

Contaminated Lands on Pribilof Islands Cleaned by TDX Corporation Emulate Model for Success

Our Story

The Pribilof Islands are remote islands located on the Bering Sea, where military debris was stored and left without remediation.

The islands are 240 miles north of the Aleutian Islands, 300 miles west of the Alaska mainland, and 750 air miles west of Anchorage. Petroleum contamination was detected at a number of properties currently and formerly owned and operated by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and its predecessor agencies. Some of these sites occur within the two cities (St. Paul and St. George), and others are scattered across each island. NOAA's National Ocean Service Office of Response and Restoration is responsible for site restoration activities at St. George and St. Paul Islands in Alaska. NOAA is the last of a series of federal agencies which managed the fur trade on the islands.

The contamination posed risks to the human health, safety, welfare, and the local environment. Much of the contamination included petroleum whereby people may have been exposed to pollutants through vapor inhalation, direct contact with the skin, or accidental ingestion of contaminated soil at the sites. Clean-up was also required to facilitate the land transfers to the local entities of Tanadgusix Corporation (TDX) and the St. Paul Island stakeholders.

In an effort to clean up the mess left by the federal government, TDX Corporation created an 8(a) subsidiary called Bering Sea Eccotech Inc. (BSE). BSE conducted several large environmental clean-up operations for the community of Saint Paul primarily under the Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) and NOAA/Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation two party agreements. The clean-up employed 99% local shareholder hire. Some \$76 million has been spent on cleaning up the islands since the mid-1990s.

The cleanup operations varied in size and scope which included removal and recycling of many tons of decrepit vehicles and heavy equipment, disposal of hazardous materials, removal of above and underground storage tanks, and the removal of stockpiling and treatment of several thousands of cubic yards of Petroleum Contaminated Soils (PCS).



Starting in the mid-1960s, an area on St. Paul Island known as the vehicle bone yard site was used to dispose of vehicle and equipment hulks. The bone yard site included debris burial and surface dumping of fur seal carcasses.



Same site Post Clean-up.

Timeline:

1786: Pribilof Islands first encounter with Russian fur traders.

1870-1946: U.S. government controlled commercial seal harvest.

1983: Congress passed the Fur Seal Act Amendments, ending government control of the commercial seal harvest and federal presence on the island.

1985: Commercial seal harvesting ceased.

1986-1997: Preliminary clean-up of the Pribilof Islands began.

1999-2000: NOAA performed additional debris removal and investigation work.

Issue: The U.S. Government caused contamination on the Pribilof Islands that created many health risks for the inhabitants. TDX Corporation cleaned up the debris with federal funds.

Requested Action: Meaningful appropriations are needed to

emulate the clean-up process used via remediation on the Pribilof Islands and on other Alaska Native Corporation lands.

Questions? Contact Julie Shane,

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