

ATLANTIC FLEET WEAPONS TRAINING AREA - VIEQUES

Vieques, Puerto Rico

98th Congressional District

Facility Location/Size:

The Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Area - Vieques, in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, includes certain areas of the island of Vieques, and nearby waters, that have become contaminated primarily by United States Department of Defense (DoD) activities. These areas include the Eastern Maneuver Area (including Camp Garcia), the former Surface Impact Area, the Live Impact Area, and the Eastern Conservation Zone on the east end of Vieques. Within the Naval Ammunition Support Detachment (NASD) on the western end of Vieques, the facility includes, but is not necessarily limited to, eight areas for which the Navy considers the ongoing investigations and remediation to be incomplete. It also includes any additional areas that may be discovered to be impacted by DoD activities during the course of investigations of the area. The waters surrounding all these areas are largely uncharacterized; identified areas of concern include waters impacted by target practice on eastern Vieques, ship anchoring areas north of Vieques, and waters near western Vieques, including Mosquito Pier. In proposing the entire Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Area (AFWTA) facility to the NPL, which included certain areas on and around the islands of Vieques and Culebra, EPA proposed an option separating the final listing decisions for Vieques and Culebra. The Agency is going forward with listing AFWTA - Vieques at this time. The Culebra areas remain proposed to the NPL pending further negotiations between the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Army for cleanup.

Site History:

Since World War II, portions of the island of Vieques have been used by the U.S. Navy, primarily, to conduct activities related to military training. The eastern end of Vieques was used for all aspects of naval gunfire training, including air-to-ground ordnance delivery and amphibious landings, as well as housing the main base of operations for these activities, Camp Garcia. Live ordnance was used for certain exercises. Site operations on the western end of Vieques consisted mainly of ammunition loading and storage, and vehicle and facility maintenance, though some training occurred there as well.

Site Contamination/Contaminants:

Extensive amounts of unexploded ordnance and remnants of exploded ordnance have been identified in the range areas of Vieques, and in the surrounding waters. Hazardous substances associated with ordnance use may include mercury, lead, copper, magnesium, lithium, perchlorate, TNT, napalm, and depleted uranium among others. At Camp Garcia, and in the NASD, the hazardous substances present may also include a range of chemicals such as PCBs, solvents, and pesticides.

Potential Impacts on Surrounding Community/Environment:

Vieques is home to approximately 9,300 residents. In addition, Vieques has an active and growing tourism industry. Both visitors and residents access beaches, fisheries, and recreational waters that may be impacted by past military training. Upon cessation of Navy activities, large portions of the impacted

areas were set aside as a wildlife refuge, which is home to at least 25 endangered species (federal and Puerto Rican), and other sensitive environments.

 **Response Activities (to date):**

To date, EPA has worked with the Navy to develop and implement a remedial investigation of certain areas of concern on Eastern Vieques. The Agency has also developed a comprehensive public involvement process which includes a public reviewed Community Involvement Plan. On the western end, the investigation has been governed by a non-NPL Superfund response. As an NPL site, EPA now has oversight authority, pursuant to Superfund, for both these areas.

[The description of the site (release) is based on information provided by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico at the time of proposal. The description may change as additional information is gathered on the sources and extent of contamination. See 56 FR 5600, February 11, 1991, or subsequent FR notices.]

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) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.