

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers To Conduct Remedial Investigation/ Feasibility Study On Martha's Vineyard

A Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) will be conducted starting this fall and extending into 2012. The objective of the RI is to search for and locate military munitions at Cape Poge, South Beach and Tisbury Great Pond. Geophysical surveys will be conducted to help define the horizontal and vertical boundary where munitions may be buried as well as the type of buried munitions. Geophysical surveys will be performed in the deep water offshore, the shallow waters near the shoreline, the beaches, dunes, upland land, land adjacent to ponds, and respective pond areas.

The cost of the RI/FS is approximately \$5.2 million and is funded by the Defense Environmental Restoration Program to clean up Formerly Used Defense Sites. All three areas were used for practice bombing training during World War II.

The Corps of Engineers New England District conducted a removal action in 1989/1990 at South Beach removing munitions from the beach and dune areas. The dynamic nature of the beach with ocean currents and tides caused more practice munitions (expended rocket motor bodies ranging in size from 2.5 inches to 5 inches), to appear in shoreline waters at the ocean bottom. In 2009, the Corps conducted a Time Critical Removal Action (TCRA) in which more practice munitions were removed along the beach in both the shallow and deep waters out to approximately 100 feet offshore. A TCRA was also conducted in 2009 at Cape Poge along the shoreline, in the mudflats, upland land and Shear Pen Pond. Military practice ordnance, MK23s, have been found at the site regularly.

The Time Critical Removal Action cleared limited areas of practice munitions. Further investigation, under the

RI/FS will determine what, if any future actions are required to protect human health and the environment. The Corps' contractor, UXB, and subcontractor VRHabilis, under the direction of the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, Ala., will perform the RI/FS at all three sites. Work is scheduled so as not to interfere with the island summer tourist season. Signs notifying the public of what actions to take should they find any object that looks like, or they believe to be, a munitions item are posted at both Cape Poge and South Beach. Similar signs will be posted in the vicinity of Tisbury Great



Pond. When encountering an item suspected of being munitions, the public should immediately follow the three R's; Recognize the item as potentially hazardous, Retreat from the area without touching or moving the item, and immediately Report the item to the local police by calling 911.

The Corps' Huntsville Center is the Corps' Center of Expertise for Ordnance and Explosives projects. The Corps New England District has project management responsibility for the entire project and provides direction, funding, oversight, and public relations coordination.

Cape Poge Little Neck

The property that comprises the former Cape Poge Little Neck Bomb Target Site on Chappaquiddick Island in the Town of Edgartown, Mass., consists of approximately 141 acres. The site is a barrier beach consisting of a strip of land surrounded on two sides by water.

The United States acquired four leasehold interests in approximately 141 acres beginning July 1, 1944. The leases were acquired by the Department of the Navy for the purpose of a bombing target area in connection with the 1st Naval District flight training program at Naval Air Station Quonset Point, Rhode Island and Naval Auxiliary Air Station Martha's Vineyard, Mass. The leases ran to



MK23 Mod 1, practice bomb

June 30, 1947. Prior to 1944, Chappaquiddick Island and Cape Poge were used for agricultural purposes and as a summer resort.

The site is currently owned and managed by the Trustees of Reservations. The Town of Edgartown owns a 2-acre parcel north of Simon Point where the jetties are located and 7 residents own portions north of Shear Pen Pond.

The Trustees of Reservations is a charitable organization whose mission is preserving, for public use and enjoyment, properties of exceptional scenic, historic, and ecological value in Massachusetts. The Trustees of Reservations acquired most of Cape Poge in the 1950s and 1960s. The Cape Poge Wildlife Refuge site is open to the public for recreational use. The site contains over-land (sand) vehicle and walking trails, as well as beaches. The site is also used for hunting, canoeing, kayaking and fishing.

South Beach

The property that comprises South Beach consists of 3 miles of beach area. The Department of the Navy leased approximately 264.3 acres for military training at South Beach. The gunnery range was used by Naval Air Station Quonset Point, Rhode Island for aerial machine gun and rocket firing practice. A concrete target car shelter (bunker), an oval shaped target and other support features were constructed within a few yards of the ocean. The car shelter (bunker), and oval track are currently located approximately 150 yards off shore due to the erosion of a large portion of the beach.

South Beach was remediated in 1989/1990 by the Corps of Engineers under a removal response. The Inventory Project Report for South Beach was amended to extend the boundaries of the project to include the Norton Point and Wasque Point Beach areas as a result of the discovery of two suspected high explosive filled 100-pound bombs at Wasque Point, one in March 2008, and the second one in March 2009. Practice munitions found in the waters offshore at South Beach itself are 2.5 inch to 5 inch expended rocket motor bodies.



Example rocket motor body found at South Beach

Tisbury Great Pond

The Tisbury Great Pond comprises approximately 500 acres, the majority of which is within tidal waters. Tisbury Great Pond was used by the Navy from August 1943 until the end of World War II. The site was deemed excess to the Navy, and the lease on the property was terminated in 1947. Tisbury Great Pond served as a practice dive bombing and strafing range in support of the fighter training program at Quonset Point Naval Air Station. During the initial operational period of the range, strafing and masthead targets were constructed for student pilots to hone their gunnery and bombing skills utilizing .30 and .50 caliber ammunition, and several practice bomb types. By the end of WWII, ordnance

activity ceased on the Tisbury Great Pond target area, however, the target was reinstated for practice bombing use by the carrier fleet at Newport, Rhode Island from March 27 through April 18, 1947. On July 29, 1947, Tisbury Great Pond target area was excess to the needs of the Navy and activity at the site ceased and the targets were removed. Tisbury Great Pond was then developed into a shellfish harvest area overseen by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Currently, a majority of the property is owned by the Trustees of Reservations, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and private landowners. A Site Inspection was performed on Jan. 29, 2008 over approximately 4.49 acres of land and water. Since military use ended numerous reports of practice bombs (MK5, MK43, MK23, MK15 and MK21) have been reported both by local residents, wildlife refuge officials, and Corps personnel. In July 1997, Corps personnel identified the remnants of an MK15 100-pound practice bomb. In the past year, the Corps has learned of incidences of exposed munitions at the site that seem to be directly associated with a trench cut in the barrier beach. The Tisbury Great Pond Association Sewers open a trench cut several times throughout the year to lower the elevation of the pond. The trench cut opening results in scouring of the bottom and sides of the barrier beach and adjacent dunes exposing fragments of practice bombs and broken heavy case bomb bodies.

The Corps will implement a Remedial Investigation/ Feasibility Study, followed by a Proposed Plan, Decision Document, Remedial Actions, and a Long Term Monitoring Program, if warranted at all three sites. Remedial Investigation activities include geophysical work, sampling, etc. to determine the nature and extent (type, quantity, and location) of munitions. Long Term Monitoring activities include annual awareness training, signage, information pamphlets, institutional controls, 5 year reviews, etc. The Corps, working with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and its contractors have developed educational awareness training for the TTOR and DCR employees.

For more information, contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' New England District POCs: Project Manager Carol Ann Charette at 978-318-8605 (office) or 978-505-2918 (cell) or Public Affairs Specialist, Tim Dugan at 978-318-8264.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to Conduct Remedial Investigation/ Feasibility Study at Cape Poge Beach, South Beach, and Tisbury Great Pond on Martha's Vineyard

