

**FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES (FUDS)  
PROJECT FACT SHEET**

*30 September 1999*

**1. GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION.**

**Site Name:** Former Southwestern Proving Grounds (SWPG)  
**Site Number:** K06AR005101  
**City/County/State:** Hope/Hempstead/Arkansas  
**Project Number:** K06AR005101  
**Category:** OE  
**INPR RAC:** 1  
**ASR RAC:** 1  
**TAG RAC:** 1

**2. POINTS-OF-CONTACT.**

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**3. SITE DESCRIPTION.** The former Southwestern Proving Grounds is situated on approximately 50,078 acres in southwest Arkansas. The site is rectangular with approximate dimensions of 19 miles in the north-south direction and 5 miles in the east-west direction. The site is divided into two sections, north of the firing line and south of the firing line, by County Road 32. The area north of the firing line was used primarily as an impact area. The area south of the firing line contained the housing, storage, and maintenance facilities.

The former Southwestern Proving Ground (SWPG) is generally characterized by gently rolling and partially-wooded terrain. Land elevations vary from approximately 500 feet above mean sea level (ft-msl) in the northern and southern portions to approximately 300 ft-msl in the central portion of the former facility.

Groundwater within the site meets most of the irrigation demands in the area. The surface water supply in the area is good. The Ozan Creek flows year round, however in July and August only a few inches. Additionally, many farmers have constructed farm ponds that supply water for livestock.

A major resource within the former SWPG is a 2,115-acre Wildlife Management Area. The area is managed by the State of Arkansas and has been used to create a suitable habitat for Bobwhite quail. In addition, several species of wildlife listed as Arkansas Threatened, Protected, and Endangered Species, including Bald Eagle, Ivory-Billed Woodpecker, Red-Cockaded Woodpecker, and American Alligator, inhabit the southern sections of the state and could potentially be found at the former military facility.

Hunters travel from hundreds of miles away to hunt within the limits of the former SWPG. Hunting clubs are located throughout the project limits. Roads within the project limits are not paved, and are not easily traversed except in a 4-wheel drive vehicle. Besides hunting, the other major activity within the former SWPG is the planting and harvesting of timber.

No plant species are listed as endangered or threatened in the area, but one section of pine trees within the wildlife management area is maintained and preserved because of the stand's mature age.

According to the Arkansas Historic Preservation Office, 54 known specific archaeological or paleontological sites are within the limits of the former SWPG. This area has a history of buried artifacts. During development of the EE/CA, state officials required contractor field personnel to be trained (and procedures approved) prior to initiating intrusive activities.

4. **SITE HISTORY.** The site was used by the U.S. Army Air Corps and the U.S. Army Ordnance Department as a proving ground between January 1942 and September 1945. Government acquisition of the land began in 1941, and construction of facilities was underway by August of that year. In January 1942, the first artillery round was fired. A wide range of inert-filled and live ordnance, including small caliber machine gun ammunition, 20-mm to 155-mm projectiles, mortars, rockets, grenades, and up to 500-pound bombs were tested at the site. Many of these ordnance items contained high explosive filler and were fuzed. Most of the ordnance was fired from one of several firing line positions at the southern part of the facility to target areas located to the north.

In September 1945, SWPG was closed. Shortly thereafter, a UXO contractor removed unexploded ammunition and scrap metal from the ground surface of the entire site. Between 1946 and 1960, the property was conveyed to state, municipal and private ownerships. Some (most?) deeds were restricted to "surface use only".

Due to technological limitations during the original site clean-up, the contractor had no way of detecting ordnance that had gone beneath the ground surface. Over the years, natural phenomena such as erosion, and human actions such as cultivation, have caused some ordnance to come to the surface. Large quantities of UXO remain on the surface and in the shallow subsurface of the former proving ground. Five (5) civilian fatalities from a single incident in 1949 have been confirmed, however, past reports of twenty-six (26) deaths are believed to be exaggerated. Regardless, ordnance at the site, although more than fifty (50) years old, remains dangerous.

5. **PREVIOUS SITE ACTIVITIES.** The Archive Search Report (ASR) for this site was completed in December 1993. It was prepared by the Corps' Rock Island District.

Following the ASR, an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) was begun and completed in August 1997. It included intrusive sampling at the site. The study characterized the site, formulated risk reduction alternatives, and offered recommendations for future action. The site was divided into six (6) ordnance operable units (OOU's), based on land use and likely extent of UXO contamination. It was determined that two OOU's, the "buffer" area surrounding the former proving ground and in the vicinity of the old administration buildings and airport, have little or no UXO contamination. Therefore, no remedial action was recommended for these areas. It was determined that the other four (4) OOU's do contain varying amounts of UXO. For these areas, a five-phase plan was established for reducing public risk and de-contamination of the site. The total cost of this plan is approximately \$42 million. The plan, initially, addresses those areas which have the most risk to the public and local residents (Priority 1 areas). Subsurface UXO removal actions in these areas are estimated to cost \$9 million.

Other proposed risk reduction measures include an information/public education program which specifically targets hunting clubs located within the project limits, installation of warning signs at selected locations within the project limits, and initiate measures w/local authorities which would discourage the paving of roads within SWPG.

Final EE/CA recommendations were used in the preparation of the Action Memorandum, dated August 1997. The Action Memorandum, which was signed by the Commander of the geographic district, was used to prepare the initial Removal Action delivery order at SWPG. A UXO contractor mobilized to the site in January 1998, and has worked at the site, off-and-on, since then. Currently, CEHNC staff are preparing the fourth Removal Action delivery order for SWPG.

Initiation of future Removal Action delivery orders and other risk reduction measures are subject to the availability of funds.

6. **CURRENT STATUS.**

**RA.** During 2nd Qtr 99, the third Removal Action delivery order was awarded to EOD Technology. EODT mobilized their UXO teams to the site in late April 99, and will continue site operations until early Fall 99.

CEHNC staff currently are preparing the fourth Removal Action delivery order, for 3rd Qtr 99 award. Clearance activity will primarily be around residences in the Range 6 and Northwest of the Wildlife Management Area, both Priority 1 areas.

**Institutional Controls.** The EE/CA recommended extensive use of institutional controls at the site. The Little Rock District has been proactive in implementing various controls. Primarily, educational programs within the schools and local community and helping to develop a museum near the former proving ground. The museum

contains educational display material regarding remaining UXO at the site. It is recommended that restrictions be placed upon future development within areas known to contain UXO.

7. **SCHEDULE SUMMARY:** For Official Use Only