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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "STATION SKIPPER SIGNS FIRST RECORD OF DECISION" NAS  
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JAX AIR NEWS

# Station skipper signs first Record of Decision

The signing of the first Record of Decision (ROD) marked a major environmental milestone for NAS Jacksonville. Capt. Robert D. Whitmire, NAS Jax commanding officer, signed the document during a ceremony held at the Officers' Club on Tuesday, Sept. 23.

More than 20 people, including Rear Adm. Paul D. Moses, USN (Ret.) current deputy secretary for Florida's Department of Environmental Protection, attended the signing.

"The ROD is a formal statement on how the Navy will remediate the hazardous wastes sites within Operable Unit One (OUI)," said Whitmire.

OUI contains two Potential Source of Contamination (PSC) sites which include PSC 26, the old Child Street Landfill, and PSC 27, a former transformer storage area. These PCS sites are located north of the Naval Hospital and family housing along Child Street.

In 1978, the transformer storage area was closed after station officials found vandalism resulted in a spill of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). The soil in the area was dug up and transported off site.

The landfill, closed in January 1979, was the primary disposal site on NAS Jacksonville since the station opened in 1940. Discarded automobiles, household and sanitary wastes, liquid industrial wastes, construction debris, and low level radioactive waste, was dumped at this site.

"This was the disposal practice at the time," explained Diane Lancaster, NAS Jacksonville's Installation Restoration (IR) manager. Lancaster coordinates the cleanup efforts at sites like PSC 26 and 27.

"We've learned a great deal over the past several decades, and we now know that this type of disposal was hazardous to human health and the environment. Now there are strict laws in place to direct how we dis-

pose of hazardous wastes," Lancaster said.

Work toward the ROD began back in 1979 when the first soil samples were taken around the landfill. When the station was placed on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Priorities List (NPL) in December 1989, OUI was targeted as one of the first areas to be investigated. In 1990, more sampling was done and has continued until the Navy developed alternatives to deal with the contamination at these two sites.

"It was the community involvement that helped the Navy decide which would be the preferred alternative," said Lancaster. "Our Restoration Advisory Board, which meets each month, told the station which alternative they thought would work best and the Navy agreed."

The alternative selected is a cap/cover system. Here's how it works:

Contaminated soil around the landfill is excavated and consolidated into the landfill.

The cap is a 30-mil. plastic liner that will cover low level radioactive material, and excavated soil and sediment, to prevent the contamination from leaching into the ground water after heavy Florida rains. The cap will cover a specifically designated area.

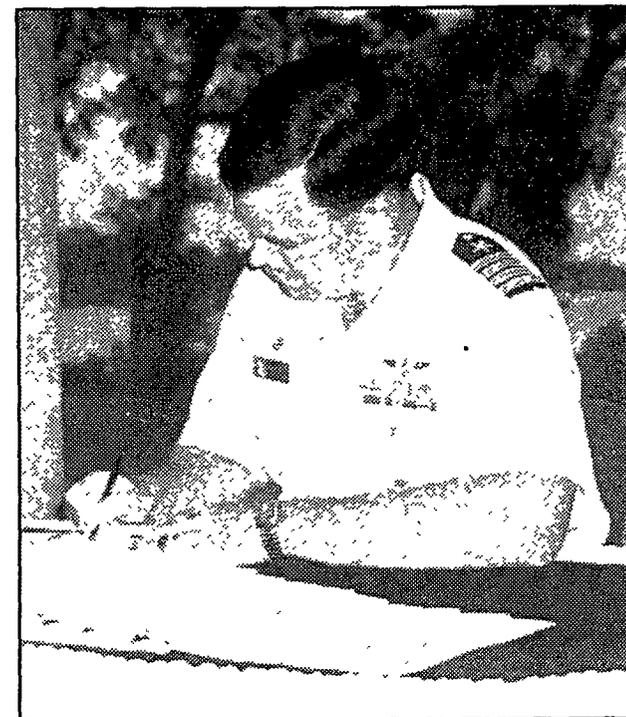
The cover will be two feet of clean soil-over the entire 38-acre landfill, covered with grass to prevent erosion.

The final phase is monitoring the ground water and surface water areas to measure how well contamination is naturally breaking down and becoming non-hazardous. If the process is not working well enough, additional actions are planned to enhance the cleanup.

A review of the ROD will take place after five years, including a close looking at monitoring records, to

There are 51 PSCs at NAS Jacksonville and three Operable Units. All the sites are in some phase of the cleanup process, from site characterization (the beginning) to removal actions (interim cleanups) to the first ROD (final decision).

Learn more about the station's cleanup activities in the *Stakeholder's Report*, the quarterly cleanup newsletter published by the NAS Jacksonville Public Affairs Office. Call Bill Dougherty at 542-4032 to get a copy, or to be placed on the mailing list



**Capt. Robert D. Whitmire, NAS Jax commanding officer signs the first Record Of Decision at the Officers' Club on Tuesday, Sept. 23.**

determine if the area could be used.

"Landfill capping is the preferred remedy of EPA," explained Lancaster. "In other locations, old landfills are used for recreation areas. It's possible to do that here if the review shows the area is safe." The station cleanup manager said the site would never be used for residential use.

Work starts this month, will be completed by the end of June 1998, and will cost \$5.2 million.

"The ROD is a milestone because it signals the end of the investigative process and the start of turning dirt," Whitmire stressed at the ceremony. "It's the first of what we hope will be many RODs as we work to clean up all the sites at NAS Jacksonville."