

FACT SHEET

APVR-DE-PSE/Env Res Br
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6 February 1990

1. SUBJECT: Update on Eagle River Flats/Poleline Road Contaminated Site Studies.

2. FACTS:

a. The 1989 Eagle River Flats study conducted by Hunter ESE under administration of USATHAMA has, as of this date, produced no conclusive results or findings as to the cause of the waterfowl mortality in the impact area.

b. Some of the analytical results have still not been received and the final report which was originally due this month will not be available until April, according to USATHAMA.

c. In anticipation of all this, the Eagle River Flats Task Force decided it should come up with a contingency plan immediately as the spring waterfowl migration would be upon us before the USATHAMA final report was available.

d. A letter was sent from the Garrison Commander to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Regional Director asking for assistance in developing a plan for 1990 based on the assumption that the 1989 study failed to identify the problem (enclosure 1). In addition, a letter was sent to USATHAMA containing a number of questions brought up by Task Force members at their last meeting on 8 November 1989 (enclosure 2). Answers to these questions have not yet been received.

e. In response to the Garrison Commander's letter, the USFWS Regional Director assembled a team of biologists and toxicologists from both his local and Washington, D.C. offices to develop a study plan for 1990: Unlike the previous study which was heavily concentrated on fieldwork and administrative labor costs (\$527,556) as opposed to actual laboratory analysis (\$168,582) the USFWS study plan proposes less fieldwork and administrative effort (approximately \$197,015) with major emphasis on actual analysis (approximately \$617,620). Total costs for last year's effort, as of 16 October 1989, was \$696,138 plus approximately \$75,000 in donated manpower and equipment support from this Command (totalling \$703,638). Preliminary and final report preparation costs may bring this figure closer to \$800,000 for the FY 89 study. The estimated cost for the USFWS FY 90 study is approximately \$615,000.

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f. From a technical aspect, the USEWS Study Plan takes a more rudimentary approach in its attempt to isolate and identify the chemical components of Eagle River Flats water and sediment. Instead of looking for specific or limited suites of chemicals in the samples, the plan proposes to test for just about everything possible using the most sophisticated analysis methods available.

g. Due to the complex, technical and highly integrated nature of the study, the USEWS recommends the majority of the analytical work be handled by a private consultant. The chemical isolation/identification process requires expertise the USEWS does not employ in Alaska, nor is it readily available in any of their facilities elsewhere. They are, however, open to further discussions with the Command concerning the performance of certain identified tasks, particularly Sample Collection, Microtox and Bird Utilization.

h. In recent discussions with Mr. Ali Alavi of USATHAMA it was stated that 1990 DERA funding for Eagle River Flats work was highly unlikely due to the following:

(1) A significant increase in competition for DERA funds nationwide.

(2) Substantial budget cuts for FY 90 (\$206 million reduced to \$175 million).

(3) The feeling that they (USATHAMA) have exhausted all their technical expertise during the 1989 study and do not know what else they can do.

(4) The Eagle River Flats project is technically ineligible for DERA funding due to its active use as an impact area.

(5) The hazard presented by the Eagle River Flats situation (i.e., health risks) is considered low by USATHAMA standards.

According to USATHAMA the Eagle River Flats project only received funding because of the local publicity it was generating. They have indicated that they have no intention of managing any future work on Eagle River Flats and are reluctant to supply additional funding.

i. The Eagle River Flats Task Force was informed at their last meeting (8 November 1989) that USATHAMA had set aside \$500,000 for FY 90 Eagle River Flats studies. They now say that under the new circumstances, they are diverting that money toward the investigation of the recently discovered Poleline Road contaminated site.

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j. The Poleline Road contaminated site was brought to the Command's attention in fall 1989 by Mr. Floyd C. Fruik (a former soldier on Fort Richardson during the early 1950s) and later confirmed by old photographs and maps obtained from the Corps of Engineers.

k. The scope of work for the Poleline Road contaminated site study has just been completed and the estimated costs are approximately \$300,000.

3. ACTION TAKEN.

a. This Command has been an active member of the investigative task force and has contributed significantly toward the entire effort. During the 1989 study, it provided the contractor, free of charge, with almost 100% of their logistical needs in the field to include helicopter and vehicle support, use of canoes, tent, and snowshoes. In addition, a significant amount of manpower support was provided by the Garrison Commander, DEH Environmental Resources, Aviation Office, Safety Office, and EOD.

b. Training schedules were manipulated and modified to accommodate the study.

c. The Garrison Commander provided the task force contractor and USATHAMA with all available information regarding the chemical composition of munitions being fired into Eagle River Flats.

d. Flexibility and concern for the resources has been, and continues to be, demonstrated by this Command as firing activities in the Eagle River Flats were again curtailed when Tundra and Trumpeter Swans gathered on the Flats prior to migrating south. This cease-fire occurs annually when swans are present in large concentrations in accordance with current Army policy.

4. ACTION REQUIRED.

a. Review and evaluate all aspects of the completed study performed by Hunter ESE to include the following:

- (1) Objectives met.

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- (2) Contractor's performance.
- (3) Interpretation of data.
- (4) Quality of results (lab and field).
- (5) Efficient expenditure of public monies.
- (6) Conclusions reached.

b. Resolve essential actions which are pivotal to the continuance of FY 90/91 follow-on study:

- (1) Ratify the study plan.
- (2) Determine who funds the study.

2 Encls

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