



PRIBILOF ISLANDS-ST. GEORGE AND ST. PAUL

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation • Division of Spill Prevention and Response

Site Description

The Pribilof Islands have been under federal government management, most recently NOAA, since the early 1900's. The land is in the process of being transferred to the native corporations and others. 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.

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 NOAA's past operations and management of the islands.

Threats and Contaminants

Petroleum is the primary contaminant that has been found in soil and groundwater. However, there are unpermitted active dumps present on both islands, which do not meet current standards. These are in the process of being closed and new permitted landfills will be built to replace them.

Public Health and Environmental Concerns

The Pribilof Islands have no fresh water supply source other than a single groundwater aquifer, which is recharged by precipitation. Protecting the drinking source and natural resources (e.g. fur seal rookeries) from adverse impacts of contaminants is a significant community concern.

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. Thousands of drums, other

solid wastes and some contaminated soil were placed in landfills on the islands. However, there is little documentation on adequacy of the cleanup and questions remain as to whether more cleanup is needed in these areas.

- 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 stockpiled pending treatment. Sheen still discharges into the lagoon and more work is needed.
- Numerous underground storage tanks have been removed from the islands and several thousand cubic yards of fuel contaminated soil are stockpiled for treatment.
- The Coast Guard is removing fuel from the water table beneath its facility on St. Paul Island.

Current Status

- NOAA has had past difficulties meeting its obligations under the compliance agreement, but is taking active steps to get the plans and fieldwork back on track.
- DEC is working with the Corps of Engineers and NOAA to ensure that sites where they share responsibility are adequately addressed.
- Further site characterization and cleanup work, including treating the contaminated soil stockpiles, is scheduled for year 2000 and beyond.

Pribilof Islands-St. George And St. Paul

- Landfill closures and new landfills are being planned and coordinated between the agencies and residents.

The USCG is continuing soil and groundwater cleanup at their facility on St. Paul.