



Environmental Restoration News

U.S. Army Alaska

Fort Wainwright

Former Communications Site Update

Spring 2009

Summary

The Fort Wainwright FCS (often referred to as Taku Gardens) is a new housing construction project intended to provide housing for enlisted personnel and their families. The discovery of PCB contamination in 2005 caused the U.S. Army Garrison, Alaska (USAG-AK), EPA, and ADEC to complete an intensive area-wide investigation in order to determine the nature and extent of all potential contamination and potentially hazardous debris. Until the Army, EPA, and ADEC agree there are no unacceptable risks, the housing will remain unoccupied. This newsletter is intended to provide you with information about the status of the project and plans for the future.

Site History

The Fort Wainwright FCS is a 54-acre site located between Alder and Neely Roads, east of White Street and west of the Fort Wainwright Power Plant. The U.S. military has occupied the general area of the FCS for over 60 years and during this time a wide variety of land uses occurred in various areas of the project site.

Between the late 1940s and late 1950s, base disposal and salvage occurred in several areas of the site. Some activities were probably associated with dumping into a slough of a historical river channel located on the site. Unusable military equipment and hardware used by both the Army and USAF was discarded and buried within the FCS during this period.

Housing built for the arrival of the 3rd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, also occupied a portion of the site from 1951 to 1956. The regiment's motor pool probably also contributed to improper disposal of unusable parts.

In July 2005, during housing construction, environmental concern was raised when the detection of an odor, led to soil being analyzed and

confirmed to be contaminated with PCBs, was noted during excavation for foundations in the southwest corner of the site. All construction activities were suspended until environmental sampling could determine the exact cause and level of PCB contamination. On 8 August 2005, EPA and ADEC were notified of the findings and continue to be actively involved in the FCS environmental project.

Glossary of Terms

ADEC	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
EM	electromagnetic
FCS	Former Communications Site
GPS	global positioning system
PCB	polychlorinated biphenyl
RI	remedial investigation
USAF	U.S. Air Force



Previous Site Activities

Year(s)	Events
2005	<p>While excavating for foundations in the southwestern corner of the housing area, an odor was detected by workers. The excavation ceased and environmental sampling was conducted. When high levels of PCBs were identified, EPA and ADEC were notified. The area was restricted, and the PCB contaminated soil was disposed of in an approved offsite location.</p> <p>The entire site was restricted and enclosed in a chain link fence. Fifty-five houses were completed. Ten houses were halted with unfinished foundations.</p>
2005/2006	<p>A thorough review was conducted of the historical uses of the area. Field notes and photographs taken during construction were evaluated. During construction, it was noted that many areas contained metal debris, old drums, and stained soils.</p> <p>The Army, in conjunction with EPA and ADEC, developed a Management Plan in accordance with CERCLA to investigate contamination and evaluate the health and safety risks and safety for future residents.</p>
2006 thru 2008	<p>In accordance with approved work plans, an RI was conducted. All contamination and debris encountered during the RI were removed and disposed of in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.</p> <p>Based on information collected with EM61 surveys, subsurface soils and groundwater were investigated. Debris, drums, munitions debris, and contaminated soil were removed and properly disposed of as investigation-derived waste to prevent future groundwater contamination and to reduce health and safety risks for future residents of the development.</p> <p>Groundwater, soil, and air were checked for contamination by one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eighty-one monitoring wells were installed and sampled to characterize groundwater and calculate future risks. • Soil gas and indoor air monitoring of houses was conducted to study possible impacts to future residents. • >1,000 soil samples collected throughout the site at both the surface and subsurface. <p>Investigation-derived waste was removed and properly disposed of including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • > 3,000 cubic yards of PCB-contaminated soil • > 300 tons of metallic debris • > 2,500 munitions related debris • > 5,000 cubic yards of petroleum-, pesticide-, and metal-contaminated soil • > 9 cubic yards of items containing asbestos • > 1,000 drums (~ 5 with liquid contents)
2009	Sitework will continue as needed to complete site activities.

The RI main areas of investigation are shown on page 3.

EM-61 MAPPING

One of the investigation approaches used at the FCS was the use of geophysics. An EM-61 was used to identify areas with buried metallic anomalies. This instrument is a metal detector equipped with GPS mapping to aid with locating the anomalies.

Current Site Status

The planned investigative fieldwork is completed. The Draft RI/Baseline Risk Assessment Report has been written for submittal to agency project managers for review. In addition, currently:

- Army is finishing 2008 planned work as needed to complete site activities. Work includes excavation backfill operations, completing test pits to accommodate street light installations, and housekeeping duties to include dust control and drainage.
- Groundwater evaluation will continue with another series of sampling and analysis.
- Existing institutional controls will be enforced.

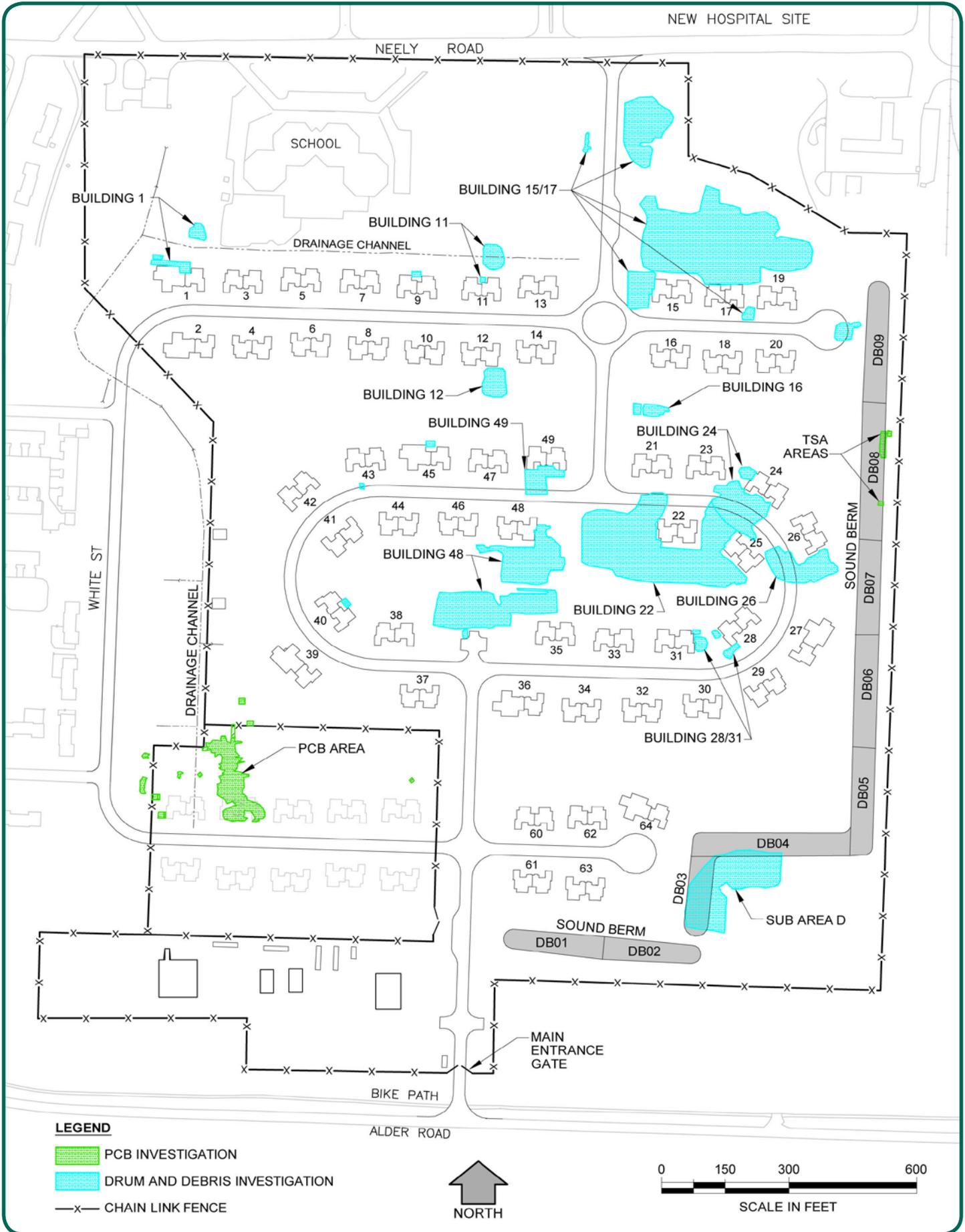
Future Actions

The Army, with EPA and ADEC, will develop a list of remedial actions that address any remaining risks and safety hazards identified in the risk assessment.

A Proposed Plan identifying future planned actions will be written and presented to the public for comment.

A Record of Decision will be completed by the Army for review and approval by EPA and ADEC. This Record of Decision will document past actions, identify safety and health risks, and explain remedial actions and institutional controls at the site.

REMEDIAL INVESTIGATION AREAS OF EXCAVATION



Contact Information

Please feel free to call Joseph Malen or David Beistel if you have questions about this project. All documents, when finalized, will become part of the Administrative Record for the FCS. These documents will be made available to the public on CDs at the Noel Wein and Fort Wainwright libraries; hard copies will be available for viewing at the Fort Wainwright Environmental Offices, Building 3023, Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

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