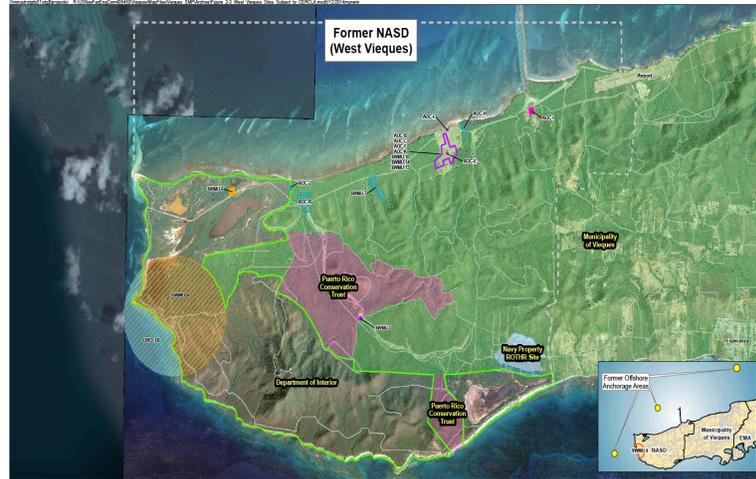


## ARCH 4/584 Intermediate Architectural Design Studio, Fall 2017 VIEQUES BUNKERS - Repurposing War for Nature



Rafael Trelles, 2014



CH2MHill, West Vieques Sites Subject to CERCLA, Site Management Plan, FY 2015, Vieques, Puerto Rico

In 1941, the US Navy established the formidable naval base Roosevelt Roads in Eastern Puerto Rico during World War II (1940-48). The base included the inhabited offshore islands of Vieques and Culebra (“Spanish Virgin Islands”) as a naval military training range. After the end of the Cold War in the late 1990’s, and after many years of public demonstrations and political unrest demanding the termination of military activities on the island, the US Navy closed the military base in 2001. The following year, the US Navy ceded most of its facilities and land to Puerto Rico for civic purposes.

The Island of Vieques is slowly repossessing and repurposing the militarized lands with a variety of programs and objectives that involve the resident community, local and national NGO’s, the municipality of Vieques, the Government of Puerto Rico and the US Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior. Among the entities in charge of steering and financing the island’s healing and revitalization is Para la Naturaleza, (a division of Puerto Rico Land Trust). Para la Naturaleza (PLN) is a non-profit organization that “protects lands of high ecological value and encourages people to take responsibility for all the natural resources while pushing forward public policy for their protection.” PLN is in charge of repurposing part of the Western Vieques Conservation Area, which includes 26 of the 77 concrete bunkers in the area.

Para la Naturaleza’s public and community driven goals have expanded “...from land conservation and historic preservation to promoting volunteerism and citizen science programs; from facilitating research and analysis to advancing critical policy changes, constantly assuming new challenges and roles.”

This architectural studio will study ways to expand Para la Naturaleza’s role on the island and propose multiple programs and proposals for the repurposing and revaluing of the Vieques Bunkers. Students will investigate Vieques’ historical and present physical and socio-economic condition, make site analyses, and study precedents to propose a general master plan and individual interventions for the adaptable reuse of the military bunkers. Possible functions to investigate include artist residences, farm to table and hospitality programs, history museums, music and audiovisual performance sites, scientific studies, and communal and economic development programs, among other functions.