

---

**Special Project**  
**Adak Update**

---

December 1999

Background Information

# Special Project

# Adak Update

---

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **Naval Air Facility Adak Selected for Closure**

With passage of Public Laws 100-256 and 101-510 in 1988 and 1990, Congress created the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission to provide a fair process that would result in timely closure and realignment (reuse) of military installations.

The former Naval Air Facility (NAF) Adak was selected for closure by the commission in 1995. The military mission of the former Navy base ended in March 1997. Since that time the Navy has been involved in the environmental restoration, cleanup and closure activities that would allow for lease and transfer of Adak to non-federal entities.

### **Laws Governing Military Base Closure**

Several federal laws set the standards and requirements for military base closure. Those laws require environmental restoration and set standards for site cleanup. Adak closure is governed by the Base Closure and Realignment Act (BRAC).

It is also governed by the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), as amended by the Community Environmental Response Facilitation Act (CERFLA), and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) regulations contained in Public Law 18 AAC 75. CERCLA is also known as the Superfund Law.

### **National Priorities List**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) placed NAF Adak on the CERCLA National Priorities List in May 1994. This action made cleanup and restoration of Adak a National Priority and provided funding to help make environmental restoration possible.

### **Federal Agencies Responsible for Base Closure**

The U.S. Navy entered into four different agreements with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation that have governed investigation and cleanup of contaminated areas on Adak. These three agencies have primary responsibility for all closure related decisions made for NAF Adak.

### **Closure and Environmental Restoration Objectives**

The following are the closure and environmental restoration objectives outlined for closure of NAF Adak by the Navy and state and federal regulators:

- Protect human health and the environment;
- Comply with all existing federal and state statutes and regulations;
- Conduct all environmental restoration activities in a manner consistent with federal and State of Alaska cleanup regulations;

- 
- Conduct an environmental baseline survey (EBS) to establish the current environmental condition of the property, supporting its lease or transfer;
  - Establish priorities for environmental restoration and restoration-related one-time compliance activities (so that property disposal and reuse goals can be met);
  - Initiate selected remedial actions to control risks or reduce them to manageable levels;
  - Consider future land use when assessing risks associated with releases of hazardous substances, contaminants, or hazardous wastes;
  - Develop, evaluate, and select remedial actions in a manner consistent with applicable state and federal statutory and regulatory requirements;
  - Commence remedial actions for areas of environmental concern and prioritize actions for areas to allow property disposal and reuse;
  - Advise the Navy Real Estate and BRAC organizations and the community regarding property that is deemed environmentally suitable for reuse and;
  - Establish programs to monitor the efficacy of remedial actions.

## **Environmental Issues for Adak**

The major environmental issues on Adak center around four areas:

- Contamination from hazardous substance;
- Contamination from petroleum;
- Hazards from past use of ordnance and explosives and;
- Solid waste disposal issues.

## **Reuse Issues**

Under the Base Closure and Realignment Act program, the military mission at Naval Air Facility Adak ended on March 31, 1997. The Navy plans to relinquish its use of the military property located on the Northern half of Adak Island to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, a branch of the Department of the Interior.

The Fish and Wildlife Service owns the land and has proposed to transfer approximately 46,000 acres of this property to The Aleut Corporation. The transfer is contingent on approval of the property transfer plan by both the Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board and by the Environmental Protection Agency. Reuse activities are planned for portions of the island that must ultimately be designated as suitable for transfer by these agencies. Further details of the property conveyance remain to be worked out. At present, a petition has been filed with the State of Alaska to form a second class city on Adak.

A decision on this petition is expected in the first quarter of 2000. Congressional action may also be necessary to allow for a land transfer. The proposed property transfer must be approved by the Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board because military activities have resulted in the presence of ordnance and unexploded ordnance (often called UXO) in portions of the property. The Environmental Protection Agency and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation have regulatory oversight for environmental cleanup.

## **Separating Major Environmental Issues**

In agreements between the Navy, EPA and the State of Alaska and in response to community concerns, it was decided it would be best to deal with hazardous substance and petroleum cleanup issues separately from ordnance and unexploded ordnance issues.

---

Two "operable units" were established called Operable Unit A and Operable Unit B. "Operable unit" is a term used to describe an area being addressed as part of the CERCLA process. Operable Unit A covers all hazardous substance and petroleum related issues. Operable Unit B addresses contamination by ordnance and unexploded ordnance. Solid Waste Management Issues are addressed under Operable Unit A.

## **Costs**

As of December 1999 the Navy has spent more than \$160 million for environmental restoration and compliance on Adak. In 1999 the budget for restoration activities was nearly \$33 million.

The projected budget for 2000 is \$8.6 million.

\$7.4 million is projected for 2001.

\$6 million/year is projected for 2002-2006.

## **Finding for Suitability for Transfer**

Once environmental restoration and property reuse issues can be resolved, a finding for suitability for transfer will be made.

## **Where to Get Information**

INFOLINE: 1-800-360-1561

WEB SITE: [www.adakupdate.com](http://www.adakupdate.com)

University of Alaska Anchorage,  
Library Reserve Room, 3211 Providence Dr.

907-786-1871

M-F, 8 am to 5 pm,

Contact: Librarian

NAS Adak, Adak Island, Alaska,

Bob Reeves High School Library

907-592-8170

M-F, 8 am to 5 pm,

Contact: Lt. Commander Ted Posuniak

Administrative Record

Engineering Field Activity NW

19917 Seventh Ave.,

NW, Poulsbo, WA 98370