

# GAO Issues Status Report on Vieques Cleanup

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The Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a status report on the cleanup of Vieques Island in Puerto Rico. The report provides an update on the progress made to date of both Installation Restoration Program (IRP) and Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP) sites. The status of the MMRP sites was presented for both the eastern and western sides of the island.

For the eastern side of Vieques, the report stated that a preliminary assessment/site inspection (PA/SI) effort identified approximately 9,000 acres potentially impacted by UXO in the former eastern maneuver area. Approximately 1,100 acres, which includes the former live-impact area, is currently undergoing a time-critical removal action (TCRA) to remove surface UXO. A total of 290 acres (225 acres inland and 65 acres of beaches) have been surfaced cleared to date. The Navy expects to complete surface removal of the remaining 810 acres covered by the TCRA by 2010. The cleanup of the remaining 7,900 acres potentially affected by UXO will depend on the results of future studies and the final conservation plan being developed by the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior (DoI). In fiscal year 2007 and 2008, the Navy plans to continue surface removal of munitions and also plans to begin subsurface UXO clearance on select beach areas for the eastern side of the island.

For the western side of Vieques, the report states that a 100-acre area was surface cleared back in 2003, and that a surface clearance at the former open burn/open detonation (OB/OD) site will be conducted in fiscal years 2007 and 2008. Limited subsurface clearance is also planned for fiscal years 2007 and 2008 on the western side of the island.

As far as the MMRP budget for Vieques goes, the Navy has allocated about \$35.4 million for effort through fiscal year 2006, and has programmed an additional \$235.2 million for UXO removal. A breakdown of the budget is provided in the GAO report that can be downloaded from [UXOInfo.com](http://UXOInfo.com) by using the download link below.