



**JS Army Corps
of Engineers**
Huntsville Division

News Release

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Corps of Engineers to Study Whether Ordnance Exists at Former West Virginia Maneuver Area

HUNTSVILLE, ALA. -- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will begin a remedial investigation / feasibility study of possible ordnance contamination at the former West Virginia Maneuver Area in early August. The Corps will hold an Open House at the Petersburg Ranger Station from 1-5 p.m. on August 1 to answer questions about the project.

The sites to be studied are located in Dolly Sods Wilderness Area, near Petersburg, W.Va. The project is part of the Defense Environmental Restoration Program.

During the project, the Corps' contractor, Metcalf & Eddy, and subcontractor UXB International Inc., will study the site and search for possible munitions buried in the area. The study will provide the Corps with information needed to determine whether any future removal action is warranted.

According to Corps officials, safety is the paramount concern. While the Wilderness Area will remain open, search areas will be closed to the public during operations.

Huntsville Division is the Corps of Engineers' Center of Expertise for Ordnance and Explosive Waste removal. The Division is cooperating with Huntington District, Corps of Engineers, which has geographic responsibility for the area.

Background

Dolly Sods Wilderness Area is located in Grant, Tucker and Randolph Counties, W.Va. The Forest Service operates the wilderness area, which contains 10,215 acres and is open to the public at all times. During World War II, the Army used the area for maneuvers. This site was selected for study based on the findings of the Huntington District Army Corps of Engineers, that ordnance may still remain in the wilderness area.

During World War II, about 2 million acres in the vicinity of Dolly Sods were used by the Thirteenth Army Corps of the Third Army for mountain training and maneuvers, including the firing of artillery and mortars. This training continued from Oct. 15, 1943 to July 1, 1944, with several divisions taking part in training before shipping out.

Records on all of the military operations in the area are scarce because of lost and destroyed records, but it is known that the targets of the artillery fire near the Dolly Sods Wilderness Area included the southern face of Blackbird Knob to the north and the eastern face of Cabin Mountain at the northwest corner. There were, apparently, three groups of gun emplacements. In addition, mortar fire took place in the area. The targets are unknown. Park Service brochures warn of the dangers of possible ordnance at this site.

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