

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS TO SURVEY WAIKANE VALLEY

Transcripts of Broadcast News Coverage

(August 2004)

WED 8/4/04: KITV-4 10 P.M. NEWS

Headlines/
Paula
Akana:
Anchor

Next, making Waikane Valley a military ordnance-free zone. A new plan could mean a major clean up. How the military hopes to restore the area...

Akana:

Nearly 30 years after the U.S. military stopped training in Waikane Valley, it's back to assess whether or not dangers are still lurking underground. KITV-4's Tasha Kobashigawa just returned from a meeting in Waikane and joins us to explain what the military is planning. Tasha?

Tasha
Kobashigawa:
Reporter

Well, Paula, it was the U.S. Marine Corps that once leased more than one-thousand acres of land in Waikane Valley. The area is still dangerous. Now it's the task of the Army Corps of Engineers to figure out just how dangerous. For nearly three decades the military used the land in Waikane Valley for live-fire training. When the military left in 1976, it cleared some of the practice ordnance but discontinued the clean-up because it became too costly.

Chuck
Streck:
Project
Manager

There's only been a concerted effort to address ordnance sites since the late 90's. So given that framework, you know, it's not been that long a time since we've both had funds and programs available.

Kobashigawa: Now the Army Corps of Engineers has one million dollars to assess the land for left over weapons or ammunition.

Streck:

What we're going to be looking for is to see if there's any potential risk to human health and safety and the environment from ordnance left from military training and then come up with alternatives of addressing the safety risks.

(Continued)

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WED 8/4/04: KITV-4 10 P.M. NEWS (Contd.)

Kobashigawa: The Army Corps of Engineers plans to send a large team of surveyors to sift through about 90 percent of the former training area. People who live in Waikane say if the military plans to clean the area, they want it all clean. There is about 187 acres of land labeled here as "Impact Area 1" that the Marines still have control over, but do not use and have not authorized to be a part of the ordnance assessment. There are many steps to the clean-up process, but only the first step has been authorized. The Army Corps of Engineers only has the funding to do the surveying of the land and if they find anything, it would be up to the federal government to provide money for the clean-up. The survey process could take up to a year. Reporting live, Tasha Kobashigawa, KITV-4 News.

WED 8/4/04: KHPR-88.1 FM 5 P.M. NEWS

Al
Hulsen:
Anchor

The military is holding a public meeting tonight to brief Windward Oahu residents on the military's plan to clean up ordnance at its training area in Waikane Valley. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers says about 874 acres of the Waikane Training Area are eligible for a federal restoration program for formerly-used defense sites. An attorney for the environmental advocacy group Earthjustice says area residents have long been asking for the clean up. Program manager Chuck Streck says the purpose of tonight's meeting is to make sure the people understand what the work entails, and also to solicit volunteers for a restoration advisory board.

THU 8/5/04: KITV-4 5 A.M. NEWS: 5:01 A.M. (Repeats 1x)

Jill
Kuramoto:
Anchor

Well, it's been more than 30 years since the U.S. military stopped training in Waikane Valley. Well, they're coming back. This time to assess the land's dangers. KITV-4's Justin Fujioka is live now with more. Justin?

Justin
Fujioka:
Reporter

Good morning, Jill. The Army first leased the land in Waikane Valley in 1942. The Marines took control ten years later. At a meeting last night, the military explained its future plans for the area, which includes a survey of the land's dangers by the Army Corps of Engineers. Through 1976, more than one-thousand acres of land in Waikane Valley was used for live-fire training. When the military left the area, it cleared some of the practice ordnance, but discontinued the clean-up because it became too costly.

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THU 8/5/04: KITV-4 5 A.M. NEWS: 5:01 A.M. (Contd.)

Chuck Streck: There's only been a concerted effort to address ordnance sites since the late 90's. So given that framework, you know, it's not been that long a time since we've both had funds and programs available.
Project Manager

Fujioka: After a push from area residents to clean-up the site, the Army Corps of Engineers has put aside 1-million dollars to assess the land for left over weapons or ammunition. They'll be sending a team of 20-to-30 people to survey about 90-percent of the land. 187 acres of the land is not authorized to be a part of the ordnance assessments. People who live in Waikane say if the military's coming to clean the area, they might as well clean it all. Now this is just the first step in the clean-up process. The Army Corps of Engineers could take up to a year surveying the land and if they find anything, it would be up to the federal government to provide more money for a clean-up. Reporting live, Justin Fujioka, KITV-4 News.

Kuramoto: Thanks, Justin.

THU 8/5/04: KITV-4 5 A.M. NEWS: 5:16 A.M. (Repeats 3x)

Kuramoto: Well, it's been 30 years since the military used Waikane Valley for training. But now they're back to look for any dangerous ordnance left in the area. The U.S. military used the valley for live-fire training and left in 1976.

THU 8/5/04: KITV-4 5 A.M. NEWS: 5:31 A.M. (Repeats 1x)

Kuramoto: More than 30 years since the US military stopped training in Waikane Valley, they're coming back. This time it will be assessing the land's dangers. KITV-4's Justin Fujioka joins us live with more now. Justin?

Fujioka: Good morning, Jill. The military leased more than 1-thousand acres land in Waikane Valley for live fire training in 1942. There are still dangers lurking underground. At a meeting last night, the military explained its plans to bring in the Army Corps of Engineers to survey the land's dangers. Through 1976, more than 1-thousand acres of land in Waikane Valley was used for live-fire training. When the military left the area, it cleared some of the practice ordnance, but discontinued the clean-up because it became too costly. Well, the Army Corp of Engineers now has 1-million dollars to assess the land for left over weapons and/or ammunition.

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THU 8/5/04: KITV-4 5 A.M. NEWS: 5:31 A.M. (Contd.)

Chuck Streck: Program Manager What we're going to be looking for is to see if there's any potential risk to human health and safety and the environment from ordnance left from military training and then come up with alternatives of addressing the safety risks.

Fujioka: The Army Corps of Engineers will be sending a team of 20-to-30 people to survey about 90% of the former training area. There's 187-acres of land the military still has control of, but do not use. It is not authorized to be a part of the ordnance assessment. People who live in Waikane say, if the military's coming to clean the area, they want it all cleaned up. The federal funding for the assessment is just the first step in the long clean-up process. And it could be a long first step. The Army Corps of Engineers may take up to a year to survey the land. Reporting live, Justin Fujioka, KITV-4 News.

Kuramoto: Justin, just a question. So the funding is just for the assessment and not the removal of the practice ordnance?

Fujioka: That's right, Jill. If the team of surveyors find anything, if they find any threat to people in the valley, the federal government will then have to approve more money for its removal.

Kuramoto: All right, thank you very much, Justin.

THU 8/5/04: KHPR-88.1 FM 5P.M. NEWS

Al Hulsen: Anchor Windward Oahu residents say the Army's proposal to clear old ordnance from Waikane Valley is late but better than nothing. About three dozen residents turned out last night to listen to members of the Army Corps of Engineers give a presentation to clean up the former training area. Some who attended last night's meeting say it should have been started sooner. The Marines used the valley for jungle and assault training from 1954 to 1976. The Corps of Engineers has offered to clean up 874 acres of the valley. The remaining 187 acres are still under the control of the Marine Corps, which recently declared those lands unsafe for training.

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