



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT
696 VIRGINIA ROAD
CONCORD, MA 01742-2751

CENAE-PPE

28 February 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Positive Determination of Restoration Advisory Board, Charlestown Naval Auxiliary Landing Field, Formerly Used Defense Sites, Property No. D01RI0008--.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this Memorandum for Record (MFR) is to document my decision to establish a Department of Defense (DoD) Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) pursuant to 32 C.F.R. § 202.2(a) for the former Charlestown Naval Auxiliary Landing Field (CNALF) Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) Property No. D01RI0008--. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) New England District previously conducted a RAB assessment in 2018 and re-assessments in 2020 and 2022, which resulted in negative determinations. A 2024 RAB re-assessment evaluated public interest in the property and determined there has been a change in the level of interest that warrants the establishment of a RAB.

2. A RAB is a stakeholder group that meets on a regular basis to discuss environmental restorations at a specific property that was formerly (or is currently) owned by the DoD, and where the DoD oversees the environmental restoration process. In accordance with federal law, a RAB is to be established when the following requirements are satisfied:

- a. There is sufficient and sustained community interest in a FUDS property; and
- b. One of the following:
 - (1) At least 50 local citizens petition the installation for the creation of a RAB;
 - (2) Federal, state, tribal, or local government request the formation of a RAB, or;
 - (3) The FUDS District otherwise determines the need for a RAB after reviewing relevant information [32 C.F.R. § 202.2(a)].

Background

3. CNALF was acquired between 1940 and 1942 by the U.S. Navy and encompasses approximately 630 acres in Charlestown, Rhode Island. CNALF was used as a pilot and flight crew training facility during World War II and later as a support facility to Quonset Point Naval Air Station. CNALF was closed in the early 1970s and transferred to the Town of Charlestown and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for beneficial reuse in 1981. The property that comprised CNALF is today used for conservation and recreation as Ninigret Park and Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge.

4. On 25 January 2017, a Revised Inventory Project Report (INPR) authorized the creation of FUDS Projects 08 and 09 at CNALF to break up the larger hazardous, toxic, radioactive waste (HTRW) Project 01 into smaller projects allowing progress to be documented and future efforts to be conducted more efficiently.

5. In July 2018, an initial RAB assessment was conducted to determine the level of public interest at the CNALF FUDS property. No previous RAB assessments had been documented. The RAB assessment involved a review of permanent record file documentation, internet and newspaper research, and discussions with stakeholders including the community, government officials, and regulators. Based on the permanent record file review, research, and stakeholder discussions, there was limited public coverage or interest in the property. Additional stakeholders including community members, opinion leaders, and government officials did not express interest in establishing a RAB. The initial RAB assessment conducted in 2018 and re-assessments in 2020 and 2022 resulted in negative determinations.

6. In August 2019, a Community Involvement Plan was prepared and a hardcopy of the Administrative Record was updated at the Cross' Mills Public Library located at 4417 Old Post Road in Charlestown, Rhode Island.

7. In July 2024, a RAB re-assessment was conducted to determine the level of public interest at the CNALF FUDS property. The July 2024 re-assessment involved discussions with stakeholders including the community, government officials, and regulators. Six stakeholders, including one community organization, expressed interest in forming a RAB at the CNALF FUDS property.

8. In December 2024, a project webpage was created to provide project information. The project website is: <https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Projects-Topics/Former-Charlestown-Naval-Auxiliary-Landing-Field/>

9. On 08 January 2025, a public meeting was held in Charlestown, Rhode Island to explain to stakeholders the purpose of a RAB and the process in forming a RAB.

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A questionnaire conducted during the public meeting and open for a 30-day response period following the public meeting resulted with 39 respondents interested in becoming a RAB board member and 63 respondents interested in attending a RAB meeting.

Determination

10. Due to the high level of interest at the public meeting on 08 January 2025 and more than 50 local citizens interested in the creation of a RAB, there is sufficient community interest for establishing a RAB at the CNALF FUDS property.

11. In light of the information discussed above, I have determined that there is sufficient and sustained interest in the establishment and operation of an official DoD RAB for the CNALF FUDS property as required in 32 C.F.R. § 202.2(a) to establish and operate a DoD RAB.

12. Although not required by DoDM 4715.20, this MFR shall be included in the administrative record file for the CNALF FUDS Property No. D01RI0008--.

13. The point of contact for this action is Mr. Gary Morin, Chief, Environmental Project Management Branch, who may be reached at (978) 318-8232.

JUSTIN R. PABIS, PE
COL, EN
Commanding