



North Landing River Target Site Expanded Site Inspection

Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Mid-Atlantic is evaluating the potential presence of munitions that may remain at a former Navy practice target site (range) in Currituck County, North Carolina. The site was used approximately 60 years ago.

Located on the North Landing River near the Virginia-North Carolina border, the area served as a practice dive-bombing range for Naval Air Station Oceana from the mid-1950s through the mid-1960s. Only miniature practice bombs equipped with signal cartridges were reportedly used. These devices produced smoke to mark the point of impact and were not designed to detonate and create fragmentation.

Through its Military Munitions Response Program, the Navy assesses former training ranges that are no longer in use to identify and reduce potential risks to human health and to protect the environment. Initial investigations at this site began in 2009. The current phase, which included geophysical surveys in 2024 to detect metallic objects on the river bottom, has shifted the suspected target area from its previously assumed location near Troublesome Point to a site farther north, closer to Gibbs Point.

Current Investigation

In September 2026, Navy contractors will continue the Expanded Site Inspection to verify the target location and determine whether any munitions are present. Field activities will involve experienced professional divers working at selected locations within the inspection boundary to investigate metallic objects identified during the 2024 geophysical surveys. Divers will:

- Use handheld equipment to locate and identify metal objects on or beneath the river bottom
- Manually recover items suspected to be munitions
- Examine all recovered items and safely destroy live munitions, should any be found

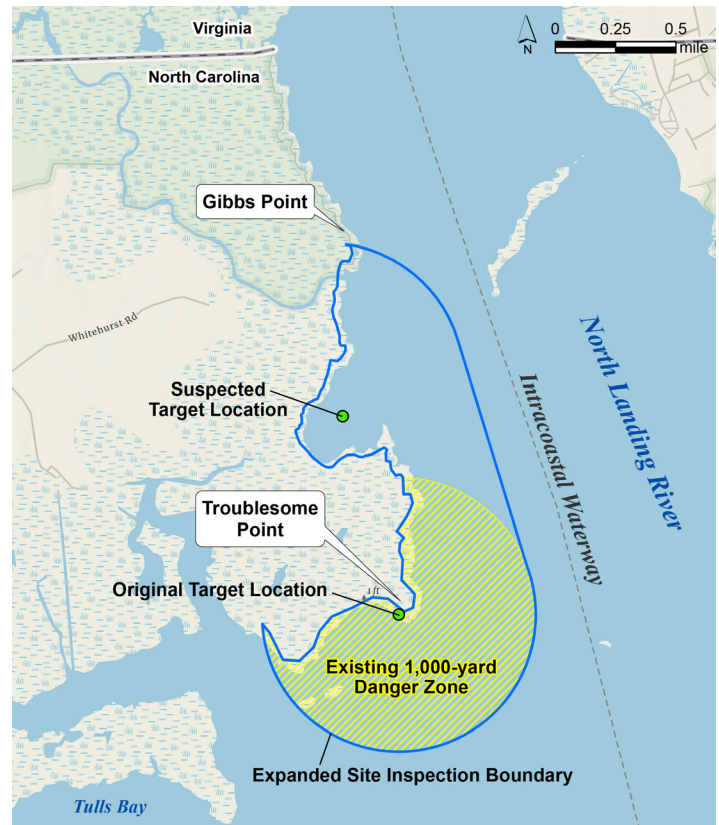
When is the work scheduled and for how long?

This second phase of the Expanded Site Inspection is expected to begin the week of September 21, 2026, and will take approximately two to three weeks to complete. The boat and equipment used for the investigation will be launched daily from a local boat ramp. All work will occur on weekdays only, during daylight hours, and will proceed as weather and river conditions allow.

What might someone see or hear?

- Dive boats and a floating work platform
- Navy-contracted divers and other personnel
- Work zones that are clearly marked and closed to the public, including boaters, hunters, and fishermen
- Safety patrol boats to ensure boaters do not enter the area
- Controlled detonations of suspicious materials, if found, including a loud bang, a quick flash of light, and/or a small cloud of smoke visible from a distance

During field operations, this portion of the North Landing River will be temporarily closed as a safety precaution to protect boaters and anyone located near the work zone.



North Landing River Target Expanded Site Inspection Location



Dive Boat and Diver Investigating Underwater Munitions Site



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Target Site Overview

The original North Landing River Target Site is a former air-to-ground land and water range, with roughly 60 percent of the area located in open water and the remaining 40 percent situated within a coastal marsh, known as “Troublesome Point.” The site is identified as a Danger Zone in Title 33 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* and is marked accordingly on National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration nautical charts.

In 2024, geophysical survey results expanded the known extent of the target area by an additional 336 water acres, increasing the total water area to approximately 797 acres.



North Landing River Target Site Location

Previous Investigations

Under the Navy’s ongoing Military Munitions Response Program, a Preliminary Assessment of the original target site was completed in 2009. A Site Inspection of the water portion followed in 2010, using digital geophysical mapping. The results showed no pattern of metallic anomalies – metal objects detected by the survey equipment – that would typically indicate a practice bombing target.

Subsequent research uncovered two news articles from the 1940s reporting the target was planned for construction farther north of the originally assumed location, in the area between Gibbs Point and Troublesome Point.

The Expanded Site Inspection began in 2024 and included geophysical surveys of 797 water acres within both the original target area and the expanded investigation area. These surveys identified metallic anomalies and wooden poles protruding from the water – features consistent with a former practice bombing target – in a cove between Troublesome Point and Gibbs Point.

Staying Safe Around Munitions

Munitions can be extremely dangerous and are often difficult to recognize – especially in the water. If you encounter, or even suspect you’ve encountered, a munitions item at sea, follow the 3Rs of munitions safety:

- **RECOGNIZE** – Know what munitions may look like and understand that they are dangerous.
- **RETREAT** – Do not approach, touch, move, or bring a suspected munitions item alongside or aboard your vessel. Increase a safe distance quickly.
- **REPORT** – Contact 911 or notify the U.S. Coast Guard, Channel 16 (156.800 MHz).



For more information, please contact:

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Guidance for Boaters

- Consult Title 33 of the *Code of Federal Regulations*, Part 334 (Danger Zones and Restricted Areas Regulations), Paragraph 410 for details on existing access restrictions
- Avoid the expanded investigative area boundary while investigations are underway