



Pribilof Islands Site Summary Update – January 2002

Site Description

The Pribilof Islands have been under federal government management, most recently by NOAA, since the early 1900's. The land is in the process of being transferred to the native corporations and other private entities. However, several landfills, disposal sites and other contaminated areas have not been properly investigated, cleaned up or closed out on the islands.

There are 31 such sites identified on St. George Island and 17 on St. Paul. These areas need to be cleaned up to ensure protection of human health, safety, welfare and the environment. Cleanup is also required to facilitate the land transfers to local entities. DEC and NOAA entered into a two-party environmental compliance agreement in January 1996. It calls for investigating and cleaning up contamination that has resulted from the federal government's past operations and management of the islands.

Threats and Contaminants

Groundwater is contaminated with petroleum compounds. Fuel has been discharged or released into the environment from leaking pipelines or underground storage tanks.

Public Health and Environmental Concerns

People may be exposed to pollutants through dermal contact or accidental ingestion of contaminated soil or water. Contaminants may have bioaccumulated in fish and other wildlife, which may pose a threat to humans.

Response Actions

- In the mid-80's, the Corps of Engineers conducted a major drum/debris cleanup in the Pribilofs under the Formerly Used Defense Site program. However, there is little documentation on adequacy of the cleanup and more cleanup is needed in these areas based on NOAA's initial site investigation work conducted in 2000.
- Diesel fuel has been seeping into Salt Lagoon on St. Paul. In 1995, NOAA excavated approximately

9,000 cubic yards of fuel contaminated soil, which is currently undergoing thermal vapor extraction. Petroleum sheen still discharges into the lagoon and more work is needed.

- Numerous underground storage tanks have been removed from both islands and several thousand cubic yards of fuel contaminated soil are in the process of being treated via thermal vapor extraction.
- The Coast Guard is removing fuel from the water table beneath its facility on St. Paul Island.

Current Status

- NOAA continues to have difficulties meeting its funding obligations under the compliance agreement, but is taking active steps to get the plans and fieldwork back on track.
- In 2000, Telegraph Hill groundwater investigation discovered low levels of diesel contamination in the groundwater and petroleum contaminated soil.
- In 2000, the Vehicle Boneyard groundwater investigation found high levels of diesel contamination in the groundwater.
- St. Paul Island's landfill is at capacity and requires the community identify an alternative area for solid waste disposal. St. George Island's landfill is to be replaced as well pending federal funding in 2002-2004.
- In 2000, an interim removal action of 45 drums at the St. Paul landfill documented soil contamination associated with the drums. Additionally, some of the drums had visible markings that showed the Department of the Navy was the original owner of these drums.
- NOAA has agreed to readdress the remedy at the St. Paul Island Diesel Seep site at the Salt Lagoon. Additional characterization showed the soils,

sediments, groundwater contamination is much more extensive than previously thought.

- The St. George Island Baseball/Former Landfill will be reevaluated due to new information showing diesel fuel contaminated groundwater.
- Further site characterization and cleanup work will be scheduled for year 2002 and beyond.