NPL Site Narrative for Fort Richardson (USARMY)

FORT RICHARDSON (USARMY)
Anchorage, Alaska

Fort Richardson occupies a 25,000 acre area located within the municipality of Anchorage in south-central Alaska. The installation is bounded by the city of Anchorage and Elmendorf Air Force Base to the west and by Eagle Bay and the Knik Arm of Cook Inlet to the north. Fort Richardson's southern and eastern boundaries consist of undeveloped lands and Chugach State Park.

Three sources of contamination were identified by the Army but do not represent all known or suspected sources of contamination at the Fort Richardson installation. These sources are the Eagle River Flats (ERF) ordnance impact area, the Poleline Road Disposal Area (PRDA), and the Roosevelt Road Transmitter Site (RRTS).

ERF is located in wetlands associated with the Eagle River delta in the northwestern corner of the installation. ERF has served as the primary ordnance impact area for Fort Richardson since World War II. The ordnance testing area encompasses 2,500 acres of wetlands, which serves as an important habitat for waterfowl such as ducks, geese, and swans during spring and fall migrations. Sediment and surface water samples collected from ERF in August and October 1989 and in 1991 revealed elevated levels of heavy metals, explosive compounds, and white phosphorous. Copper, cadmium, nickel, zinc, and mercury concentrations in surface water wetland samples exceeded the Ambient Water Quality Criteria.

PRDA is located approximately 1.1 miles southwest of the Eagle River. PRDA was identified by a former soldier who stated that hazardous substances were buried there in the 1950s; a 1954 Army Corps of Engineers map confirmed the existence of this disposal area. In 1990, an expanded site investigation conducted by the Army confirmed the presence of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in soil and shallow ground water at PRDA.

RRTS consists of a bomb-proof underground bunker and the remnants of support facilities constructed in the 1940s. In May and June 1990, the Army conducted sampling operations as part of a site investigation follow-up. Analytical results from this investigation indicated contamination by PCBs, VOCs, semi-volatile organic compounds, dioxins, asbestos, and inorganic elements throughout RRTS.

The Eagle River is used for recreational fishing and supports a wide variety of game fish including king, silver, red, pink, and chum salmon; dolly varden; arctic char; rainbow trout; grayling; and whitefish. The river maintains spawning runs of chinook, coho, and pink salmon. Stickleback inhabit salt marshes along the Knik Arm and are common within the shallow ponds and some impact craters within ERF. The American peregrine falcon, a federally-designated endangered species, and the federally-designated threatened arctic peregrine falcon, migrate through the area.

EPA, the Army, and the Alaska Department of Conservation will negotiate an interagency agreement to address the clean-up of this site.

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.