

# **ADAK NAVAL AIR STATION**

**ALASKA**

**EPA ID# AK4170024323**

**EPA Region 10**

**Aleutian Islands**

**Adak**

**1st Congressional District**

**Other Names: ADAK NAVAL AIR  
STATION, ADAK WHITE ALICE  
SITE, WHITE ALICE ANTENNA  
SITE**

Last Update: April, 2002

## **▼ Site Description**

The Naval Air Station (NAS) Adak, approximately 80,000 acres in size, is located on Adak Island, near the western end of the Aleutian Islands, Alaska. Adak Island was designated part of the Aleutian Island Reservation by Executive Order 1733 on March 3, 1913. This withdrawn land was re-designated as a sub-unit of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act on December 2, 1980.

Beginning in the early 1940s, Adak became a key operations and supply location for United States military forces after the Japanese occupation of Kiska and Attu Islands during World War II. The northern portion of Adak Island was designated for military use by the Navy on August 19, 1959 by Public Land Order 1949. In 1994, the base was re-designated NAF Adak, and was directed to close as a result of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Act of 1995. NAF Adak was on caretaker status since March 31, 1997 when it operationally closed until September 31, 2000 when caretaker funding ended. At this time Navy operations consist solely for long-term maintenance of Superfund cleanups and final clearance of ordnance items.

Over a 40-year period, hazardous substances were disposed of in areas on the island, including landfills, storage areas, drum disposal areas, spill sites, and pits for waste oil and fire-fighting training. Petroleum, chlorinated solvents, batteries, and transformer oils containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are some of the hazardous materials present at the site. Primary releases include: PCBs (over 2,000 gallons), unexploded ordnance (70,000 items

located, not including ranges and offshore disposal), petroleum (1,000,000 gallons), solvents, and pesticides. The island has high winds and frequent storms. The island is a federally designated wilderness area, and is part of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. A wide variety of marine mammals and birds inhabit the near-shore areas. Access to remote areas is allowed, but restrictions are necessary due to potential presence of unexploded ordnance.

Approximately 50 people reside on the island and use the area for hunting, fishing, and recreational purposes. The U.S. intends to transfer the former Base from the U.S. Navy to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) who will then exchange the property with The Aleut Corporation for other lands in the Aleutian Islands. The exchange will provide a well developed city for the Aleuts to commercialize in return for high quality marine bird habitat being transferred to FWS for management within the refuge. The facility is being leased to the Adak Reuse Corporation, who are marketing the island to commercial fishing fleets and other business which operate in the area.

**Site Responsibility:** This site is being addressed through state and federal actions.

<b>NPL Listing History</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<b>Proposed Date:</b>	<b>10/14/92</b>
<b>Final Date:</b>	<b>05/31/94</b>
<b>Deleted Date:</b>	

## ▼ Threats and Contaminants

**Media Affected:** [Groundwater](#), [Surface Water](#), [Soil & Sludges](#)

Groundwater, sediments, surface water, and soil in several locations on the island are contaminated with petroleum-related constituents, PCBs, and metals. Potential contaminants of concern include chlorinated solvents, ordnance, explosives, and unexploded ordnance. Although groundwater is not now, nor is it expected to be, a source for drinking water, it is contaminated with petroleum and organic chemicals and is a potential pathway to the

island's surface water. Drinking contaminated groundwater could pose a health risk. The contaminants may pose a threat to human health and the sensitive environments both on and off the island, including the Wildlife Refuge.

## ▼ Cleanup Progress

The Navy has completed more than 20 removal actions, two interim remedies, and hundreds of UST removals. The removals addressed PCB contaminated soils and sediments, buried drums, and other releases. Interim actions capped two landfills. PCBs were either removed from the island or capped in place due to site constraints. Numerous petroleum spills are being cleaned up under a State and Navy agreement.

A proposed plan to address Operable Unit A (OU-A) was released in January 1998. The remedies selected are excavation of contaminated soil and sediments, capping of a historic landfill and long-term monitoring of sediments and landfill covers. The final record of decision for OU-A was signed by the Navy in October 1999. EPA undertook formal government to government consultation with the Aleut Tribes in September 1999 on the OU-A ROD. These were completed in February 2000. EPA signed the OU-A ROD on March 31, 2000.

The OU-A remedies include excavating PCB and petroleum-contaminated sediments in two surface water bodies, pumping and treating groundwater contaminated with petroleum, monitoring natural attenuation for petroleum-contaminated soils, and capping a solid waste landfill. Institutional controls will maintain land use, restricting access and advising against subsistence fishing in two marine water bodies. A long-term monitoring program will determine when the fishing advisories can be removed, or whether further remedial actions are necessary in the two marine water bodies. The Navy has completed the capping of the landfill and remedial actions for sediment removals and the development and implementation of long-term monitoring plans. The petroleum remedies are operating now and long term monitoring plans are in place for the petroleum sites. Final decisions on the petroleum-free product sites will be consistent with State law.

Because vast areas of Adak were used for military training including artillery ranges, an ordnance, explosives, and unexploded ordnance operable unit was created. This has been designated as Operable Unit B (OU-B). This OU will address ordnance and explosives remaining on Adak. The investigation and remedy evaluation process is being undertaken as a joint effort by the Navy, EPA, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, USFW, The Aleut Corporation, and the Aleut/Pribilof Island Association. Extensive investigations and clearance methods were undertaken in 1999 and 2000. A proposed plan for Operable Unit B-1, which covers the areas for transfer, was released for public comment on May 14, 2001. A Record of Decision was signed by the Navy, EPA, and the State of Alaska in December 2001. Additional investigations and clearance actions are scheduled for 2002 to enable the transfer of 47,000 acres from FWS to TAC. A final remedy for the remainder of OU-B is not expected until 2003.

There is a Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) which has met monthly since the spring of 1996. The mission of the RAB is to provide a forum for communication between all interested parties and to provide recommendations to the United States Navy regarding the Naval Air Facility Adak environmental restoration program. The RAB has added several Adak residents to its membership.

## ▼ Regional Contacts

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**Information pertaining to this site is housed at the following location(s):**

University of Alaska Anchorage (Administrative Records)

Library Reserve Room  
3211 Providence drive  
Anchorage, AK 99501