NPL Site Narrative for Naval Air Station, Whidbey Island (Ault Field)

NAVAL AIR STATION, WHIDBEY ISLAND (AULT FIELD)
Whidbey Island, Washington

Conditions at proposal (September 18, 1985): The Naval Air Station (NAS) at Whidbey Island in Island County, Washington, was commissioned in September 1942. It covers over 7,000 acres and is composed of two bases -- Ault Field and Seaplane Base -- 5 miles apart. The mission of NAS Whidbey Island is to maintain and operate facilities and provide services and materials in support of the Navy's aviation activities and units.

Ault Field contains most of the military activities. Its major waste-generating activities include aircraft and vehicle maintenance and washing, engine testing, nondestructive testing, parts cleaning, painting and paint stripping, battery maintenance, pest control, public work maintenance, and transformer servicing. Wastes generated include carbon tetrachloride, trichloroethylene (TCE), methyl ethyl ketone, toluene, trichloroethane (TCA), zinc, lead, caustic cleaners, waste paints, and pentachlorophenols.

The Ault Field Site consists of 23 waste areas. To date, contamination of ground water or surface water has not been documented. The waste areas lie over both the shallow and the sea-level aquifers. These aquifers provide drinking water to about 21,000 people within 3 miles of the site. Local surface water bodies are used for recreational activities and irrigation. One surface water intake, 6,500 feet from the site, is used to irrigate 66 acres of farmland. A fresh water wetland is within 500 feet of the site.

NAS Whidbey Island is participating in the Installation Restoration Program, established in 1978. Under this program, the Department of Defense seeks to identify, investigate, and clean up contamination from hazardous materials. The Navy has completed Phase I (records search). Phase II (preliminary survey) is scheduled to start in October 1985.

Status (February 21, 1990): The Navy's expanded site investigation, conducted in the summer of 1989, revealed that the shallow aquifer is contaminated with TCA and TCE. The investigation also showed a hydraulic connection that permits water to flow between the shallow and intermediate aquifers. Cleanup will be divided into 32 "operable units" (discrete field activities) that will be considered in 8 remedial investigations/feasibility studies, which will determine the type and extent of contamination at Ault Field and identify alternatives for remedial action.

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at ATSDR - ToxFAQs (http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.