

Former South-Bank Dumpsite ACTION PLAN



Alakanuk, Alaska

Prepared by

Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council
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March 2011



INTRODUCTION

In April 2010, the Native Village Alakanuk applied for an Environmental Site Assessment of the Former South-Bank Dumpsite through the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council (YRITWC) Brownfields Program. Based on the hazards posed to human health and the environment, this site was ranked as a top priority and selected to receive an *Environmental Management Plan (EMP)* and this *Action Plan*.

The EPA defines a brownfield as ‘real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant.’

The information contained in this Plan is based on the EMP, communication with the Native Village of Alakanuk Environmental Department, interviews with local residents, and communication with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Brownfield State Response Program.

PURPOSE

This document is an Action Plan, with the general purpose of providing the Alakanuk community with relevant information to inform future decisions regarding the Former South-Bank Dumpsite. This document will provide site-specific background information, summarize major findings of the Environmental Management Plan, outline future recommended actions, and identify potential funding opportunities.

Sections in this Action Plan include:

1. Site Description
2. Environmental Management Plan Findings
3. Recommended Actions
4. Potential Funding Opportunities

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

In April 2010, Native Village of Alakanuk applied for an Environmental Management Plan with YRITWC for an assessment of the Former South-Bank Dumpsite. YRITWC hired NORTECH Environmental Engineering & Industrial Hygiene Consultants to complete the work, and travelled with two of its professionals on August 26, 2010 to participate in the EMP.

The site inspection confirmed both the condition of the Dumpsite as well as the continued use of the Dumpsite area as a boat landing by local residents. The solid waste is generally continuous over approximately 50 feet of river bank and solid waste mixed with fill material may be present for up to 10 feet on either side. Most of the solid waste appears to be construction debris such as rubber sheeting, plastic sheeting, plastic bags, metal roofing/siding, wire/cable, and other non-degradable items. While previous reports have documented the potential presence and removal of lead-acid batteries and other potentially hazardous debris, none were visible on the surface of the solid waste at the time of this site inspection. Some newer waste materials, such as food wrappers and beverage containers, were also observed and appear to either be recent litter and/or deposited from the river.

The potential extent of the solid waste into the bank was discussed with Mr. Oney. Existing reports suggest that the buried debris extends less than 20 feet from the active bank face. A scrap section of arctic pipe was observed sticking out of the ground in some vegetation back from the bank, suggesting that the debris may extend at least 30 or 40 feet. The depth of the solid waste could not be confirmed because of the silt load of the water. However, Mr. Oney indicated that the groundwater elevation is generally similar to the water elevation at the bank. Excavation into the water table in this area is difficult because the sidewalls collapse into the excavation once water is encountered. Based on this, the depth of the solid waste is most likely not much deeper than the low water level observed during the winter months. The area continues to be used as a landing location for private boats. These boats are reported to be used by individuals/families that live nearby. This is consistent with river bank usage around Alakanuk in general, particularly in areas where erosion or accretion has resulted in a beach or other reasonable access point for a boat. While the Dumpsite itself is currently in a location with bank erosion, areas within a few hundred feet upstream and downstream are accreting, which makes the whole area more attractive for subsistence uses, particularly processing of fish and animals brought in by boat.

In 2006, International Consulting & Engineering completed a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (*Phase I Environmental Assessment Alakanuk BIA Dumpsite, South Bank Alakanuk, Alaska*) of the site. A summary of environmental information and findings from this report included:

- Observations made during the site visit support the information provided by residents that a dumpsite is located on the site
- Hazardous materials were not observed during the site visit but likely exist
- Materials are entering the Yukon River because of erosion
- The area and depth of the dumpsite should be defined
- The material/waste should be classified and removed

In 2007, Oasis Environmental completed a Reuse & Redevelopment Initiative Brownfield Assessment for the site (*Former South-Bank Dumpsite Environmental Audit and Inventory*) that is dated January 2008. A summary of environmental information and findings from this report included:

- The site was originally developed as a dumpsite by contractors during construction of the Alakanuk High School between 1974 and 1975.
- Other businesses, including a laundromat and elementary school were constructed and wastes from these projects may also have been disposed of on the site.
- Waste is visibly exposed along the bank of the river for approximately 60 feet.
- Waste is strewn along the shore for approximately another 20 to 40 feet.
- Mixed waste, including empty quart bottles and batteries were observed.
- Visible waste consisted of construction-related materials (plastic sheeting, rusted/damaged drums, metal debris, and wood).
- Community concern that the dumpsite affects water quality (includes drinking water and river use).
- Residents come into direct contact with waste during boating activities.
- Erosion and flooding continue to contribute to the overall degradation of the dumpsite.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN FINDINGS (NORTECH)

NORTECH and YRITWC staff gathered information through records review, physical investigation of site, and interviews with community members including Ray Oney – Tribal Administrator for the Native Village of Alakanuk.

In the EMP report produced by NORTECH - which conducted the investigation with YRITWC - findings indicate the potential presence of contamination from materials in the Dumpsite have not been fully documented. Lead-acid batteries and small oil containers have been reported at the site in the past. Rusted drums with no markings have also been reported in the past. Based on construction practices, potential contaminants of concern have been speculated to include petroleum, paint, and urethane foam precursors. Determination of the contaminants of concern will not be possible until the waste material can be inspected following excavation and removal.

3. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

STEP 1: Site Control

- a) Post signs and participate in community meetings to educate the public about the hazards and safety issues of the site.
- b) The area should be blocked off by using caution tape or boards to prevent children from disturbing the soil.

STEP 2: Planning For Clean-Up

- a) Hold a community meeting to determine property reuse goal.
- b) Establish planning committee (city, tribe, individuals, partnering organizations).
- c) Work and meet regularly with planning committee and partnering organizations to develop clean-up plan.
- d) Identify resources:
 - o *Local*: equipment, HAZWOPER trained individuals, and area suitable for soil stockpiling/remediation.
 - o *Regional*: partnering organizations, funding agencies.
 - o *State/Federal*: ADEC and EPA assessment and/or clean-up funding.

STEP 3: Planning For Reuse

- a) Work with planning committee and partnering organizations to develop reuse plan.
- b) Target potential funding agency and participate in application process for funds.

4. POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The EPA Indian General Assistance Program (IGAP) provides an opportunity for tribes to build capacity and management capability to implement environmental programs administered by the U.S. EPA. Under the Program, tribes can tailor capacity-building through an integrated plan that may include financial assistance complemented and/or supplemented with additional assistance through project and program-specific grants.

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/TRIBAL.NSF/Grants/IGAP/>

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/CLEANUP.NSF/sites/bf>

<http://www.epa.gov/swerosps/bf/index.html>

ATTACHMENT: RESOURCE CONTACTS

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