

U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY (MD-63)
NAVAL STATION ANNAPOLIS (MD-59/87/334)
Annapolis, Maryland
(Federal Facility)

Site Location

The Naval Station Annapolis is located across from downtown Annapolis on the east bank of the Severn River, Arundel County, Maryland. The Station is part of the Annapolis Naval Complex, which comprises four major activities: the Naval Academy (MD-063), the Naval Hospital, the former Naval Radio Transmitting Facility (NRTF), and the Naval Station Commissary and Exchange (formerly the Naval Station Storage Yard No.2). The former NRTF and Storage Yard No. 2 are currently subject to environmental investigation and cleanup activities.

Site History

Storage Yard No. 2:

The Naval Storage Yard No. 2 is part of a 161-acre parcel acquired by the Navy in 1943 from the Fort Severn Development Company. Navy operations began around 1943 and included metal salvaging, pesticide storage and preparation, and waste material disposal. Reportedly, open burning and waste oil disposal also occurred at the site. Operations continued through the 1960s and into the early 1970s. In 1973, bulk "waste materials" were reportedly removed from the site and the remaining waste was covered with three feet of soil. After 1973, the use of Storage Yard No. 2 for waste disposal appears to have been discontinued. The Commissary and Exchange complex and parking lot were constructed on the site sometime after 1977 and remain active today.

Former Naval Radio Transmitting Facility:

Greenbury Point was acquired by the U.S. Navy for use as the U.S. Naval Academy Farm in 1910. From 1911 to 1917, the area served as the Naval Air Facility. In 1918, four high-power VLF (very low frequency) transmitter towers were erected at the site. The towers were 600-foot high, three-legged Eiffel-style construction, located within the central portion of the peninsula. In 1922, two similar towers were constructed south of the preexisting three. Combined, these six towers provided a communication link between the United States and Europe during World War I. In the late 1930s and 1940s, NRTF was retrofitted to include LF (low frequency) as well as VLF communication systems. Between 1938 and 1941, seven additional towers (of varying construction types) were erected to suit Naval communication needs.

In 1969, six towers were razed to accommodate the construction of a new VLF antenna array consisting of seven guyed towers. To complete the circular configuration of the new antenna array, a causeway of wood pilings was built to hold a 66-foot tower at its terminal end. In 1993, the Department of Defense recommended NRTF Annapolis for closure. The facility was formally decommissioned in 1996. In 1999, most of the towers and the causeway were dismantled to eliminate maintenance costs. Three towers were preserved for historical reasons, and to provide visual aids to navigation for recreational boaters. Ownership of the remaining towers transferred to Anne Arundel County, who will maintain them in perpetuity.

Greenbury Point is now maintained as a nature conservation and education center. The Navy's long-term goal is to provide critical open space and wildlife habitat for the Annapolis area. The area is now an important nesting area for Osprey and Bald Eagles. The wildlife education center monitors the migration patterns of the Monarch Butterfly through a tag and release program. The habitat afforded from the undisturbed open area on Greenbury Point provide critical habitat for a variety of flora and fauna.

Environmental Investigations

Storage Yard No. 2:

Environmental investigations of the site have included a 1979 methane gas survey, a 1985 drum removal, a Preliminary Assessment in 1988, a 1991 Site Investigation, a Remedial Investigation in 1994, and the current Remedial Investigation that is ongoing. To date, compounds of potential concern include volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semivolatile organic compounds (SVOCs), pesticides, metals and petroleum hydrocarbons. Several suspected source areas have been identified, as well as residual contamination from historical operations. Risks to ecological receptors are being quantified concurrently with the ongoing RI efforts.

Former Naval Radio Transmitting Facility:

In conjunction with the decommissioning of the facility, the Navy evaluated environmental impacts from historical operations. Limited sampling was conducted in 1996 to evaluate soil conditions beneath the current and former tower locations. It was determined that soils in the vicinity of the towers were contaminated with fine particulate lead based paint from historical maintenance activities including sandblasting and re-coating of the structures. From 1996 to 2001, the Navy conducted several investigative efforts to determine the extent of contamination within the footprints of the current and preexisting towers. To evaluate potential risks to human health and ecological receptors, and to determine the costs of soil mitigation, the Navy published an Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis (EE/CA) in 2001, which was finalized in 2002. Risks to ecological receptors were not identified. However, to release the property for unrestricted future use soil removal was deemed necessary.

Current Activity

Storage Yard No. 2:

A Draft RI document was submitted to the Department in early 2003. Based on comments provided by the MDE and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, additional investigation and characterization has been recommended. The Navy is preparing to collect additional data to completely characterize the site.

Former Naval Radio Transmitting Facility:

Excavation of contaminated soil to meet removal action goals was completed in the 1st quarter of 2003. The site has been restored and reseeded with grasses recommended by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The post-removal action report has been reviewed by the Federal Facilities Section, and it confirms the achievement of the Navy's objectives.

Future Activities

Storage Yard No. 2:

The Navy Commissary and Exchange complex continues to serve Navy personnel in the Annapolis area. Immediate risks to current land users have not been identified at this point. The Navy intends to continue to collect information sufficient to publish a feasibility study in order to determine appropriate action at the site.

Former Naval Radio Transmitting Facility:

None.

Contacts

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