DECLARATION OF PROJECT CLOSURE DECISION
for
DEFENSE ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION PROGRAM
FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITE
GERSTLE RIVER EXPANSION AREA, ORDNANCE SITES
NEAR DELTA JUNCTION, ALASKA
FUDS Property #: F10AK098404

STATEMENT OF BASIS

Authority for the Defense Environmental Restoration Program for Formerly Used Defense Sites (DERP-FUDS) projects is derived from the Defense Environmental Restoration Program, 10 United States Code 2701-2707. The decision to closeout this Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP)/Chemical Warfare Material (CWM) project is based on the results of numerous site cleanups, records searches, site visits, geophysical investigations and verification sampling actions conducted between 1968 and 2010. The Updated Final Closeout Report, Gerstle River Expansion Area, Ordnance Sites dated December 2012 summarizes these activities.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

The Gerstle River Expansion Area (GREA) is located in the interior of Alaska at approximately latitude 63 degrees, 50 minutes north and longitude 145 degrees, 15 minutes west. It is 230 air miles northeast of Anchorage and 20 air miles southeast of Delta Junction along the southern side of the Alaska Highway. The GREA is composed of approximately 80,000 acres and surrounds the Gerstle River Test Site (GRTS), a parcel of land still under US Army ownership. The site is still accessible by a fairly extensive road system constructed during development of the GRTS in the 1950s, and used for the Army testing program that occurred from 1964 through 1967.

The MMRP/CWM project at the GREA includes 5 potential sites of concern: Registration Areas 9E and 10N, and Test Grids 9, 10, and 11. The two registration areas were used for test firing/warm up of the artillery prior to test firing of CWM into the test grids. The registration areas potentially contain hazards from unexploded ordnance (UXO). The three test grids were historically used for testing of chemical weapons. The test grids potentially contain hazards from both the chemical weapons ordnance and from any residual contamination caused by the chemical agent (CA) or agent breakdown products (ABP).

DESCRIPTION OF THE SELECTED REMEDY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Registration Areas 9E and 10N

To investigate the potential hazards posed by UXO, records searches, site visits, and site investigations were conducted at both registration areas. Geophysical surveys using electromagnetic and magnetometer instruments, with follow-up intrusive investigation of selected geophysical anomalies, were conducted across each area. Each area contained numerous munitions related fragments, as well as some non-munitions related metallic

anomalies (cans, barbed wire, etc.). No UXO was found at either area. The information gathered during the investigations confirmed that both sites were used for registration of artillery using conventional high explosive rounds. However, based on the negative findings from the investigation and historic accounts indicating limited use of the area, it is highly unlikely that UXO are present at Registration Areas 9E and 10N. Registration Areas 9E and 10N are therefore recommended for No Further Department of Defense Action Indicated (NDAI).

Test Grid 9, 10, and 11

To investigate the potential hazards posed by UXO or CWM, records searches, site visits, and site investigations were conducted at all three test grids. Cleanup operations were conducted in 1970 to remove material from the test grids, command posts, and refuse pits. A thorough review of CWM testing records identified four individual rounds that had their "burst height" recorded as "unknown" in the CWM test log. To address this issue, interviews were conducted with the test personnel that were present at the time and they explained that "unknown" only meant that they could not determine the height of the burst due to tree damage from previous tests. Geophysical surveys using electromagnetic and magnetometer instruments, with follow-up intrusive investigation of selected geophysical anomalies, were conducted across each area to ensure that UXO or CWM did not remain at the test grids. Each area contained numerous munitions related fragments, as well as some non-munitions related metallic anomalies (cans, barbed wire, etc.). No UXO or CWM were found at either area. The information gathered during the investigations confirmed that all three test grids were used for the testing of explosively configured CWM. Therefore, based on the negative findings of the investigation and historical records accounting for each round tested in the test grids, it highly unlikely that UXO or CWM are present at Test Grids 9, 10, or 11.

To investigate the potential hazards posed by CA and ABP, soil samples were collected in 2010 to confirm the absence of CA and ABP. All sample results were non-detect for all analytes. The results demonstrate there are no CA or ABP present at these sites at levels that would pose a risk to human health, public safety or the environment.

Based on the information gathered during the archive records search, interviews with test site personnel, geophysical surveys/anomaly investigation, and soil sampling for CA and ABP, Test Grids 9, 10 and 11 are recommended for NDAI.

DECLARATION

In accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA) and the Defense Environmental Restoration Program for Formerly Used Defense Sites, the U.S. Army Engineer District, Alaska, has completed all activities required to support a closure determination at the Gerstle River Expansion Area, Ordnance Sites, Near Delta Junction, Alaska.

The accompanying Updated Final Closure Report supports the conclusion that all known hazards have been investigated. Based on site investigations/characterization no release has been discovered that poses a significant threat to public health, safety or the environment and no further DOD action is required at these sites.

This decision may be reviewed and modified in the future if information becomes available which indicates the presence of contamination or exposure routes that may cause a significant threat to public health, safety or the environment.

This project closure document has been prepared and approved by the undersigned in accordance with the FUDS Program Policy, ER 200-3-1, 10 May 2004.

Date 19 FEB 2013

Christopher D. Lestochi
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander

REVIEW AND CONCURRENCE

The State of Alaska, through the Department of Environmental Conservation, agrees this project closure for the Gerstle River Expansion Area, Ordnance Sites is consistent with state cleanup requirements. The decision may be reviewed and modified in the future if information becomes available that indicates the presence of waste that may cause unacceptable risk to human health or the environment.

_____ Date 3/28/2013

John Halverson
Department of Defense Environmental Program Manager

POA STAFF ACTION SUMMARY	1. CONTROL# PM-13-017	2. Suspense 2013-02-28
		3. Today's Date 2013-01-31

4. Subject Gerstle River - Declaration of Project Closure - Ordnance Sites

5. Office Symbol	6. Action Officer	7. Telephone #	8. E-mail
CEPOA-PM-ESP	Richard Ragle	(907) 753-2683	Richard.A.Ragle@usace.army.mil

COORDINATION

9. Division	10. Name	11. Concur/Nonconcur	12. Comments	13. Date
8 DC	COL Lestochi	–	SIGNED BUT MAKE	
7 DDC	LTC James R. Stone	–	SURE ~~AT~~ SIGNATURE	16/26/13
6 DPM	Dr. McCallister	–	BLOCK SAYS	15 Feb 13
– EA		–	"U.S. ARMY CORPS OF	ENGINEERS"
– EN		–		
– CO		–		

14. Routing	☒ DC	☒ DDC	☐ DPM	☐ EN	☐ CO

15. For:	Information ☐	Read-Ahead ☐	Decision ☐	Approval ☐	Signature ☒

16. PURPOSE/BOTTOM LINE/DISCUSSION:

1. PURPOSE: Obtain Commander's approval and signature of Declaration of Project Closeout Decision and No Department of Defense Action Indicated Report.

2. BOTTOM LINE: All Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP) response actions for this property have been completed.

3. DISCUSSION: The decision to closeout this MMRP project is based on the results of remedial actions conducted between 1968 and 2010. ADEC has concurred that the work is complete and the project can be closed out. The Closeout Decision and Report were formerly signed by USACE in 2006, further work was requested by ADEC. That work has been completed and described in the Updated Final Closeout Report dated December 2012.

4. RESOURCE IMPACT: n/a

5. ROUTING: Routing for the Commander will be done through PM-ESP Branch Chief, OC, PA, DPM and DDC.

17. Releaser: Clare L. Jaeger, Branch Chief Clare L Jaeger 2/12/13

18. Recommendation: DC to sign enclosed Declaration of Closure.

19. Action:	Approved ☐	See Me ☐	Other ☐

COORDINATION (cont.)				
20. Division	21. Name	22. Concur/Nonconcur	23. Comments	24. Date
4 OC	Stolzman	–		14 Feb 13
– RM		–		
– CT		–		
– RE		–		
– RD		–		
– LM		–		
– IR		–		
– SO		–		
– SEC		–		
– PAO		–		
– SB		–		
– EEO		–		
– CPAC		–		
– IM		–		
5 PA	Findtner	–		15 Feb 13
3 PM-ESP	Jaeger	–		2/12/13
2 FUDS	Andraschko	–	corrections made	2/12/13
1 EN-EE	Geist	–	concur	1/31/2013
Misc. Offices		–		
Misc. Offices		–		
Misc. Offices		–		
Misc. Offices		–		
Misc. Offices		–		
Misc. Offices		–		