



U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY

# MONTHLY UPDATE

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## DESERET CHEMICAL DEPOT | June 21, 2012



Surface cleanup of the depot's most contaminated areas started May 28, and will take approximately one year to complete. The debris was dumped between the 1940s and the early 1980s; the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act requires military installations to assess and remediate former disposal areas.

### Environmental cleanup underway

Crews start removing decades-old debris from Deseret Chemical Depot's most heavily contaminated sites

Initial cleanup on Deseret Chemical Depot's (DCD) Solid Waste Management Units (SWMUs) 1 and 25 is underway. SWMUs 1 and 25 are DCD's most heavily contaminated areas, which were once used for the treatment and disposal of conventional and chemical weapons, and the disposal of other industrial materials. The initial remediation encompasses more than 1,600 acres and does not include digging up any material.

The surface cleanup contract was awarded to Shaw Group, Inc., who has begun a thorough surface sweep of the areas, picking up wood debris, scrap metal from demilitarized munitions, pallets, paint cans, drums, and munition bandings. After going through a two-step inspection process to ensure that the debris is not contaminated with chemical agents, the debris will be sent through an industrial-sized metal shredder and then shipped off-site for recycling.

Debris that is contaminated with commercial products such as industrial cleaners, paints and fuels will be segregated, sampled and shipped off-site to a permitted disposal facility.

Any explosive materials that are found during the surface cleanup will be moved (if it can be moved safely) to a designated area within SWMU 25 and

detonated. If it is determined the explosive material is unsafe to move, it will be detonated in its place.

Any Recovered Chemical Warfare Materiel (RCWM) will be placed in an airtight, overpack container and transported to a secure storage igloo. The overpacking and transportation activities will be the responsibility of a government agency, CBRNE Analytical and Remediation Activity, known as CARA. The over-packed munitions will then undergo a formal assessment by the (See ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANUP on page 2)

#### SWMUs 1 and 25

A quick glance at DCD's toughest cleanups

##### SWMU 1

Size: 373 acres

Scope: includes more than 130 disposal features such as trenches, mounds and open pits that were used to dispose of or bury conventional and chemical munitions and industrial chemicals. More than 59,000 empty 4.2 inch mortar shells litter the ground.



##### SWMU 25

Size: 1,250 acres

Scope: includes 50 craters each measuring approximately 3 acres in diameter created by open detonations, trenches with metal debris, cluster bombs and incendiary bombs and numerous ash piles from open-burning activities.



Surface Cleanup: includes removing the above-ground munitions and scattered debris. When the surface cleanup is complete, it will be determined if further remediation is necessary.

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8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Monday - Friday

(Additional hours available upon request)

## Fire scorches DCD

A fire that started Friday, June 15, about 5 p.m. near mile marker 4 on state route 73 quickly spread to Deseret Chemical Depot (DCD) property. Pushed by 25 to 30 mph winds, the fire burned nearly 1,600 acres before crews could contain the blaze the following morning.

Crews from DCD and the Utah Bureau of Land Management fought the fire; a helicopter was also utilized for an air attack to help douse the flames.

"I can't tell you how proud and grateful I am for the firefighters, law enforcement and Emergency Operations Center personnel that responded to this blaze and kept it from doing more damage than it did," said DCD Commander, Col. Mark B. Pomeroy.

Though no structures were lost, the fire did damage some power poles, at least one transformer, phone lines and possibly some wells.



*Solid Waste Management Unit 1 includes approximately 59,000 empty metal mortar shells that will be removed during the area's initial surface cleanup, which is going on now.*

## Deseret nesting ground growing

*Burrowing owl population shows steady increase*

Build it and they will come. That has certainly been the case for the burrowing owl nests at Deseret Chemical Depot (DCD). As the number of manmade nests have increased, so has the number of owls. Last year, the nests attracted four nesting pairs; this year that number more than doubled to nine nesting pairs.

"We're happy with this year's results," said Boyd White, who oversees DCD's burrowing owl efforts. "I think as we continue to make positive changes, we will see positive results."

The artificial nests are made from 55-gallon plastic drums that are cut in half and connected to a long piece of corrugated plastic tubing, which serves as the entrance and exit. The tubing is big enough for the owls, but too small for predators such as badgers, coyotes and foxes.

DCD has a total of 70 nests in 35 locations, mainly along the north area perimeter, Cemetery Hill and in Area 2. The nests are placed in pairs because nesting owls utilize two nests at once, using one for nesting and the other as a food cache.

DCD staff started banding the owls last year. This



*Hot, dry conditions and strong winds helped fuel a fire on Deseret Chemical Depot on Friday, June 15. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.*

## Environmental cleanup

*(continued from front page)*

Munitions Assessment Review Board, which will verify whether the items contain or are contaminated with chemical agent. If chemical agent is detected, the munition will be destroyed by the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency's Non-Stockpile Chemical Materiel Project's Explosive Destruction System (EDS). The EDS is a mobile system that provides on-site treatment for RCWM in a safe and environmentally sound manner.

Surface cleanup activities are expected to conclude May 2013. Afterwards, additional investigations will determine if there is a need for additional remediation.



*A group of burrowing owl chicks stands outside the entrance to one of Deseret's artificial nests. **CLICK ON** the above photo to see a short video of their birth.*

year, two previously banded owls returned.

"We hope the number of returning owls also continues to increase year after year," said White.

Next year, DCD plans on participating in a Department of Defense Legacy Project, which will use geo-locators to track the owls' migratory movement. Four other locations in the western United States, including the Umatilla Chemical Depot in Oregon, are already participating in the migratory tracking project.

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