



# Adak Naval Air Station

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

### Site Description

Adak Naval Air Station occupies approximately 76,800 acres on Adak Island and is part of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. The southern half of Adak Island is also a federal wilderness area. The base was added to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) National Priority List in 1994. In 1997, the base was closed under the Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC).

There are currently about 300 people on the island, including operations and maintenance contractors as well as private fish processor and refueling station workers. Base re-use, including land transfer to the Aleuts, is an ongoing issue.

### Threats and Contaminants

Approximately 58 chemical- and 128 petroleum-contaminated sites have been identified under Operable Unit (OU)-A at Adak. Contaminants include petroleum, metals, pesticides, and volatile organic compounds. Contamination has been identified in soil, surface water, sediment, and as free product on the groundwater. Drum disposal areas, spill sites, pits for waste oil disposal/fire-fighting training, and several landfills make up the majority of chemical and petroleum contaminant sources on the island.

Additionally, over 200 potential unexploded ordnance (UXO) sites have been identified under Adak's OU-B. This contamination is primarily a result of WWII munitions storage, handling and training.

### Public Health and Environmental Concerns

Surface waters in the area are used for sport, subsistence, and commercial fishing. Personnel may be exposed to contaminants through dermal contact or accidental ingestion of contaminated soil or water. Exposure could also occur through ingestion of fish or shellfish that may have been affected by the site. Threatened ecological resources include migratory birds, wetlands, spawning and feeding fish, and various marine mammals.

### Response Actions

- (Remedial Agreements) In 1990, the Navy and EPA signed a Federal Facilities Compliance Agreement to govern corrective action at hazardous waste sites. In 1993, the Navy, EPA, and DEC signed a Federal Facilities Agreement to establish a procedural framework and schedule for CERCLA response

actions. In 1994, Navy and DEC signed agreements for investigation and remediation of petroleum release sites and storage tank assessments/upgrades.

- Since 1989, the Navy has removed hundreds of underground storage tanks, closed miles of fuel pipelines, and cleaned associated fuel-contaminated soil.
- A 1996 preliminary screening evaluation and a 1997 remedial investigation and feasibility study were conducted to assess the risks to human health and the environment. This assessment resulted in an island-wide remedial program that included free product recovery and groundwater monitoring systems, sludge lagoon remediation, sediment removal and treatment, landfill restoration, and institutional controls to minimize the potential for exposure to contamination.
- In the late 1990s, extensive UXO removal actions were conducted in the downtown Adak area.

### Current Status

- The Record of Decision for OU-A site remediation was signed by the Navy in October 1999 and is expected to be signed soon by the EPA and ADEC, pending final community input. Comprehensive site monitoring of natural attenuation and maintenance of institutional controls are important long term activities.
- Investigation processes and risk decisions for OU-B are still under development in a formal dispute resolution process between the Navy, EPA, and ADEC. The process parallels the CERCLA cleanup approach.