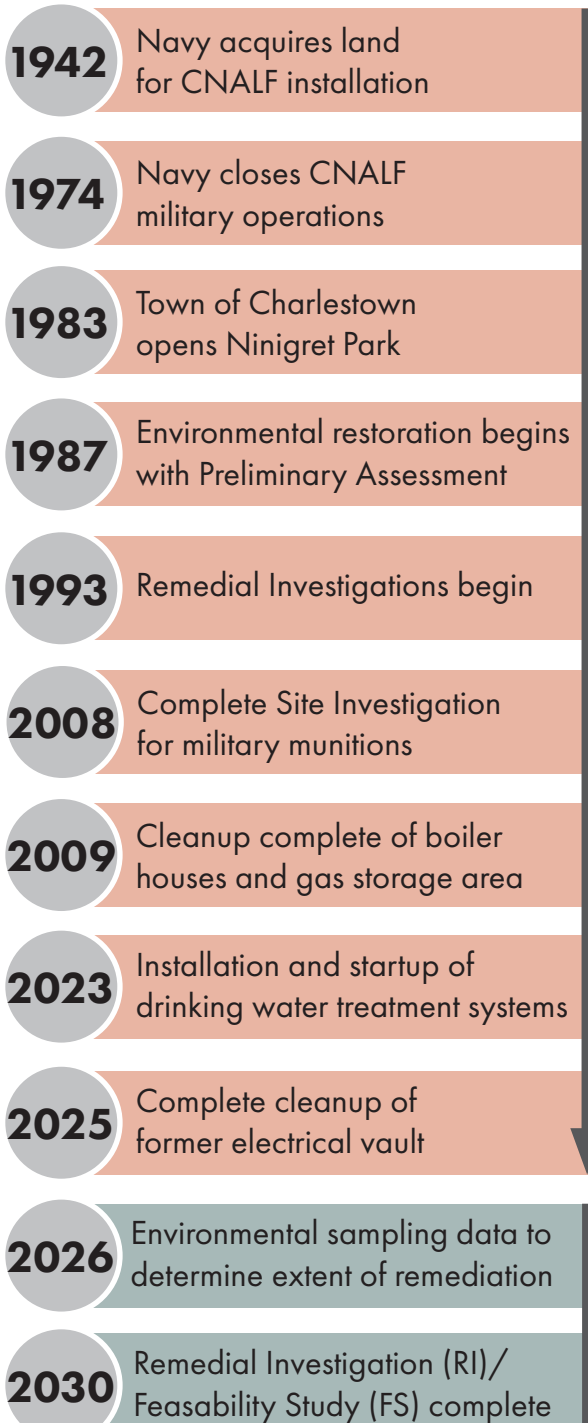


Students learn about the environment of the Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge during an educational visit. The refuge was part of the Charlestown Naval Auxiliary Landing Field in World War II. (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Photo)



sediment samples, surface water samples, and groundwater samples to evaluate potential current and future human health and environmental risks related to former U.S. Navy uses of the site. The RI approach was developed in collaboration with the Town of Charlestown, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, as documented in the RI Work Plan (March 24, 2023). The ongoing RI is expected to be completed in 2030.

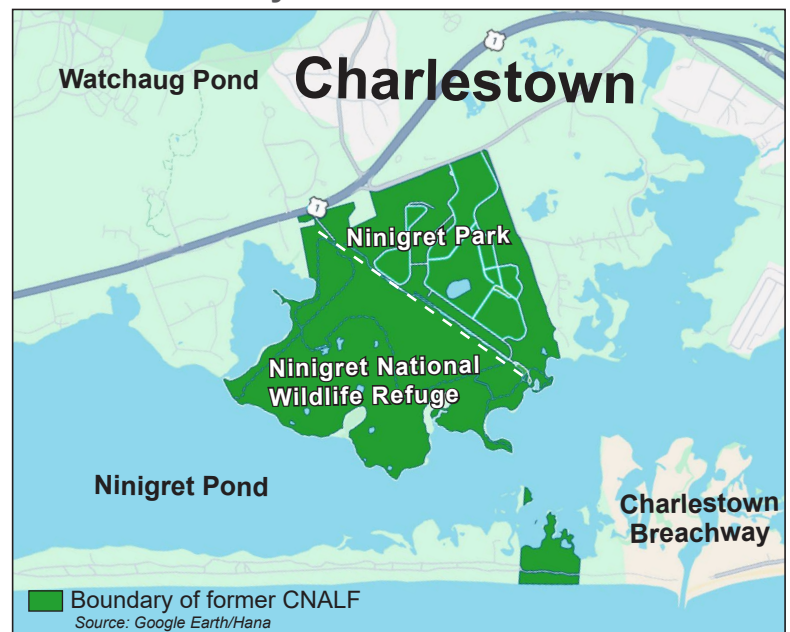
CNALF Formerly Used Defense Site Timeline: 1942 to Present Day



Next Steps and Major Milestones

- ❑ **Proposed Plan (PP):** Summarizes alternatives studied in detailed analysis phase of RI/FS.
- ❑ **Record of Decision (ROD):** Documents the remedial action plan for the project site.
- ❑ **Remedial Design (RD):** Technical approach to be used in remedy and cleanup detailed in ROD.
- ❑ **Remedial Action (RA):** Site cleanup using plans detailed in RD phase, followed by report.

CNALF Formerly Used Defense Site



Ninigret Restoration Advisory Board

The Ninigret Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) was formed in 2025 after a community questionnaire found strong support for establishing a RAB at the former CNALF. Col. Justin R. Pabis, PE, the Commander and District Engineer for USACE, New England District, approved forming the Ninigret RAB on Feb. 28, 2025.

Twelve members were selected by a temporary RAB Selection Panel based on Community Interest Forms (CIF) submitted by interested individuals in Charlestown and the surrounding area. After several training sessions and work groups, the RAB adopted Operating Procedures and selected chairs.

The purpose of the RAB is to increase communication, collaboration, and transparency among community members and stakeholders involved in or affected by remediation efforts and activities at the former CNALF. RAB meetings are open to the public for attendance and participation. Public notices of RAB meetings will be published on the USACE project website for CNALF, in *The Westerly Sun*, *The Providence Journal*, and posted on the Town of Charlestown website.

Contact us

Please contact us with questions or comments about the CNALF FUDS:

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