

NSA Norfolk and NAVSTA Norfolk win Environmental Awards

By Katisha Draughn, Naval Support Activity Norfolk Public Affairs

Naval Support Activity (NSA) Norfolk and Naval Station (NAVSTA) Norfolk are two installations that pride themselves on their accomplishments in environmental restoration. As a result of their efforts, they have been jointly selected as the winner in the Environmental Restoration Category for the fiscal 2010 Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Environmental Awards competition at both the CNO and Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) levels.

“This achievement marked the completion of a 27-year Environmental Restoration Program in which \$100 million was utilized to investigate and/or clean up 175 different sites,” said Christopher Murray, Remedial Project Manager with the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Mid-Atlantic (NAVFAC MIDLANT).

The Environmental Awards competition recognizes exceptional environmental stewardship on an installation. NSA Norfolk and NAVSTA Norfolk jointly received the award for making a significant contribution to environmental restoration on their bases. Due to the close proximity of NSA Norfolk and NAVSTA Norfolk, these Installation Restoration (IR) sites located at the installation are jointly managed as part of the Norfolk restoration program.

“The awards are in recognition of our entire Installation Restoration program accomplishments – the highlights being the accelerated push to attain construction complete status by the end of fiscal 2010 and our ability to beneficially reuse three of the sites to support installation mission,” said Sharon Baumann, Environmental Installation Program Director for both installations. “It is a testament to the dedication of our team to be honored with these awards.”

The Restoration Partnering Team worked diligently on their environmental restoration program consisting of completing various removal actions to allow three sites to be reused. Formed in October 1996, the Team consists of personnel from NAVFAC MIDLANT, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Mid-Atlantic Regional Office (Region III), the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) and environmental consultants and community leaders who support these organizations.

The three IR sites that were able to be beneficially reused included Site 22 at NSA Norfolk, Site 23 at NAVSTA Norfolk and the Solid Waste Management Unit (SWMU) 14 at NAVSTA Norfolk.

Site 22 remediation of soil and sediment on NSA Norfolk was completed in 2004. In a partnership with the Virginia Department of Transportation, the site was recently transformed into approximately 22 acres of recreational ball fields for use by the Navy and the surrounding community.

Site 23 consisted of removal action with capping and implementation of land-use controls to provide approximately 9,500 feet of high-grade warehouse space. This action eliminated an environmental liability from an area that was formerly strictly access-controlled and created a usable area that supports the mission of NAVSTA Norfolk.

SWMU 14 was defined by a previous construction and demolition debris landfill covering 14 acres of a peninsula created by filling operations during base expansion. Following completion of the removal action to construct an asphalt parking lot, approximately 1,400 additional parking spaces were constructed for use by NAVSTA Norfolk. Additionally, 13 rain gardens were built into the parking lot to retain and treat storm water running off the site during rain events. These rain gardens help to eliminate potential pollutants from discharging into the Chesapeake Bay.

“This achievement is a shining example of what great partnerships between the USEPA, VDEQ and the Navy can achieve. It should also serve as a badge of honor to the dedicated men and women whose vision, dedication and commitment made it possible,” said Murray.

Judging for the competition was based on how well the environmental program was managed, the program’s technical merits, if the program supported the military readiness/civil works mission and if base personnel, residents and the local community were involved.

The team’s success stems from their prompt collaboration and communication, their clean-up actions and their innovative and proactive approach to complete removal actions. During fiscal year 2008, the Team set a goal to attain a Remedy in Place (RIP) for all remaining program IR sites while completing all Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) documentation for multiple additional sites. RIP is a milestone achieved when the construction of a long-term remedy is complete and the remedy is operating as planned to meet project remedial action objectives in the future, or a short-term remedy has been successfully implemented and the final documentation is being prepared.

The Team also set out to achieve the paramount USEPA milestone of installation construction completion prior to the end of fiscal 2010. This goal was accomplished without any extra funding to support the environmental program and no additional personnel resources were provided.

The NSA Norfolk/NAVSTA Norfolk team will now continue to compete for the Office of the Secretary of Defense level award. A ceremony will be held on June 7 at the U.S. Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C., to honor all of the award winners.

“The main reason this award is important to me is that it shows what can happen when government agencies put their differences in philosophy and mission aside to focus on a common objective and work together in a way that generates consensus and unmatched cost effective productivity,” said Murray. “This was the greatest example of teamwork that I have ever been a part of.”