Haines Fuel Terminal

April 2024 Site Summary and Next Steps

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The U.S. Army has been assessing and remediating contamination at the former Haines Fuel Terminal along Lutak Inlet since 1990. This document provides information about the former military facility and updates on the latest findings as of April 2024.

Site History

The Haines Fuel Terminal (HFT) operated from 1955 through the early 1970s as the southern end of a 626 mile pipeline that delivered fuel to air force bases near Fairbanks. The terminal had infrastructure to offload ocean-going tankers, storage for millions of gallons of fuel, and a pumping station to initiate the transfer of fuel along the pipeline. Other infrastructure included electrical and steam generating facilities, an analytical laboratory, shops, warehouses, and disposal areas such as landfills and burn pits. Activities at the fuel terminal resulted in petroleum contamination of soil and groundwater.

Cleanup Oversight

The U.S. Army owns the 203-acre property where the terminal was located. It is responsible for conducting the cleanup of the contamination. The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is conducting oversight of the activities to ensure that Alaska regulations are followed. The U.S. Army is not involved with the cleanup of the other contamination along the Haines-Fairbanks Pipeline. Those sites are being cleaned up by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers through the Formerly Used Defense Sites program. Because the HFT is owned by the U.S. Army it is responsible for the cleanup rather than the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The HFT is not a Superfund site, but the U.S. Army is using that same process to clean it up.

Remedial Actions Taken

Remediation has involved removing contaminated soil from various source areas and infrastructure such as above ground tanks, underground storage tanks, and fuel piping from the property. Other efforts were made to stop the contamination from migrating outside the fence or remove existing sources located outside the fence. Groundwater treatment and on-site contaminated soil treatment systems were also installed during previous phases of the cleanup.

Analyses and Investigations

From the 1990s to 2014 a number of investigations and interim removal actions were carried out in discrete areas in and around the terminal. Much of the investigations and analysis focused on areas outside the fence of the terminal property. A report completed in 2014 analyzed dozens of areas of potential concern within the terminal area to identify gaps in data necessary to determine the nature and extent of contamination. Sites were divided into categories based on whether contamination is above or below regulatory levels and if additional data is needed to determine contamination concentrations. A Remedial Investigation (RI) was completed in 2020 to fill in the missing information about contamination at each site. The RI identifies which sites exceed cleanup levels or pose an unacceptable risk to health from exposure to metals, petroleum compounds and volatile organic compounds in soil and groundwater. These sites will require an evaluation of remedies in a Feasibility Study.

Cleanup Levels

The U.S. Army is comparing contaminant concentrations with DEC's default regulatory cleanup levels at this stage. It will propose cleanup levels during the next phase of the cleanup process. The final cleanup levels for the site will be determined later.

Fuel Terminal Area Map

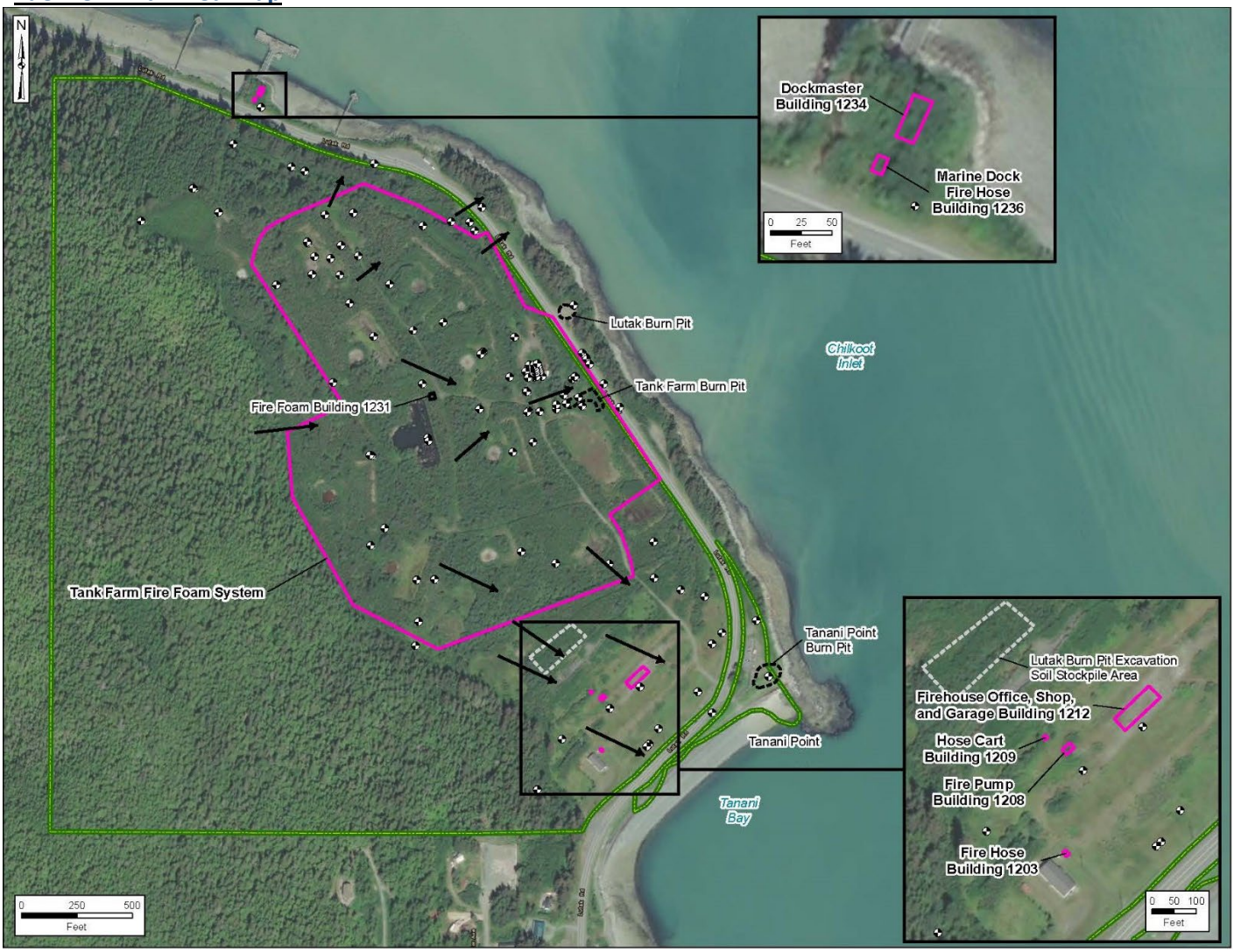

Image courtesy of U.S. Army

Potential Human Health Exposure Areas

Soil contamination is present at two locations outside the boundaries of the fence surrounding the terminal property. The first is a former burn pit located along Lutak Inlet roughly half a mile north of Tanani Point. The petroleum-contaminated soil is present starting at a depth of 10.5 feet below ground surface and does not pose a risk to people recreating at the site. The second area of contamination outside the fence is at Tanani Point and Tanani Beach. Here the petroleum-contaminated soil is present at the ground surface. Although exposure to contaminants is possible, concentrations at this site are below the DEC regulatory levels protective of the human health pathway in a residential scenario. Risk to ecological receptors at Tanani Beach will be further evaluated following fieldwork in the summer of 2024.

Emerging Contaminant – Per and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

PFAS are a group of chemicals used in some types of firefighting foam due to their resistance to grease, oil, water and heat. These properties also lead to their persistence in the environment. Exposure through ingestion of these chemicals has been linked to negative health impacts. For more information about PFAS visit the DEC Contaminated Sites web page.

A Preliminary Assessment and Site Inspection completed in March of 2023 found PFAS in concentrations greater than DEC screening levels in the soil of areas that housed equipment related to fire suppression. The U.S. Army is planning to conduct a PFAS-specific remedial investigation (RI) in 2024. The RI will collect additional soil, groundwater, seep water, and sediment data to further characterize the nature and extent of PFAS contamination and determine potential health risks. Fieldwork is currently planned for summer and fall of 2024 and a report is planned for completion in 2025.

Next Steps

The U.S. Army plans to conduct a Site Inspection of the former Fuel Terminal Dock to assess for contamination. On two occasions the dock was sandblasted to prepare it for repainting. This may have led to contamination of marine sediment from the paint chips.

A Feasibility Study will be conducted to evaluate remedies for areas of the former terminal that pose a potential health and/or environmental risk. The analysis will consider protectiveness, compliance with regulations, long and short-term effectiveness, reduction of contamination, cost, implementation, and community acceptance to help determine permanent solutions.

After the Feasibility Study a Proposed Plan for the sites will be prepared and a Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public for review and comment. After the public comments are reviewed and resolved, a Record of Decision will be signed to formally document the selected remedy. For sites that are found to have no unacceptable risk to health and the environment, a No Further Action Proposed Plan will be prepared and go through the same public process before a Record of Decision.

Scan the QR code to visit the web page for DEC Contaminated Sites:

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