

**ALASKA RAILROAD CORPORATION
ANCHORAGE TERMINAL RESERVE SITE CLEANUP**

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

May 17, 2004

1. Where is the Alaska Railroad Terminal Reserve Site (“Site”)?

The Site is located in the Ship Creek “bowl” southwest of Government Hill and Elmendorf Air Force Base. Ship Creek runs through the Site and empties into Knik Arm and Cook Inlet to the west.

2. How big is the Site and who owns it?

The Site is approximately 600 acres and is owned by the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC). ARRC’s railroad operations occupy approximately half of the Site and the remainder of the Site is under lease to numerous other industrial and commercial businesses. The federal government owned and operated the Site from 1915 to 1985.

3. What is the contamination on the Site and why does the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency believe the Site poses a risk to human health and the environment?

Prior studies indicate that a number of industrial-related materials are present in some of the soils and shallow ground waters at the Site. Examples include petroleum products, industrial solvents, paint, thinner and lacquers, herbicides, batteries, contaminated and used oil, spent antifreeze, polychlorinated biphenyls, metals. These materials are regulated as hazardous substances and solid wastes under EPA regulations. EPA believes that past releases of these materials at the Site require further study to determine whether they pose a risk to human health or the environment.

4. What is the remedial investigation and feasibility study or RI/FS?

The remedial investigation or RI will determine the nature, extent, and magnitude of any contamination of soils, groundwater, surface water and fresh water sediments at the Site that might cause harm to human health or the environment. The feasibility study or FS will identify and evaluate site cleanup alternatives that will be considered by EPA for any cleanup action that may be needed.

5. Will the environmental problems at the Site affect my drinking water?

No. The Municipality of Anchorage water system obtains its water from wells several miles upgradient from the Site. Environmental conditions at the Site

could not affect these wells. If EPA or ARRC determines that any groundwater at the Site is being used as a source of drinking water, that use will be investigated to determine whether it creates any risk to human health.

6. Is the contamination moving into Ship Creek?

EPA and ARRC agree that there is insufficient technical information to determine whether Site contaminants are entering Ship Creek at levels that might create a human health or environmental risk. The main objective of the remedial investigation is to develop more complete Site information. Data from the remedial investigation will determine whether any contaminants are entering Ship Creek from ARRC property at levels that require remedial action.

7. Is it safe to fish in Ship Creek? Are the fish safe to eat?

ARRC and EPA have no information indicating that it is unsafe to consume fish from Ship Creek. Most fish caught in Ship Creek are adult salmon that return to Ship Creek from the ocean. These “non-resident” fish do not feed in the Creek and are not impacted by any contaminants that may have reached the Creek. Therefore, they do not pose a risk to human health if consumed. These recommendations are based on limited information and may change as additional Site information is developed.

8. When will the Site be cleaned up and who is going to pay for it?

No decision has been made at EPA or ARRC that any Site cleanup will be needed. The remedial investigation will be directed at answering this question, and identifying potential alternative methods for any cleanup that may be required. Any areas that are determined to pose a significant risk will be considered for immediate action. ARRC will be responsible for completing the RI/FS under a consent order recently signed with EPA. ARRC, the federal government agencies who were former owners and operators at the Site, and other parties who have contributed to the release of contaminants at the Site are potentially responsible for carrying out or funding any remedial action that may be needed.

9. Who will decide whether the Site is cleaned up?

EPA will establish cleanup requirements based upon human health and environmental risks that will take into account how the Site is being used and is likely to be used in the future, including recreational use of Ship Creek.

10. **Where can I get more detailed information on the Site investigation?**

The ARRC contact for more information is Tim Thompson, 907-265-2695. EPA's public information officer is Mark MacIntyre, 206-553-7302. Documents and periodic updates will appear on the ARRC website, www.alaskarailroad.com.

11. **What input will the neighboring community have in the cleanup process?**

EPA and ARRC will keep the public informed regarding the progress of the RI/FS through web sites and periodic public notices and mailings. Both EPA and ARRC also will have public information officers appointed to communicate information about the Site and respond to inquiries throughout the process until the Site investigation is completed.

12. **What kinds of activity will occur at the Site during the next year?**

ARRC will be conducting at least two "Interim Actions" during the 2004 field season. One will involve a literature survey and focused sediment sampling to get current data regarding the Ship Creek sediments. A second Interim Action that will be done in 2004 will involve sampling along the bluff at the northern boundary of the Site. This will be a preliminary survey of possible contamination that may be entering the Site from upgradient sources. During 2004, ARRC also will be preparing a comprehensive Site Background Report that will include all information developed to date regarding environmental conditions at the Site. This will require compilation and organization of a large volume of existing information about the Site into a database so that data may be evaluated and summarized. This information will form the basis for the RI/FS investigation and will identify "data gaps" that must be filled to develop a complete understanding of environmental conditions at the Site.