

Section 1

INTRODUCTION

The Southwest Division Naval Facilities Engineering Command (SWDIV) requested Bechtel National, Inc. (BNI) to perform a Site Inspection (SI) at the Salton Sea Test Base (SSTB), Imperial County, California. The SI was performed under the Comprehensive Long-Term Environmental Action Navy (CLEAN) II Program, Contract Task Order (CTO)-0035 of Contract No. N68711-92-D-4670.

1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of the SI was to collect information to evaluate the qualitative potential presence of hazardous substance contamination at the SSTB, not to characterize the magnitude or extent of contamination. Specific objectives were to:

- determine background levels of suspected contaminants in soil, groundwater, sediment, and surface water at the SSTB;
- collect data concerning the presence of suspected contaminants at concentrations exceeding background levels related to past operational and disposal practices at the SSTB; and
- evaluate the data obtained to provide recommendations concerning additional action.

1.2 SCOPE

The scope of the SI was based on the SI Work Plan (JEG 1993) and the SI Work Plan Addendum (BNI 1994a) prepared for the SSTB. The SI included the following tasks: aerial topographic mapping; geophysical, soil gas, and radiological surveys; collection and laboratory analysis of soil, groundwater, sediment, and surface water samples; land surveying; and aquifer testing.

The investigation was concentrated on potential contaminant sources identified in the Preliminary Assessment (PA) (NEESA 1993) prepared for the SSTB. Sampling was conducted in locations estimated to possess the highest potential for contamination

The specific sites evaluated during the SI were:

- Site 1 - Taxiway Landfill
- Site 4 - Shoreline Disposal Area
- Site 6 - Building 4033 - Instrument Laboratory Leach Line
- Site 7 - Building 4070 - Dog Site Leach Field
- Site 8 - Building 4055 - Grease Pit
- Site 9 - Buildings 4026, 4027, and 4070 - Radiological Survey
- Site 10 - SSTB Marine Target Range
- Site 11 - Building 4033 Landfill
- Site 12 - East-West Runway Landfill
- Site 13 - Gully Landfill
- Site 14 - Warehouse Landfill

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Site 15 - Building 4049 - Paint Shop
Site 16 - Building 4009 - Paint Storage
Site 17 - Old Building 5 - Vehicle Maintenance Area
Site 18 - Old Buildings 3 and 4 Shops
Site 19 - Buildings 4006, 4007, 4008, 4050 - Equipment Sheds
Site 20 - Imhoff Tank
Site 21 - Oiled Roads
Site 22 - Small Arms Range
Site 23 - Septic Tanks
Site 25 - Main Leach field
Remote Camera Site B1

The terminology used for site labels in the PA (NEESA 1993) for Sites 1, 4, 11, 12, 13, and 14 have been maintained for the SI, although these sites should be considered as "unregulated waste disposal sites," as defined by the California Regional Water Control Board (RWQCB). Subsequent to preparation of the SI Work Plan Addendum (BNI 1994a), it was determined that alternatives to the geophysical investigation methodology proposed for the Site 10 Land Target should be investigated and implemented. The alternatives currently under consideration include automated (e.g., conducted using a vehicle and/or aircraft) geophysical data collection techniques, which promise cost and time benefits as well as the potential to more completely achieve the goals of the survey. Therefore, the planned geophysical survey of the Site 10 Land Target was excluded from the SI field activities. The Site 10 Land Target will be addressed under a separate phase of work.

Sites 2, 3, 5, and 24 were not included in the SI.

- Action pertaining to underground storage tanks at SSTB (Site 2) was excluded from the SI activities (see Section 2.3.4 for additional information).
- No further action was proposed by Naval Energy and Environmental support Activity ([NEESA] 1993) for the abandoned electrical system (Site 3). However, additional sampling and analysis to evaluate this conclusion will be conducted as part of subsequent field activities (see Section 2.3.2 for additional information).
- Asbestos abatement (Site 5) was conducted by Naval Weapons Center (NWC), China Lake in the fall of 1993.
- Potential contamination related to unexploded ordnance in areas where its presence has been reported (Site 24), and the potential presence of test units at the Site 10 land target will be addressed under a separate phase of work.

This report describes the present conditions at specific sites within the SSTB. The conclusions and recommendations presented are based on government-furnished data, the results of previous contractor investigations, and the collection of new data through limited research and visual inspections as well as limited soil, sediment, water, and radiological sampling. As new information becomes available, it may be necessary to modify the conclusions and recommendations presented in this report. The findings,

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recommendations, and professional opinions in this report were prepared in concurrence with interested regulatory agencies, in accordance with current generally accepted professional environmental practices in California. This report references certain laws, regulations, and procedures, but is not intended to provide legal advice.

1.3 RESPONSES TO REGULATORY AND COMMUNITY REVIEW

Draft and preliminary final versions of this SI Report were reviewed by the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal-EPA) Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), California RWQCB, and Salton Sea Test Base Restoration Advisory Board. The Restoration Advisory Board comprises members of the public who represent community interests. Comments and responses pertaining to the draft and preliminary final versions of this SI Report are presented in Appendix AA.