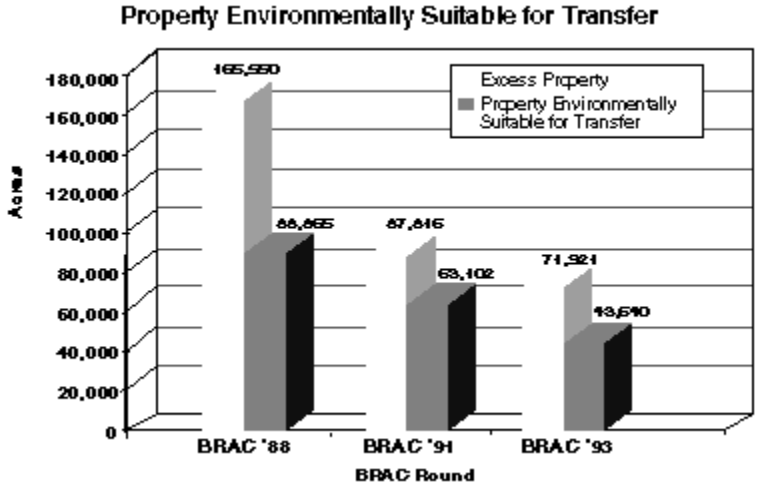
Fast -Track Cleanup Moves Ahead

"Environmental experts from EPA, DoD, and the state will work together, and a professional cleanup team will be stationed at every site."
--President Clinton, July 1993



The Fast-Track Cleanup Program continues to improve the way DoD is cleaning up its base realignment and closure (BRAC) installations. President Clinton introduced the program in July 1993 as part of his Community Reinvestment Program aimed at speeding the economic recovery of communities affected by BRAC actions. Fast-Track Cleanup outlines an approach for accelerating environmental cleanup and transferring property to communities at closing bases, while ensuring that human health and the environment are protected.

DoD published highlights of its continuous self-evaluation efforts in a report entitled *Fast-Track Cleanup, Successes and Challenges, 1993-1995*. Some of those accomplishments are excerpted here, followed by examples of how Fast-Track Cleanup is working in the field.

Teamwork

DoD, with support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state regulatory agencies, has established BRAC Cleanup Teams at installations included in the 1988, 1991, 1993, and 1995 rounds of BRAC. BRAC Cleanup Teams consisting of DoD, EPA, and state environmental agency representatives are challenged to find ways to expedite cleanup actions needed to prepare real property for transfer and reuse. BRAC Cleanup Teams take a common-sense approach to environmental cleanup by developing common goals, making decisions, and setting priorities based on the identified goals.

State and territory laws and regulations are identified early on in the cleanup process, and regulatory personnel are intimately involved in the early phases of the restoration.

Partnership

The partnerships DoD has formed through Fast-Track Cleanup efforts are proving to be one of the most effective means of completing the many tasks involved in cleanup. Partnerships among representatives of DoD, EPA, state regulatory agencies, municipalities, redevelopment authorities, and installations help to determine common objectives and resolve differences.

Reuse

Property must be made available to communities for reuse as quickly as possible.

In his Community Reinvestment Program, the President emphasized early community redevelopment of "excess property" that is, property that is no longer needed by DoD. To achieve this goal, all elements of the program must work in concert to incorporate community priorities for sustainable redevelopment and job creation, while speeding assessment and cleanup of contaminated property to make it environmentally suitable for reuse and transfer.

As cleanup efforts continue at BRAC installations, DoD, EPA, state regulatory agencies, and redevelopment authorities are finding innovative and environmentally protective ways of pursuing economic revitalization. These innovations, made possible through teamwork and partnership, are also being applied at non-BRAC installations, particularly as the initiatives of the Fast-Track Cleanup Program prove successful and information on the lessons learned is transferred.

On the surface, the accomplishments of the Fast-Track Cleanup Program are measured and easily quantified by the amount of property made available to communities for transfer and reuse. As the program matures and sites are restored with increasing efficiency, the amount of property environmentally suitable for transfer increases relative to the amount of excess property.

The continued success of the Fast-Track Cleanup Program will depend on factors not easily quantified. Strong partnerships with regulatory agencies and the public are integral to future progress. In a short time, DoD has gained significant results by diligently working to accelerate environmental actions, promote redevelopment of valuable assets, increase job opportunities, and spur economic growth.

The people implementing the principles of the program, including BRAC Cleanup Teams and other stakeholders, are the primary reason for the program's success. The partnerships that have formed and the spirit of teamwork that has ensued is impressive. Property transfer is the ultimate goal of the Fast-Track Cleanup Program, but teamwork and partnerships are the true foundation of the program.

Overriding Principles of Fast-Track Cleanup

- *Protect human health and the environment*
- *Make property available for reuse and transfer*
- *Provide for effective community involvement*

Turning Liabilities into Assets, Loring Air Force Base, Maine

"Team Loring," the BRAC Cleanup Team at Loring Air Force Base (AFB) in Maine, discovered that liabilities can become assets when all parties of the BRAC project team work together. Team Loring's genuine partnership approach has resulted in the expeditious cleanup of numerous sites at significant cost savings.

By focusing on common goals to expedite reuse through effective cleanup, Team Loring representatives were able to devise and implement a waste soil consolidation and disposal method for use during restoration activities. This unique cleanup strategy enabled the team to change the installation's on-site landfills from liabilities to assets.

The 53 sites at Loring AFB represent a significant environmental restoration challenge. Since the decision was made to close the base in 1991, that challenge has been magnified by the need to achieve prompt and effective environmental restoration while addressing the economic concerns of the small rural community of Limestone, Maine.

As a result of ongoing studies, Team Loring demonstrated that bioventing would be an effective technology to remediate most of the numerous fuel-contaminated sites on base. Bioventing uses oxygen to stimulate natural in situ biodegradation of petroleum hydrocarbons in soil by existing soil microorganisms. At sites where bioventing would not be the most effective cleanup alternative, Team Loring was challenged with identifying alternate cleanup methods. Team Loring learned that the design for capping installation landfills specified the addition of 500,000 cubic yards of subgrade fill material to ensure proper drainage of the capping systems. As a result, the team evaluated the feasibility of using soils from the proposed bioventing sites as subgrade fill for the landfill capping systems.

After investigating the feasibility of using contaminated soils as subgrade fill according to stringent Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Land Disposal Restrictions, Team Loring determined that using the fuel-contaminated soils from the proposed bioventing sites complied with EPA regulations. Using the consolidated soils as subgrade fill in the landfill capping systems would satisfy not only the landfill design requirements, but would also protect human health, eliminate ecological risks, and protect groundwater from possible leaching contaminants.

The cost savings realized by this approach was dramatic. The team's original estimate for using bioventing and other soil cleanup methods at Loring AFB was $210 million. With the adoption of landfill subgrading as a soil cleanup option, current estimates have been reduced to less than $150 million. The use of the soil consolidation and disposal method

has already expedited the cleanup at many of the 53 sites, many of which are becoming more readily available for redevelopment by the community.

"The environmental cleanup at Loring is more than half done, ahead of schedule and under budget. This is just the kind of cooperative effort we need to move quality economic development foreward at Loring and across Maine."

--*Angus King*, Governor of Maine (I)

Bias for Cleanup versus Studies at Marine Corps/Navy BRAC Installations

The Marine Corps/Navy treats fuel-contaminated soil at Tustin Marine Corps Air Station using a portable thermal desorption unit.

The Marine Corps/Navy is emphasizing a bias for cleanup instead of studies in an effort to share vital information and implement lessons learned at two Marine Corps Air Stations (MCAS) in California. By combining analytical data from environmental studies with cleanup plans, the need to conduct additional environmental studies has been eliminated. The same cleanup technologies have also been implemented at both installations; an approach that reduces the regulatory approval and document review process. By using this approach, the restoration process is expedited, cost savings is achieved, and property can be transferred to the community more quickly.

At Tustin MCAS, the installation chose thermal desorption as the most cost-effective way to treat 80,000 tons of fuel-contaminated soils. To avoid additional high transportation costs and reduce environmental impacts, a portable thermal desorption unit was brought to the site to treat the contaminated soil.

As a result of the success at Tustin MCAS, the Marine Corps/Navy will use the same portable thermal desorption technology at El Toro MCAS to remediate similar soil contamination. In addition, the El Toro BRAC Cleanup Team (BCT) is using preliminary assessments to establish cleanup levels for 3,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil. Basing cleanup alternatives on preliminary findings saves costs, accelerates the restoration process and eliminates the need for conventional and time-consuming study phases.

Although the Marine Corps/Navy chose safe, cost-effective methods to treat soil at both installations, the remedies could not be implemented without regulatory agency approval. The partnership formed by the Marine Corps/Navy and the state and Federal regulatory agencies has been successful in efforts to accelerate cleanup. By focusing on cleanup and eliminating the need for additional studies, restoration costs at El Toro MCAS were reduced from $9 million to $4.5 million, and an estimated $15 million was saved at Tustin MCAS.

"Focusing on cleanup will make the process more efficient and cost-effective by minimizing the amount of investigative studies and technical reports. We are giving each site individual attention and making decisions based on data unique to each site, which allows us to clean up each site as rapidly and cost-effectively as possible."

--*Jason Ashman*, Remedial Project Manager, El Toro MCAS

Non-BRAC Installations, Joliet Army Ammunition Plant, Illinois

Planned Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

Joliet Army Ammunition Plant, a leading producer of munitions from the 1940s to the 1970s, is undergoing an amazing transformation into a cultural and natural resources area and economic development center. In 1993, the installation ceased operations. A group of diverse stakeholders quickly developed a plan to convert the 23,544-acre installation located 1 hour's drive from Chicago into a park and recreation center, among other uses. According to Brent Manning, director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the installation will become a park "where buffalo and elk share space with hikers and hunters." The reuse plan for the installation clearly demonstrates how DoD can clean up

and convert once contaminated installations into valuable property, while creating thousands of new jobs, generating high revenues, and revitalizing surrounding communities.

Developing the reuse plan was not without its challenges. Initially, the reuse plan was not well received by the regulatory agencies. Extensive discussions and disputes transpired between the stakeholders, with most disputes focusing on cleanup goals. However, the stakeholders eventually established a solid partnership, allowing parties to express their strong positions while maintaining a professional atmosphere conducive to problem solving.

The cornerstone of the installation's reuse plan is the 19,000-acre Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie to be managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Midewin is the Pottowatomi name for "healing," and the name serves as a symbol for the environmental restoration of the installation. The park will be the largest tallgrass prairie east of the Mississippi River and will provide a safe haven for 16 state-designated threatened and endangered species. In addition, a planned 982-acre national cemetery will become the largest national veterans cemetery, and the 455-acre county landfill will solve a local waste management problem and reduce the cost of cleanup at this Superfund site. The reuse plan also identifies 3,000 acres that will be developed as industrial parks.

The program's cleanup initiatives encourage teamwork and partnerships, and the effort to convert and reuse the installation embodies these goals. Solid working relationships among DoD, regulatory agencies, and other stakeholders have allowed for consensus to be reached on a reuse plan that all parties consider extraordinary. Working together, the parties agreed on cleanup levels and prepared a comprehensive reuse plan that will serve as an example for other Federal property reuse efforts.

"The Joliet Arsenal project is a rare opportunity for Illinois to utilize a large tract of land for open space and conservation, job creation, and a national veterans cemetery. [The project] has attracted a bipartisan coalition of groups--conservationists, labor, business, education, and elected officials throughout the state--and thousands of hours have gone into passage of the legislation to redevelop the Arsenal."

--*Jerry Weller*, U.S. Representative from Illinois (R)

"Never again in our lifetime will we have land acquisition of this magnitude."

--*Bob Kustra*, Lt. Governor of Illinois (R)

Building a Partnership, Bergstrom Air Force Base, Texas

After years of complaints from local residents about noise pollution from low flying aircraft, the City of Austin decided to construct a new airport. As city officials continued

their search for a new site for the airport, Bergstrom Air Force Base (AFB), located inside Austin city limits, was placed on the 1991 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) list. The city quickly realized that Bergstrom AFB was the ideal location for Austin's new airport. Bergstrom AFB was placed on a very strict restoration schedule in order to open the airport within the time frame required by the city.

The strict schedule initially caused some conflicts. More than 1 year after base closure, the restoration process was bogged down in numerous disputes among the various stakeholders. These disputes resulted in legal arguments, policy contention, and delays in cleanup. Because the city developed an aggressive reuse schedule to open the new airport on time, any schedule delays caused by the restoration process were a major setback to the redevelopment process.

An Executive Team was established to represent the interest of all stakeholders and to resolve differences. The team included representatives from the City of Austin, the State of Texas, EPA, and the Air Force Base Conversion Agency (AFBCA). The new partnership allowed each stakeholder to express concerns and jointly work out solutions acceptable to everyone. As a result, the restoration process and the airport construction are both proceeding on schedule.

RESULTS OF EXECUTIVE TEAM

- Avoided $20,000 in sampling requirements for an underground storage tank
- Resolved dispute concerning cleanup of sewer line
- Avoided $4 million and several months of cleanup time by jointly selecting sampling locations
- Avoided hundreds of thousands of dollars in airport construction costs
- Used soil from airport construction to cap on-site landfills

AFBCA and the State of Texas worked together to expedite cleanup at critical sites through continuous communication and verbal approvals of reports before official submittal. The success demonstrated by the Executive Team partnership was built on teamwork, communication, and cooperation. The efforts at Bergstrom AFB serve as a model for community and regulatory involvement.

A genuine partnership approach expedited the cleanup of numerous sites and produced significant cost savings.

". . . when a community comes together to develop an agreed upon reuse plan to close bases, they are in a much better position to quickly create new jobs and new revenues."

--*William J. Perry*, Secretary of Defense