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LETTERS FROM READERS

Friday 8/4/95
Florida Times Union

NAVAL BASES

Navy is committed to environmental restoration

In response to the front-page article on July 10 regarding the reduction of environmental cleanup funds at local Navy bases, I would like to tell the rest of the story with regard to the Navy's total and unwavering commitment to environmental restoration.

The article, which emphasized recent cuts to defense environmental restoration account funds, failed to focus on one extremely vital fact: In spite of these congressionally mandated cuts, the U.S. Navy still has the requisite capacity and wherewithal to continue our excellent environmental stewardship programs. Over the past several years, responsible Navy officials at area bases have proactively stepped out to meet the challenge of protecting, preserving and, in some cases, enhancing our environment, while fully accomplishing their installations' military missions.

Despite limited budgets, our people have worked as full partners with their regulatory counterparts in federal, state and local governments

to ensure a safe environment.

This approach was validated recently when a \$200,000 partnering investment generated a taxpayer savings of \$2 million. By cutting red tape and relying on new technologies, the Navy can take a more logical and responsible approach to funding cuts. By the end of this year, we hope to have 14 active environmental partnering teams in the Southeast United States.

One of the two Site Characterization Analysis



Penetrometer System units in the Navy is now being managed at Jacksonville Naval Air Station. This device uses the latest laser technology to quickly and cost-effectively locate soil contaminated with petroleum products. It has already been used successfully at Cecil Field Naval Air Station and will be employed wherever needed throughout the region.

While these measures are not a cure-all for the environmental challenges that face all of us, they are certainly giant steps in the right direction. I am proud of our successes in environmental restoration, pollution prevention and hazardous waste minimization.

We in the Navy are deeply and firmly committed to maintaining our role as a leader in protecting the environment. It is our community, too, and our Navy men and women are proud to live here.

REAR ADM. KEVIN F. DELANEY,
commander,
U.S. Navy,
Jacksonville