



FACT SHEET

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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August 2024

Subject: Fort Babcock Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS)
Kruzof Island, Alaska.

Introduction

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) – Alaska District completed an environmental remedial investigation, feasibility study, and decision document for the Fort Babcock Formerly Used Defense Site located on Kruzof Island, Alaska. USACE has assessed the risk to human health and the environment resulting from past military activities and determined the remedy for the site.



Remedial Investigation Activities

Site Background

Fort Babcock is located approximately 11 miles west of Sitka across Sitka Sound at Shoals Point on Kruzof Island. During World War II the United States Army was commissioned to build several coastal six-inch gun artillery batteries in the Sitka area to support the Sitka Naval Operating Base (SNOB) as part of the U.S. Army Coastal Defenses. The U.S. War Department acquired 4,070 acres on Kruzof Island for Fort Babcock in 1941. The Army planned for one six-inch gun battery and several support facilities to be constructed. Construction began but stopped in 1944 when the SNOB was decommissioned. Battery 290, composed of concrete, was partially completed at Fort Babcock, but the six-inch guns were never installed. Other structures were completed before the site was abandoned by the Army in 1944 including a construction camp, living quarters, a power plant, a pump house and associated water line, and the Lava Point Base End Station and observation tower. The site is currently part of Tongass National Forest, under jurisdiction of the United States Forest Service (USFS).

Previous Investigations

A 1995 USACE site inspection identified soil contaminated with diesel fuel at an above ground storage tank (AST) near the former dock. A Department of Defense Phase I environmental assessment completed in 2003 inventoried debris and identified the AST as a potential source of contamination. The 2010 site inspection by USACE determined a remedial investigation and feasibility study were appropriate to determine potential actions to identify and address FUDS-eligible risks to human health and the environment. A Phase I remedial investigation was conducted in 2012 and confirmed petroleum contamination in the Fuel Storage Area located in the vicinity of the AST. A Phase II remedial investigation was performed in 2013 to address data gaps from the 2012 remedial investigation and to determine if contaminants were present at additional features identified on historic Fort Babcock engineering drawings. The results of the remedial investigation identified one area with polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contamination above federal cleanup levels, and two areas with petroleum contamination containing diesel range organics (DRO) and residual range organics or (RRO) exceeding site-specific alternative state cleanup levels.

Feasibility Study and Decision Document

A feasibility study was completed in 2018 that developed and evaluated remediation alternatives. A proposed plan containing the preferred remedy was made available for public review and comment and was subsequently completed in October 2019. The content of the proposed plan was presented during a public meeting in Sitka, Alaska on Nov 7, 2019. A Responsiveness Summary was completed that included responses to comments received during the public comment period. The Decision Document was completed in August 2021. The selected remedy is excavation with offsite disposal of soil contaminated with PCBs and petroleum.

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS – ALASKA DISTRICT

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Remedial Action

USACE awarded a contract in 2022 to implement the remedy from the 2021 Decision Document. Two eagle nest surveys and planning documents were completed from 2022 to 2024. On-site preparations for the remedial action field work will begin in Fall 2024 that include creating an access point from the beach, clearing an area for a field camp and laydown area, and clearing the former military road. The remedial action will include excavation of PCB and POL contaminated soil, placing the soil in large bags, and shipping the soil offsite by barge for disposal at a permitted landfill in Oregon. The Forest Service requires that cleared areas are restored back to the condition they were in prior to the remedial action to the extent practical by re-seeding and spreading felled trees over cleared areas and the military road. The soil excavation, offsite disposal, and site restoration activities are planned to take place during the summer of 2025.

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