



Maryland Department of the
Environment

FACTS ABOUT: THIOKOL CORPORATION- MECHANICSVILLE SITE

SITE LOCATION

The Morton Thiokol, Incorporated site was located on an 800-acre parcel at 26100 Friendship School Road in Mechanicsville, St. Mary's County, Maryland.

The property is at the intersection of Maryland State Route 235 and Friendship School Road, and is bounded by Maryland State Route 235 to the north, Friendship School Road to the west and woodlands to the east and south. Rich Neck Creek and Tom Swamp Run, including its intermittent tributaries, flow through the property generally to the south and southwest towards the Potomac River.

SITE HISTORY

Prior to 1950, Federal Ordnance Corporation operated a munitions plant on the property. Hunter Manufacture purchased the property in the early 1950s and continued to produce munitions until the late 1950s. At the time the factory was in operation, unexploded ordnance (UXO) was routinely buried and/or burned in pits on the property. The location of buried explosives was not documented.

When Thiokol Corporation (Thiokol) acquired their 793 acres of the property in 1959, munitions production did not resume. In the early 1980s, Thiokol razed all buildings on the property, harvested timber, and reforested part of the property.

Robert Gollahon of South Resource Management purchased the property from Thiokol in 1999. Prior to the sale, Thiokol listed a declaration of covenants prohibiting residential construction at two 30-acre special reserve areas located in suspect burial regions of the property. Gollahon split the 793-acre property and sold 619-acres, including the reserve areas, to PB II, LLC in October 2006. PB II entered the property into the Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP).

A 2.01-acre portion of the original Federal Ordnance Property was acquired in 1997 by the Hollywood Worship Center.

ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATION AND ACTION

The property was placed on the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) list of potentially hazardous waste sites in 1985. MDE conducted a preliminary site assessment report in which they documented existing site conditions, noting that an unknown quantity of UXO was buried on the property.



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NUS Corporation, contracted by the Environmental Protection Agency, evaluated on-site development by reviewing available air photographs of the property from 1952 to 1972.

A site inspection, conducted by NUS Corporation in 1990, concluded that no significant human health impacts were expected from detected substances.

In 1994, a property interim study, including a geophysical survey completed by the Human Factors Applications, Inc. and Geophex Limited, led to the discovery of UXOs in pits at the property. In June 1995, the site investigation and cleanup report, prepared by G & E Engineering, Inc. stated that approximately 1,360 pounds of explosives were unearthed and detonated on-site, and approximately 456 tons of soil was removed from detonation areas. The detonation pits were backfilled with soil. A 550-gallon fuel oil underground storage tank and 250 pounds of oil-contaminated soil were also removed from the site.

In 1998, Thiokol, in response to MDE's request, initiated the study of lead-impacted soil used to backfill the detonation pits. Apex Environmental, Inc. (Apex) excavated 162 tons of soil from the detonation pits, disposed of the soil at a permitted facility off-site, and backfilled the pits with clean soil.

In 1999, an environmental assessment was initiated by Thiokol and included collection of five groundwater samples from on-site geoprobe borings, three surface water/sediment samples, and 17 soil samples. The analytical results of the samples revealed no significant contamination. Thiokol contracted with Apex and UXB International, Inc. to accomplish additional remediation in response to MDE's request. Between September 1999 and June 2000, Apex conducted a UXO investigation and removal at the property. Approximately 22 acres were inspected and approximately 82 pounds of UXO items including 11 pounds of explosives, non-UXO related scrap, and approximately 218 tons of soil containing UXO materials were removed from the property and disposed. In December 1999, the Department confirmed that no significant chemical contamination exists above acceptable risk levels for those areas sampled.

CURRENT STATUS

In April 2007, PB II, LLC submitted a VCP application for the property as an inculpable person. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was submitted to the VCP in July 2007. The VCP comments on the application package were issued in September 2007. A Phase II ESA was submitted in October 2008. The PB II, LLC property was accepted into the VCP in November 2008, with the requirement that a response action plan be developed. An additional site assessment is being required by the VCP. Future property use has been designated as restricted commercial.

