

Final

Community Involvement Plan

Former Naval Facilities

Vieques Island, Puerto Rico

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AOC	Area of Concern
AFWTA	Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Area
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, as amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act
CIP	Community Involvement Plan
ECA	Eastern Conservation Area
EMA	Eastern Maneuver Area
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ERP	Environmental Restoration Program
FFA	Federal Facilities Agreement
FWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
LIA	Live Impact Area
MRP	Munitions Response Program
NASD	Naval Ammunition Support Detachment
NPL	National Priorities List
PRDOL	Puerto Rico Department of Labor and Human Resources
PREQB	Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board
RAB	Restoration Advisory Board
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
SIA	Surface Impact Area
SWMU	Solid Waste Management Unit
TRC	Technical Review Committee
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
VNTR	Vieques Naval Training Range

SECTION 1

Overview of the Community Involvement Plan

The U.S. Navy, in consultation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board (PREQB) developed this Community Involvement Plan (CIP) to facilitate communication with the communities affected by and interested in the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Area (AFWTA) cleanup on Vieques Island, Puerto Rico. The plan was developed in accordance with the requirements of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), commonly known as the Superfund program. This plan will help the Navy, EPA, PREQB, and FWS address the concerns of interested communities, coordinate informational activities within these communities, and ensure that the public is kept informed and involved throughout the entire cleanup process.

The CIP was developed with input and review by the public and stakeholders in the cleanup process. This document is intended to facilitate a collaborative process and serve as a guide during all work at the AFWTA-Vieques Island Superfund site. Specifically, this document provides a history of the AFWTA-Vieques site and its relationship to federal regulatory agencies and the community; discusses the affected community, its background, makeup, and specific concerns; and lays out a community involvement program, with a detailed strategy for addressing the concerns of the community as voiced through numerous interviews and meetings. Important references and documents are provided in appendixes at the end of this document.

Site Description

2.1 Site History

Vieques Island is located approximately 7 miles southeast of Puerto Rico's main island and encompasses 33,000 acres, although most of the island's 9,106 residents live in or around two main towns – Isabel Segunda on the north shore and Esperanza on the south shore.

From the 1940s until 2003, the U.S. Navy administered lands on both the western and eastern ends of Vieques Island. The former Vieques Naval Training Range (VNTR) was located on approximately 14,573 acres of the island's eastern side and consisted of four separate areas: the Eastern Maneuver Area (EMA), the Surface Impact Area (SIA), the Live Impact Area (LIA), and the Eastern Conservation Area (ECA). It was used primarily for ground warfare and amphibious training, naval gunfire support training, and air-to-ground training. The former Naval Ammunition Support Detachment (NASD) covered 8,200 acres on the west side of the island and was used to store munitions and other support facilities for Atlantic Fleet training (Figure 2-1).

Live-fire training on Vieques ceased in 2001, although periodic training with dummy bombs and blank bullets continued until 2003. In early 2001, the Navy ceased active operations on the former NASD, and on April 30, 2001, 4,250 acres of former NASD land were transferred to the municipality of Vieques, 3,050 acres to the FWS for use as a wildlife refuge, and 800 acres to the Puerto Rico Conservation Trust. The Navy retained 100 acres for its Relocatable Over the Horizon Radar system. The Monte Pirata telecommunication facility was transferred to FWS in March 2005.

In 2003, all Navy training on Vieques ceased, and all 14,573 acres of the former VNTR were transferred to the FWS in accordance with Public Law 107-107, to be administered as the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge, and the former LIA as a wilderness area with no public access.

2.2 Site Cleanup History

The Navy manages several cleanup programs of its own, two of which are active on Vieques. The first, the Munitions Response Program (MRP), is specifically targeted to old munitions and safely and cost-effectively reducing their threats to public safety. This program is coordinated with other, more broadly defined programs on Vieques to clean up 63 potential munitions sites, but is operated primarily by the Navy using Department of Defense protocols.

The second cleanup program, the Environmental Restoration Program (ERP), is more broadly focused on potential environmental threats. The ERP closely follows steps legislated under CERCLA and is intended to ensure that all possible steps are taken to clean up any sites that pose a risk to human and environmental health. On Vieques, Navy work under the

ERP began in 1986 and has so far resulted in the nomination of 17 sites to be investigated under CERCLA procedures. Figure 2-2 shows environmental and munitions response sites on West Vieques. Environmental and munitions response sites on East Vieques are illustrated in Figure 2-3 and Figure 2-4.

In January 2000, EPA and the Navy entered into an Administrative Order of Consent under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) to investigate and address potential environmental contamination at the AFWTA and EMA. Under the order, the Navy began a RCRA facility investigation of nine Solid Waste Management Units (SWMUs) and three Areas of Concern (AOCs) to determine whether or not they contained potentially harmful releases of hazardous materials. SWMUs are areas formerly used to store or manage waste, and AOCs are sites that may be contaminated based on their history of use. AOCs often require further investigation to determine if any hazardous material was released into the environment. Additional sites have been added to this initial list of 12 to be investigated to assess if hazardous materials have been released elsewhere on Vieques. Under RCRA, the Navy is required to clean up any sites that threaten human health or the environment.

On February 11, 2005, areas on and around Vieques Island were placed on the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL). The NPL is EPA's priority list of private, federal, and formerly federal properties with known or potential releases of hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants throughout the United States and its territories. Although Superfund legislation (CERCLA) provides a fund for cleaning up NPL sites, all cleanup activities at former federal lands are undertaken and funded by the responsible federal agency. Consistent with the legislation that called for the cessation of Navy activities on Vieques, the Navy will conduct and fund all Superfund cleanups on Vieques under its own MRP and ERP, with EPA and PREQB oversight.

The addition of the Vieques sites to the NPL followed a 2003 request by the then-governor of Puerto Rico, Sila Calderon, to make the former AFWTA-Vieques site the Commonwealth's highest priority facility for cleanup. The AFWTA-Vieques Superfund site includes 8 of the 17 sites initially identified by the Navy as potential hazards under its ERP and several underwater areas awaiting further definition. The remaining nine areas were recommended for no further action and were not included as part of the NPL listing.

An interagency agreement, called a Federal Facilities Agreement (FFA), among the Navy, EPA, PREQB, and FWS, will ensure that potential environmental contamination is properly evaluated and, if necessary, properly cleaned up. Most importantly, the Vieques FFA will clearly establish the procedure, schedule, and framework for the cleanup activities and define the specific roles and responsibilities of each government agency involved on Vieques.

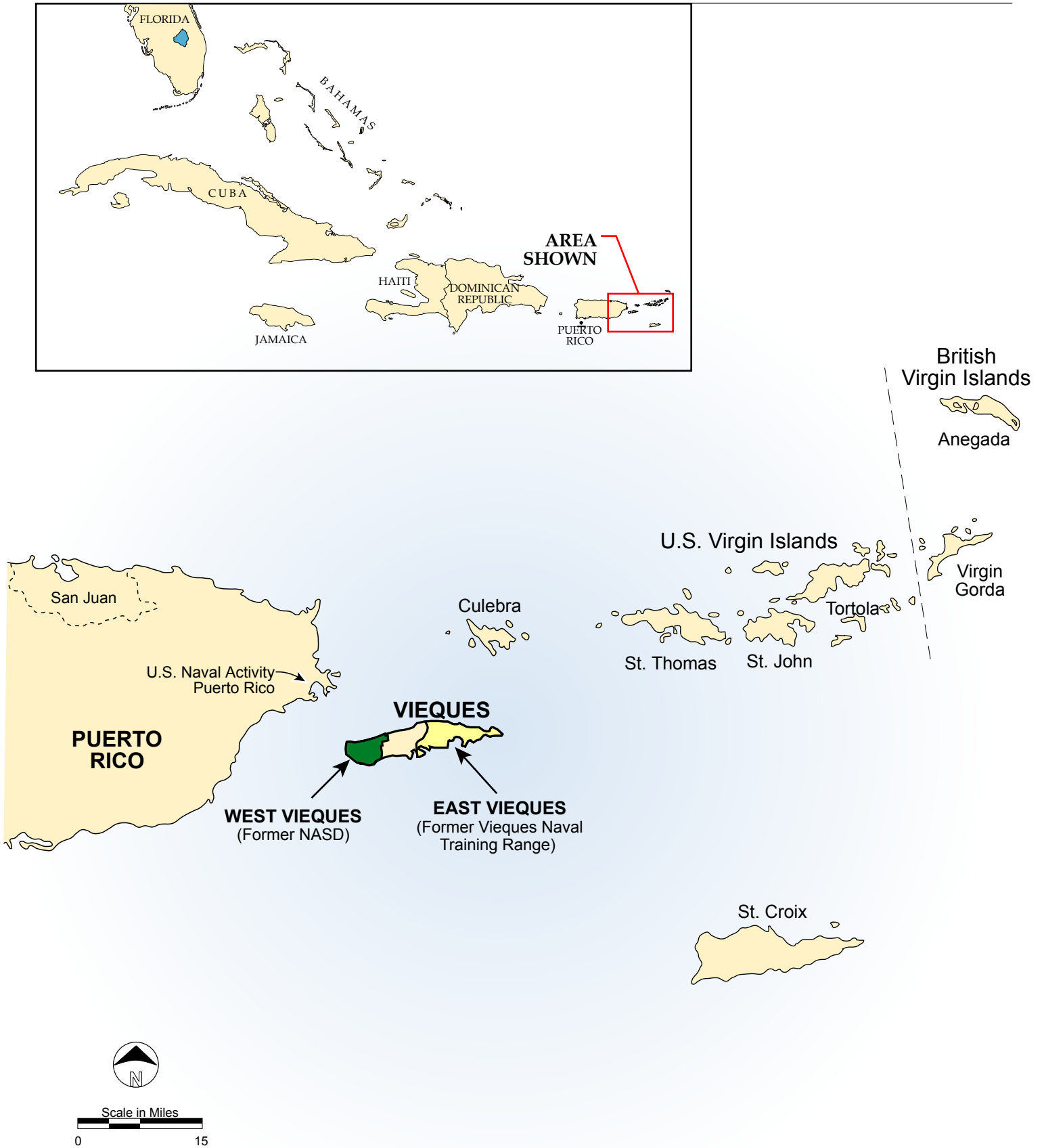
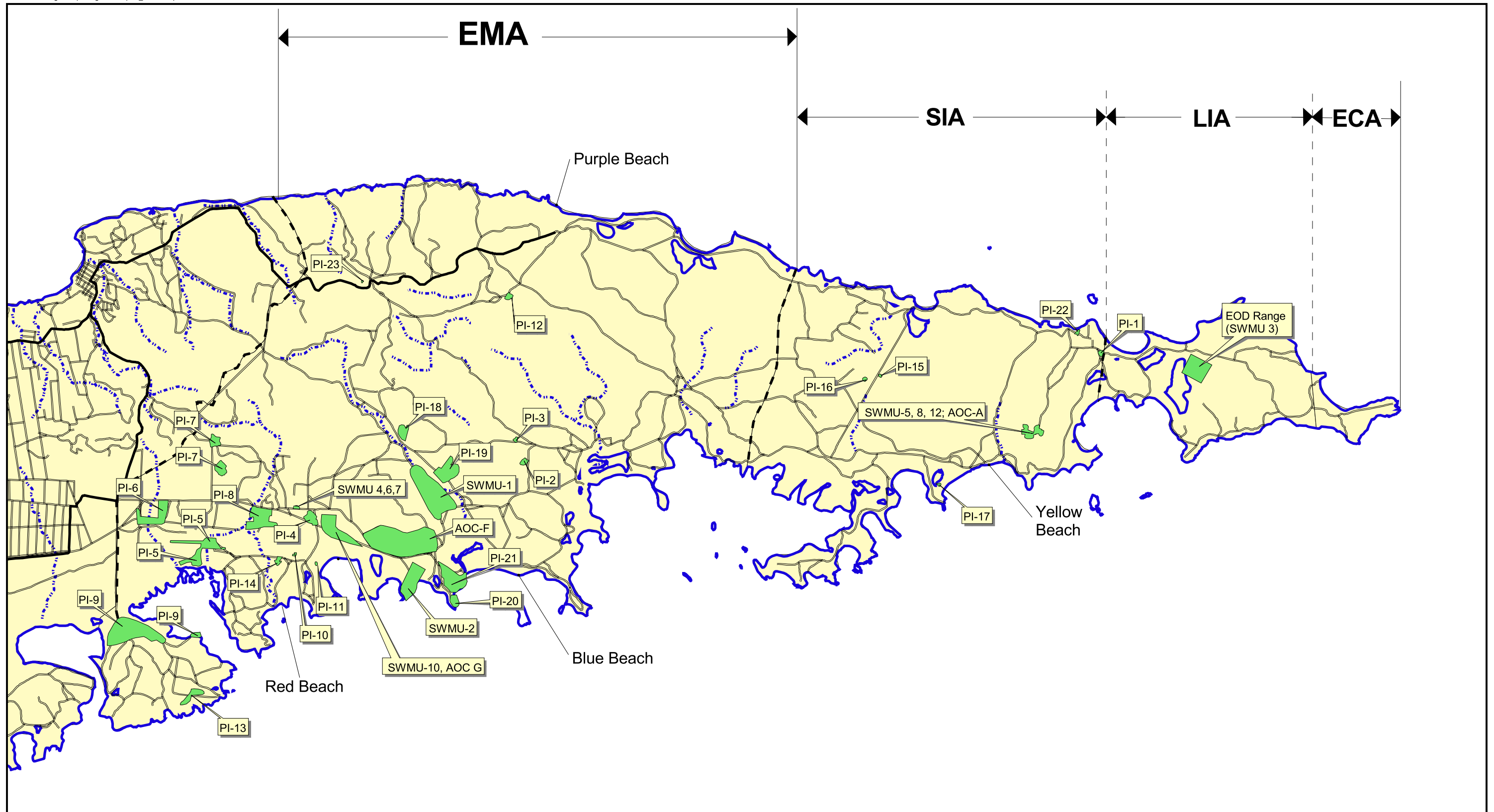


Figure 2-1
Regional Location Map
Vieques, Puerto Rico



LEGEND

- Roads
- Hydrography
- Streams
- Property Line

Environmental Sites
 SWMU, AOC, PI Sites

ECA - Eastern Conservation Area
 LIA - Live Impact Area
 SIA - Surface Impact Area

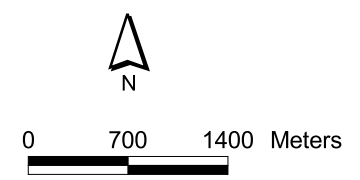
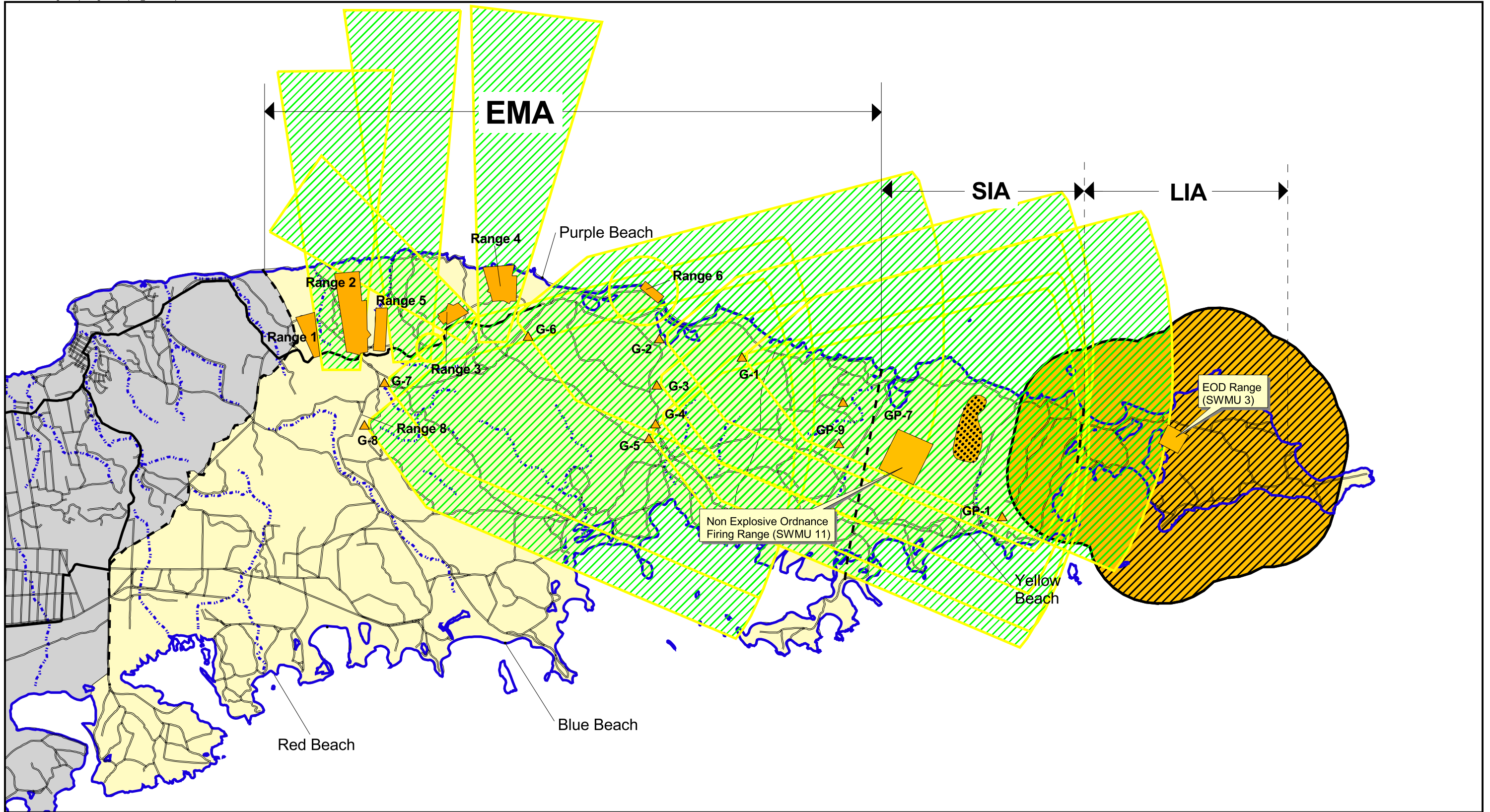


Figure 2-3
 Environmental Sites on East Vieques
 Vieques, Puerto Rico



LEGEND

- Roads
- Hydrography
- Streams
- Property Line
- Non-Navy Property

Ordnance / Explosives Sites

- Gun Position
- Explosive Safety Quantity Distance Arc
- General Location of Marine Artillery Targets
- Small Arms/Artillery Ranges
- Artillery Safetyfan

AFWTF - Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility
 EMA - Eastern Maneuver Area
 LIA - Live Impact Area
 SIA - Surface Impact Area

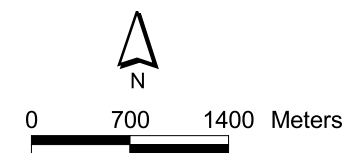


Figure 2-4
 Munitions Response Sites on East Vieques
 Vieques, Puerto Rico

Community Background

3.1 Community Description

Vieques Island is surrounded by the Vieques Sound on the north, the Vieques Passage on the west, and the Caribbean Sea on the south and east. Most of the western and eastern thirds of the island make up the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge. The municipality of Vieques occupies the middle third of the island.

The most developed areas of Vieques are in and around the towns of Isabel Segunda and Esperanza. Several new tourist and housing developments have been built recently on the northern beachfront. To the southeast is the “South La Hueca” area, which consists of privately owned homes, small pastures, and farms.

Vieques Municipal Airport is located on the northwest shore of the island, just northeast of the portion of the former NASD that was transferred to the municipality.

3.1.1 Water Resources

There are several shallow lagoons on Vieques, with large patches of mangrove. Streams on Vieques are intermittent, which means that they flow for only a short time after it rains, through natural drainage channels called *quebradas* (“breaks”). Vieques residents fish in many of the island's bays and lagoons.

Groundwater has not been used as a primary source of drinking water on Vieques since 1978, when an undersea pipeline from the main island was installed. The last potable well on Vieques was closed in 1999. Although all potable wells are closed at this time, the Puerto Rico Department of Health and the PREQB consider the groundwater in Vieques to be a potential source of drinking water, especially during periods of drought or if water service from the mainland is interrupted. It should be noted that in order for groundwater to be considered for potable use, it must meet certain water quality standards.

3.1.2 Community Demographics and Economic Profile

After the Navy acquired large portions of the island in the 1940s, nearly 3,000 of its then 10,300 residents relocated, many to St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands. People who have left the island since then have often settled elsewhere. However, in recent years, the growing tourism industry has brought new residents from the continental United States.

At the 2000 Census, approximately 9,106 people were living on Vieques Island, a 5.9 percent increase from the 1990 Census count of 8,600 people. According to the Census, about 25 percent of the increase from 1990 to 2000 was from people moving to Vieques. In 2004, the estimated population had risen to 9,253 people. At the 2000 Census, the median income in Vieques was \$9,331 for households and \$11,036 for families. About 12.4 percent of the population had incomes below the federal poverty level in 1999.

Inns, guesthouses, and the seasonal rental of houses provide a major source of income on Vieques. The average value of a house on Vieques in 1999 was \$60,900. Media coverage of the real estate market on Vieques indicates that housing prices have increased sharply in the last several years, especially after the Navy ceased its operations in 2003.

Unemployment rates reported for Vieques are high, but similar to those of the entire Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, average annual unemployment in Vieques was 12.2 percent in 2001, based on a labor force of 2,583 adults, compared to 10.1 percent for all of Puerto Rico. In 1990, unemployment in Vieques was 12.7 percent, compared to 14.2 percent for the Commonwealth. The Puerto Rico Department of Labor and Human Resources (PRDOL) reported similar figures through 1998, although anecdotal accounts and estimates by non-governmental sources estimate the unemployment rate to be much higher.

According to a 2001 report by PRDOL, most of the employed residents of Vieques work in one of several production and manufacturing facilities, including the General Electric plant (12 percent of the labor force in 1999); in construction (4 percent); on ranches and in the fishing industry (data not available); in government or public administration (37 percent); or in service and retail businesses, a growing number of which are tourist-related and depend upon a pristine natural environment for their income (35 percent).

The arrival of the Navy in Vieques in the 1940s created a sector of construction and support jobs. Prior to the close of AFWTA, the Navy provided about 240 jobs (9 percent of the 2000 labor force).¹ ²Island residents primarily worked as contract employees either on the island or at Naval Station Roosevelt Roads on the main island, which has now also been closed. Contract jobs included security, grounds keeping, trades such as carpentry and cooking, custodial work, and pest control. Since closing, the Navy is no longer a significant source of local employment, although it has begun training qualified local residents to work as unexploded ordnance (UXO) technicians and vegetation removal crews on the island.

Spanish is the primary language for nearly 100 percent of the population of Vieques. Therefore, all summaries of decision documents and other communications materials related to the AFWTA-Vieques site should be produced in both Spanish and English.

3.2 Community Involvement History

The Navy and EPA began conducting community involvement activities on Vieques in 1998, when EPA issued the Navy an interim permit for burning and open detonation of waste ordnance in the former LIA. The Navy also conducted community involvement activities in 2001, prior to the first transfer of lands in Western Vieques. Since then, the Navy, EPA, and other federal and Commonwealth agencies have been involved in a number of community involvement activities, including conducting multiple public forums; constructing mailing lists; distributing fact sheets, reports, and newsletters (Appendix A); conducting public information sessions and interviews; presenting workshops on risk assessment; making site visits to community members; and posting public notices.

¹ Remarks by Robert B. Pirie, Jr., Undersecretary of the Navy to National Image, 24 May 2001

² U.S. Census 2000, American Fact Finder – Fact Sheet Vieques Municipio, Puerto Rico

The most significant community involvement activity on Vieques has been the formation of a Restoration Advisory Board (RAB). The RAB, which was formed by the Navy in August 2004, offers an expanded forum for community input and participation in the cleanups on Vieques. The RAB grew out of a Technical Review Committee (TRC) formed in 2001 and now consists of 17 community members and 4 ex-officio members from government agencies (see Appendixes B and C). Co-chaired by an appointed Navy representative and an elected community member and governed by a charter that was signed in May 2005, the RAB allows for the sharing of information on the environmental restoration and munitions response process. Thus far, RAB meetings have been held quarterly. They are open to the general public, offer simultaneous interpretation in Spanish and English, and are announced via bilingual public notices in the local press and broadcast by megaphone trucks. For more information on the Vieques RAB, including a copy of its charter, see Appendixes C and D.

Other important community involvement activities include the establishment of an EPA field office in Isabel Segunda with a full-time project manager; and the creation of a public information repository, first at the public library in Isabel Segunda, and currently at the electronic public Library in Isabel Segunda. The public information repository provides all Vieques residents with free access to the public documents and technical reports regarding the AFWTA-Vieques Superfund site. More information about the repository, including its street address, can be found in Appendix G.

3.3 Community Concerns

Through one-on-one community interviews, public surveys, RAB meetings and ongoing public outreach, the Navy, EPA, and PREQB have been able to identify the central concerns of the Vieques communities. The Navy conducted interviews with 21 residents in 2000 and with 30 residents in 2005. EPA interviewed 40 residents in 2003. The results of the interviews provide a comprehensive view of these communities and their mixed feelings towards the cleanup operations at the former Navy lands on Vieques.

The following is a brief summary of the issues and concerns frequently cited by Vieques residents:

Health and Safety: Most residents believe that high levels of contamination still exist from former Navy operations. Many expressed concerns about high cancer rates on Vieques and wondered if their air, land, and water are still safe.

Environmental Impacts: Some residents expressed concern over the possible effects of the cleanup on the local environment. In particular, residents wondered about the island's economic future and whether the cleanup might hurt tourism and local aquatic resources.

Regulatory Oversight: A number of residents believe there is not enough oversight of the cleanup process by the regulatory agencies.

Blow-in-place contamination: Some residents believe that the process of removing UXO by blowing it up in place creates additional contamination and may contribute to health and environmental problems.

Security: Residents are concerned that restricted areas on Vieques lack the security to adequately protect members of the public from potential safety risks and UXO.

Timeline: Residents questioned why the cleanup is taking so long and wondered when it would be completed.

Agency Communication: Many residents cited a lack of communications by federal, Commonwealth, and local agencies. They suggested that improved communication between agencies might speed up the cleanup process.

Communication and Outreach: Residents perceived that community concerns were frequently ignored by federal agencies and called for more-frequent RAB meetings with better documentation. Some residents also requested further risk assessment training to better understand how cleanup actions are decided.

3.4 Summary of Community Concerns

In addition to the concerns summarized above, Vieques residents also expressed a desire for:

- frequent progress reports and a timeline for cleanup program implementation
- easy-to-read reports with clear, simple language and graphics
- further testing of land crabs for contamination
- more public involvement in decisions about munitions removal
- an explanation of how cleanup activities will affect development by the municipality of Vieques of former Navy lands on western Vieques

Interviewees suggested that the following modes of communication might be helpful:

- a social (music and food) and informational event in Isabel Segunda, with government experts available to answer individual questions
- fact sheets and flyers posted at more local businesses
- increased use of television, radio, and print media
- group tours of cleanup sites
- small group meetings
- loudspeaker trucks to help announce events

SECTION 4

Community Involvement Plan

The goal of this CIP is to promote and facilitate greater communication between the Navy, EPA, PREQB, and FWS and the affected communities on Vieques. This plan enables factual, timely, and clear information to be provided to the public and allows the public to have input in the decision-making process. The Navy will work in conjunction with EPA, PREQB, and FWS and other government agencies to implement this plan effectively and efficiently and to assist the public in its understanding of the cleanup projects on Vieques.

The Navy, EPA, and EQB have staff members assigned to the Vieques project. Some are assigned to the island permanently; others work on the island on a regular basis. This staff, and both a Navy and an EPA community involvement coordinator, will be responsible for implementing and coordinating the following community involvement activities, depending on the availability of resources. These activities were developed in response to the concerns and desires expressed by Vieques residents (summarized in Section 3). They are arranged under four broad categories:

- Input: activities that allow the public to share their concerns with the Navy, EPA, PREQB and other federal and Commonwealth regulatory agencies
- Output: activities that allow the Navy, EPA, and PREQB to share information with the public
- Outreach: activities that promote public education and awareness about the cleanup projects on Vieques
- Involvement: activities that encourage public participation in the cleanup projects

4.1 Input Tools and Activities

4.1.1 Public Information Sessions

Description: Public information sessions are effective, informal meetings open to the general public. They feature posters, displays, presentations, question-and-answer sessions, and other interaction between government experts and the public. Detailed information is presented in understandable terms, and individuals are encouraged to freely express their concerns and ask questions of government personnel. Public information meetings are less formal than public meetings and do not require the use of court reporters and transcripts, although meeting summaries may be issued through newsletters and progress reports.

Goal: The goal of these sessions is to educate the public on important project issues and to enable community members to ask questions in a comfortable and informal setting. Public information sessions also provide important feedback from the community and can reveal aspects of the cleanup process that the community finds confusing or troublesome.

Method: The sessions will be conducted as needed and will be held at convenient times and places. Simultaneous interpretation (English and Spanish) will be provided. Whenever possible, public notice will be given at least 2 weeks before each meeting.

4.1.2 Public Meetings and RAB Meetings

Description: Public meetings are structured, formal events that are open to the general public, featuring a presentation and interaction with the public. Formal public meetings may involve the use of a court reporter and the issuance of transcripts. RAB meetings are held quarterly and also are open to the general public. Visitors may ask questions during and at the end of each RAB meeting.

Goal: Formal public meetings are opportunities to update the community on site developments and address community questions, concerns, ideas, and comments. RAB meetings can serve as a forum to share information on the environmental restoration and munitions response programs and remediation technologies.

Method: The regulatory agencies (Navy, EPA and PREQB) will schedule, prepare for, and attend all announced meetings. Whenever possible, public notice will be given at least 2 weeks before scheduled meetings. Simultaneous interpretation (English and Spanish) will be provided.

4.1.3 Community Interviews

Description: Community interviews allow the government agencies to listen to, document, and address the concerns of community members, groups, and other stakeholders.

Goal: To obtain public input on general topics related to cleanup activities being conducted on the site.

Method: Interviews are generally conducted in people's homes, businesses, during community events, and at public information sessions. Interviews are conducted informally and have the feel of casual conversations. Participants are able to speak openly and made to feel comfortable with both the interviewer and the questions.

4.1.4 E-mail

Description: Electronic mail can be used to contact EPA and Navy representatives with questions or requests for information about any of the cleanup activities on Vieques.

Goal: E-mail allows residents to provide input, ask questions, and request information.

Method: The EPA Vieques team members may be contacted via e-mail in San Juan at reyes.brenda@epa.gov or in Vieques at rodriguez.daniel@epa.gov.

Navy contacts can be reached by e-mail at christopher.penny@navy.mil, kevin.cloe@navy.mil, or riveramad@napr.navy.mil.

EQB contacts are:

YarissaMartinez@jca.gobierno.pr; WilmarieRivera@jca.gobierno.pr; and YvettePerez@jca.gobierno.pr

4.1.5 Public Comment Period

Description: The public comment period is a formal opportunity for community members to review and contribute comments on various Navy decision documents or actions.

Comment periods are legally required for, among other things, proposed plans, and the addition or deletion of a site to the NPL.

Goal: Comment periods allow the public to offer input to the process and provide the agencies with valuable information for use in making decisions.

Method: Each comment period will be announced through public ads in local newspapers, listserv notifications, and fact sheets. These announcements will ensure the public understands what is being presented, when comments will be accepted, how long the comment period will be open, and how to submit comments.

4.1.6 Public Input

Description: Letters and informal discussions with Navy, EPA or PREQB staff are among the ways the public can communicate their questions and concerns about the cleanup projects on Vieques.

Goal: Verbal comments and letters allow continued opportunities for the public to provide input and, consequently, enable the agencies to recognize trends in issues of public concern and identify areas that require more information or clarification.

Method: Informal comments can be offered at any time, such as during information sessions, open houses, community visits, and workshops. Written comments may be submitted by mail or via email. See Appendix H for extensive contact information.

4.1.7 Stakeholder Group Interaction

Description: The Navy, EPA and PREQB will coordinate with and, upon request, attend meetings of stakeholder groups.

Goal: Such interaction helps ensure that members of these organizations receive the information that they need and that the government receives their input and understands their concerns.

Method: The Navy, EPA and PREQB will regularly coordinate with and, upon request, attend meetings of stakeholder groups that have identified the Vieques cleanups as a focus of their organization.

4.2 Output Tools and Activities

4.2.1 Web Sites

Description: Internet access to major technical reports, progress reports, and updates on the AFWTA-Vieques Superfund investigation is available on the Navy's Vieques Web site at <http://public.lantopsir.org/sites/public/vieques/default.aspx> and EPA's Vieques Web site at www.epa.gov/region2/vieques/index.html. Broader information about the Navy and EPA is available at www.navy.mil or www.epa.gov. PREQB's website features a monthly bulletin about activities related to the Vieques project. The PREQB website address is www.jca.gobierno.pr.

Goal: The Web sites noted above provide general and specific information about Vieques and are critical resources for the public. Access to both Web sites is available through personal and public computers.

Method: Generally, updates, progress reports, and major technical reports will be posted online within 2 business days of their release. Notice of all public meetings, forums, and information sessions and announcements related to the project will be posted online. The Web sites will be updated and enhanced regularly so that users can easily search for information.

4.2.2 Fact Sheets/Progress Reports/Newsletters

Description: Fact sheets, sometimes called site or project updates, are brief documents written in plain language and containing clear graphics that help residents understand highly technical reports, concepts, and information. Progress reports are semi-technical updates that provide factual information about the cleanup projects. They also summarize the progress of activities since the last report, describe upcoming events, and explain how to find more detailed information on described activities. Newsletters are less-technical, more community-oriented publications that include articles, columns, perspectives, and photos. Appendix A contains examples of these documents published to date.

Goal: Fact sheets, progress reports, and newsletters keep the public informed and up to date by providing site-related information in an easy-to-understand format.

Method: Fact sheets and newsletters will be produced periodically throughout the investigation and cleanup process to promote understanding of the individual elements of the remedy. Fact sheets and newsletters are distributed to individuals and organizations on the project mailing list, posted on the Web sites, and are available at agency offices and public meetings. Fact sheets and newsletters will be published in English and Spanish.

Progress reports will be distributed via Navy or EPA offices, the Vieques listserv, and posted on the Vieques Web sites. Progress reports will be published and distributed as needed to meet community information needs.

4.2.3 Safety Notifications

Description: The Navy or EPA, as appropriate, will post advisories, restrictions, and explanatory signs to clearly mark project work areas.

Goal: Advisories, restrictions, and explanatory signs are intended to keep the public informed and maintain safety.

Method: All advisories, explanatory signs, and restrictions on land access or to project work areas will be clearly posted.

4.2.4 Information Repositories

Description: Information repositories are local public buildings such as libraries, universities, or government offices at which site-related and supporting documents are available for review (see Appendix G).

Goal: Information repositories provide accessible public locations at which residents can read and copy official documents and other pertinent information about EPA and Navy activities and the cleanup process.

Method: EPA will maintain at least one repository on Vieques, one in New York City, and one in San Juan. These repositories will continue to be updated as documents become available. The Navy will maintain the Web site and make the Administrative Record³ available by placing a computer in the library:

Biblioteca Electrónica
Calle Carlos LeBrum #449 Isabel II
Vieques, PR 00765
Phone/Telefono: (787) 741-2114

4.2.5 Listserv

Description: The EPA-Vieques listserv is a free, subscription-based electronic news distribution system that EPA uses to distribute updates, notifications, and progress reports via email, and it is a quick way to get current information. The listserv cannot be used to transmit graphics and photos, so all information conveyed via the listserv will be text-only. Graphics-rich documents will be available on either EPA or the Navy's Web sites in .pdf format.

Goal: The goal of the listserv is to disseminate information as quickly and effectively as possible to large numbers of interested individuals.

Method: To register for the EPA listserv, interested individuals can visit EPA's Vieques Web site at www.epa.gov/region2/vieques.

4.2.6 Mailing Lists

Method: Current recipients of mailed or faxed notifications are encouraged to switch to listserv distribution for earliest notification. However, because many citizens and elected officials do not have access to or do not use the Internet, the Navy and EPA will continue to send print copies to those who add their names to the Navy's Vieques mailing list and/or to EPA's Vieques mailing list. To sign up for the EPA's Vieques mailing list, interested persons should go to the agency's Web site at www.epa.gov/region2/vieques. To be added to the Navy's Vieques mailing list, those interested should go to the Navy's website at:

<http://public.lantops.ir.org/sites/public/vieques/Lists/Mailing%20List/NewForm.aspx>.

Participants can also sign up for the Navy's mailing list at public meetings, RAB meetings, and other events.

4.2.7 Maps and Visual Aids

Description: Maps and visual aids help people understand the geography of the site and the locations of activities and resources.

³ The Administrative Record is a collection of documents compiled by the US Navy to document the selection of environmental response actions for the Installation Restoration Program currently underway at Vieques.

Goal: The objective of using visual aids is to communicate complex issues effectively.

Method: Maps, photographs, and other visual aids will be used as needed in documents and fact sheets, at public sessions, and on the various Vieques Web sites.

4.2.8 Media Distribution/Media Events

Description: Updates and information will be provided to local media (newspapers, television, and radio) on Vieques and mainland Puerto Rico in both Spanish and English.

Goal: Working effectively with the media allows a large audience to be reached quickly and further reinforces important information.

Method: Government representatives will provide information and be accessible to the news media. Media briefings before public sessions may be used to summarize the purpose and main points of the events and to enhance accuracy of media coverage.

4.2.9 Public Notices

Description: Public notices are advertisements published in local newspapers or sent through mailings that announce public comment periods for project decisions, public meetings, and major cleanup milestones.

Goal: The goal of public notices is to communicate an important event to as many people as possible in the community.

Method: Public notices will be used to announce public comment periods and public meetings. They will be published in Spanish and in English. In certain cases, it may be necessary to supplement published notices with radio announcements.

4.2.10 Reports/Concept Documents/Work Plans

Description: These documents detail the investigations, studies, findings, and decisions about the Vieques project and will be made available at the repositories and, in most cases, on the Vieques web sites for public access.

Goal: To provide the public with access to detailed information on the cleanup process and decision-making.

Method: These documents will continue to be made public. However, the complexity of some of these reports makes them difficult to understand for those without technical or scientific expertise. As a result, these reports need to be supported with other community involvement activities. The Navy will prepare summaries (in both English and Spanish) to accompany the release of reports to the public. All reports will be available at the Navy and EPA offices and site repositories and at the PREQB office in Rio Piedras.

4.3 Outreach Tools and Activities

4.3.1 Community Events

Description: Navy, PREQB and EPA representatives will attend appropriate community events to distribute information and provide answers to questions.

Goal: Community events provide the opportunity to build and maintain strong relationships with the public. Community events also foster an understanding and appreciation of the daily lives of community members and the events and activities that are important to them.

Method: An information booth will be supplied and staffed at appropriate events.

4.3.2 Project Site Visits/Tours

Description: Members of the RAB will be given guided tours to view site activities when such tours are feasible, appropriate, and safe.

Goal: Site visits give the public a better understanding of the project work.

Method: Appropriate staff will lead tours of the sites and explain what is occurring. Field demonstrations will be based on interest and safety considerations.

4.3.3 School/Education Outreach Activities

Description: The Navy, PREQB and EPA will provide project information to interested schools and will assist them in developing educational projects related to the AFWTA-Vieques Superfund investigation.

Goal: Educational activities help expand awareness and understanding of the project and strengthen ties to the community.

Method: Educators and students can visit or call the Navy, PREQB, or EPA for information, request a visit to their school from a Navy, PREQB, or EPA representative, or visit any of these pages on the EPA Web site: www.epa.gov/region2/vieques/index.html, www.epa.gov/kids, www.epa.gov/students, or www.epa.gov/teachers.

4.3.4 Workshops/Seminars

Description: Workshops and seminars are classroom-style sessions used to provide more-detailed technical information to interested citizens. Workshops can be used to explore project-specific topics and more-general scientific inquiries.

Goal: Workshops can be used to educate small groups of citizens on the chosen topics and discuss issues identified in this CIP.

Method: If there is sufficient interest, targeted workshops will be conducted to educate the public on the basics of the cleanup process and related project topics.

4.4 Involvement Tools and Activities

4.4.1 Coordination with Local Government and Agencies

Description: The Navy, PREQB and EPA will coordinate with local governments and agencies to keep them informed and to get feedback on their concerns. These representatives and agencies will be informed throughout all the phases of the cleanup project.

Goal: Coordination ensures that local government officials and agencies are informed of project activities that may occur in their jurisdiction and helps minimize the impacts of project activities.

Method: Relationships with local representatives and agencies will continually be fostered through meetings and dialogue.

4.4.2 Restoration Advisory Board

Description: The Vieques RAB has 17 community members and 4 ex-officio members who represent government agencies. The RAB is co-chaired by a Navy representative and a community member. The Navy Co-Chair is appointed and the Community Co-Chair is elected by other community members on the RAB. Representatives from PREQB, EPA Region 2, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also participate in the RAB. The RAB is governed by a charter that was signed in May 2005 (Appendix D).

The RAB transitioned from the TRC in early 2004 to provide an expanded opportunity for ongoing community input and participation in environmental activities at former Navy facilities on Vieques. A list of RAB members is provided in Appendix C. A comparison of the membership and function of the TRC to that of the RAB can be found in Appendix B.

Goal: To foster communication and cooperation with communities, regulators, and other stakeholders affected by the cleanup operations on the island of Vieques. The RAB can serve as a forum to share information on the environmental restoration process, munitions response activities, and remediation technologies.

Method: RAB meetings are held quarterly and open to the general public. Visitors have a chance to ask questions during and at the end of each meeting. Simultaneous interpretation is provided for non-bilingual participants. RAB meetings are advertised to the public by paid public notices, in English and Spanish, in *Vieques Events*, a monthly newspaper published on Vieques, and by broadcasts on the megaphone trucks that are typically used to announce public events on Vieques. These meetings will also be announced with listserv notices and on the Web sites. Appendix E provides contact information for these services and Appendix F provides a list of RAB meeting locations to date.