



US Army Corps
of Engineers

Fact Sheet
May 2002

Formerly Used Defense Sites Program Environmental Investigations at the **Former Laredo Air Force Base** Laredo, Texas

In 1986, Federal legislation established provisions for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to perform environmental restoration activities at properties formerly controlled or used by the Department of Defense. This Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) Program involves thousands of sites throughout the United States. While every site is unique, the Corps evaluates each site for the following:

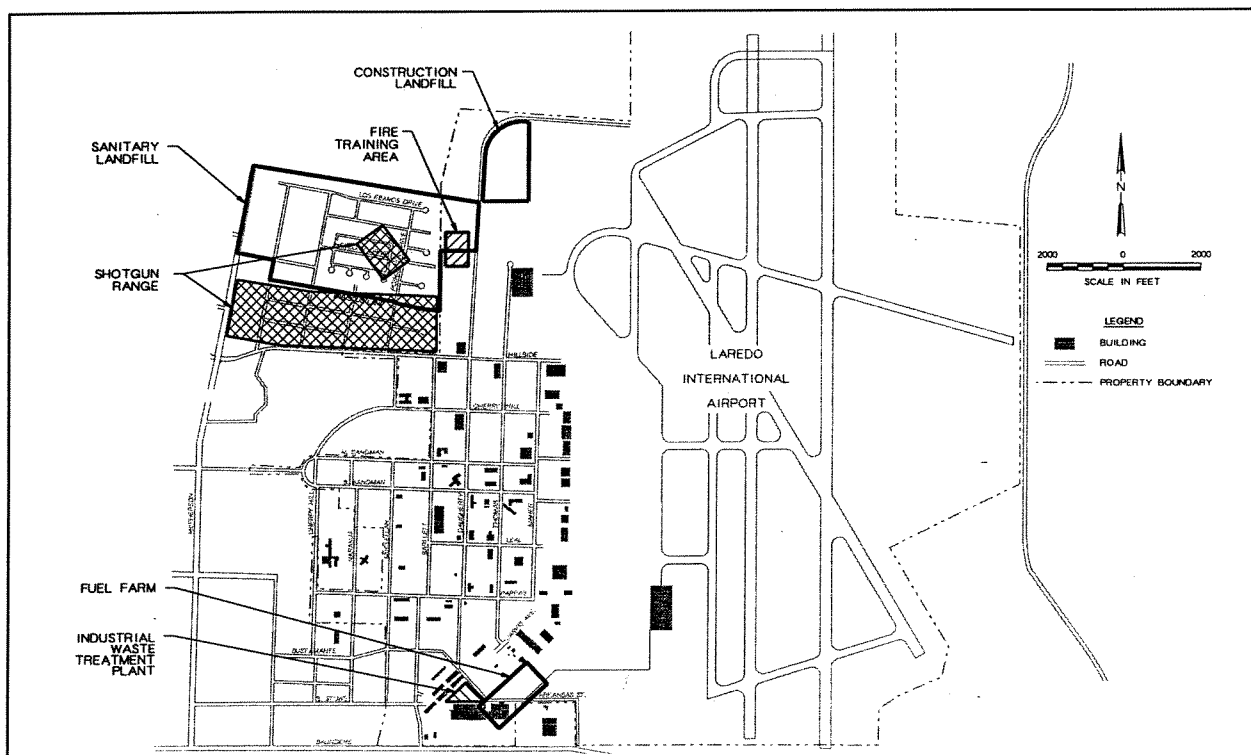
- Containerized Hazardous, Toxic and Radiological Waste
- Building Demolition and Debris Removal
- Ordnance and Explosive Debris
- Hazardous, Toxic and Radiological Waste
- Potentially Responsible Party Investigations.

The Corps is currently evaluating the site of the former Laredo Air Force Base and conducting environmental investigations. The Corps will develop cleanup plans as necessary to provide an acceptable remedy to the site.

The Corps is working in partnership with the City of Laredo, the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC), private parties, and the public.

History of the Former Laredo AFB

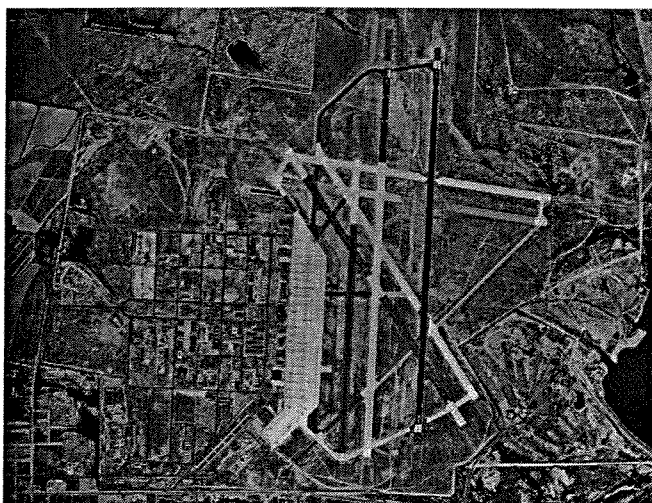
The former Laredo Air Force Base was initially known as the Laredo Army Air Field when it was constructed in 1942. The field included a gunnery range and flexible gunnery school. The Laredo Army Air Field became inactive in 1945, and was deactivated in June 1947; however, it was reactivated as the Laredo Air Force Base in 1952. At its peak of activity in the 1960s, the former base covered approximately 2,085 acres. The primary base activity was basic flight training for jet pilots, and included aircraft maintenance facilities, fuel



The six Corps environmental study areas at the former Laredo Air Force Base.

storage tanks and distribution systems, and landfills. The U.S. Air Force closed the base in March 1974, and most of the former base property was deeded (turned over) to the City of Laredo. Approximately 309 acres not deeded to the City were transferred to federal, state, and county agencies or sold to private parties.

Currently, the majority of the former base property is occupied by Laredo International Airport and used for various purposes related to commercial aviation. A portion of the base was developed into commercial and residential areas by private developers.



Aerial photograph of the former Laredo AFB, December 1959.

Site Summary

The City of Laredo, TNRCC, and the Corps have examined some of the past records of the base. These records show that past Air Force activities, and the activities of others since the base closure, involved the use of petroleum products, solvents, and metal plating materials.

Areas that are part of the past, current, or proposed environmental investigations include:

Fuel Farm. This site is where aviation fuel was previously and is currently stored and dispensed. Twenty-two underground storage tanks have been removed from this site over the past ten years. Soil samples and groundwater monitoring have indicated that petroleum products did leak from some of the tanks. The City of Laredo and the

Laredo International Airport are monitoring the groundwater to ensure the petroleum products are contained and naturally degrading.

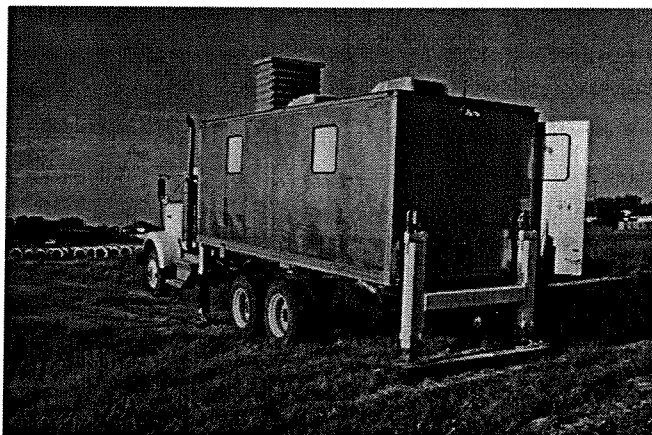
The Corps and the City of Laredo are negotiating a cost sharing agreement for future monitoring and studies.

Fire Training Area (FTA). Firefighting training exercises were conducted in pits at the FTA. Exercises typically included adding petroleum products to the pit (and any training structures in the pit), starting a fire, and then extinguishing the fire. The Air Force and the City of Laredo have used this area as a training site. Soil and groundwater samples collected at the FTA indicate the presence of petroleum and solvent-related products.

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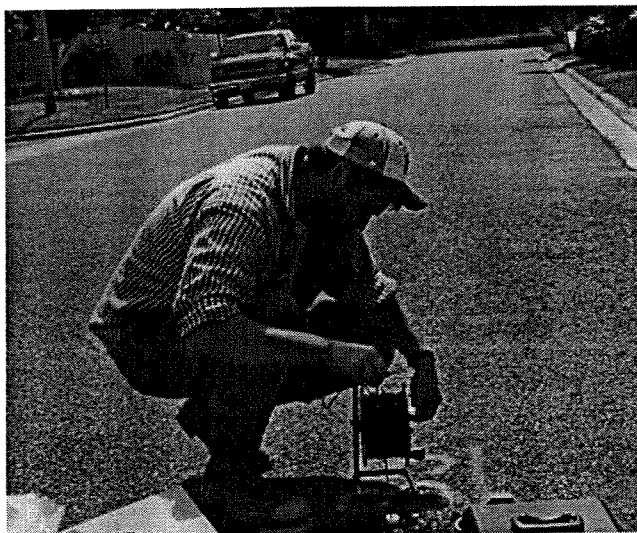
Sanitary Landfill (SLF). A review of historical aerial photographs indicates that trenches were dug in a configuration similar to that constructed for sanitary landfills. Some trenches were dug in locations that are now retail business areas and residential neighborhoods.

Aboveground monitoring instruments (an electromagnetic survey) detected a total of 16 trenches. Groundwater, soil, and soil vapor samples were collected and analyzed, and there was no indication that the landfill had resulted in any impacts to soil or groundwater. There are no additional investigations planned at the SLF.



The Corps SCAPS (a mobile laboratory and sampling system for gas, groundwater, and soil) in use at the FTA.

Construction Landfill (CLF). A review of historical aerial photographs revealed an area of the base where the ground was obviously disturbed and piles of unknown materials were apparent. Later photographs showed the area covered with dirt. The CLF is now an industrial area.



Corps personnel measuring groundwater levels prior to collecting a groundwater sample at the SLF.

Aboveground monitoring instruments (an electromagnetic survey) and the excavation of 28 test pits were used to determine the extent of the CLF. The test pits revealed buried concrete, asphalt, and metal typical of a construction landfill. Additionally, soil gas and groundwater samples were collected and analyzed. There was no indication that the landfill had resulted in any impact to the soil or groundwater. There are no additional investigations planned for the CLF.

Industrial Waste Treatment Plant (IWTP). The IWTP was constructed by the Air Force in 1969 to treat water flowing from the storm sewers, the flightline, and the bermed area of the fuel farm. The water was treated and released into the base sanitary sewer system, which in turn was connected to the City of Laredo sanitary sewer system. The IWTP was taken out of service when the base closed in 1974.

The collection of soil and groundwater samples at the IWTP indicated that hydrocarbon products

were present at concentrations above those permitted by TNRCC. However, the data also indicate that the soil impact is not the result of the operation of the IWTP but from another source; the hydrocarbon products appear to be flowing with the groundwater.

Further investigation may be conducted at the IWTP to determine the extent and source of the detected contamination in the soil and groundwater.

Shotgun Range (SGR). A review of historical aerial photographs revealed an area of the base where structures characteristic of a firing range were observed. The area within the footprint of firing range activities (structures and firing field) is now residential neighborhoods.

Surface and subsurface (2 feet below ground) soil samples were collected at 15 locations and analyzed for lead. Lead is a naturally occurring metal in most soils, and was detected in all the soil samples collected. At one sample location, lead was detected at a concentration higher than TNRCC limits. Additional samples at this location did not reveal any other concentrations greater than TNRCC-allowable concentrations. Lead was detected in all site soil samples at a concentration higher than that permitted by TNRCC for protection of groundwater.

Further investigation may be conducted at the SGR to establish a higher density of sample locations, and for the collection and analysis of groundwater samples.



Two groundwater monitoring wells at the IWTP used for collecting groundwater samples for laboratory analysis.

Potentially Responsible Party Negotiations

It is known that individuals and businesses other than the Department of Defense have used portions of the former Air Force base. These individuals and business activities (referred to as "responsible parties") may have impacted environmental conditions.

The Corps and the City of Laredo are negotiating a cost sharing agreement. The Corps has conducted several meetings with the City and will continue to work toward a partnership. The goal of the partnership is to ensure the former base property meets all applicable regulatory criteria to protect human health and the environment.

Public Involvement

Public involvement is an important part of the FUDS Program. The Corps will host public information meetings, mail fact sheets and other information, and make technical documents available to the public. Copies of documents related to the former Laredo Air Force Base project are available at the **Laredo Public Library, 1120 East Calton**. This information repository will be updated as new information becomes available.

To receive mailings, you can request to be added to the former Laredo AFB project mailing list by calling 817-886-1313 or sending an email to FUDSmailinglist@swf02.usace.army.mil. Be sure to include your full name and mailing address. You may also give your daytime and evening phone numbers and email address. (You can be removed from the mailing list at any time by calling 817-886-1313.)

The public is encouraged to ask questions and make comments throughout the process; this input will become part of the public record. Please contact by mail or phone:

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