

**Information Sheet #1
Formerly Used Defense Site Program
Former Laredo Air Force Base
Webb County, Texas**

**Investigations on Laredo Airport Property
January 1997
D-R-A-F-T**

SITE HISTORY

In 1942, the U.S. Government purchased lands and easements of approximately 2,085 acres northeast of the city of Laredo. From 1942 to 1947, the base was used by the Army as a flexible gunnery school. From 1952 to 1974, the base was used by the Air Force as a pilot training facility. The former Air Force base was declared excess on 29 March 1974. Approximately 309 acres were either deeded to, or sold to other federal, state, and county agencies, or private firms. The remainder of the site was deeded to the City of Laredo, Texas. Currently, most of the former Air Force base is occupied by Laredo International Airport. The Corps of Engineers (COE) is conducting initial investigations at Laredo Airport property on environmental conditions related to activities of the U.S. Air Force and others.

AREAS OF FOCUS

Fire Training Area - A small area on airport property was used by the Air Force and the City of Laredo to conduct fire safety/training exercises. Preliminary site investigations have been completed which include the collection and analyses of soil and groundwater samples. Some contaminants were identified in quantities slightly above the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) Risk Reduction Standards. The COE is compiling the analytical results from the preliminary investigation and will submit a report to the TNRCC for their review and comment.

Fueling (Fuel Farm) Area - The Air Force conducted flight operations at the base throughout its presence at the site. Fuels used for aviation and support were stored in aboveground and underground tanks. The fuel storage facilities at the airport have been used by lessees of the City of Laredo in support of civil aviation. Groundwater monitoring wells, installed by the City of Laredo, have identified the presence of petroleum products in the groundwater; however, wells down gradient to the site indicate that the petroleum products are not migrating offsite. Currently, the COE, the City of Laredo, and other potentially responsible parties are negotiating cost sharing agreements to further study the site. The COE is developing a work plan for additional investigations for the TNRCC's review and comment.

Construction Landfills - A landfill was identified at the end of the northwest oriented runway on airport property. The Air Force and other parties have used it to dispose of various materials. Preliminary investigations have been completed, and the results indicate that the landfill was used to dispose of construction debris such as wood and concrete. A soil gas survey was conducted in the area, and no volatile organic contaminants were detected. The COE is compiling the results

of the investigation and will submit a preliminary report for the TNRCC's review and comment.

Industrial Waste Treatment and Other Activities - The U.S. Air Force treated industrial wastes from the installation in facilities once located near from the fueling area. Currently, no investigations have been conducted at the site. The COE will begin developing a work plan to investigate the site to determine if any hazardous constituents exist at the site. The work plan will be sent to the TNRCC for review and comment prior to conducting any investigations.

FUTURE WORK

The COE, working with the City of Laredo and the TNRCC, are working together to identify sites that require investigation and determine if any constituents of potential concern exist at any of the sites. If any constituents of potential concern exist (exceeding TNRCC standards), a risk assessment will be conducted and appropriate actions will be taken in accordance with TNRCC regulations.

**Information Sheet #2
Formerly Used Defense Site Program
Former Laredo Air Force Base
Webb County, Texas**

**Trenching Areas and Shotgun Ranges
January 1997
*D-R-A-F-T***

SITE HISTORY

In 1942, the U.S. Government purchased lands and easements of approximately 2,085 acres northeast of the city of Laredo. From 1942 to 1947, the base was used by the Army as a flexible gunnery school. From 1952 to 1974, the base was used by the Air Force as a pilot training facility. The former Air Force base was declared excess on 29 March 1974. Approximately 309 acres were either deeded to, or sold to other federal, state, and county agencies, or private firms. The remainder of the site was deeded to the City of Laredo, Texas. Currently, most of the former Air Force base is occupied by Laredo Intern Airport. The Corps of Engineers (COE) is conducting initial investigations at Laredo Airport property on environmental conditions related to activities of the U.S. Air Force.

AREAS OF FOCUS

Historic Trenching Activities - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, under the Department of Defense Formerly Used Defense Site Program, is evaluating environmental conditions of former Army, Air Force, and other Department of Defense facilities throughout the United States. In its evaluation of the Former Laredo Air Force Base, the Corps has examined historic aerial photographs. These photographs display what appears to be trenches in an area that is now used for residential and commercial properties. This area is located immediately west and northwest of the current airport (see map on back). Based on the photographs, the trenches appear similar to those used for landfills. The only information we have on the contents of these trenches is available from a geotechnical investigation phase report conducted by City Officials prior to a building addition to the Newman Elementary School. Investigations revealed the presence of refuse fill (clothes, mattress, and other similar items) in the subsurface.

Former Shotgun Ranges - The Army Air Corps (predecessor to the U.S. Air Force) trained anti-aircraft gunners at the former base. To train personnel in aiming at flying objects, the Air Corps target practiced with shotguns similar to what is done in the sports of trap and skeet. Some areas were possibly used for skeet ranges by other parties after the former base property was deeded away in 1975. Areas used for shotgun ranges are now the location of residential and commercial properties. Much of the soils in the area have been disturbed since 1940; however, there is no information on how much lead shot and its residues, if any, remain in the soil.

FUTURE WORK

Trench Areas

The COE will conduct a geophysical survey which aids in determining the presence, location, and characteristics of suspected debris in the trenches. Subsurface soil and groundwater samples will be taken near the trenches using a device that punches a small hole in the ground. All samples will be analyzed by a laboratory for constituents of potential concern. The COE will conduct sampling in such a manner that will minimize disrupting residential and commercial property. Most samples will be taken in the city streets or on vacant property. The COE will obtain the property owner's permission through a right of entry permit before conducting any sampling activities on the property. A work plan to investigate the trench areas will be developed by the COE and provided to the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) for their review and comment prior to any soil and groundwater investigations.

Shotgun Ranges

The COE will develop a work plan to investigate areas suspected of containing lead shot and its residues. Soil samples will be collected and analyzed for lead in a laboratory. The COE will conduct sampling in such a manner that will minimize disrupting residential and commercial property. The COE will obtain the property owners permission through a right of entry permit before conducting any sampling activities on the property. The work plan to investigate the soils suspected to contain lead will be submitted to TNRCC for their review and comment prior to any soil investigations.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public participation in all aspects of the Department of Defense Formerly Used Defense Site Program is critical to the Corps mission of environmental restoration. Individuals and groups are encouraged to provide information, ask questions, and make comments about any Corps activities regarding the Former Laredo Air Force Base. Please direct your comments or questions to:

Lisa Lawson
Project Manager
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Tulsa District
P.O. Box 61
Tulsa, OK 74121-0061 Phone: 918-669-7551