



Plum Tree Island National Wildlife Refuge, VA

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
FACT SHEET as of February 1, 2015

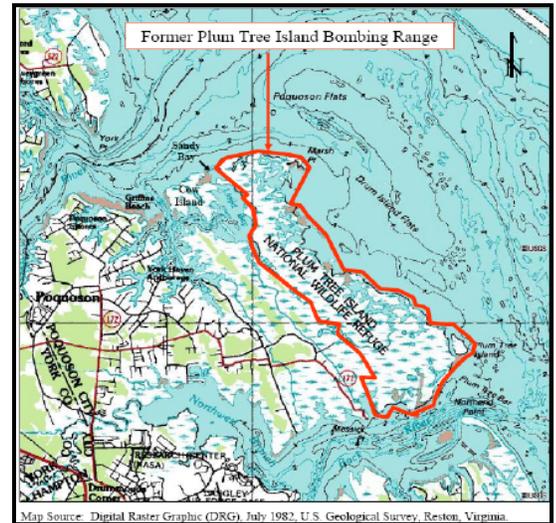
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AUTHORIZATION: Defense Environmental Restoration Program

TYPE OF PROJECT: Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS)

PROJECT PHASE: Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP) Feasibility Study, Proposed Plan, Removal Actions, Design and Implementation of Land Use Controls

CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST: Senators **Kaine** and **Warner (VA)** and Representative **Wittman (VA-01)**



BACKGROUND: Plum Tree Island National Wildlife Refuge was formerly known as the Plum Tree Island Range and used for aerial bombing and gunnery practice from 1917 through the late 1950s. The former bombing range consisting of approximately 3,000 acres was transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1972. The entire refuge remains closed to all public use due to the potential for encountering unexploded ordnance (UXO). Known extensive usage of the southern portion of the Refuge for bombing and the presence of UXO along the shoreline has prompted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to establish a Danger Zone in the shallow water along the southern half of the Refuge. This Danger Zone is marked by warning signs, and disturbance of the bottom is prohibited.

The former bombing range is being addressed under the Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) program conducted by the USACE. As of January 2008, the USACE Baltimore District assumed project management activities for all FUDS properties in the Norfolk area.

STATUS: A Remedial Investigation (RI)/Feasibility Study (FS) was begun in 2008. RI field work began in January 2009. The focus of this work was to characterize the nature and extent of munitions and explosives of concern (MEC) and munitions constituents (MC) at the Refuge. MEC refers to military munitions that were used and did not function as designed, or were discarded. These residual MEC may still pose an explosive hazard. MC refers to those chemical contaminants associated with MEC that may have entered into the soil, sediment, or water and pose an environmental concern.

The RI field work was conducted during a January through April time frame to avoid wildlife disturbance on the Refuge.

The first phase of field work was completed in April 2009, and included a shoreline clearance of about 80 acres around the southern shoreline, and collection of geophysical information in the northern two-thirds of PTI (sub-surface metal detecting). The shoreline clearance removed MEC that posed a safety concern for the RI teams accessing the Refuge, and helped determine the type and extent of MEC present along the shore.

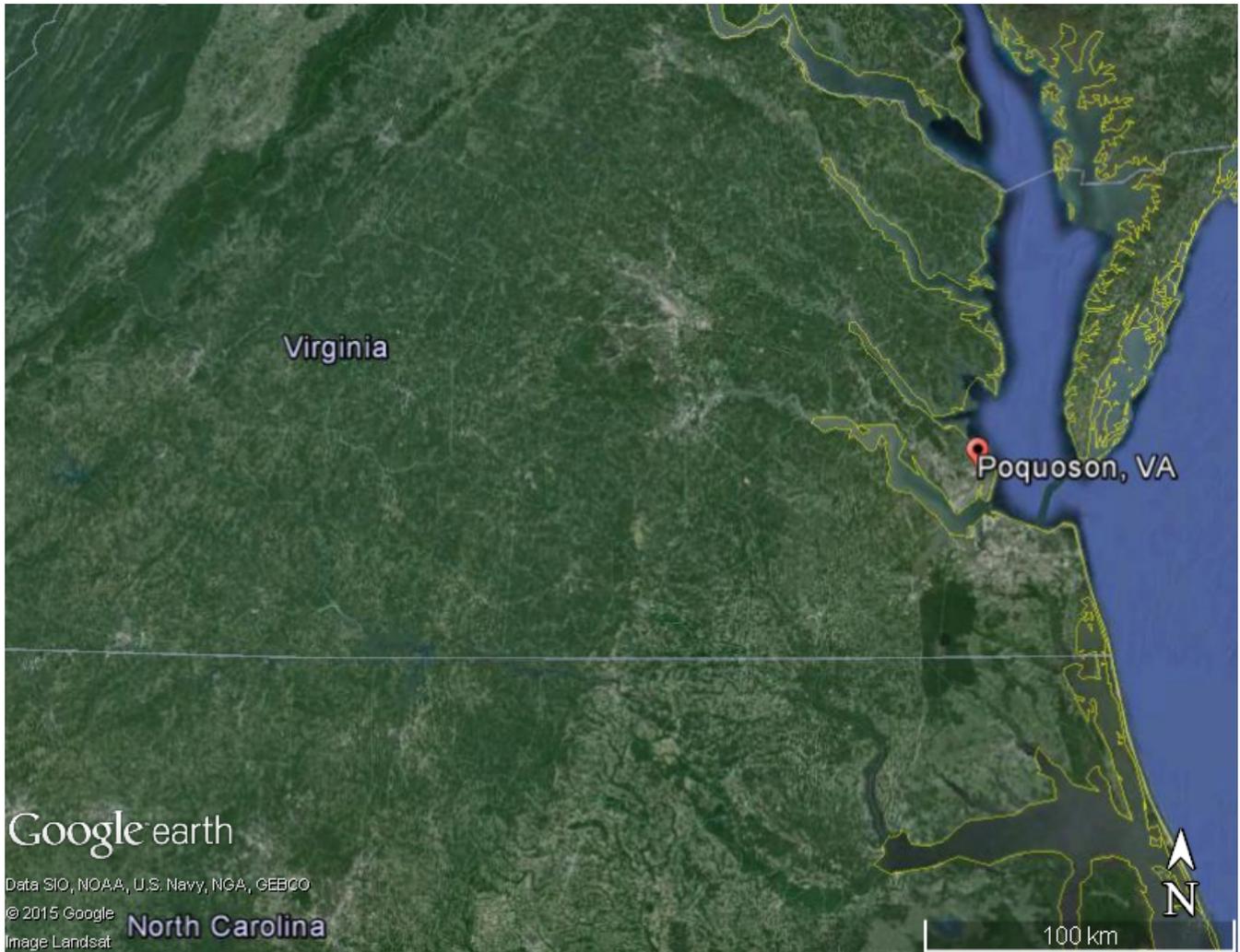
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The second phase of field work was completed in April 2010. Phase 2 consisted of surveying selected areas in the southern third of PTI where the known bombing targets were to determine where and in what concentrations MEC items are present in the subsurface. Environmental samples were collected throughout the site in 2009 and 2010 to determine if chemical contaminants or MC have entered the environment. The Draft Final RI Report was provided to stakeholders in November 2010.

Risk Assessors from VADEQ and USF&W Service requested additional samples be taken and analyzed before agreeing to the provided RI Report results of no chemical contaminants or MC in the MRA environment. A third round of samples were taken in September 2013 by a joint USACE and USF&W team. Laboratory tests indicate no MC issues on the property. These results will be incorporated into the RI/FS Report and Proposed Plan by an environmental firm in 2015.

For more information regarding the Plum Tree Island National Wildlife Refuge FUDS project, please contact George Follett, CENAB-EN-H, (410) 320-8157, e-mail george.c.follett@usace.army.mil.



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