PUBLIC NOTICE SITE 39 NEWSLETTER NAS WHITING FIELD FL
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TETRA TECH NUS

Site 39, Clear Creek is, located along the western boundary of Naval Air Station Whiting Field (NASWF) directly west of the South Air Field, the Waste Water Treatment Plant, and two closed land fills Sites 15 and 16. Clear Creek is being investigated to determine if activities previously conducted at NASWF have affected the creek and flood plain. Clear Creek is designated an outstanding Florida waterway and as such is home to wildlife and plants.

An ecological survey of Clear Creek indicates it is very similar to other creeks in the area including Ellis, Wolfe, Ates, Beaver, and Cold Water Creeks. Several major vegetative community types have been identified. Floodplain wetlands are found within frequently flooded wetland areas located along the creek. Upland pine forest with broad-leaf deciduous trees are found on adjacent well drained upland slopes on either side of the creek. The Clear Creek study area is home to two state-protected plants the white-topped pitcher plant, the water sundew, and many other animals included deer, beaver, snakes, amphibians, and birds.

The two foot tall white-topped pitcher plant is a hardy plant threatened elsewhere by loss of habitat. The plant has a vase shaped structure containing watery syrup that attracts insects to the vase. Once inside the vase interior spines prevent the insects from leaving and the insects eventually drown in the syrup where they digested. This plant prefers an acidic bog environment where nitrate levels are low

The sundew is a wildflower typically green and red in color and less than ten inches in height. This plant is covered in tiny tentacles that exude sweet smelling adhesive droplets. Attracted insects landing on a tentacle are overcome as the plant responds to the contact by contracting over and encompassing the prey, killing the insect within minutes. The sundew digests the insect over several days. After feeding the plant relaxes its' tentacles and resumes a normal form awaiting the next meal.

Investigative activities at Site 39 include aerial photo interpretation, collection and laboratory analyses of surface water, sediment, and groundwater samples from both the creek-bed and floodplain. Investigation results to date indicate Clear Creek surface water and sediment have not been measurably impacted by previous activities at NASWF. One small area of the creek floodplain contains measurable concentrations of fuel and oil contaminants exceeding USEPA and Florida action levels. This area is currently being evaluated for potential ecological impacts.

Ongoing discussions with the USEPA and State of Florida ecological risk assessors indicated that sufficient data exist to complete the Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA). Currently, an ecological risk assessment evaluation is in progress with interim conclusions due in late 2003. The draft Site 39 CERCLA lnvestigation Report is scheduled for completion in the third quarter of 2003. This report will provide the investigative findings and results of the ERA.

The Clear Creek area, creek and flood plain, currently exist as thriving ecosystem. Unless a significant ecological risk exist at the site the Clear Creek area will probably remain undisturbed.