



# The Big Mountain Newsletter

Volume 1, Number 1

May 31, 2003

## Introduction

This newsletter has been prepared by the United States Air Force (Air Force) to provide the public information on the upcoming Clean Sweep activities at the Big Mountain Radio Relay Station (RRS). The Clean Sweep project will take place in two phases over two summers, and entails demolition and removal of abandoned site facilities. Phase 1 project activities will start in June 2003, and continue for a period of about 60 days. The second phase of the project, Phase 2, is scheduled to take place the following summer in 2004.

The purpose of the Clean Sweep effort is to remove remaining structures and debris left on site when the installation was abandoned, and to address any remaining environmental impacts at the site. The Air Force plans to environmentally restore installation property and eventually relinquish ownership to others.

The Air Force is working closely with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), the state's environmental regulatory agency, during planning and execution of the Clean Sweep project. ADEC provides regulatory oversight and is working cooperatively with the Air Force to accomplish site clean up and restoration objectives.

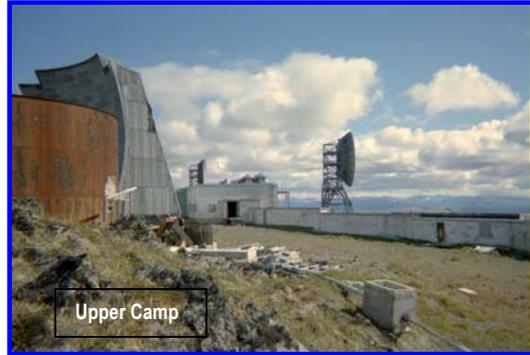


## Background and History

The Big Mountain RRS is an abandoned Air Force facility, located about 220 miles southwest of Anchorage (Figure 1). The installation is situated at Big Mountain, which is located near the southern shoreline of Lake Iliamna (Figure 2).

The Big Mountain RRS was constructed in 1956 as part of the White Alice Communication System (WACS) established across Alaska during the

Cold War. Later advancements in communication technologies made the Big Mountain mission obsolete, and the Air Force abandoned the facility in April 1979. The Air Force left most of the equipment and structures in place at that time. Since then, site facilities and structures have fallen into disrepair and been subject to vandalism. Loose material and debris have been scattered across the site by the wind.



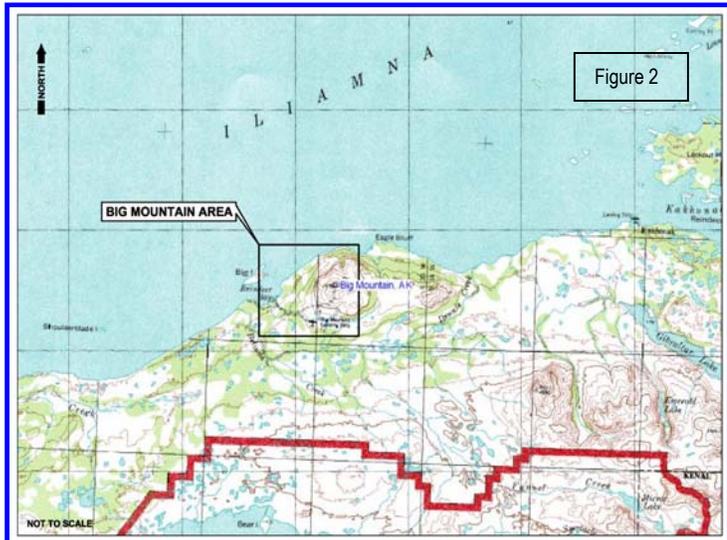
### Highlights of Phase 1 (2003)

The main purpose of Clean Sweep Phase 1 is to develop site infrastructure and prepare for the bulk of building demolition and removals scheduled during Phase 2 (2004). Highlights of 2003 Phase 1 site activities include:

- Repair of the existing runway so that it can be used for transport aircraft.
- Repair the existing roadways so that demolition equipment and debris can be safely transported.
- Removal of all regulated asbestos containing material (RACM) from existing site structures.
- Removal of hazardous wastes and regulated materials.
- Removal of residual contents of aboveground fuel storage tanks at both Upper and Lower Camp areas (with physical removal of tanks to be completed during Phase 2).
- Initiate cleanup of petroleum contaminated soils identified at the Upper Camp tank area (to be completed in 2004).
- Construct a permitted landfill on site for disposal of inert demolition debris (To be collected in Phase 2).

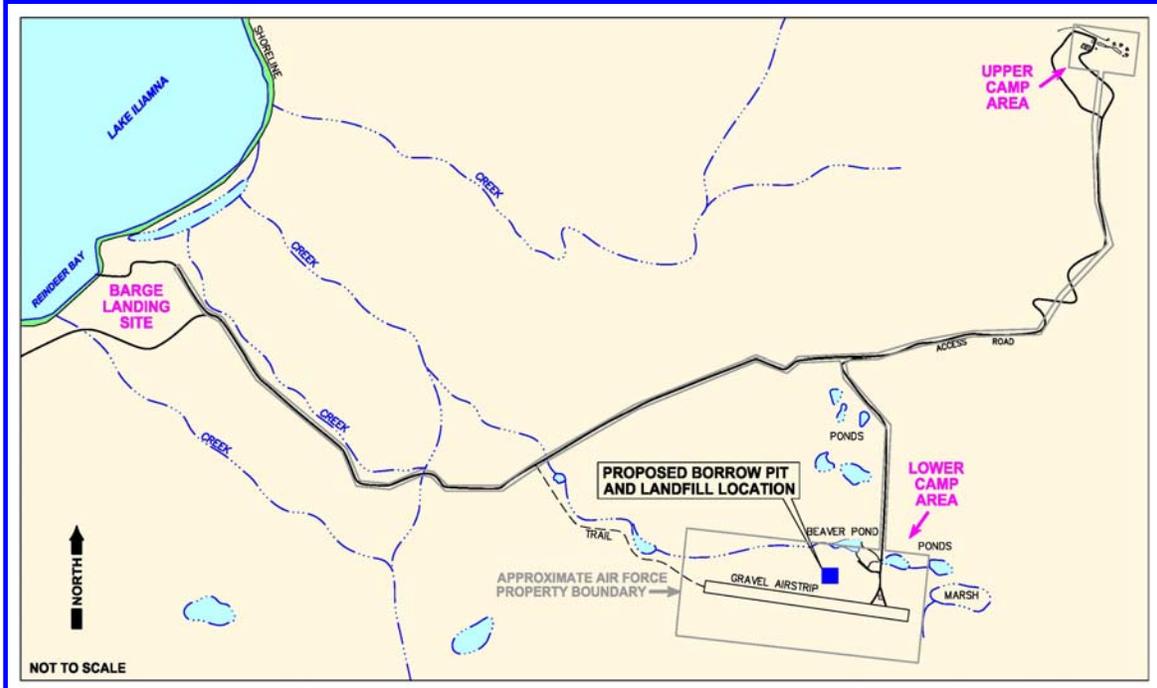
### Highlights of Phase 2 (2004)

The Phase 2 effort is planned for the summer of 2004. Activities will include demolition and removal of all site buildings and structures, soil investigation and remediation, placement of demolition and construction debris at the landfill, and final removal and off site disposal of all remaining hazardous and regulated wastes.



### Installation Property

The Air Force currently owns about 400 acres of property at the Big Mountain site. Property parcels are mainly divided between the Upper and Lower Camp areas and the intervening roadways, including the road that leads from the Lower Camp to the barge landing site at Reindeer Bay (Figure 3).



The State of Alaska owns most of the land surrounding the Big Mountain property. The University of Alaska currently owns the barge landing site at Reindeer Bay, property formerly owned by the Air Force and later transferred to others.

The installation is mainly accessible via helicopter or via the privately-owned barge landing on the lake. A gravel airstrip is located at the Lower Camp but is not certified for use by the Air Force except for rotary wing aircraft.



### Surrounding Area

Southwestern Alaska is an area of incredible scenery and abundant wildlife. Lake Iliamna is Alaska's

largest lake, with more than 5,000 square miles of freshwater, in a region of spectacular natural beauty. The Air Force is committed to restoration of the property and preservation of the region's resources.

The areas around Big Mountain and Lake Iliamna are prime subsistence habitat, and home to nine commercially important fish species (i.e. northern pike, lake trout, rainbow trout, arctic grayling, and seasonal runs of King, Coho, Sockeye, Chum, Pink Salmon, and Dolly Varden).

### On-Site Contractors

Iliamna Lake Contractors (ILC) has been selected as the prime contractor for both phases of the Big Mountain Clean Sweep project. ILC is a licensed and bonded construction company owned by the Iguigig Tribal Council. The award of this project to ILC will create economic opportunity in the region.

### Site Visitors

Many local people have expressed an interest in visiting the site during summer construction activities. The Air

Force welcomes community interest in this project and will attempt to accommodate people wishing to visit the Big Mountain site while Phase 1 work activities are underway. As an active construction site, there are numerous potential safety hazards for site workers as well as site visitors. For this reason, advance notification and prior arrangements to visit the site are required.

Air Force Community Relations Coordinator toll free at 800-222-4137.



### **Air Force Clean Sweep Program**

The Clean Sweep Program combines Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)-governed remediation, along with non-CERCLA building demolition and debris removal. The program is the initial step in performing the complete restoration of the property to allow for the eventual transfer to others.

### **Public Meetings**

Two Public Meetings are planned to coincide with the distribution of this newsletter. A public meeting will be held in Kokhanok on June 4, 2003, at 3:00 pm at the Kokhanok Dog Musers Club. A second public will be held on June 4, 2003 at 7:00 pm in Iliamna at the Iliamna Village Council Center.

The Air Force has worked with ADEC and regional communities in planning for the Big Mountain Clean Sweep effort. The Air Force invites interested residents to attend either of these meetings to discuss project activities.

If you would like more information about this project, please contact the

If you would like more information about Big Mountain Air Force activities, contact an Air Force or ADEC representative at the following addresses:

Air Force Project Manager (Michael Rhoads) at 907-552-4490 or email at [mike.rhoads@elmendorf.af.mil](mailto:mike.rhoads@elmendorf.af.mil)

Air Force Community Relations Coordinator (Steve Wilhelmi) at 907-552-8166 or email at [steven.wilhelmi@elmendorf.af.mil](mailto:steven.wilhelmi@elmendorf.af.mil)

ADEC representative (Gretchen Pikul) at 907-269-3077 or email at [gretchen\\_pikul@dec.state.ak.us](mailto:gretchen_pikul@dec.state.ak.us)

**Air Force Community Relations Toll Free Number: 800-222-4137**