DEFENSE ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION PROGRAM
FOR FORMERLY USED SITES
INVENTORY PROJECT REPORT
GOULD ISLAND (NAVY TORPEDO TESTING FACILITY)
NARRAGANSETT BAY, JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND
PROJECT NO. D01RI033801

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PART I - PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
GOULD ISLAND (NAVY TORPEDO TESTING FACILITY)
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1. INTRODUCTION

At the request of the Huntsville Division, New England Division conducted a site inspection of the former Navy Torpedo Testing Facility on Gould Island in Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island. The purpose of the inspection was to assess the presence of unsafe debris, hazardous and toxic waste contamination, and unexploded ordnance. This report addresses debris on the Island. An assessment of hazardous and toxic waste and unexploded ordnance is addressed in Project No. D01RI033800.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

No building demolition/debris removal project is proposed at the former Navy Torpedo Testing Facility on Gould Island because the potential hazards from the buildings are visible, access to the Island is limited, and the Island is used for wildlife conservation.

3. DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is a part of the former U.S. Navy Torpedo Testing Facility, and currently is owned by the State of Rhode Island, Department of Environmental Management. It is used by the state as a bird sanctuary. Access to the site is by boat, and is limited through a permit system managed by the State. There is no known history of injury to the public resulting from the unsafe buildings.

ATTACHMENT 1 - SITE SURVEY SUMMARY SHEET

SITE SURVEY SUMMARY SHEET
FOR
PROJECT NO. D01RI033801

SITE NAME: Gould Island (Navy Torpedo Testing Facility, or Naval Underwater Systems Center).

LOCATION: Narragansett Bay, Jamestown, Rhode Island.

DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM: The site contains three buildings which show signs of structural weakness and one pier which constitutes a navigational and safety hazard.

SITE HISTORY: The date and method by which the United States acquired Gould Island is unknown. The Island was actively used by the Navy during World War I as a torpedo storage facility and a seaplane base. A portion of the site was deeded to the State of Rhode Island in 1976, and another portion was transferred to the State in 1989. (The remainder of the Island continues to be owned by the United States.)

AVAILABLE STUDIES AND REPORTS: Final Initial Assessment Study of the Naval Education and Training Center, Newport, RI, March 1983; Hazardous Waste Site Safety Plan for Gould Island, Newport, RI, February 1989; and Executive Summary for Confirmation Study on Hazardous Waste Sites at Naval Education and Training Center, Newport, RI.

CATEGORY OF HAZARD: Unsafe building and debris.

BASIS FOR DETERMINATION OF DOD RESPONSIBILITY: The buildings and pier were used by the Navy and abandoned. They have not been used subsequent to DOD usage.

POC/DISTRICT: Robert L. Batt, New England Division, (617) 647-8590.

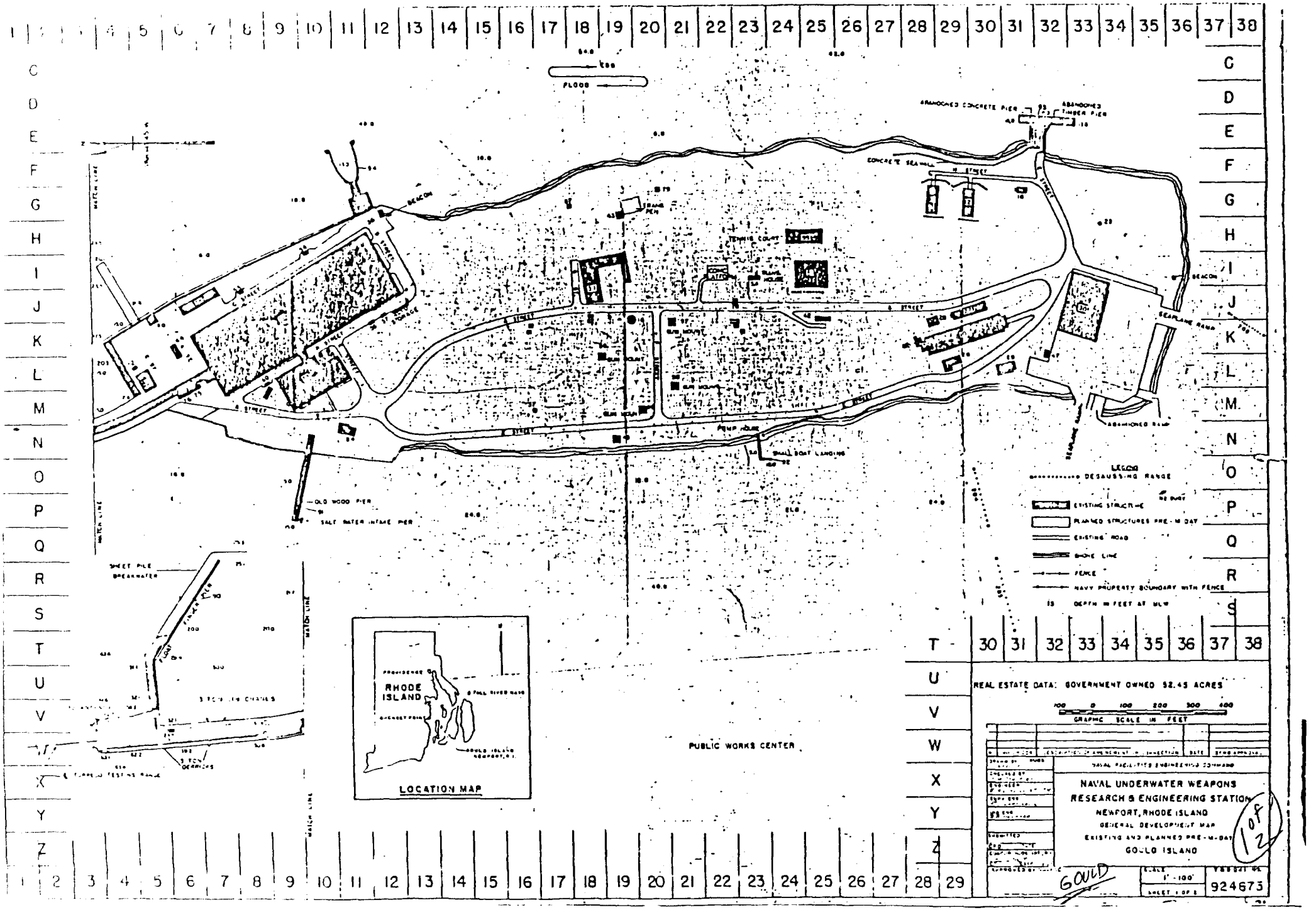
POC/OWNER: Jim Meyers, State of Rhode Island, Department of Environmental Management, Promenade Street, Providence, Rhode Island, (401) 789-0281.

STATUS: The site currently is owned by the State of Rhode Island for use as a wildlife sanctuary. (The remainder of Gould Island is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Navy.)

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED REMEDIAL ACTION: None.

ESTIMATED COST: None.

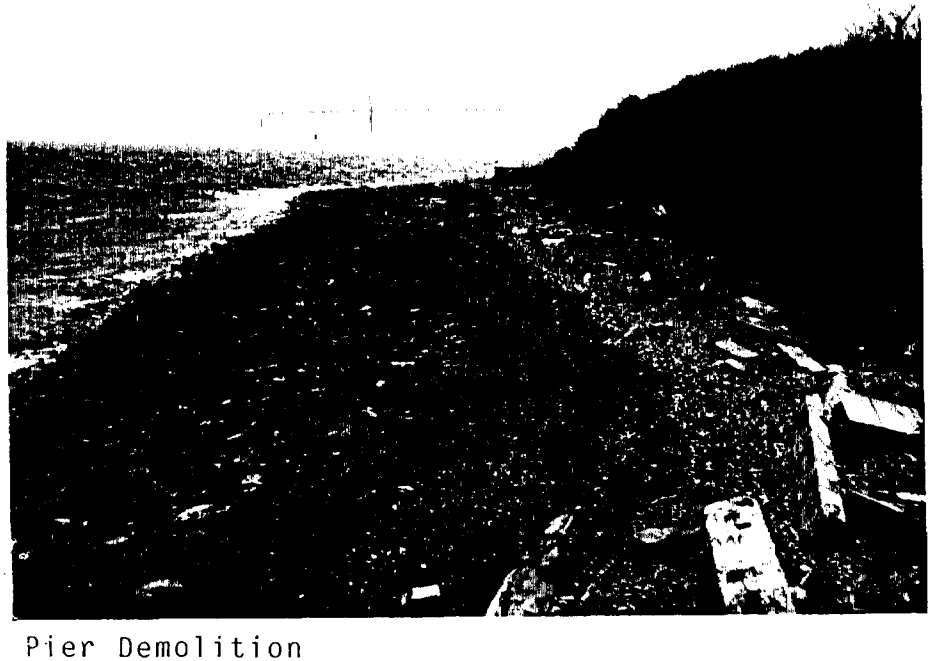
ATTACHMENT 2 - SITE MAP & PHOTOGRAPHS


FLOOD
ABANDONED CONCRETE PIER
ABANDONED TIMBER PIER
CONCRETE SEAWALL
BEACON
TENNIS COURT
SEAPLANE RAMP
ABANDONED RAMP
SMALL BOAT LANDING
PUMP HOUSE
OLD WOOD PIER
SALT WATER INTAKE PIER
SHEET PILE BREAKWATER
WATER LINE
LEGEND
DESAUSSING RANGE
EXISTING STRUCTURE
PLANNED STRUCTURES PRE-M DAY
EXISTING ROAD
SHORE LINE
FENCE
NAVY PROPERTY BOUNDARY WITH FENCE
DEPTH IN FEET AT MLW
PROVIDENCE
RHODE ISLAND
FALL RIVER NAVY
GOULD ISLAND
LOCATION MAP
PUBLIC WORKS CENTER
REAL ESTATE DATA: GOVERNMENT OWNED 52.45 ACRES
GRAPHIC SCALE IN FEET
NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING COMMAND
NAVAL UNDERWATER WEAPONS
RESEARCH & ENGINEERING STATION
NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND
GENERAL DEVELOPMENT MAP
EXISTING AND PLANNED PRE-M-DAY
GOULD ISLAND
1 OF 2
GOULD
SCALE 1" = 100'
SHEET 1 OF 2
924673

GOULD ISLAND
NO. D01RI03380

Pier Demolition

Pier Demolition

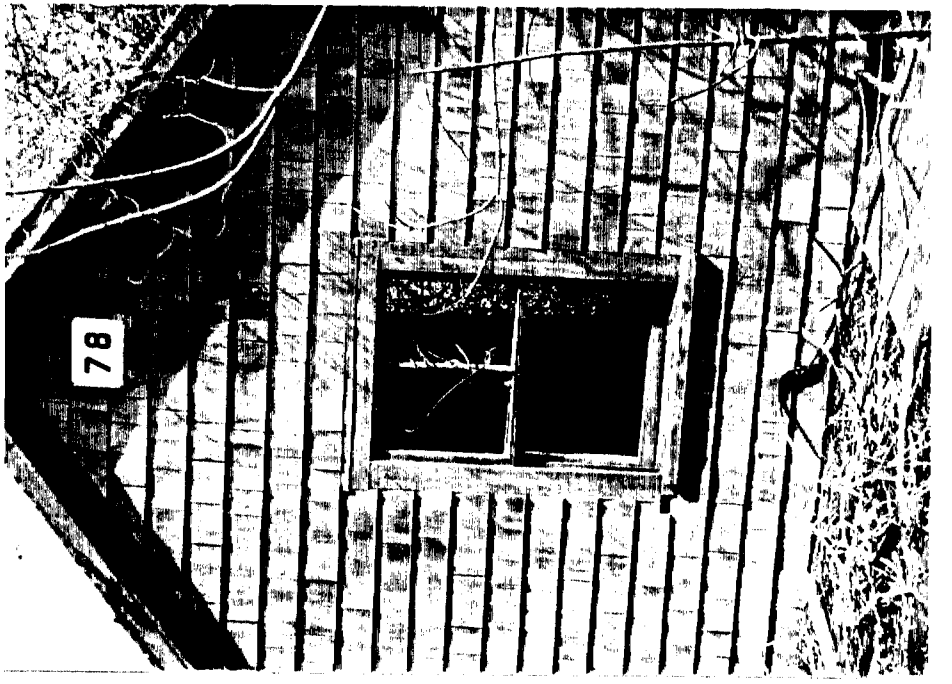


Pier Demolition

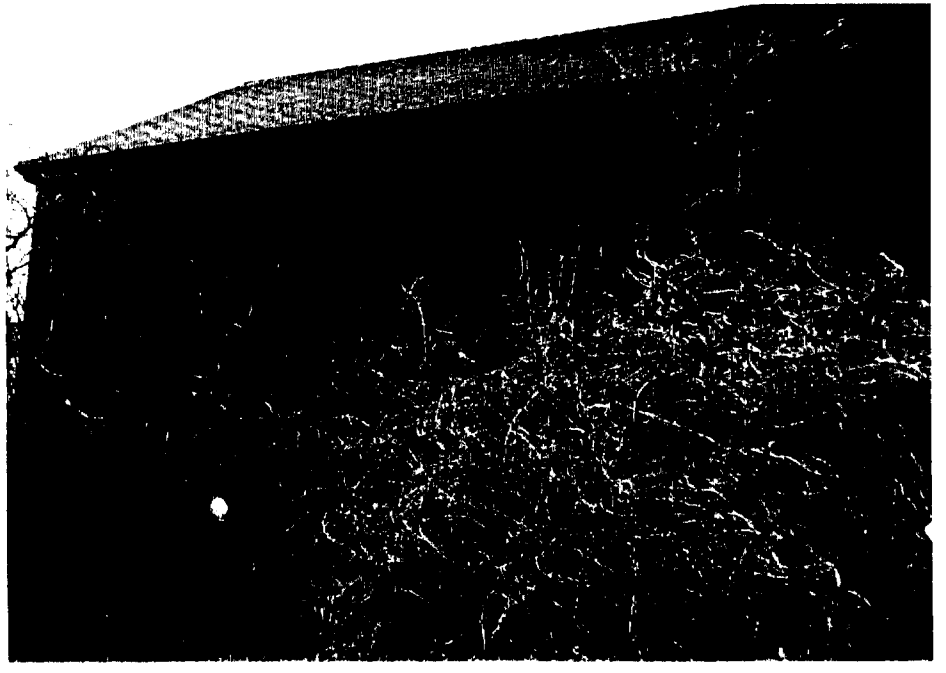
Pier Demolition

GOULD ISLAND
NO. D01RI03380

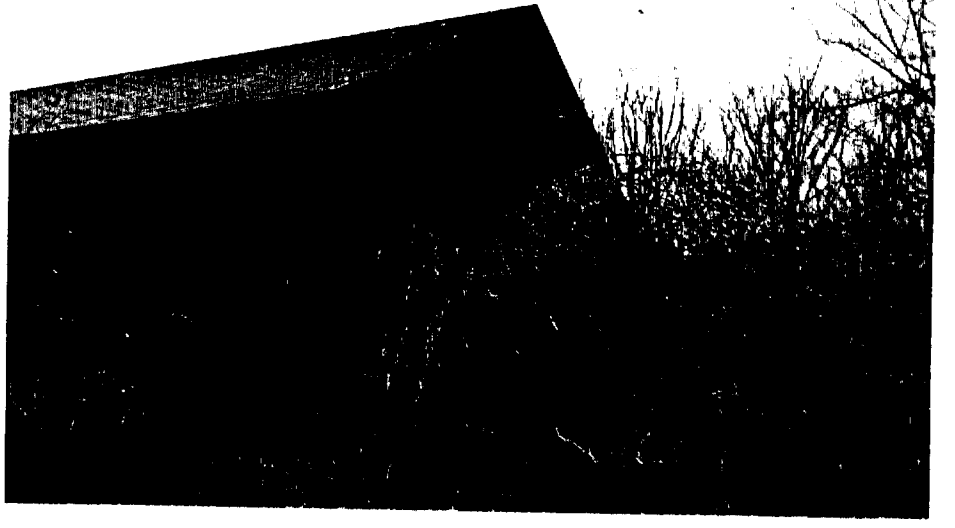
Building Demolition



Building Demolition



Building Demolition



Building Demolition

PART II - FINDINGS AND DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

DEFENSE ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION PROGRAM
FOR FORMERLY USED SITES
FINDINGS AND DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY
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FINDINGS OF FACT

1. No building demolition/debris removal project is recommended for Gould Island in the Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island.

2. The United States acquired Gould Island sometime before 1914. The date and method by which the United States acquired Gould Island is unknown. Gould Island consists of approximately 56 acres.

3. Gould Island was used by the Navy as a storage facility for high explosives prior to WWI. Several buildings were erected for torpedo and warhead storage and for housing a detachment of marines. Around 1921, hangars were constructed at the southern end of Gould Island and ramps were installed so that two seaplanes could experiment with airdropped torpedoes. In February 1942, Gould Island was provided the capability to proof-fire 100 torpedoes per day. In 1944 a degaussing station (a demagnetizing facility, capable of neutralizing ships to prevent their attracting or detonating magnetic mines or torpedoes) was put into operation. During the time that the Navy used the site, two areas were used as disposal areas (Bunkers 11 and 12, and Disposal Area No. 14). The site was not under other than DOD control during the period of DOD ownership and use.

4. Of the approximately 56 acres which comprise Gould Island, some 16.6 acres continue to be owned by the United States and under the jurisdiction of the Navy. The remaining acreage was reported to General Services Administration (GSA) as excess in November 1972. Approximately 16.9 acres were transferred to the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation on 30 March 1973. By quitclaim deed dated 28 March 1975, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation transferred approximately 16.9 acres (excepting one building) to the State of Rhode Island. The deed provided that the land be used in perpetuity for public park or public recreation purposes, or else the United States could exercise a right of entry upon the property. The United States retained the

right to enter the land to mine and remove oil, gas, and other minerals. The United States also reserved easements to access underground electric distribution lines and water mains, and a right to access retained property. The deed contained a recapture clause, but contained no restoration provision. By quitclaim deed dated 18 April 1989, the United States, acting through GSA, transferred approximately 22.25 acres to the State of Rhode Island (but excepted from the conveyance some buildings and a 100 foot by 100 foot parcel containing a U.S. Coast Guard beacon). The deed required that the land be used as a reserve for the conservation of wildlife (other than migratory birds) or else title to the property would automatically revert to the United States. The United States retained the right to enter the land to mine and remove oil, gas, and other minerals. The United States also reserved easements to access underground electric distribution lines and water mains, and a right to access retained property. The deed contained a recapture provision, but did not contain any restoration provision. The State of Rhode Island is the current owner of the site.

5. The State of Rhode Island Fish & Wildlife Department maintains the site for wildlife habitat. The area is a valued shorebird breeding site, and is off-limits to visitors during the breeding season (April 1--August 15). At the center of the site are three buildings which are structurally unsafe: the former torpedo storage warehouse (wood, steel, and concrete); the former maintenance shop (brick, wood, and cement); and a building connected to the maintenance shop, the former firehouse (brick, wood, and cement). On the southeastern shoreline of the site is a concrete and timber pier which is in an extreme state of disrepair. Mr. Jim Meyer of the State Department of Environmental Management reported that the State values the area as a bird sanctuary, and does not want to jeopardize the bird population. He feels that a building demolition/debris removal project may jeopardize the bird population in two ways: (1) the demolition and removal activity may disturb the bird nesting areas; or (2) after the structures are removed and the site restored, more people may be attracted to the Island, and increased human activity may disturb the birds. Evidence of hazardous and toxic waste problems and unexploded ordnance is contained in a companion report (Project No. D01RI033800). There is no other evidence of unsafe debris, hazardous or toxic waste, or unexploded ordnance resulting from DOD use of the site.

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DETERMINATION

Based on the foregoing findings of fact, Gould Island has been determined to have been formerly used by DOD. The Island can be accessed only by boat. The State has a permit system intended to further limit visitors to the Island. The State uses the property as a bird sanctuary, and does not want to encourage greater numbers of visitors to the Island or disturb bird nesting areas. Therefore, it is determined that an environmental restoration is not an appropriate undertaking within the purview of the Defense Environmental Restoration Program, established under 10 U.S.C. 2701, et. seq.

18 Nov 90
Date

PHILIP R. HARRIS
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
Commander

PART III - POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS
GOULD ISLAND (NAVY TORPEDO TESTING FACILITY)
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Current DOD policy permits the removal of unsafe structures that have been used by DOD if the property has been in continuous government ownership since DOD disposed of the site and the structures have not been subsequently used. At the former Navy Torpedo Testing Facility on Gould Island, DOD used the buildings and pier once used by DOD have not been subsequently used. The property has been in continuous government ownership since DOD disposed of the site.

Current DOD policy does not permit building demolition/ debris removal projects where the likelihood of injury to the public posed by the unsafe structures is minimal and where the owner does not request that the structures be removed. At the former Navy Torpedo Testing Range on Gould Island, the State has expressed reservations about having the unsafe structures removed because of potential adverse effects on bird nesting habits. The Island can be accessed only by boat. The State has a permit system intended to further limit visitor access to the Island.

PART IV - PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS
GOULD ISLAND (NAVY TORPEDO TESTING FACILITY)
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No building demolition/debris removal project is recommended at the former Navy Torpedo Testing Facility on Gould Island.