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Contact:

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Phone:

(206) 764-3750

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Corps Plans Site Inspection of Fort Columbia State Park

Information meeting scheduled January 30, 2008

SEATTLE, WA. — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is evaluating Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) that had historically been used for military training. One of these sites, Fort Columbia State Park, is located in Pacific County, six miles southeast of Ilwaco in southwestern Washington.

The Corps will do the evaluation by conducting a Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP), Site Investigation (SI). The SI will be conducted in the next few months by a Corps contractor, Shaw Environmental. The work to be performed will include access to and a visual inspection of property that was part of the former Fort Columbia. The inspection may also include soil and/or water sampling.

Corps project manager Mike Nelson said, “The SI will be used to determine what future work the Corps may do to clean-up possible munitions related components and chemical constituents used during military activities.” The Corps of Engineers inspects and evaluates sites contaminated with hazardous waste, radioactive waste, and/or ordnance according to federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations.

In order to begin the SI the Corps will be contacting the property owners of the former Fort Columbia site and request the owner provide a signed Department of the Army Right of Entry (ROE) for Investigation and Sampling.

Site Inspection of Fort Columbia State Park

Additionally, a public information meeting is scheduled for January 30, 2008 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Fort Columbia State Park, Chinook, WA, to provide the public an overview of the MMRP, SI process.

Fort Columbia, consisting of 770 acres, was purchased by the War Department in 1864 for coastal fortification as part of the Harbor Defenses of the Columbia River. After purchase the land was left undisturbed until 1898 when construction began on the first of three artillery batteries and support buildings. All three batteries were completed in 1903. Between 1903 and 1947 Fort Columbia, in conjunction with Fort Stevens and Fort Canby, was a U.S. Army coastal defense artillery installation protecting the Columbia River through the end of World War II.

In late 1947 the War Department declared Fort Columbia surplus. In 1950 the State of Washington acquired the property and dedication of Fort Columbia Historic State Park was on June 17, 1951.

Area residents are invited to this public information meeting on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Military Munitions Response Program Site Investigation at Fort Columbia State Park. Over the next few months, the Corps will evaluate the Fort under the Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) program. Work will include a visual inspection of property that was part of the former Fort Columbia, and may include soil and/or water sampling. The Corps will use the results of this investigation to determine if future work is needed to clean up possible munitions related components and chemical constituents used at the Fort.

More information about Fort Columbia will be available on Seattle District's website at <http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/PublicMenu/Menu.cfm?sitename=PMEM&pagename=MMRP>