

NOAA Hazardous Waste Site Report

Taputimu Farm (IX-1)
Tutuila Island, American Samoa
April 13, 1984

Location and Nature of Site:

Taputimu Farm is a government-owned experimental farm in the western district of Taputimu on which containers of unused or partially used pesticides are stored in a cement-floored wooden warehouse (Figure 1). Liquid materials are present in a variety of containers, some rusted or damaged and leaking. A total of 2,000-4,000 pounds of material, mostly pesticides, are in the warehouse. 2,4,5-T and Deldrin are known to be present, although some containers have illegible labels. In addition to the farm, there are three areas (Tafuna Power Plant, Satala Power Plant, and a warehouse near the airport) where PCB-contaminated oils have been found.

Proximity of Chemical Hazard to Marine Resources:

The warehouse is about 0.5 miles upstream from a public beach. In the original notification of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Trust Territory of American Samoa said that the area occasionally flooded. Soil samples taken from the area do not show any evidence of a release to the environment. A severe storm could presumably cause a release in the environment of materials in the warehouse. Some PCB-contaminated oil may have been released to marine waters during rainstorms.

Marine Resources at Risk:

The Fagatele Bay area and the coastline to Papualau Pt. is characterized as a shallow fringing coral reef that is typically inhabited by a wide variety of marine organisms. Dominant species are porites, millepora, and montipora (1).

Coral reefs provide critical habitat for larval and adult fish and shellfish, and are generally popular fishing areas for snapper, grouper, barracuda, and other species that are eaten by local residents. Marine turtles are often common in reef areas. Coral reefs offer a wide range of recreational activities, including SCUBA diving, fishing, and boating.

Summary of Site-Related Actions:

EPA has slated the area for cleanup this summer, at which time the threat to the marine environment would be reduced to zero. In the

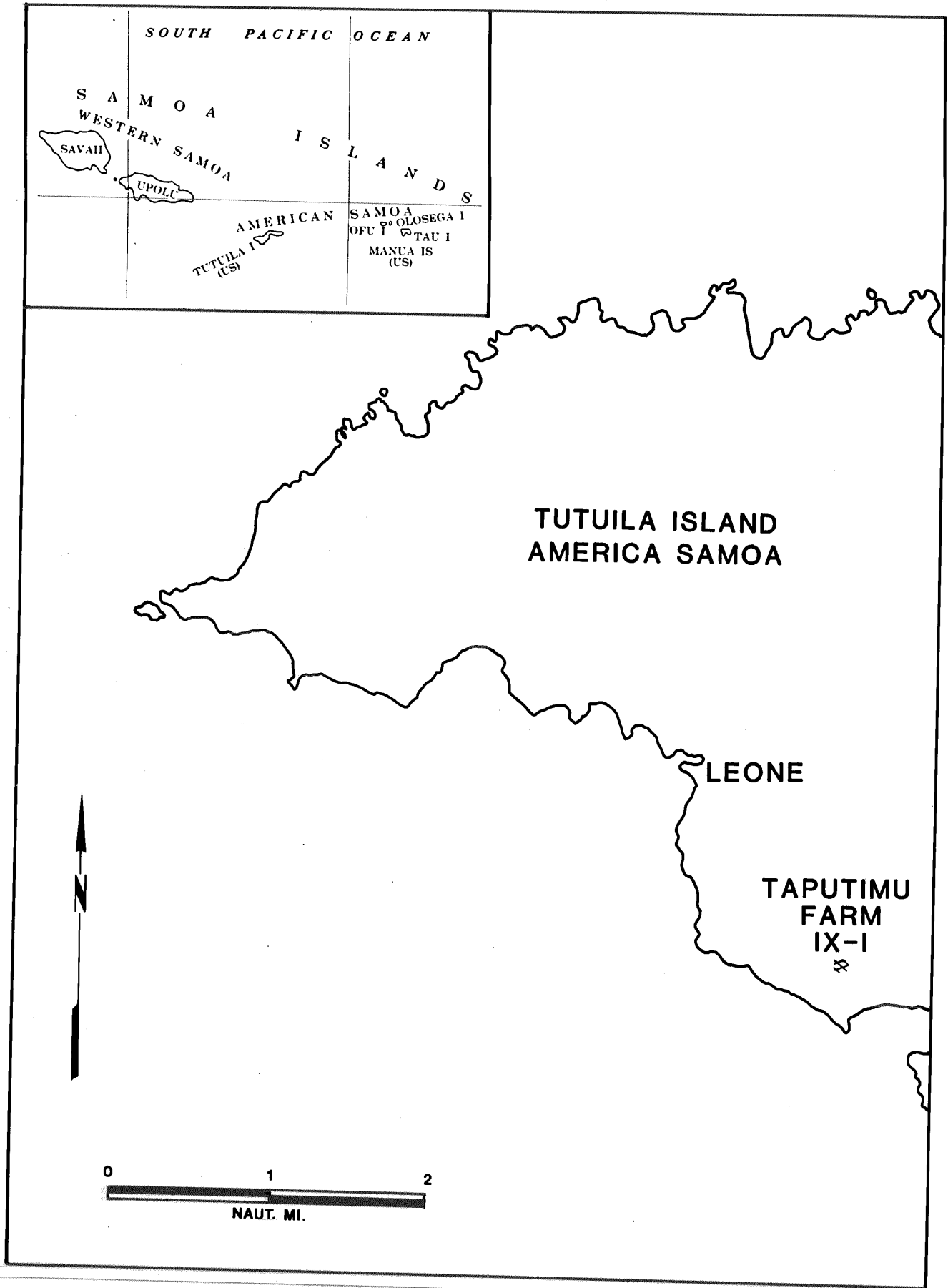


FIGURE 1. Site location.

original report to EPA by the Trust Territory, there was mention of flooding at the site having caused a release to the environment. EPA has said that it has subsequently been unable to support this contention. The PCB sites are presently the subject of an EPA emergency response action.

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References:

1. Chelsea International, Inc. and Research Planning Institute, 1983.
National Marine Sanctuary Site Evaluations.