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Air Force, residents clash over cleanup

*Eloise Aguiar
Advertiser Final*

Bellows neighbors say ending work on landfill leaves beach hazards

WAIMNALO - The **Air Force** is recommending that no further action be taken to clear a 1940s landfill on

Bellows **Air Force** Station, but community **residents** disagree and want the military to thoroughly clean the site, which they say contains lead and zinc above acceptable levels.

"It's right on the shore, right on the beach," said Kim Kalama, of Waimanalo. "**With** all these natural disasters happening around the world, it only takes one big flood. Who knows what's going to come up and it's going to leach right into the ocean where everybody plays, where people fish."

The site is in the Marine Corps Training Area at Bellows and is fenced off to prevent entry. It's near a white-sand beach that is open to the civilian population on weekends and holidays.

Kalama, a member of the Restoration Advisory Board that is working **with** the military on the issue, encouraged people who have concerns about the decision to attend the public meeting Tuesday evening.

Site LF24, also called Pier Dump, was used in the early 1940s and closed by late 1945. It was under investigation from 1998 to 2005 as part of the Hickam Environmental Restoration Program to determine its uses and potential hazards.

According to the Proposed Plan for No Further Action, the site was used to burn and dispose of trash and miscellaneous debris generated at Bellows. About 8,500 tons of trash is on the site, consisting of household and municipal waste, construction and demolition debris, and waste from heavy equipment and motor vehicles, according to the plan.

After tests, analysis of material found and a partial cleanup, including 10 tons of large metal debris and 70 tons of soil stained by petroleum, no further action was recommended for the site, said Patricia Teran-Matthews, Hickam **Air Force** Base community involvement program manager.

"Throughout the investigation process, we continued to research appropriate legal and available alternatives and resources to address public concerns," Teran-Matthews said. "Other variables considered include whether the decision complies **with** the law, does it protect human health and the environment, cost, implementation, long/short-term effectiveness, state acceptance and community acceptance."

After the public meeting and comment period, the Record of Decision, which will contain all of the comments, will be signed by the **Air Force**, the Marine Corps and the state, she said. The site will then be turned over to the Marines, who will monitor and manage the site, Teran-Matthews said.

Waimanalo **residents** question the decision, considering the proximity of the site to the ocean where the public swims, the amount of debris left in the landfill and the possibility of the land being returned to the state.

Andrew Jamila Jr., a Waimanalo Neighborhood Board member, said low levels of contaminants are at the site, and even though the government found them to be at acceptable levels, the community doesn't.

"They basically told us the funding ran out and because of the war all our other resources are being sent to Iraq," Jamila said. The military feels the landfill is "not a crucial mission to spend money on, but we as the homebodies here, we feel differently."

The sample results showed that no contaminants were present at levels that require cleanup, Teran-Matthews said.

"The **Air Force** is confident that we conducted a reasonable and thorough investigation," she said.

Mabel Spencer, a Waimanalo Neighborhood Board member, said the military estimated the cost of the cleanup at \$2 million.

At some point, the land could revert to the state, and she wondered if the military would revisit the issue if that happens.

Spencer and others do not believe the military will change course and spend the \$2 million, but she said the people must let their voices be heard, and if they can't attend the meeting to write and send their comments to the military.

"I don't see victory," she said. "But we have to band together and fight and go down saying no."

Reach Eloise Aguiar at eaguier@honoluluadvertiser .com or 234-5266.

Drop-in:

HAVE YOUR SAY

Submit comments by Feb. 9

Send to: Todd Lanning, 15th CES/CEVR, 75 H St., Hickam AFB, HI 96853

Fax: 448-0247

E-mail: Todd.Lanning @hickam.af.mil

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BELLOWS PUBLIC MEETING

6:30 p.m. Tuesday

Olomana Golf Links conference room, 41-1801 Kalaniana'ole Highway, Waimanalo

Topic: No further action for Pier Dump at Bellows **Air Force** Station

For copies of the report: Visit Waimanalo Library or go online:
http://projects.ch2m.com/HNL_AFCEE/bellows.htm#to193deliv

Includes graphic:

Bellows **Air Force** Station

(map)

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