



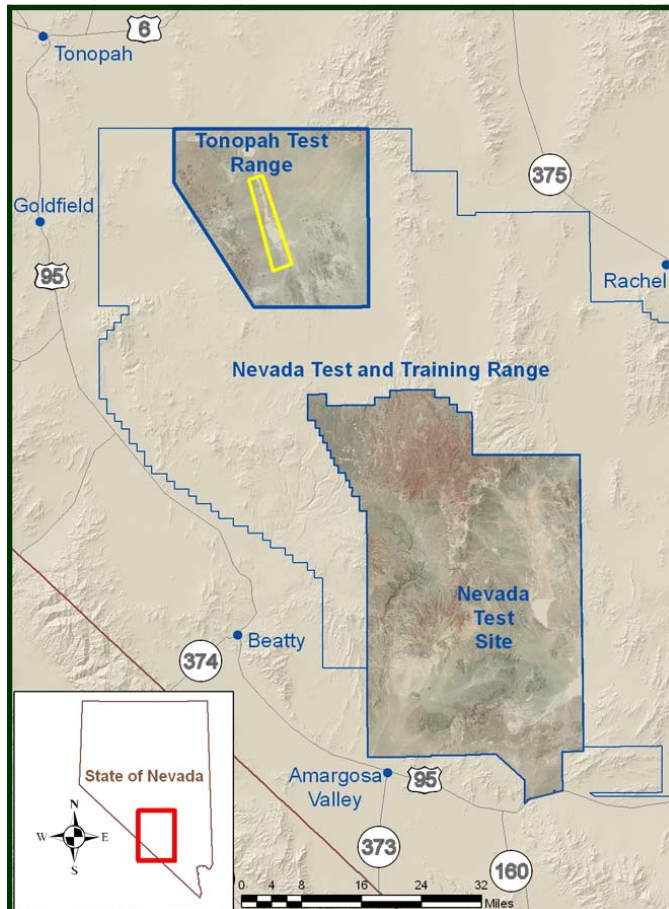
November 10, 2009

Nevada Site Office Environmental Management

# EM NEWS FLASH

## Tonopah Test Range Bomblet Target Areas to be Cleared

More than 1,200 acres of the Tonopah Test Range (TTR) in central Nevada are being cleared of munitions and explosives using *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* funds. Environmental cleanup of this area, known as the Bomblet Target Area, is the responsibility of the U.S. Department of Energy, National Nuclear Security Administration Nevada Site Office in accordance with the [Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order \(FFACO\)](#).



*Bomblet Target Area is highlighted in yellow.*

From the late 1960s to 1985, the Bomblet Target Areas were used by the U.S. Department of Energy for testing cluster bomb delivery systems to more effectively cover targets. Today, the Bomblet Target Areas (controlled by Sandia National Laboratories) contain potential explosive hazards and possible soil contamination from spent munitions and depleted uranium used in prototype munitions.

In order to clean close these areas, planned activities must be approved by the State of Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP), the regulatory authority for the FFACO. The NDEP reviews and approves proposed closure strategies and corrective actions based on public health and environmental considerations. The FFACO-approved approach to clean close the Bomblet Target Areas is to remove any unexploded ordnance; identify and remediate pits previously used for the disposal of construction debris and spent munitions; collect soil samples; and remove any contaminated soil.

Investigation and identification of one large disposal pit was completed through the use of historic digital geophysical mapping and multispectral photographs, and surface radiological surveys. Also discovered through this process were two separate pits each containing a large unexpended munition. The construction debris and spent munitions from the disposal pit will be removed and disposed in the appropriate permitted landfills while the unexpended munitions were safely excavated and relocated to await permitted detonation.

Unexploded ordnance (UXO) technicians have and will continue to conduct surface clearance on all of the target areas by performing “Mag and Dig” surveys using handheld geophysical instruments such as magnetometers. The magnetometer is capable of detecting a single bomblet at a depth of one foot below grade as well as detecting a larger mass of metallic debris at greater depths. The UXO technicians evaluate and identify submunitions and the item(s) are either exploded in place or, if safe to move, removed to a designated area and rendered inert.



*Unexploded ordnance (UXO) and radiation control technicians conduct a surface clearance survey at the TTR Bomblet Target Areas.*

Areas that indicate the potential for soil contamination by explosives or depleted uranium will be sampled. Sample collection of surface and near-surface soil is ongoing. Samples are screened for radiological constituents, followed by analysis at an off-site laboratory. Any soils found to contain hazardous or radioactive contamination will be removed, packaged, and disposed at the appropriate facility on the Nevada Test Site.

Due to the complexity of this extensive project, the need for more than 10 key technical jobs was realized through Recovery Act funding. Completion of the Bomblet Target Areas cleanup, which began July 30, 2009, is expected in September 2010.

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