



PUEBLO OF ISLETA



## Successful Partnership Between the Pueblo of Isleta and DoD's Native American Lands Environmental Mitigation Program

In 2001, the Pueblo of Isleta (NM) became a partner tribe in the Department of Defense (DoD)-sponsored Native American Lands Environmental Mitigation Program (NALEMP) when the tribe entered into its first Cooperative Agreement (CA) with DoD. In February 1942, the Kirtland Air Force Base (KAFB) Precision Bombing Range (PBR) Number (No.) 20, Target S-7 was leased by the War Department, predecessor agency to the DoD, from the Santa Fe Pacific Railroad (SFPR). A total of 480 acres were leased for the purpose of training bombing pilots flying out of KAFB. The PBR was used for day and night bombing target practice runs by the Army Air Corps from 1942 until 1946; five practice targets were constructed at the PBR. The PBR was used until October 1946, when it was declared surplus and returned to the SFPR in February 1947. The Pueblo of Isleta purchased the land in 1997. The Site is located within the Pueblo of Isleta Comanche Ranch property, which includes approximately 91,000 acres of the Pueblo of Isleta's total land holdings of approximately 211,000 acres.

Prior to NALEMP removal actions, the density of practice bomb debris was high at the Site relative to the other Comanche Ranch sites. The known and potential impacts included M38A2, MK15, M35, and M85 series 100-pound practice bombs; M47 100-pound incendiary bombs; M1A1 spotting charges; M26 and MK4 parachute flares; M60 fuze igniters; and M111 and M126 fuzes. Initial NALEMP removal actions estimated surface clearance to generate over 2,500 pounds of munitions debris (MD) at the conclusion of the clearance.



Funding provided to the Pueblo of Isleta under the first NALEMP CA in 2001 included development of a Strategic Project Implementation Plan (SPIP), which outlined the tasks required for the mitigation of past DoD impacts to their lands. A Site Inspection for KAFB PBR No. 20, Target S-7 was conducted in 2010 and documented MD from M38A2 and MK15 100-pound practice bombs and M1A1 spotting charges.

Photo: All munitions and range debris discovered at the Site.  
Source: Pueblo of Isleta/Britannia Environmental

**CLEARED**  
**For Open Publication**

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Under the 2016 CA, a surface clearance removal action was completed in 2018, for a total of 249 acres of KAFB PBR No. 20, Target S-7. All surface items associated with the PBR were identified and removed, including range debris (RD), munition items, and all trash related to the presence of the PBR. All munitions identified during the surface clearance were consistent with those discovered during earlier studies at the S-7 Target. Most of the RD discovered were the remnants of wooden light posts, electrical insulators, and light fittings which were likely used to illuminate the PBR during nighttime bombing runs. A total weight of 5,697 pounds of material documented as safe (MDAS) and RD was removed from the Site. It was determined that there was a remaining area of approximately 673 acres within the Target S-7 that required clearance.

With continued NALEMP funding under the 2020 CA, all remaining surface items associated with the PBR were identified and removed from 675.8 acres of the Site, including RD, munition items, and all trash related to the presence of the PBR. Munition items which were positively identified during the surface clearance included: M38A2 100-pound practice bombs (including M1A1 spotting charges); MK15 100-pound practice bombs; M47 100-pound incendiary bombs (practice); and M85 100-pound practice bombs. Most of the RD discovered at the Site were steel and aluminum cans, with small amounts of plastic, concrete, and other trash items. The surface clearance activities removed a total of 3,270 pounds of munitions and RD. By completing this removal action, the surface clearance at KAFB PBR No. 20, Target S-7 is complete.



Photo: Field workers search for debris in a sweep line.  
Source: Pueblo of Isleta/Britannia Environmental

The completion of surface clearance at KAFB PBR No. 20, Target S-7 removed safety hazards to tribal members and animals using the Pueblo of Isleta lands and allows the tribe to continue to utilize the lands for hunting, grazing, firewood gathering, religious and cultural practices, and subsistence food gathering.