



Vieques Cleanup News!

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<http://public.lantops-ir.org/sites/public/vieques>

Solid Waste Management Unit 4 (SWMU 4)

The Navy is investigating and removing munitions and explosives of concern (MEC) that may be beneath the surface of selected roads and beaches at SWMU 4. The area is managed by Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) as part of the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge.

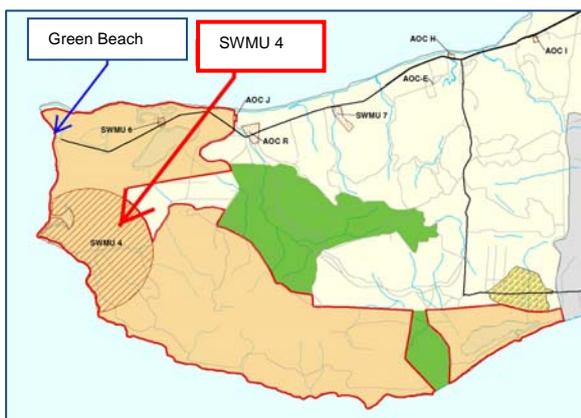
The purpose of this removal action is to make it safer for FWS personnel to conduct road maintenance and wildlife management activities.

First, the area must be prepared: removing the metal fence in certain locations around SWMU 4, so it won't interfere with the geophysical detection equipment, and removing vegetation as needed to operate the equipment.

Next, personnel will perform Digital Geophysical Mapping (DGM). While technicians walk over the area, the equipment detects metal below the surface and automatically records the signal strength and location of metal items (called "anomalies").

When the DGM is complete, an Unexploded Ordnance team will locate each anomaly and excavate it to determine if it is MEC or just metal debris. To date 2,114 metal items at SWMU 4 have been investigated and approximately 70 MEC items have been recovered.

Access to SWMU 4 is restricted due to the presence of munitions and explosives of concern. Only Navy authorized personnel should access this area. For your own safety, please obey the signs and stay away from this area.



Munitions Removal Update

The primary objective of munitions removal is to reduce the risk to trespassers and other members of the public, reduce the risk to workers, and to support future land management activities.

As of January 18, 2010:

- ✓ The surface removal of MEC has been completed on 1,443 acres in the former training range on eastern Vieques.
- ✓ Over 20,000 MEC items have been recovered and destroyed during the surface removal in these areas. Surface removal actions continue.
- ✓ Approximately 7,500 tons of munitions debris and range-related debris (such as old targets) have been recovered and are being processed for eventual shipment to a recycler.
- ✓ Over 5,500 tons of munitions debris and range-related debris have been shipped off the island to be recycled.

Metal debris from the removal area is taken to the Central Processing Center. It is weighed and separated by the type of metal. Most of the munitions debris requires thermal treatment to ensure that no trace amounts of explosives remain on metal that was once in contact with explosives.



Other debris may be completely harmless, but still look like military munitions. These items must be disfigured so that they no longer look like dangerous items. A cutting torch, a hydraulic shear or an impact crusher is used to do that, depending on the size and type of metal.

All of the metal items are thoroughly inspected, to make sure there are no explosives on anything leaving the Central Processing Center.