

Waikane cleanup briefing set: Engineers will discuss the planned removal of old ordnance - Star Bulletin - Gregg K. Kakesako - Aug. 4, 2004

<http://starbulletin.com/2004/08/04/news/story8.html>

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will brief Windward Oahu residents tonight on a proposal to clean up ordnance on 874 acres in Waikane Valley used for jungle training from 1942 to 1976.

The proposal does not include the 187 acres in Waikane Valley that the Marines in November labeled as unsafe to use as a training area because there were too many unexploded devices. It has since fenced that area.

The Marines' decision followed a 16-month-long environmental assessment and a staff study that concluded there was too much unexploded ordnance in the valley. The last time Waikane was used as a live-fire range was in 1976.

The Army Corps of Engineers' briefing on the possible cleanup will begin at 6 tonight at Waiahole Elementary School at 48-215 Waiahole Valley Road.

Chuck Streck, project manager, said ZapataEngineering will conduct the \$1 million engineering evaluation and cost-analysis study. He estimated that it will take at least a year to complete the study, with about three or four months of field work to evaluate potential risks from any munitions and to develop alternative plans to address the problem.

He said the land is owned by Waikane Development Co., the state, city and several small property owners.

The Army engineers also will ask the Windward Oahu community to see whether a restoration advisory board should be established for this project, Streck said.

"The advisory board will be community-focused, and its No. 1 priority is to have people from the community who have direct interest in the project," he said.

He said most of the Waikane training area is undeveloped. It is covered with dense vegetation with gulches and steep slopes of the Koolau Mountain range.

The Army in 1942 obtained a lease from Lincoln L. McCandless heirs

and the Waiahole Water Co. to use 1,061 acres in Waikane for warfare training.

In 1953, the Army turned the range over to the Marine Corps. It was used as a training area and a bombing and firing range for artillery units from 1942 to 1976. Army engineers have estimated that since the lease was terminated in 1976, more than 40,000 pounds of practice ordnance and scrap have been removed from the area.

The Marines said two major sweeps of their portion of the valley recovered 24,000 pounds of ordnance debris in 1976 and 16,000 pounds in 1983. Marine Corps training there included the use of rockets, mortars and hand grenades.

Windward Oahu residents have long advocated a cleanup of the area by the military, especially after the Marines abandoned its plan to use part of it for jungle training.

Last year, when Arthur Machado was chairman of the Kahaluu Neighborhood Board, he said a majority of board members believed the Marines should clean up the valley.

Waikane parcel may get military cleanup - Advertiser - Eloise Aguiar - Aug. 4, 2004

<http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2004/Aug/04/In/In21a.html#Anchor-49575>

WAIKANE — After decades of calling for a complete cleanup of military ordnance in a longtime training area in Waikane Valley, residents may finally get their wish.

In a continuing effort to restore former U.S. Department of Defense sites, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has announced that about 874 acres of the Waikane Training Area is eligible for the Defense Environmental Restoration Program i Formerly Used Defense Sites.

However, restoration of the training site will not include 187 acres that the Marine Corps recently declared unsafe for military training.

A public meeting has been called for today to make sure people understand the scope of the work and to solicit volunteers for a restoration advisory board for the project, said Chuck Streck, Army Corps of Engineers program manager for ordnance studies.

Plans call for a federally financed risk assessment — cost: about \$1 million — to be conducted beginning as early as September. From that, solutions will be offered, Streck said.

The treatment of Waikane Valley, along with areas such as Kaho'olawe, has long fueled debate over the military's use of Hawai'i land for training, especially where there are archaeological sites and endangered species.

Kapua Sproat, an attorney with the environmental advocacy group Earthjustice, said she looks forward to tonight's meeting because residents, especially longtime Waikane families, have been long asking for the cleanup.

"It was a commitment the Marines made and never made good on," Sproat said, referring to the military's original agreement to clean the property once it stopped using it.

The area was once used to grow taro and contained a heiau and other archaeological sites. Today the land is mostly vacant and used by bike riders, pig hunters and other trespassers who seem unaware of the potential dangers.

The Waikane Training Area was leased by the military and used for live-fire training from World War II until 1976, when it was shut down. A cleanup cleared the land of about 40,000 pounds of practice ordnance and scrap before the military backed away from the effort, saying it had become too expensive.

The 1,061 acres in the Waikane Training Area were returned to the owners, including 187 acres that belonged to the Kamaka family. The Kamakas then farmed the land until the military condemned it in 1989, said Ray Kamaka, 65. Kamaka said he discovered ordnance on the land in the mid-'80s and asked the military to remove it.

However, the military decided it would be too expensive, so it condemned the land, offered the family \$2 million and fenced off the area instead, Kamaka said.

Even now Kamaka contends that the land was improperly taken and said he has never accepted any of the money for it.

"They were supposed to clean it but instead they turned the table on me," Kamaka said.

Kamaka said he wasn't sure what this new proposal could mean for the valley or his family. The acreage surrounding the 187 acres has

ordnance as well, but that property was never condemned or fenced off, he said.

"The neighbors had just as many bombs on their area," he said. "It's all over."

Last year, the Marines wanted to reactivate the 187-acre parcel for jungle warfare training but determined it was too dangerous because of unexploded ordnance. The Marines Corps erected a new fence around the site and left any decision about whether to clean it to the Department of the Navy.

Nationally, the Defense Department has about 9,000 formerly used defense sites and has been conducting studies and cleanups for several years toward making the areas safer. Two years ago, the government initiated an assessment for land in He'eia, Kahalu'u and Maunawili. That project stalled because one of the bigger landowners took a year to give permission to enter the property, Streck said. That assessment should wrap up by September.

The assessment in Waikane will require a right-of-entry to the properties now owned by the city, state, Waikane Development Co. and a few small landowners, Streck said, adding that they could refuse to have their properties assessed but there could be consequences.

"If you don't volunteer to be a part of this, that means you agree to assume the liability," he said.

Public meeting

- **What:** Waikane Training Area informational meeting
- **When:** 6 p.m. today
- **Where:** Waiahole Elementary School Cafeteria, 48-215 Waiahole Valley Road
- **Contact:** Clayton Sugimoto, consultant, 955-6088; or Chuck Streck, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 438-6934