

Cleanup crews mopping up mess on Nomans Land ...

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Cleanup crews mopping up mess on Nomans Land Island

NOMANS LAND ISLAND (AP) - Cleanup crews have recovered 578,000 pounds of military debris from Nomans Land, an island that may eventually and literally, go to the birds.

The island, which was used as a practice site for Navy jets and Air Force bombers, is scheduled to be turned over to the U.S. Department of Interior as a wildlife preserve off-limits to the public.

Environmental officials say it is unfit for people because of its military past. Foster Wheeler Environmental Corp. reportedly has been paid \$1.6 million to clear the island of the extensive debris.

So far, cleanup crews have uncovered more than 9,000 pieces of bombs, bullets, and other military debris. Nearly 1,000 "suspect" pieces may have to be detonated.

"This place is never going to be safe for people." Bud Oliveira, project leader for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's refuge complex in Sudbury, told The Boston Globe. "There's always a threat of a bomb coming to the surface."

Despite the military's plan to hand over the island to the wildlife service, the Wampanoag Indian tribe of Gay Head on Martha's Vineyard has asked the government to give it to them.

According to tribe members, Nomans was originally called Tequenoman - after a sachem from Martha's Vineyard who held jurisdiction over the island when English explorers arrived in the 1600s.

In the years before the Navy moved in - in the 1940s - the island was a haven for the tribe.