ENCOMPASS

Environmental Excellence in the Navy's Southeast Region

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Navy Opens Natural Gas Fuel Site

By Bob Nelson
CNRSE Environmental Public Affairs

Clean air is important. It's important to the environment, public health and safety. For these reasons, the Navy in Jacksonville, Fla., is committed to making the air cleaner.

Navy officials together with representatives from the Navy Exchange and Tampa-based TECO Energy Inc./Peoples Gas Systems dedicated two new alternative fuel service stations at a ribbon cutting ceremony June 12, 2001 at Naval Air Station Jacksonville (NAS).

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), pollution in Jacksonville is on the decline, three percent from 1998 to 1999. At NAS Jacksonville and Naval Station Mayport, the use of alternative fueled vehicles (AFVs) is one way Public Works Center (PWC) Jacksonville helps contribute to cleaner air quality by reducing pollutants and greenhouse gases.

Representatives from the Navy, Navy Exchange, and TECO Energy Inc./Peoples Gas Sytems participated in the alternative fuel service ribbon cutting ceremony onboard NAS Jacksonville June 12, 2001.

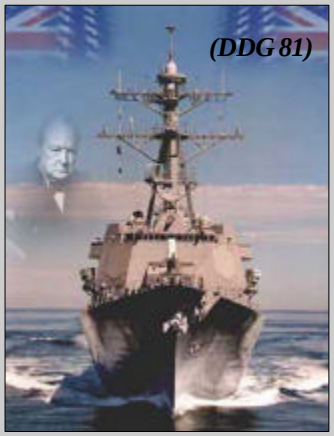
Acquisition of AFVs within the Department of Defense is mandated by federal legislation and executive order. Under these mandates, the Navy is required to plan, program, purchase and utilize alternative fueled vehicles and establish access to refueling facilities.

The applicable acts and orders accomplish two main goals. First, purchase and use of AFVs reduces national dependence on traditional petroleum-based fuels and reduces the demand for imported oil, thus increasing overall national security.

See FUEL, page 4

Navy Safeguards Marine Life During Shock Trials

By Navy Environmental Center Public Affairs Office



Newly designed and modified Navy ships are subjected to a thorough and demanding series of tests that determine whether or not they can withstand combat at sea. USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81) is no exception.

Churchill was subjected to a shock trial off the coast of Florida from May to June. A shock trial involves as many as four detonations of 10,000-pound explosive charges near the ship, followed by a detailed analysis.

More than a year before the first explosion, however, the Navy did extensive research in order to minimize the effect on marine mammals. "This was important not only in terms of protecting a fragile ecosystem in the area of our shock test, but also for all future at-sea tests in which damage to marine life is possible if proper precautions are not enacted," said Cmdr. Michael T. Franken, commanding officer of Churchill.

See SHOCK TRIAL, page 6

From the Regional Environmental Coordinator

Congratulations to the environmental teams in the Southeast Region for the recent news of superior compliance with the Clean Water Act (CAA) for the period of October 2000 to March 2001.

Performing our mission of "Enabling Warfighter Readiness" while complying with this particularly important body of regulations is indeed an accomplishment.

Special recognition to Weapons Station Charleston, S.C.; Naval Air Field Key West, Fla.; Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, P.R.; and Naval Station Pascagoula, Miss., for attaining 100 percent compliance with the CAA for this period.

The Navy, especially in Southeast Region, is entrusted with the care and maintenance of significant natural resources, and our wastewater effluent and stormwater is discharged into many areas of special sensitivity.

It is very important for the environment and the continued operation of the Fleet that we operate within the federal, state, and local regulations that govern the CAA.

Thanks to the installation staffs for this example of exemplary performance.

In other environmental matters, I recently returned from Puerto Rico where Sailors and Marines from the Atlantic Fleet concluded another succesful round of training in the Puerto Rican Operation Area including the use of the Vieques Island training range.

As the future of military training on Vieques Island is discussed at the highest levels of the U.S. military and government, I welcome each chance I have to visit Vieques Island and see first hand how years of environmental management have made Navy property on the island some of the most beautiful in Puerto Rico.

There have been a number of allegations in the national and international press that have cast dark shadows on the Navy's protection of the island's environment and its natural resources over the years. I assure you, the allegations warrant no merit.

Our stewardship of the island's natural resources, including protection of engdangered and threatened marine species, is second to none. Flora and fauna thrive on this desert like island because of the Navy.

The Navy works diligently to ensure the environment is protected each time we perform vital training on Navy property. Our dedicated staff of natural resource experts, biologists, enviromental technicians, managers and counsel, follow stringent guidelines, as required by federal and local law, and work closely with federal and local agencies who have jurisdiction for managing the environment. This teamwork allows our Sailors and Marines the opportunity to benefit from valuable training while minimizing any affects to the environment.

With the future of Navy training in Vieques still undecided, I assure you, the Southeast Region will continue to devote significant resources to protect endangered species against poaching and boat traffic, while protecting habitats such as sea turtle nesting areas, the pygmy orchid and mangroves, and we will do this in concert with providing our troops valuable training.

RADM Jan C. Gaudio

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NAS Jacksonville hosting CAMEX-4

Teamwork Approach Seeks Better Hurricane Forecasting

Photo and Story by Jeff Hilton
NAS Jax Public Affairs

Northeast Florida residents spend roughly six months each year facing the prospect of hurricanes. In the sunshine state, weather conditions drive activities from lawn mowing to flight scheduling at Naval Air Station Jacksonville and launches at the Kennedy Space Center.

In an effort to fine-tune the science of hurricane forecasting, NAS Jacksonville is hosting a collaborative effort by education, government and military agencies. For the next five weeks NAS Jax will support three aircraft from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Hurricane Research Division.

NASA will employ a DC-8 Airborne Laboratory and an ER-2 Airborne Science aircraft together with NOAA's WP-3D research aircraft.

These planes will carry instruments from their own agencies as well as those from several universities during CAMEX-4, NASA's fourth Convection and Moisture Experiment. The goal of CAMEX-4 is to understand hurricane intensification, movement and the impact of hurricanes coming ashore.

The ER-2 will gather data well above storms at 65,000 feet; the DC-8 will operate between 35,000 and 40,000 feet. By matching speeds and headings the two aircraft will operate as low orbiting satellites collecting data that will produce detailed images. Data from the WP-3D will also be linked as they pass through the storms at 1,500 to 10,000 feet.

In support of CAMEX-4, NASA will launch five Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) from Naval Station Mayport to provide storm data near sea level.

CAMEX-4 is associated with U.S. Weather Research Program Hurricane Landfall Experiment, an effort to study these storms through a multi-agency partnership.

NASA Program Manager for CAMEX-4, Dr. Ramesh Kakar, said the data collection will allow researchers "to get a 3-D picture" of storms they observe. At an Aug. 16 press briefing Kakar called CAMEX-4 "a collaboration with our sister agencies… to benefit people on the coast."

CAMEX-4 Lead Mission Scientist Robbie Hood said, "One reason NASA studies hurricanes is to understand the best way to useinformation from NASA resources." She said, "Working more closely with the forecasting community," will be one application of the data collected during the exercise.

Hood said August and September are prime months for hurricanes to spawn in waters of the Atlantic and Caribbean, making them an ideal time to hold CAMEX-4.

Naval Atlantic Meteorology and Oceanograph Facility Jacksonville and its detachments at NAS Key West and Naval Station Mayport will assist CAMEX-4 researchers. NASA's Kakar said, "We're excited and ready to go."

NASA is using the ER-2 Airborne Science aircraft as flying laboratories. The aircraft, based at NASA Dryden Flight Research Center, Edwards, Calif., will fly from NAS Jacksonville during the Convection and Mositure Experiment- 4, (CAMEX-4). The plane will collect information for studying hurricanes from 65,000 feet.

FUEL, from Page 1

Second, use of AFVs rduces emissions of air pollutants.

Since 1991, Public Works Center Jacksonville and TECO Energy Inc./Peoples Gas Systems, partnered to supply the base AFV fleet with compressed natural gas (CNG), which resulted in a cleaner mode of transportation. Natural gas engines are among the cleanest internal combustion engines ever certified by the EPA.

CNG-powered vehicles emit 85 percent less nitrogen oxide, 70 percent less reactive hydrocarbons, and 74 percent less carbon monoxide than similar gasoline-powered vehicles. It is estimated that conversion to CNG can result in a reduction of more than three tons of hydrocarbon emissions over the life of the vehicle. Petroleum products contain large amounts of hydrocarbons, a known pollutant.

"Currently, PWC Jacksonville maintains a fleet of 114 CNG vehicles, comprising approximately 15 percent of PWC's fleet," said John Joneikis, PWC transportation department head. "When we started the program in 1991, we had seven vehicles. We are expecting delivery of 40 additional CNG vehicles soon, making PWC Jacksonville one of the three largest CNG vehicle fleets on the East Coast."

The latest policy, Executive Order 13149, "Greening the Government through Federal Fleet and Transportation Efficiency" signed by former President Bill Clinton on Earth Day in April 2000, requires that Federal fleets continue purchasing AFVs and reduce fiscal year 1999 petroleum consumption by 20 percent no later than fiscal year 2005.

"Using CNG vehicles will assist the Navy reach the EO- mandated reductions, reduce the emissions of ozone precursors and make the Jacksonville air quality better," said Randy Bishop, Navy Region Southeast environmental coordinator division head.

With the Navy's growing fleet of CNG vehicles in the Jacksonville area, PWC Jacksonville recently upgraded CNG- fueling capabilities at both NAS Jacksonville and Naval Station Mayport.

Designed to benefit all federal government CNG vehicles, PWC Jacksonville invested $475,000 on two new CNG pumps that will operate at each of the installation's existing gasoline/fueling service stations. The pumps will be operated by the Navy Exchange (NEX) through a cross-service agreement.

"Twelve other Navy installations have access to fast- fill CNG," said Joneikis. "However, NAS Jacksonville and NS Mayport will be the first Navy CNG fueling stations owned by PWC and operated by the NEX."

"One of the potential advantages of NEX operating the fast-fill pumps is that PWC Transportation will receive local CNG at a competitive price and can focus on the vehicle business without investing too much time and money into fuel station operations and maintenance," said Capt. Steve Duba, PWC Jacksonville's commanding officer. "It's a win-win situation for both agencies."

"Also, with the growing number of personal AFV vehicles using CNG, we expect the pumps will soon be opened to base patrons as well," added Joneikis.

U.S. Navy Transfers Land to DOI

Effective May 1, 2001, the Secretary of the Navy transferred, without reimbursement, approximately 3,100 acres on the Island of Vieques, Puerto Rico to the Secretary of the Interior.

This land was a portion of the facility known as the Naval Ammunition Support Detachment property and is now administered as a national wildlife refuge by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Vieques National Wildlife Refuge contains several ecologically distinct habitats including beaches, coastal lagoons, mangroves wetlands, and upland forested areas. The marine environment surrounding the refuge contains coral reefs and sea grass beds. The refuge and its surrounding waters are home to at least four plants and 10 animals on the Federal endangered species list including the West Indian manatee, the brown pelican, and four species of sea turtles.

A Cooperative Management Agreement made among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Puerto Rico Conservation Trust provides the general management principles for the protection of the refuge lands and other lands on the Islands of Vieques. A Conceptual Management Plan will serve as an interim management plan for the refuge until we develop a Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

Naval Station Pascagoula's Solution Well Balanced

By NAVSTA Pascagoula Public Affairs

Bobcat

In the middle of a salt marsh in the open waters of the Mississippi Sound in the Gulf of Mexico, an island once overpopulated by gluttons is now more environmentally balanced. The 400-acre Singing River Island, on which the Naval Station Pascagoula, Miss., is located, at one time was under siege by hordes of rabbits.

Due to the amount of grass on the island and lack of any natural predators, the rabbit population—along with the burgeoning nutria population—on Singing River Island exploded unchecked, covering the island in fecal pellets and causing thousands of dollars in damage to the Navy's ornamental plants. Numerous methods of ridding the island of the rabbits were considered.

Meanwhile, farmers in northern Mississippi were having a problem with nuisance bobcats that were raiding livestock. In an ingenious idea to help both sides, bobcats, natural predators of both rabbits and nutria, were brought to Singing River Island. That was in 1995.

Today, Naval Station (NAVSTA) Pascagoula resides in ecological harmony, with fewer rabbits and nutria, and two well-fed bobcats. "We are no longer losing ornamental plants to rabbits," said NAVSTA Pascagoula Environmental Manager Tom Sarros. In fact, by just a year after the introduction of Beauregard and GIRT (Government Issue Rabbit Trap)—the two bobcats—the number of both rabbit and nutria droppings on the island had decreased from over 12 pellet piles per square meter to just over three.

"That was a significant reduction in rabbits, for it to drop by that large of an amount," Sarros said. There has been "a significant reduction in the damage to vegetation and a reduction in the amount of rabbit and nutria droppings." Not long after the bobcats were introduced to the island, Beauregard disappeared and his tracking collar was never found. An as-yet-to-be-named replacement bobcat was brought in. These days, the radio transmitter tracking collars have been eschewed for "scat tracking"; or, in other words, monitoring the bobcats' feces to tell where they've been and how long ago they were there. Sarros said no problems have been encountered with this natural solution.

Nutria

"I feel great about this project," he said. "We saved the bobcats' lives, brought an out-of-balance ecosystem back into balance and reduced the cost of maintaining ornamental plants. "This wasn't a win-win situation, this was a win-win-win situation."

Navy Builds Park from Old Missile Site

What once was home to Cold War weapons now will be an area filled with the relative peace of competing youth sports teams. The United States Navy has spent almost $10 million in converting an old missile site into a public park.

In Vernon Hills, Ill., just shy of 40 minutes northwest of Chicago, what was once a Nike missile site is being redeveloped to include baseball and softball diamonds, 16 soccer fields, a 1,500-seat stadium and other facilities. Forty-six acres will hold trails, picnic areas, an interpretive center and a playground; and nearly three-and-a-half miles will have paved bike paths and nature walks.

The area is now 95 percent cleaned up, said Mark Schultz, environmental director of the Engineering Field Activity Midwest, and the entire park project should be completed by 2003. Part of the cleanup involves the removal of old landing strips. 58,000 tons of material will be recycled and used in the construction of parking lots and roadways. Of the 164 acres, 50 acres will be deeded to Vernon Hills High School for ball fields and 50 more acres will go to Stevenson High School.

CNRSE Hosts 2001 Clean Air Act Conference

By Bob Nelson
CNRSE Environmental Public Affairs

The 2001 Navy Clean Air Act Conference was held at the Adams Mark Hotel in downtown Jacksonville, Fla., May 15-17.

Attended by more than 160 participants from Navy and Marine Corps activities from around the world, this year's conference focused on issues dealing with ongoing permitting, enforcement actions, painting/coating issues, and air quality encroachment.

Opening remarks were delivered by Captain Steve Duba, Navy Region Southeast Environmental Program Manager and commanding officer, Public Works Center Jacksonville. Rear Admiral Larry Baucom, director for the Chief of Naval Operations' Environmental Protection, Occupational Health Division (CNO N45) was the guest speaker. RADM Baucom spoke about the ongoing air issues that face the Navy today and encouraged all the environmental professionals attending the conference to work together on difficult problem areas.

Admiral Baucom was followed by Paul Yaroschak, acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Environment & Safety, ASN (E&S). Yaroschak offered listeners a glimpse of the future of environmental issues through a look at the world in 2015.

Bruce Buckheit, the Environmental Protection Agency's Director of Air Enforcement, Office of Regulatory Enforcement; and Jim Manning, Chief of the Air and Water Quality Division for the City of Jacksonville's Regulatory and Environmental Services Department, discussed the importance of maintaining clean air compliance at both the Federal and local level.

Following the daylong plenary sessions on day one, days two and three consisted of a variety of technical sessions and included a legal panel that discussed the role and importance of the lawyer in an environmental program. On the final day of the conference, a group of conference attendees observed air pollution control practices at Naval Station Mayport, the St. John's River Power Plant, and the Anheuser Busch Beer Plant.

"The conference was great success," said Jerry Wallmeyer, deputy environmental program manager for Navy Region Southeast. "These conferences offer the Navy team an opportunity to gather and exchange ideas. I am pleased the conference was held in Jacksonville and we were able to provide a local perspective by allowing a city official to address the group," added Wallmeyer.

EPA Launches New Permitting Web Site

EPA has launched a new web site to provide easy access to information on its national permitting program, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).

The site uses state-of-the-art database technology to manage documents, regulations, and contact information. Users are able to select a variety of ways to enter and view the website, from a general interests format to a detailed topics list for those more familiar with the NPDES program. The site also allows users to create and sort specialized lists of publications, guidance materials, and regulations. It can be accessed at www.epa.gov/npdes. If you have any questions or comments, contact Ross Brennan at brennan.ross@epa.gov.

Shock Trial, From page 1

"No one in the Navy ever intentionally goes out to injure, kill or harass a marine animal," said Lyn Carroll, environmental engineer with program executive officer for theater surface combatants. "At the same time, we are in the business of ensuring the defense of the country."

The Navy determined that an area off the coast of Florida would be the best place to conduct the tests, as it would minimize impact on both environment and marine fauna. The area chosen underwent extensive aerial surveys two days prior to each detonation and was found to have low marine mammal and turtle populations.

On the day of each detonation, aerial surveys, shipboard monitoring and passive acoustic monitoring were conducted. If any marine animals were sighted or detected, detonation was delayed. Immediately following each detonation, the testing area was monitored for any signs of injured or dead marine animals.

For the following two days, aerial monitoring took place for a minimum of three hours each day, down current from the detonation site. No injured or dead marine animals were found.

The Marine Animal Recovery Team remained in the area, down current from the detonation point, for 48 hours after each detonation and for seven days following the last detonation. Such dedication may seem extreme but the results cannot be contested.

"Much work has gone into establishing the Navy's high standard of ensuring we execute our mission without marring our oceans," Franken said. "This ship and its crew were not about to tear down those many decades of environmental stewardship."

NELP, CNRSE, and NAS JAX Celebrate Earth Day

By NELP and CNRSE Public Affairs

Naval Station (NS) Mayport's Navy Environmental Leadership Program (NELP) took part in two Earth Day events in the month of April, to present to the public its mission of addressing fleet environmental issues and promoting environmental awareness while supporting Fleet operational readiness.

On Saturday, April 21, NELP participated in the city of Jacksonville's Earth Day 2001 Ecology Fair at the Jacksonville Landing.

An estimated 10,000 people attended the all-day event, which included live music, crafts for children, and displays from a wide range of organizations from the Sierra Club to CSX Transportation.

Joining NELP at th Landing were environmental representatives from Commander Navy Region Southeast (CNRSE) and Naval Air Station Jacksonville (NAS JAX) who handed out give away's and shared information about local environmental programs.

The celebration provided the Navy with a large community forum in which to showcase the Navy's commitment to environmental leadership.

"The annual Ecology Fair is a great time," said Ken Conley, CNRSE Nautral Resources Manager. "The Navy is a good environmental steward, and it's important we show it every chance we get," he added.

NELP also took part in the 2001 Environmental and Energy Awareness Week sponsored by NASA, Kennedy Space Center and the U.S. Air Force 45th Space Wing.

The four-day event was designed for the benefit of employees at Kennedy Space Center, Cape Canaveral Air Force Station and Patrick Air Force Base. More than 75 exhibitors from organizations throughout Central and Northeast Florida were in attendance.

Lt. Stuart Keiner and Lt.j.g. Donny Williams of VP-45 get up close and personal with a tarantula courtesy of an Earth Day Ecology Fair participant from Kritter Konnections.

photos by JO2 Eric Clay

The educational event provided NELP with yet another occasion to increase public awareness of its environmental initiatives. "Events such as these are great opportunities for NELP to educate the general public about the active role that the Navy takes in addressing fleet environmental requirements around the world, while promoting environmental awareness and training," said Lt. Cmdr. Bill Jones, NELP Team Leader.

Between the two events, NELP, representatives distributed more than 1000 coloring books featuring endangered species native to Northeast Florida, and more than 600 manatee posters with the message "Earth Day Ever Day."

Visitors also had the opportunity to learn more about specific NELP initiatives and success stories, such as the Mobile Aircraft Firefighter Training Device and the implementation of innovative painting and de-painting technologies at NS Mayport.

"EQ Pelican," the Navy's environmental stewardship mascot, was a hit at the Ecology Fair. VP-45's Lt.j.g. Chris Artis portrayed the feathered favorite.

Environmental Excellence at Naval Hospital Beaufort

Naval Hospital, Beaufort, S.C. has become certified for membership in the S.C. Environmental Excellence Program, coordinated by the University of South Carolina's Center for Environmental Policy.

"The program recognizes and encourages organizations to work toward continuous environmental improvement," said Charlotte Pitt, program coordinator for the Center for Environmental Policy. "Not only did the naval hospital go above and beyond the standard for environmental performance, but now we'll be able to hold you up as a model for other military activities to emulate."

To qualify for membership into the S.C. Environmental Excellence Program, an organization must submit an environmental excellence plan that includes a commitment by senior management to establish an organization-wide environmental management system. Minimizing adverse impact on human health and the environment must be a top priority for the organization along with a commitment to continuous environmental improvement.

Since 1998, Naval Hospital Beaufort has cut wet chemical usage by 75%, decreased medical waste by 40% and, with the installation of water conserving toilets and showerheads, decreased water usage by 5%.

Only 20 organizations in the state have achieved this environmental award, with Naval Hospital being only the second military organization to receive it. According to Captain Gary W. Zuckerman, the hospital commanding officer, this award is about more than compliance – it's a commitment to continuous quality improvement. "It starts with leadership and goes all the way to the workers doing the right thing for patients and the environment. We take environmental regulations as a given and try to go beyond them to be better than the rules require and to provide the highest quality of care we can to our patients," said Zuckerman. "Our short-term goal is to have as little effect on the environment as possible, and our long-term goal is to have no effect at all," he added.

The Environmental Excellence Program began in 1996 in Columbia, S.C. It is coordinated by the Center for Environmental Policy, part of the Institute of Public Affairs at the University of South Carolina. Other organizations include the State Department of Health and Environmental Control, the S.C. Chamber of Commerce, the S.C. Manufacturers Alliance and the S.C. Chapter of the Sierra Club.

The Naval hospital employs over 600 military and civilian staff and provides care to over 30,000 military, military family and retired beneficiaries residing in the Beaufort area.

Johnson Sworn in as Assistant Secretary of the Navy

Secretary of the Navy Gordon England held a ceremony August 7 in the Pentagon to swear in Hansford T. Johnson as Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Installations and Environment. In this capacity Johnson is responsible for the formulation of policies relating to environmental protection, facilities, installations, housing, long-range basing and infrastructure requirements, and safety and occupational health for military and civilian personnel.

Before his appointment, Johnson was president and chief operating officer of EG&G Technical Services, Inc. A retired general in the Air Force, Johnson served as commander-in-chief of the U.S. Transportation Command during operation Desert Storm. He was a member of the 1993 Base Realignment and Closure Commission, and has worked for USAA Capital Corp. and the Credit Union National Association.

Johnson is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy, and holds a master's degree in aeronautics from Stanford University and an MBA from the University of Colorado.

EPA Announces Web-Based Public Bulletin

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announces the release of a web-based, Interim Information Products Bulletin (IPB) for public review and comment. The Interim IPB can be found at: http://www.epa.gov/ipbpages and via links from the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) web site. The Interim IPB provides an initial list to notify interested stakeholders and members of the public of upcoming "significant information products" being developed or modified by EPA. They have been derived from federal, state, local, tribal and/or other organizations' data; state reports and publications; and, other reports that are regional or national in scope. The Interim Bulletin includes products that EPA plans to publish either electronically or in hard copy between October, 2000 and March, 2001. This initial Bulletin precedes a more detailed bulletin which will be published regularly, both on-line and in hard copy, starting next spring. The Bulletin is a joint effort between EPA and the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS). It was developed, in part, in response to a request from participants in a national Information Management Forum (which included representatives from industry, state, tribal and local government officials and various public interest and educational groups) and the participants in various focus groups convened by EPA nationwide since 1997. Future editions of the IPB will be made available in hard copy to facilitate public access by those who do not have access to the Internet at home, school, work or in their community.

Weapons Station Charleston Contributes to Artificial Reefs

By Terrence Larimer
NWS Charleston Natural Resources

The Navy, the National Guard and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources are making life environmentally friendly for the local marine life.

Naval Weapons Station Charleston (NWSCHS) recently contributed obsolete materials for use in the construction of artificial reefs along the South Carolina coast as part of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources(SCDNR) Marine Artificial Reef Program. The project aims to improve local fish habitat.

Under the direction of the SCDNR, and with primary assistance from the South Carolina Army National Guard, the Navy donated materials that will enhance existing reefs and help create new ones.

NWSCHS donated old mooring anchors, large cement vehicle barriers, cement culvert pipes and cement manhole junctions for the reef project. In addition, NWSCHS contributed six obsolete fuel barges and more than 100 used shipping containers.

The containers are 20 feet long and eight feet high, and because of non-repairable damage, the Navy no longer uses them. Before sinking, the doors were removed and several holes were cut in the container. This will aid with the sinking process, and allow marine life to better access the structures.

National Guard personnel cleaned and stripped the barges of any hazardous materials. They also welded hatches open and cut holes throughout the barges.

In preparation for the donations, NWSCHS Environmental and Natural Resources personnel identified and selected materials that were safe and suitable for marine reefs.

Once materials were located, the National Guard's 1052nd Transportation Company and the Environmental Enterprise Group Inc. of Charleston transported the materials to their final location.

The SCDNR program currently maintains 41 artificial reefs along the South Carolina coast.

"Creation of this habitat helps to increase fish population, while also providing enhanced recreational fishing and sport diving opportunities in our coastal waters," said Bob Martore, coordinator of the artificial reef program. "With reef sites ranging from inshore waters less than 10 feet deep, to more than 35 miles offshore with depths exceeding 120 feet, boats of almost any size can reach a reef from any major inlet on our coast."

"We believe this is a great project. Most of this material has not been used for years," said David Jones, NWSCHS Environmental and Natural Resources. "Now we're getting it cleaned up, out of the way; and it will be benefiting fish, anglers and divers for years to come."

The Navy donated more than 100 shipping containers to the South Carolina Artificial Reef Program. The containers will provide a safe haven for marine life.

Welcome New Staff

Lt. Cmdr. Susan Stewart joined the Commander, Navy Region Southeast (CNRSE) staff in June, replacing Lt.Cmdr. Lindy Young as the Regional Environmental Counsel.

Stewart earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism from the University of Southern California, graduated from the University of Alabama School of Law in 1988 and joined the Alabama bar in September 1998. Stewart graduated from Naval Justice School in 1989 and attended George Washington School of Law where she earned her Environmental Masters in Law in June 2001.

She has served on staff's in San Diego, Calif.; Alexandria, Va.; Millington, Tenn.; Naples, Italy; Bahrain; and Yokuska, Japan. Her legal career has included duties as a legal assistance attorney, personal property claims officer, senior defense counsel, senior trial and legal counsel, and staff judge advocate.

Mr. Dave Pipkin reported to CNRSE Environmental in August as the Region's Air Program Manager. Prior to his assignment at CNRSE, Pipkin had served as the Naval Air Station Jacksonville Air Program Manager since 1992.

Following graduation from the University of Florida with a BS in Environmental Engineering in 1979, he began his federal service career at Naval Aviation Depot Norfolk. Over the past 21 years he has worked in the environmental arena as Environmental Coordinator at Naval Air Station Oceana, Va.; Water and Wastewater Program Manager at Naval Facilities Engineering Command HQ; Environmental Coordinator at Naval Station Orlando, Fla., and Barking Sands, HI; and as Installation Restoration Program Manager and Environmental Director at former Naval Air Station Cecil Field, Fla.

Sea Turtles Thrive On Navy Beaches

By JO3 Kimberly Stephens
NSRR Public Affairs

Hawksbill, leatherback and green sea turtles have found themselves a popular hang-out on the Navy's beaches in Vieques. Yellow Beach seems to have quite the atmosphere for the females to nest their eggs.

The beaches located on Navy property in Vieques are ideal for the turtles to reproduce. "If the land wasn't suitable then they wouldn't go there," said Winston Martinez, Natural Resources Program Manager at the Environmental Engineering Division on Naval Station Roosevelt Roads (NSRR).

Other than the quality of the beaches, they also have controlled access. "We don't have the problem of poachers as they do on the main island of Puerto Rico because of the controlled access," said Oscar Diaz, NSRR Fish and Wildlife conservationist. "Vieques is very important because it is the only place in all of the Puerto Rican territory that Green Sea Turtles nest consecutively – every year."

The Navy pays the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources to have people count the nests and observe the turtles' habits on the beaches throughout the year.

Green Turtle on Vieques Island

Seventy days prior to Navy training exercises, the observations of the sea turtles begin. This time period is more or less the incubation time for the turtles' eggs, and if there are any nests on the beach area they are marked with yellow flags. The flags mark where each nest is so military personnel can be aware of their locations during training.

Qualified observers conduct aerial and ground surveys twice a day during exercises. The information collected is then passed on to Observation Post 1 (OP1) so any necessary adjustments to training exercises can be made.

"Because of all the measures we put in place to protect sea turtles, they are not in danger because of the Navy's training exercises," said Martinez.

The Navy property in Western Vieques is very important to the hawksbill, leatherback and green sea turtles. And, taken in to consideration the nesting activity on Navy property compared to that of the rest of the island, it is definitely a great indication of the quality of habitat there.

"If the habitat wasn't good, we would not have this type of nesting activity on the Navy's land," Martinez reemphasized.

New Guidelines Issued for Wetlands Grant Program

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has proposed new guidelines to improve the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program.

The program offers annual matching grants to coastal states and U.S. territories for projects involving the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of coastal wetlands. All of the projects must be administered for long term conservation benefits to wildlife and habitat.

The proposed guidelines provide clear direction on grant proposal development, along with examples and information on how projects are ranked and scored. An additional criterion was developed to address the benefit of candidate projects to coastal dependent and migratory birds.

"The proposed rule provides clear guidance to the states, territories and other partners and will greatly improve the efficiency of the program," said USFWS acting director Marshall Jones.

The USFWS has provided more than $90 million in grants to 25 states and one U.S. territory under the grant program. When the 2001 grant projects are complete, more than 105,000 acres will have been protected or restored since the grant program was created in 1990.

The program is one of three conservation efforts funded by the 1990 Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act. All grants are awarded through a competitive process.

Funding for the program is generated from excise taxes on fishing equipment and motorboat and small engine fuels. These taxes are deposited into the Sport Fish Restoration Account of the Aquatic Resources Trust Fund (called Wallop-Breaux after its Congressional sponsors).

Making Order From Chaos

Spill Scenario Provides Valuable Training

By Jeff Hilton
NAS JAX Public Affairs

It was a quiet Thursday morning at the Fleet Industrial Supply Center's (FISC) Fuel Farm near Heckscher Drive on Jacksonville, Florida's north side. The farm, on the banks of the St. Johns River, stores 750,00 barrels of fuel in a dozen tanks about 12 miles from the river's mouth.

This particularThursday, the USNS Patuxent, a Military Sealift Command ship was moored starboard side to in the St. Johns River.

The morning calm turned to chaos at 7:20 a.m. when a towline from a commercial tug and a barge parted. The barge struck the Patuxent opening a one by 10 foot gash and ruptured three fluid tanks each able to hold 8,976 barrels (about 377,000 gallons). JP-5 aviation fuel and Diesel Fuel, Marine began leaking into the pristine waters not far from the Jacksonville Zoo and several environmentally sensitive marshes. Initial estimates indicated 6,000 barrels of fuel were in the St. Johns. Fuel was escaping at a rate of 1,000 gallons an hour. An environmental calamity was facing the waterways and citizens of north Jacksonville.

Within minutes, spill containment measures were underway by the ship and fuel farm staff. Military and civilian authorities were notified, the Regional Spill Management Team (RSMT) under the direction of Commander, Navy Region Southeast (CNRSE), was activated at Naval Air Station Jacksonville. The RSMT would direct efforts to contain the fuel and conduct clean up operations.

The event never happened. It was a training exercise held in July by CNRSE. The day-long event involved several Navy commands, U.S. Coast Guard elements plus coordinating with local, state, and Federal agencies, and the public.

The drill comes as a response to the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska. The disaster which revealed the shortcomings of how agencies in all jurisdictions, local, state, and Federal respond to large environmental incidents. The 1989 spill led to the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 that outlines responsibilities; establishes criteria for rapid response, containment and clean up.

Dominic Broadus, CNRSE environmental engineer, developed much of the scenario. He wears the Navy On Scene Coordinator (NOSC) Media (Fuel, Oil and Hazardous substances) manager hat and is a primary contact for any oil spills in the Region. Broadus said three months of preliminary training and preparations were held prior to the exercise focused on getting RSMT member familiar with the process.

Exercises are built using the Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (PREP) developed by the Environmental Protection Agency, the Coast Guard's Research and Special Programs Administration- Office of Pipeline Safety as well as Minerals Management Service. Since environmental damage can affect overlapping jurisdictions, federal notification and tracking is required even when federal resources are not deployed.

Members of the spill management team record asset and recovery equipment data, and track the movement of oil along the St. Johns River. The Oil Spill Drill provided the spill management team valuable training.

PREP is built around 15 core components from initial reporting through post-incident documentation.

As the exercise unfolded, Navy units deployed or simulated deploying containment and clean up resources. "Cooperation across multiple jurisdictions is important," Broadus said. "When a large spill occurs coordination helps ensure all stakeholders' interests are considered, especially in setting priorities and objectives. Other issues resolved by coordination include where to obtain and deploy equipment; identification of local resources to support our response effort and concurrence of the most effective mitigation measures to minimize the environmental impact," he added.

Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Brian Penoyer, Federal On Scene Coordinator for the drill, said, "The Coast Guard's general position on drills like this is that they are invaluable. By-in-large what we saw was a command and control system people don't use everyday. The plan may look good on paper until you try it…then you make adjustments." In his capacity, Penoyer was not directing the response but ensuring the actions taken were in concert with the national strategy for spill response. Although there is room for improvement, Penoyer's overall evaluation, --- "I was very pleased with the process."

While the Navy continues to emphasize and improve its environmental stewardship, spills are a risk any time. By running simulated drills then evaluating strengths and weaknesses, those responding are far better equipped to succeed while minimizing impact on the environment.

The Chief of Naval Operations' Environmental Protection, Safety and Operational Health Division (CNO N45) has developed a new logo for use in publications, briefings, and display materials in support of the Navy's enviornmental message.

For more information on the Navy's environmental programs, visit http://environet.navy.mil/n45.

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