DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
BALTIMORE DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 1715
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21203-1715

June 2, 2008

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF
Engineering Division

Ms. Sarah Cavitt
President
Indian Head Highway Action Council
415 River Wood Drive
Fort Washington, MD 20744

Dear Ms. Cavitt:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has recently completed a study of the Fort Foote Site, Prince George's County, near Fort Washington, MD (Formerly Used Defense Site Project Number C03MD102101) concerning potential chemical warfare materiel contamination. The study determined that chemical warfare materiel is unlikely to be present at the Fort Foote Site and that no further action is necessary. Further information regarding the history of the site is presented in the attached Fact Sheet.

The Site Inspection Report prepared as part of the study recommended Project Closeout for the Fort Foote Site and removal from the project inventory for chemical warfare materiel.

Since the Fort Foote Site is located within Prince George's County, Maryland, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District invites local officials and public representatives, such as yourself, to comment on the Report recommendations. Copies of the Site Inspection Report will be made available for review in a local information repository located at the Oxon Hill Public Library (Local Reference Section), 6200 Oxon Hill Road, Oxon Hill, MD 20745.

If you have any comments concerning the Fort Foote Site Report and recommendation for Project Closeout, please forward them in writing within **30 days** from the date of this letter to Mr. Brent Graybill at the following address: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District (CENAB-EN-HN), P.O. Box 1715, Baltimore, MD 21203-1715.

Public comments received during this **30 day period** will be considered in the final decision-making process for the Fort Foote Site. Pending public input, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will prepare the Final Site Inspection Report and initiate the closeout decision process.

If you would like more information, please contact the undersigned at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District at 410-779-2795.

Sincerely,

Brent Graybill
Project Manager
USACE—Baltimore District

Corps Facts

US Army Corps of Engineers®
Baltimore District

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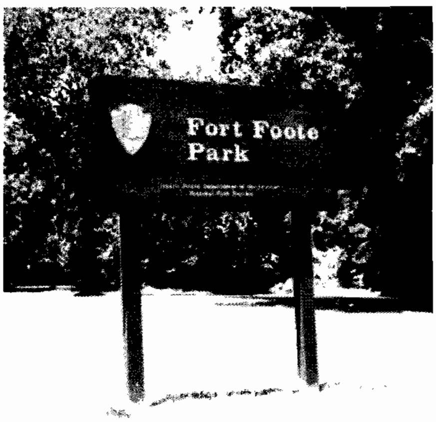

SUBJECT: FORT FOOTE
Chemical Warfare Materiel Scoping and Security Study - Project Closeout

Background

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is conducting the first nationwide effort to identify, manage, prioritize, and develop cost estimates for future actions at Formerly Used Defense Sites where historical documentation indicates that chemical warfare materiel had been used, produced, stored, and/or tested.

Formerly Used Defense Sites were used by the military to train Soldiers, airmen, sailors, and Marines, as well as to test new weapons and warfare capabilities. After wartime, many of these properties were no longer needed, and they were cleaned up according to the best practices available at the time and then transferred to other owners. Congress established the Formerly Used Defense Sites Program in the mid-1980s to restore properties formerly owned by, leased to, or otherwise possessed by the United States and under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Defense. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for carrying out the program. The scope and magnitude of the Formerly Used Defense Sites Program is significant, with more than 9,000 properties identified for potential inclusion. Approximately 100 to 200 of these properties have been identified as suspect chemical warfare materiel sites.

The former Fort Foote is included as one of these properties. The former Fort Foote is located near Fort Washington, Maryland on the Potomac River in Prince George's County. Fort Foote was used to defend the capital from attack during the Civil War.

Site History

Fort Foote was originally built in 1863 to protect Washington, D.C. from Confederate attack along the Potomac River. Fort Foote was a Civil War fort used for training from 1865 to 1878. After the Civil War, the site was used for the Army Engineer's School.

With the beginning of World War I, the use of the military installations in and around Washington, D.C. expanded; this expansion included Fort Foote. In the spring of 1917, American University in northwestern Washington, D.C. offered the government the use of its campus and buildings for the war effort. The American University Experiment Station was established for use by the Bureau of Mines for the discovery, manufacture, and use of poisonous gases. The War Department established the Gas Service in October 1917 to share the American University Experiment Station facilities with the Bureau of Mines. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers mobilized the 30th Engineers Battalion, a unit of gas and flame troops, as part of the Gas Service.

In December 1917, the Bureau of Mines obtained permission to use Fort Foote as an engineer training and practice site. The 30th Engineers Battalion was stationed at Fort Foote during 1918 and 1919. Fort Foote served as an extension of the American University Experiment Station, and was used for experiments including testing of intensive bombs, combustible bombs, and combustible darts from November 1917 to 1918.

Fort Foote was declared excess in July 1922. The property was leased for 5 years to an individual who served as a civilian caretaker of the site. On May 28, 1928, the Girl Scouts of Washington were granted a license to use lands of Fort Foote for camping. The land was transferred in 1931 to the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Capital Parks. It has remained under National Park Service control since 1931.

Project Description

As part of the Chemical Warfare Materiel Scoping and Security Study, the Corps is evaluating all Formerly Used Defense Sites where chemical warfare materiel is suspected. Chemical warfare materiel has been defined by the Army as an item configured as a munition that contains a chemical substance that is intended to kill, injure, or incapacitate a person. By definition, chemical warfare materiel does not include: riot control agents; chemical herbicides (plant/weed killers); smoke and flame producing items; or soil, water, or other debris contaminated with chemical agents. The Corps is conducting this Chemical Warfare Materiel Scoping and Security Study to determine if chemical warfare materiel is present, understand the potential security, safety, and health risks, identify the requirements to clean up the sites, and prioritize future actions to be taken.

An evaluation of all suspect chemical warfare materiel sites is required to determine what steps to take. Research is the first step, and some sites may require additional investigation to determine the need for further response action and the potential cost. At other sites, the research may determine that chemical warfare materiel is unlikely to be present, and therefore no further action will be needed. These latter sites are categorized as chemical warfare materiel project closeout. Based on the review of records and the current site condition of the former Fort Foote, the project team has determined that chemical warfare materiel is unlikely to be present. As such, the former Fort Foote is categorized as chemical warfare materiel project closeout. If contamination is found at this site in the future, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will reconsider the categorization of the property. The Army's number one priority is public health and safety.

For More Information

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers wants the public to be a part of study efforts as we work hard to ensure the public's safety, the safety of our on-site workers, and to protect the environment. For more information about the Formerly Used Defense Sites Chemical Warfare Materiel Scoping and Security Study and the former Fort Foote, contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Baltimore District Public Affairs Office at 410-962-2809 or visit the Formerly Used Defense Sites Program website at:

https://eko.usace.army.mil/usacecop/pub/ecop/what_we_do/fuds/