



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)

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

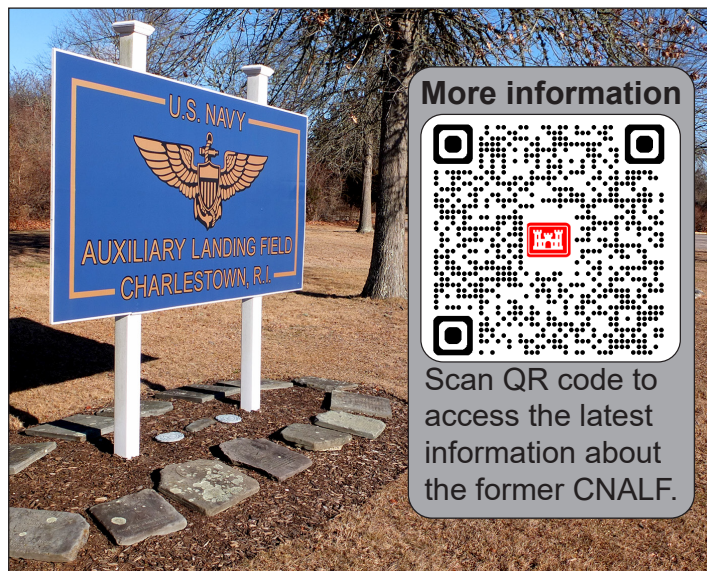
During World War II, between 1940 and 1942, the Navy acquired approximately 630 acres for the CNALF in Charlestown, Rhode Island. Pilots, flight

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.

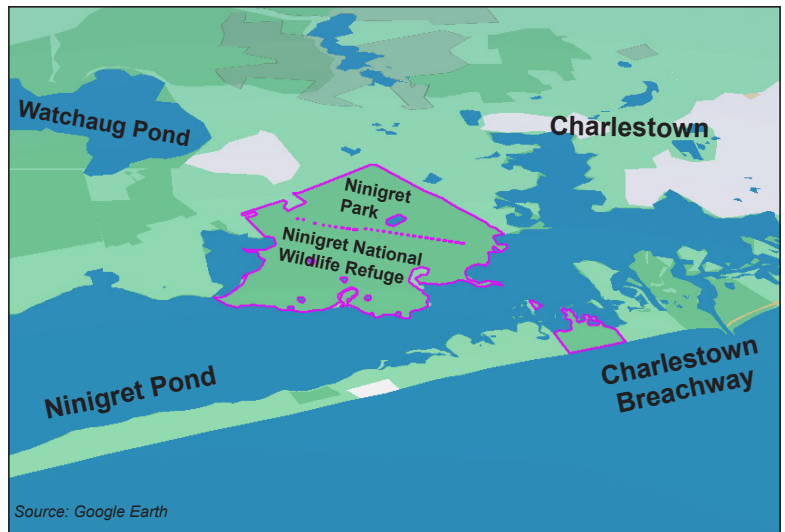
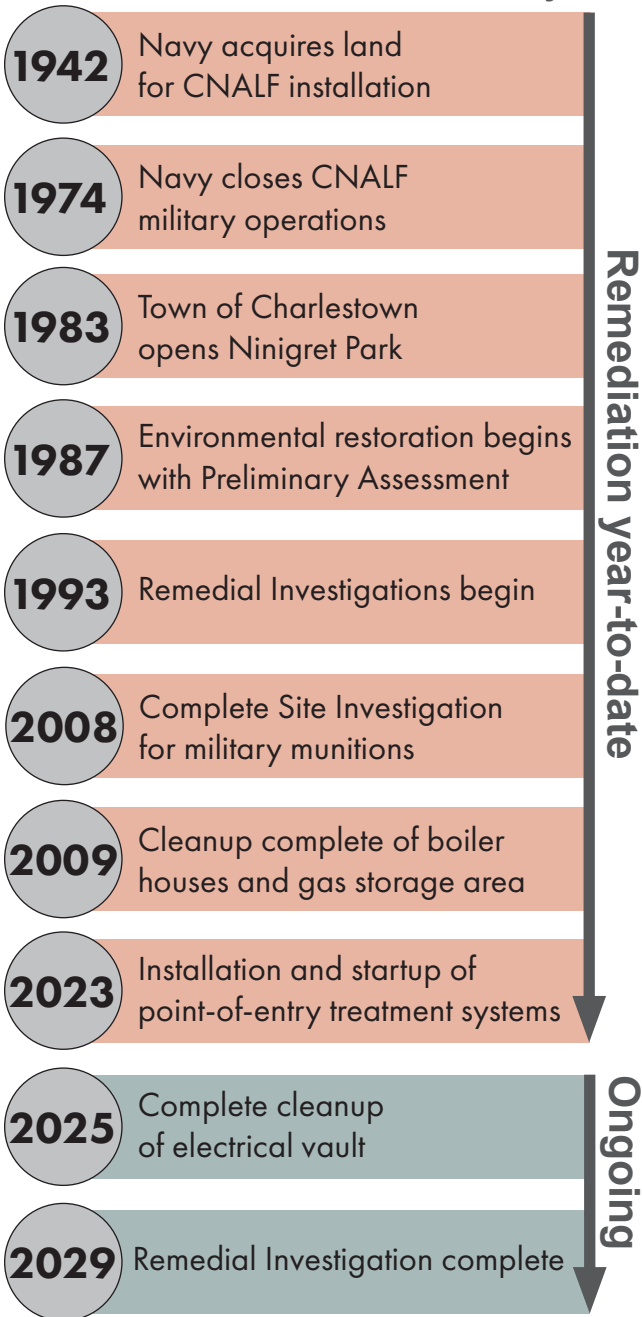
CNALF closed in the early 1970s with ownership of the land transferring to the Town of Charlestown and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1981 to be used for the benefit of the community and the citizens of Rhode Island. Today, the CNALF site serves as two areas for conservation and recreation: Ninigret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

Environmental Investigations

The RI consists of the collection, testing, and evaluation of surface and subsurface soil samples, 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 RI is planned to continue into 2026.



CNALF Formerly Used Defense Site Timeline: 1942 to Present Day



■ Boundary of CNALF Formerly Used Defense Site

Restoration Advisory Board

A Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) is one of several methods USACE uses to facilitate public participation by providing a collaborative forum for community stakeholders to discuss and identify concerns, opportunities, and goals for land use and remediation efforts for formerly used defense sites.

A RAB exchanges information between USACE and community stakeholders. RAB members review and comment on technical documents and plans related to environmental studies and restoration activities. RAB members serve as a liaison between the community and USACE and are available to meet with community members and groups to answer questions.

USACE held a public meeting on January 8, 2025, at the Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge Kettle Pond Visitor Center and conducted a questionnaire to determine community concerns, interest in the RAB process, identify volunteers who might serve on a board, and to answer questions about work and future plans at the former CNALF.

Contact us

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

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The Grumman F6F-5N Hellcat night-fighter was one of the aircraft used to train pilots at CNALF in the 1940s. (National Archives Photo)