NPL Site Narrative for Loring Air Force Base

LORING AIR FORCE BASE
Limestone, Maine

Conditions at proposal (July 14, 1989): Loring Air Force Base covers nearly 9,000 acres in Aroostock County in a sparsely populated area of northeastern Maine. Limestone is 2 miles to the east, Caribou 8 miles to the west, and the New Brunswick, Canada, border 3 miles to the east. Loring has been active since 1952 and has been home to the Strategic Air Command's 42nd Bombardment Wing since 1953. Hazardous wastes generated on-base include waste oils, fuels cleaned from aircraft and vehicles, spent solvents (many of them chlorinated organic chemicals), PCBs, and pesticides. Historically, wastes have been burned or buried in landfills.

Loring Air Force Base is participating in the Installation Restoration Program (IRP), established in 1978. Under this program, the Department of Defense seeks to identify, investigate, and clean up contamination from hazardous materials. IRP tests reported in 1986 indicate that monitoring wells on the base are contaminated with methylene chloride, trichloroethylene (TCE), carbon tetrachloride, and barium. The wells are on or downgradient of several widely scattered disposal areas. Two are adjacent landfills, both old gravel pits, covering 190 acres. Landfill 2 was used for disposal of hazardous wastes during 1956-74, and Landfill 3 from 1974 to the early 1980s. In the 0.5-acre Fire Department Training Area, large quantities of hazardous materials were landfilled until 1968 and burned until 1974. The 600-acre Flightline Area, with its industrial shops and maintenance hangars, was a primary generator of hazardous waste on-base; most wastes were disposed of elsewhere, although some probably were disposed of on the ground or concrete or in the storm and sewer drains.

Soils in the Flightline Area also contain significant amounts of fuel, oil, and various volatile organic chemicals. An estimated 1,200 people obtain drinking water from wells within 3 miles of hazardous substances on the base; the nearest well is less than 500 feet from where transformers were buried.

Water in the Flightline Drainage Ditch (a 2,500-foot channelized portion of a tributary to Greenlaw Creek) is contaminated with methylene chloride, tetrachloroethylene, 1,1,1-trichloroethane, TCE, and iron, according to the 1986 IRP report. The ditch receives storm water discharges from several sewers draining the Flightline Area and the Nose Dock Area, where fuels were handled. Surface water within 3 miles downstream is used for recreational activities. A fresh water wetland is 500 feet from Landfill 3.

The 8,500 people on the base can come in direct contact with hazardous substances at the landfills and burn pit because they are inadequately fenced.

Status (February 21, 1990): EPA is reviewing information on the base in preparation for negotiations in 1990 with the Air Force for an Interagency Agreement under CERCLA Section 120 covering further studies and remedial activities.

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see

the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at ATSDR - ToxFAQs (http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.