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JANUARY 2016

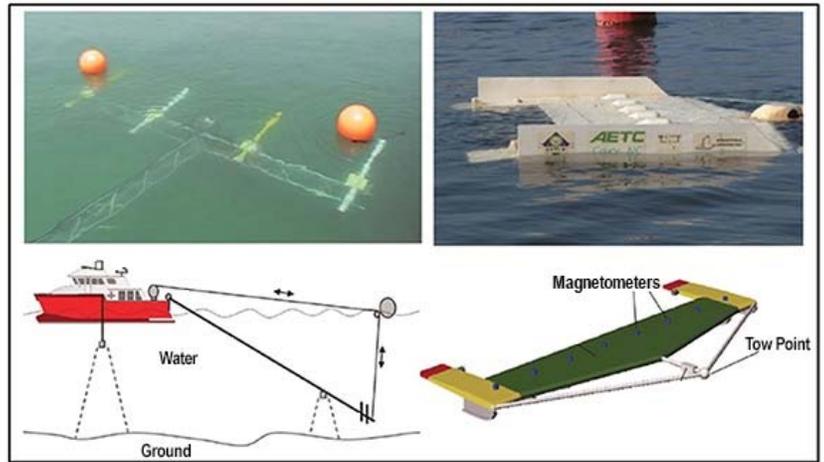
Underwater Wide Area Assessment Investigation at UXO 16 Ready to Begin

UXO 16 is the offshore area adjacent to the former ranges and operational areas on east and west Vieques that have or may have been affected by military training activities. The Wide Area Assessment (WAA) is an underwater investigation and is one of the initial steps in the process for investigating and addressing underwater munitions around Vieques. The purpose of the WAA is to identify where large clusters of munitions may be located. This information will help the Navy prioritize areas for more focused, follow-up investigations, and provide information for biological assessments and/or procedures to ensure protection of important marine species and habitats.

The WAA work plan was completed in late 2015 and field work is anticipated to begin in the next few months, covering approximately 11,500 acres. Field teams will use metal detectors (magnetometers) to identify areas containing large numbers of metallic objects that may indicate the presence of potential munitions items on, or buried beneath, the sea floor.

Get Involved

- ✓ Attend the quarterly RAB meetings to hear about the latest cleanup activities, ask questions, and provide input.
- ✓ The next RAB meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 9, 2016 from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at the Vieques Multiple Use Center.



Examples of the type of metal detector equipment that may be used during the Wide Area Assessment



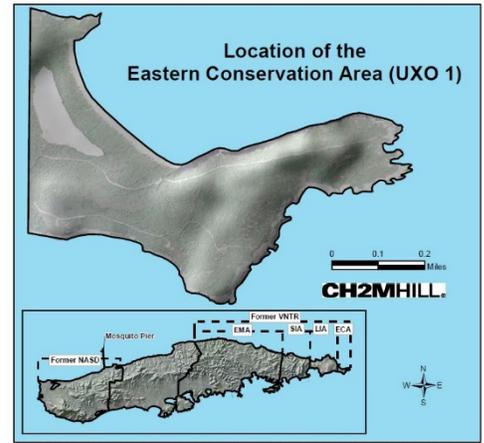
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Remedy Selected for the Eastern Conservation Area Will Reduce Explosive Hazards and Restore Vegetation

The Navy and the Environmental Protection Agency, with concurrence from the Department of the Interior and Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board, have selected a remedy that will reduce the explosive hazard from potential munitions and restore vegetation at UXO 1. UXO 1, also known as the Eastern Conservation Area, is adjacent to the former Live Impact Area on east Vieques. The remedy selected for UXO 1, documented in the Record of Decision (ROD), is *Focused Additional Munitions and Explosives of Concern (MEC) Removal and Land Use Controls (LUCs)*.

Because interim removal actions previously removed munitions from the surface across UXO 1 and from the subsurface along the roads and beaches, the selected remedy includes removal of any munitions identified during long-term monitoring and/or along additional trails identified by US Fish and Wildlife Service to gain access to sea turtle nesting habitats. LUCs are included in the remedy to ensure activities within UXO 1 are consistent with its use as a wildlife refuge and to deter unauthorized access. The remedy also includes restoration of vegetation at Playa Blanca and the dry upland forest.

Public comments on the UXO 1 Proposed Plan for the remedy were solicited by the Navy during the public comment period from August 4, 2014, through September 17, 2014. A public meeting was held on August 21, 2014 at the Vieques Multiple Use Center to discuss the Proposed Plan with members of the community. The ROD and supporting documents are available in the Administrative Record, online at <http://www.navfac.navy.mil/vieques>. Paper copies are available at the EPA Region 2 Field Office in Vieques.



Workers use digital geophysical mapping equipment to find potential subsurface munitions



Munitions response workers removing munitions and debris

Interim Removal Action for Munitions Completed at SWMU 4

The interim removal action for munitions was completed in December 2015 at Solid Waste Management Unit (SWMU) 4 on the west end of Vieques. The site was once used by the Navy for munitions destruction (open burn/open detonation). As noted above, the recent cleanup work was part of an interim removal action, sometimes called a non-time-critical removal action (NTCRA).

Removal of munitions and munitions debris reduces potential explosive hazards and helps US Fish and Wildlife Service accelerate plans to open areas of SWMU 4 to the public for a variety of recreational uses. As part of the NTCRA, Navy contractors removed approximately 30,000 pounds of munitions and munitions debris, which included 6,100 munitions items from several areas planned for public use, including the beach, roads and hiking trails, parking and picnic areas, an observation tower, areas for hunting, and former open burn/open detonation locations.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. When is the SWMU 4 area going to be open to the public? Is there more work to be done?

A. Some steps still need to be taken to deem the area suitable for US Fish and Wildlife Service's intended public use. The Navy is preparing an *After Action Report for the NTCRA* that will be submitted for regulatory review. In addition, information gathered during this NTCRA will be used to prepare a Feasibility Study Addendum. A Remedial Investigation (RI) in the offshore area adjacent to SWMU 4 is planned for this summer, after which an RI Report will be prepared detailing the results. After the Navy and regulatory agencies consider all this information, their recommendation for the final remedy will be presented to the public for review and comment. The ROD for the site will be signed once public comments have been considered. The ROD will document any additional cleanup activities necessary for the site.



20-mm projectiles accounted for more than 94 percent of the munitions removed from SWMU 4



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