



Facts About...

Phoenix Military Reservation Launch Area FEDERAL FACILITIES PROGRAM

Site Description:

The Phoenix Military Reservation (PMR) is consisted of two operational areas known as the Fire Control Area (FCA) and the Launch Area (LA). This fact sheet provides information about the 17-acre LA property, which is located in north central Baltimore County, about a half mile west of Jacksonville, Maryland. The LA is also identified on Maryland's State Master List as MD-234. Surface water drains to the south and southeast into the Greene Branch and ultimately discharges to the Loch Raven Reservoir located three miles west of PMR. Paper Mill Road borders the site to the north while residential properties are located to the east and west. Greene Branch is located to the south of the site. The site is currently managed by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE), Baltimore District.

Paper Mill Road borders the site to the north with private properties to the east and west and Greene Branch to the south. The surrounding land use is mature forest and widely-spaced single family residences. The site is managed by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE), Baltimore District.

Site History:

From 1954 to 1958 the Phoenix Military Reservation served as a Nike Ajax missile site (BA-03). In 1958, the site was modified for the use of Nike Hercules missiles. The Army Air Defense Command operated the facilities from 1954 to 1962. After this time, the operations were turned over to the National Guard until the closure of the Nike project in 1966.

Operations associated with the Nike project included vehicle repairs, storage of fuel components, lubricants, and solvents, missile cleaning, fueling, defueling, and assembly. Structures on the site were buildings, dirt mounds, motor pools, personnel decontamination facilities, acid neutralization pits, and a limestone seepage pit that received discharge from the decontamination facilities and acid neutralization pit. The purpose of the acid neutralization pit was to neutralize red fuming nitric acid, a missile fuel component.

At the completion of the Nike program, all missile-associated equipment was removed. The site remained inactive until 1976 when Baltimore County obtained the land through the Heritage Conservation Recreation Service, per "quit claim" deed. The site is currently being used as a recreation center and county council district office (former barracks area) and for Baltimore County Public Works Department heavy equipment training (former missile area).

Environmental Investigations and Actions:

In 1981, a sampling program was created by the Baltimore County Department of Health, but due to limitations of County equipment, very few soil-groundwater interface samples were obtained. This sampling therefore could not reveal information on the site groundwater configuration. Although it was concluded that contamination existed on the site, no contamination source conclusions were made.

In 1984, the Army Toxic and Hazardous Materials Agency completed a second sampling study. This study was made to match the FCA study such that database comparisons could be made. The LA study included the addition of nine (9) monitoring wells, in addition to the three (3) Baltimore County wells that



had already been installed. Sampling from this study revealed concentrations of trichloroethene (TCE), dichloroethene, and tetrachloroethene. TCE was the most abundant contaminant found in the samples. Sampling revealed that the highest concentrations of contamination were located in the northeast corner of the site and decreased to the southeast.

In 1985, a remedial action alternatives assessment for both the FCA and LA was conducted. The document however, focused more on the FCA than LA. This report found the same conclusions as the 1984 study. It was concluded that water during pumping was drawn from the northeast, north, or northwest of the site, but the aquifer yield was too small to use the desired pump and treat method.

In 1985 an Environmental Assessment (EA) was conducted by the ACE to determine the environmental impacts of removing some structures from the site. The structures selected for removal were the kennels, three (3) sentry boxes, a septic tank, two (2) underground missile silos, and an acid fuel station berm. Above ground structures were to be demolished while underground structures were to be filled by materials obtained during demolition. The EA found no basis for significant impact to the environment or to human health. An Environmental Impact Statement was therefore not merited and all proposed structures were removed. The remaining buildings are still being used for Baltimore County funded activities.

Between 1986 and 1990, only site visits and preliminary reports were conducted on the LA. In 1986, the MDE conducted a preliminary assessment for the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In 1989, a summary report was completed for the EPA. In 1990, a sampling investigation was conducted that showed contamination was still present in the groundwater. No additional soil or groundwater sampling was conducted until 2009.

Current Status:

As of December 2010, the ACE is evaluating soil and groundwater sampling data from 2009 and working with the MDE to update the site's environmental investigation. Based on the 2009 groundwater sampling, there is minimal, if any, on-site TCE contamination. The ACE and MDE will determine the next steps in the investigative process, which may include groundwater sampling of several existing off-site monitoring wells.

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