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NEW ENGLAND MILITARY BASE CLEAN UPS MOVE FORWARD AS EPA APPROVES PLANS

BOSTON-- The Environmental Protection Agency announced today that hazardous waste cleanup plans totaling \$26 million were approved this year at 6 military facilities in 5 New England states, setting the stage for future reuse of the majority of these sites by local communities.

The approved plans include a \$14.2 million plan for restoration of wetland and stream sediments at Loring Air Force Base in Limestone, Maine and a \$10.3 million plan to cap the Allen Harbor Landfill at the Naval Construction Battallion Center in Davisville, RI.

In addition, cleanup plans were approved for: Pease Air Force Base in Portsmouth NH (\$1.2 million); Fort Devens in Ayer, Mass (\$886,000); Sudbury Training Annex in Sudbury, Mass and New London Sub Base in New London, Conn .

“These cleanup decisions show that significant progress is being made toward the environmental restoration of these bases,” said John P. DeVillars, administrator of EPA’s New England office. “In order that the public can safely use these areas in the future, the EPA is committed to ensuring that the military has properly addressed contamination and minimized the health and environmental risks before these properties are transferred.”

Over the past several years, the Department of Defense closed five of these facilities and has been turning them over to local communities for commercial, recreational or residential reuse in accordance with the locally approved reuse plan. The New London Submarine Base is the only active facility not slated for closure. The EPA has required that the military identify and clean up contaminated areas of the bases prior to transfer.

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The military will conduct all the cleanups. The EPA provides regulatory and technical guidance on Superfund to the military during base cleanups and oversees all cleanup activities.

The EPA uses several criteria in evaluating cleanup alternatives including: protection of the environment and public health; compliance with state and federal regulations; long and short term effectiveness; cost; implementability and state and community acceptance.

The following are descriptions of the various cleanup decisions approved by the EPA at the six federal facilities in New England in 1997.

Loring Air Force Base; Limestone, Maine

In June, the EPA approved cleanup plans for base wide surface water and sediment. The EPA agreed on soil excavation to a depth of two feet of approximately 2 miles of wetland and stream sediments in the interior of the base. The military will excavate sediments in two ditches in the Nose Dock area and a wetland area in east Loring. The military identified polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), pesticides, and inorganics as the primary contaminants in the sediments. The military will use over 100,000 cubic yards of excavated material to cap a base landfill. The military evaluated surface waters during the remedial investigation of the remaining 31 square miles of the base and determined that no action under Superfund was needed. The total cost for excavation, wetland remediation and monitoring is \$14.2 million. For more information on the environmental cleanup at Loring, contact Mike Nalipinski at 617/ 223-5503.

Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC); Davisville, Rhode Island

The EPA has agreed with the Navy to place a landfill cap on the Allen Harbor Landfill. The cap placement will reduce contamination from landfill leachate into Allen Harbor. The cap will consist of a clay layer, impervious liner, a flexible membrane layer, drainage netting, geotextile and top soil. The cap will be graded to promote runoff. There will be some consolidation of landfill materials to protect wetlands which border the landfill on the north, south and west. Institutional controls will be placed on the landfill to prevent unauthorized digging that could disturb the cap. The remedy will also include wetland creation, storm water management and long term groundwater monitoring. The total estimated cost of this remedy is \$10.3 million. For more information on the environmental cleanup at NCBC-Davisville, contact Christine Williams, EPA Project Manager at 617/573-5736.

Pease Air Force Base Portsmouth, New Hampshire

The EPA agreed with the Air Force on remediation of sediments in the brooks and ditches on the base. These areas include Flagstone Brook, Pauls Brook, McIntyre Brook and Lower Newfields Ditch. The remedy selected includes excavation of sediments from Pauls and McIntyre Brooks, off-base disposal of excavated sediments, placement of erosion controls to prevent contamination of wetlands areas during excavation, and restoration to repair wetland areas damaged during excavation at Pauls Brook. In addition, the remedy will include long term monitoring at Pauls and McIntyre Brooks. No action is required at Flagstone Brook and Lower Newfields Ditch since no unacceptable risks were identified at these sites. The total estimated cost for this remedy is \$1.2 million. For more information on the environmental cleanup, call Mike Daly, EPA Project Manager at 617/573-5783.

Fort Devens, Ayer, Mass.

In 1997, the EPA has signed two records of decision for contaminated areas with the Army. In the first decision, the EPA selected a monitored natural attenuation alternative for a former gas station. This remedy also includes institutional controls for restrictions on use of groundwater in the immediate area until cleanup levels are met, and long term monitoring. Natural attenuation will mitigate existing groundwater contamination through a combination of biological, chemical and physical processes. The EPA has determined that this alternative will reduce the amount of contaminants, in a reasonable time frame, to levels that are protective of human health prior to migration off site. The cost for this remedy is \$886,000 in addition to \$310,000 spent on a prior source control (soil) removal action. The second decision selected no action for two underground storage tanks which contained gasoline, waste and heating oil for use at a motor pool. The EPA determined this because the contamination was already addressed by the removal of the tanks and contaminated soils. The remedy has no costs associated with it, although the removal action cost \$87,000. For more information on the environmental cleanup at Fort Devens, contact Jim Byrne, EPA Project Manager at 617/573-5799.

Sudbury Training Annex, Sudbury, Mass.

The EPA has confirmed no further action is needed for three areas at the Sudbury Training Annex. For two of the areas, EPA selected no further action for groundwater after the Army implemented source controls at the sites in 1996. Source control activities involved removal and off site disposal of a hot spot, and consolidation of contaminated soils under a cap at a cost of \$2.5 million. Since these actions significantly reduced risks at the landfill site, the EPA determined no further action was needed. The EPA has, however, required that the Army conduct long term monitoring of groundwater in the event that conditions at the landfill site change in the future. The third area named in the decision was a potential drum disposal area. The EPA has selected no further action for this area after site investigations revealed the presence of debris and empty drums but no widespread contamination to ground and surface water or soils and sediments. For more information on the environmental cleanup at Sudbury Training Annex, call Bob Lim, EPA Project Manager at 617/ 223-5521.

New London Sub Base, New London, Conn.

The EPA has selected a no further action decision for a spent acid storage and disposal area. The EPA determined that the site poses no unacceptable risk to human health after the Navy removed contaminated soils. A Navy baseline risk assessment of the soils after the removal confirmed the risks at these areas have been significantly reduced because all contamination was removed. The cost of the removal was \$250,000. For more information on the environmental cleanup at New London Submarine Base, call Kymberlee Keckler, EPA Project Manager at 617/ 573-5777.

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