

United States Marine Corps



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FUNDING COMMITTED TO RESOLVE LANDFILL'S PHASE I CONSTRUCTION DEFICIENCIES

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. -- Camp Pendleton officials have received a funding commitment to correct construction deficiencies identified at the Phase I expansion section of the Las Pulgas Landfill here.

The funding for fiscal year 2009, pledged by Headquarters Marine Corps, will pay for the removal of existing trash from the landfill's Phase I section to a future Phase II section. Funding will also pay for the follow-on repair or construction of a new Phase I liner.

"Environmental stewardship, and keeping the trust and confidence of the American people, is extremely important to us," said Col James B. Seaton, commanding officer, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. "We're committed to resolving this issue in a proactive and environmentally responsible manner."

Base environmental officials will continue to work closely and in cooperation with the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (SDRWQCB) and the County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health on the planned way ahead.

BACKGROUND

In operation since 1971, the 39-acre Las Pulgas landfill was projected to reach capacity by 2010. As a result, base officials planned a 7-phase expansion project to extend the life capacity of the landfill. In accordance with new federal regulations, plans for each phase included the construction of a liner and a leachate collection and removal system to contain and transfer leachate – the liquid generated as trash naturally decomposes -- into collection tanks, instead of allowing it to seep to the environment.

In 1999, the landfill's 7.5-acre Phase I section was completed by Selco Inc., a civilian contractor hired and managed by Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest in San Diego. In 2003, Camp Pendleton officials discovered two small tears in the side slope of the liner in an area not yet covered by trash. Base officials immediately notified the SDRWQCB and voluntarily suspended operations in Phase I.

Upon further investigation of the tears by a civilian contractor, base officials learned that Selco Inc. had not built the side slopes of the liner to design specifications. As a result, the SDRWQCB questioned the integrity of the entire liner, including the bottom.

After three independent, civilian contracted studies of the conditions of the Phase I liner, Base officials acknowledge that the side slopes were not built to design specifications. However, no additional tears were discovered.

Base officials expect a construction contract for Phase II to be awarded by Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest to a civilian contractor by the end of this summer. Construction is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2009. The removal of trash from Phase I to Phase II is planned to begin shortly thereafter.

"We are the caretakers of Camp Pendleton's land, and we take this responsibility very seriously," said Seaton. "We are committed to doing the right thing for today and tomorrow's future."

Camp Pendleton's environmental staff totals more than 85 people. During fiscal year 2006, the base spent more than \$35 million on environmental programs and projects.

***** Media queries regarding Phase I remedial action should be directed to the Consolidated Public Affairs Office at (760) 725-5044 or 5043.**

Media queries regarding all Phase I and II contracts, civilian contractors, cost estimates, and quality assurance and quality control should be directed to Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest Public Affairs at (619) 532-3100.

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