

Former Bureau of Indian Affairs School ACTION PLAN



Emmonak, Alaska

Prepared by

Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council
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INTRODUCTION

In April 2010, Chuloonawick Native Village applied for an Environmental Site Assessment of the Former BIA School building 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 Chuloonawick Native Village 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 Emmonak community with relevant information to inform future decisions regarding the Former BIA School building. 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 2011, Chuloonawick Native Village applied for an Environmental Management Plan with YRITWC for an assessment of the Former BIA School building. YRITWC hired NORTECH Environmental Engineering & Industrial Hygiene Consultants to complete the work, and travelled with two of its professionals on August 25, 2010 to participate in the EMP.

The former BIA School complex was constructed in the 1960s. This facility was used as the primary school in the community until the early 1990s when the Lower Yukon School District (LYSD) constructed a new school approximately 800 feet northeast of the BIA building locations. The teacher housing, bulk petroleum storage tanks, and fuel piping and pumping systems remain in use by the LYSD. The LYSD undertook an asbestos abatement effort in the early 1990s. LYSD transferred ownership of the former main school building to the City of Emmonak. A partial renovation was started in the mid-1990s, but was stopped due to concerns about remaining asbestos containing materials.

No specific use of the area is documented prior to 1964, although it is likely that the riverbank in this area was used for subsistence activities. The Site was developed as the BIA School complex when the current community infrastructure was developed. The BIA operated the facility into the 1970s when the responsibility for education was transferred to the State of Alaska and the LYSD was incorporated. The LYSD used the main school building until 1991 and continues to use several of the nearby buildings that were part of the original BIA School complex.

The main building of the former BIA School complex is no longer in use. The interior and exterior have been extensively vandalized, although the structural elements of the building appear to remain sound. Four of the nearby buildings that were originally part of the BIA School complex remain in use by LYSD as teacher housing. The tank farm and pump house also remain in use by LYSD.

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 Roberta Murphy – Environmental Coordinator for Chuloonawick Native Village.

In the EMP report produced by NORTECH - which conducted the investigation with YRITWC - findings indicate the presence of contamination from petroleum products and asbestos at the subject property for this EMP. The contaminants of concern for the renovation of the building are asbestos within the building materials and petroleum

contamination in the ground beneath and adjacent to the building. Since no lead based paint was observed, building material waste that does not contain asbestos or other specific hazards can be disposed of as standard construction and demolition waste.

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 playing in the abandoned building or disturbing 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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