



# U. S. ARMY GARRISONS FORT WAINWRIGHT AND FORT RICHARDSON QUARTERLY UPDATE FOR ALASKA NATIVE TRIBES

January 2009, Issue 15

This is a quarterly update on USAG Fort Wainwright and Fort Richardson activities and issues of interest to federally recognized tribes in Alaska.

## Upper Tanana Inter-tribal Coalition Quarterly Meeting Held

The 8th quarterly meeting between the tribes of the Upper Tanana Inter-tribal Coalition and USAG Fort Wainwright and Fort Richardson was held October 8, 2008 at the Northway Community Center, Northway, Alaska.

The Army provided reports to tribal representatives on the following:

- This summer's archaeological findings from DTA were discussed. Seventy-five sites were assessed to determine their eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Archaeological investigations on the Tanana Flats Training Area this summer included: 4 new prehistoric sites at Wood River Buttes, 5 previously examined sites at Clear Creek Buttes, 1 previously identified site and 1 newly identified site at Salmon Loaf Buttes, and the discovery that 6 previously identified sites at Blair Lakes were actually 1 contiguous site.
- An archaeological survey was done of Yukon Training Area and no cultural features were found.
- Fort Richardson was also surveyed. No cultural resources were found, this is expected as the examined area—the small arms training area—is heavily disturbed.
- Progress on the Army Alternate Procedures for Section 106 was discussed. The procedure is currently under review by the State Historic and Preservation Office.
- NEPA projects were reviewed. Those talked about included: Donnelly Training Area East, Mobility and Maneuver Enhancement Environmental Assessment (EA), Donnelly Training Area West All-Season Maneuver Trail Environmental Assessment (EA), Aviation Task Force Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Grow the Army Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (SPEIS) and site-specific (EA), and Range Complex Upgrades Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA)
- Gerstle River Training Area water-testing results and the summer's wildlife surveys in the Healy Lake area were reported.
- The continuing site investigations of the Tok Fuel Terminal and Sear Creek Pump Station were also reported on. 2007 site investigation reports for each were finalized in June 2008 and were made available.

Tribal representatives had a number of questions about the wildlife studies around Healy Lake. A discussion of moose management techniques and projects also ensued. Game management is a topic of great importance in the upper Tanana region.

The meeting was also the opportunity for Fort Wainwright's new garrison commander, Colonel Timothy Jones, to meet UTIC members. Fort Richardson garrison commander, Colonel David Shutt, was able to introduce Colonel Jones and thank the Coalition for their continued partnership in improving tribal/Army relations through open communication and shared goals.

The Army appreciates the hospitality of President Gerald Albert and the Northway council staff — Shelley Albert and Daisy Northway. The next meeting is scheduled to be held in Tetlin in January.



Corrected recipient information is welcomed. Issues are mailed quarterly to tribal administrators and tribal leaders.

## Outdoor Recreation on U.S. Army Training Lands

contributed by Ken Steinnard, USAG-AK Natural Resource Specialist

With the hunting and trapping season under way and snowmobiling conditions improving, it is a good time to welcome you to use U.S. Army training lands for your outdoor recreation. We would like to take this opportunity to inform you of a few access restrictions and safety requirements before you enter training lands.

The U.S. Army manages approximately 2,500 square miles of training lands in Alaska. Popular military training lands recreational areas include lands close to Fairbanks and Delta Junction, making access fairly easy and affordable to reach. The Tanana Flats Training Area (TFTA) is adjacent to Fairbanks south of the Tanana River. The Yukon Training Area (YTA) is east of Eielson Air Force Base and the Donnelly Training Area (DTA) is south of Delta Junction.

From time to time the Army must close an area to all recreation to meet its first need—training its Soldiers. There are also training sites and impact areas that are permanently closed due to ongoing live-fire exercises and the presence of unexploded live ordnance (UXO) which make those areas too dangerous to enter. Impact areas are designated target ranges into which live ordnance is dropped or fired during training. Because all ordnance does not explode on impact, all access into impact areas is prohibited. Ranges, impact areas, and other sites that are closed to recreation are located within all the training areas. A complete list and maps noting closed areas, including impact areas, can be obtained on-line at [www.usarak.army.mil/conservation](http://www.usarak.army.mil/conservation) or by picking up a copy of the Army Outdoor Recreation Regulation Supplement at the Visitor Centers and Natural Resources Offices on Fort Wainwright and Fort Greely.

Because of their close proximity to urban areas and being within popular recreation destinations, a few **permanently closed** sites of particular note are:

- Alpha Impact Area south of the Salchaket Slough in the Tanana Flats Training Area,
- Blair Lakes Training Site and Impact Area, also in the Tanana Flats Training Area,
- Small Arms Range south of the Richardson Highway and north of the Tanana River in the Tanana Flats Training Area,
- AFTAC area and Stuart Creek Impact area in the Yukon Training Area, and
- all impact areas west of the Delta River in the Donnelly Training Area.

For a complete list of closed sites visit the website above or refer to Outdoor Recreation Regulation Supplement.

Within all Army training lands it is possible to come across unexploded live ordnance (UXO). If you come across an item you believe may be live ordnance do not touch or handle it in any way. Flag and, if possible, GPS the location and contact the Provost Marshal Office at 353-7535, Fort Wainwright Range Control at 353-1266, or Donnelly Range Control at 873-4714.

To ensure the safety of individuals recreating on military training lands the Army requires all persons 16 years of age or older to have in their possession a Recreation Access Permit (RAP). This permit is free and can be obtained at the visitor centers/main gates on Fort Wainwright, Fort Greely, and Fort Richardson. Before entering training lands you must also check in by calling the U.S. Army Alaska Recreation Tracking System (USARTRAK) phone system. USARTRAK is a convenient and easy-to-use check-in phone system that also provides up-to-date information about training-land closures, construction and safety information relating to using training lands. Information about USARTRAK will be provided to you when you obtain your Recreation Access Permit. The Army will also provide a printed Outdoor Recreation Regulation Supplement which describes, in detail, Army regulations relating to outdoor recreation on training lands.

Army lands are open to all users on an equal basis when training is not occurring. No permanent structures, including cabins, tent frames, or tree stands are allowed. Please remove all of your equipment and trash when leaving the field. Trappers are required to register traplines and, in the spring, black bear bait station locations must be registered with Army Natural Resources. USAG-AK no longer has a regulation requiring all hunters to complete a basic hunter education course. All hunters are required to adhere to ADF&G hunting regulations relating to hunter education requirements. Operators of off-road vehicles (ORV), including snowmobiles, must wear a helmet and eye protection. Loaded firearms may be carried on an ORV/snowmobile as long as there is not a live round under the firing pin. Firearms cannot be concealed and must be carried in plain sight.

Fort Wainwright Conservation Officers and Army Natural Resources personnel will be in the field to support recreational activities and enforce applicable regulations and laws. If you need assistance, have a question, or wish to report a violation, please do not hesitate to contact a supporting agency.

We hope you have an excellent outdoor recreation experience on Army training lands. If you have any questions please call the Fort Wainwright Army Conservation Officers at 361-7692, Fort Wainwright Natural Resources at 361-6490, Donnelly Training Area Natural Resources at 873-1616, or the Public Affairs Officer at 384-1542. For more information and to review training area maps visit [www.usarak.army.mil/conservation](http://www.usarak.army.mil/conservation). Have a safe and enjoyable outing.

## Native American and Alaska Native Heritage Celebrated in November

USAG Fort Wainwright and Fort Richardson celebrated Native American and Alaska Native Heritage Month in November with celebrations on their respective Posts.

On November 14th, a program was presented in Fairbanks to an audience of approximately 120. The hour



and a half program included the National Anthem sung by Willa Henderson and the reading of a proclamation from Governor Palin. The featured speaker was Benno Cleveland, an Inupiaq veteran of the Vietnam conflict. The Inu-Yupiaq Dancers from University of Alaska Fairbanks performed several numbers. Refreshments of moose and salmon were served. A display

of artifacts from the UAF Museum of the North added to the event.

At Fort Richardson, the November 21st celebration included guest speakers Loren Anderson and Margaret Nakak. The Saint Lawrence Dancers with Yaari Kingeekuk performed. The national anthem was sung by SPC Dave Lemon. Refreshments of whale, salmon, Eskimo ice cream and flat bread were served to the approximately 60 attendees.

## Soldier Orientation Ideas Sought

Every month Soldiers newly stationed at Fort Richardson and Fort Wainwright are given briefings at *Newcomers' Orientations*. These meetings are designed to acquaint Soldiers with their new Alaskan surroundings. Presentations are given during the day-long session on a variety of topics— from available social opportunities to the wildlife and natural resources surrounding their new home.

A 15-minute presentation entitled “Alaska Native Cultural Awareness” is part of their day. While this is not enough time to go in-depth on the cultures of Alaska, the USAG Native Liaison presents a brief overview of Alaska Native culture and history. Topics such as respect for the land and the complexity of land ownership in the State are also touched upon to assist Soldiers in avoiding trespass problems.

As tribal leaders, what would you like for new Soldiers to know? We request your feedback regarding suggestions on concepts to work into the *Newcomers* presentations. Your feedback is valuable, helping the Army be a good neighbor to Alaska's Native community. Have ideas? Contact the Army Native Liaison at Elizabeth.Cook3@us.army.mil or 907-361-6323.

## Section 106 Undertakings

- A management strategy of selective retention for the **Site Summit Historic District** (Site Summit) is being developed. Selective retention includes securing structures that are critical to the historical understanding of Site Summit, demolition of unused structures (with the retention of their foundations for interpretation), and securing other remaining structures. This proposed undertaking is needed to address existing training needs, human safety concerns, and vandalism associated with trespass. In February 2008, the Environmental Assessment/Finding of No Significant Impact was finalized, but Section 106 consultation is ongoing. Documents concerning this undertaking are located at [http://www.usarak.army.mil/conservation/CR\\_Nike.htm](http://www.usarak.army.mil/conservation/CR_Nike.htm).

- **Aviation Stationing** consultation is also ongoing. The Army proposes to increase and reorganize existing aviation assets in Alaska, including proposed new construction within Fort Wainwright's WWII National Historic Landmark. As this undertaking has substantially changed (the Birchwood hangars are no longer proposed for demolition), the Army is again requesting interested parties join the consultation process. (see *NEPA Notes*)

- Mitigation options for the **BAX Surface Danger Zone** at Donnelly Training Area are being developed.

- Fort Richardson and Fort Wainwright have a number of smaller Section 106 undertakings concerning construction within their cantonments including American Disability Act and weatherization improvements, general maintenance, and similar projects.

- The buildings in Fort Richardson's cantonment area were surveyed and it was found that no historic district exists there.

For more information about any of these undertakings, please contact the Army's Native Liaison, 907-361-6323.

## Haines Fuel Terminal RAB Meets

The Haines Fuel Terminal Restoration Advisory Board met on November 5th in Haines. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss the Haines Fuel Terminal clean-up and monitoring process. Meetings occur twice a year and attendees include Army restoration staff, Army Corps of Engineers staff, contractors performing the clean up and testing work, RAB committee members, and community members. At the November 5th meeting, the Alaska Department of Transportation also reported on findings related to the property. A large road project is currently taking place across the property's frontage.

The Haines Fuel Terminal was the starting point of the Haines-Fairbanks Pipeline that was built between 1953 and 1955. The Haines community, including the Chilkoot Indian Association, is concerned about the site's clean-up status and its eventual fate, as the land may be excessed by the Army once the clean up is concluded.



## National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Notices

- **Eagle River Flats EIS** - USAGAK has pushed back the publication dates for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which analyzes the proposed year-round live-fire weapons training at Fort Richardson. Army staff is developing a Biological Assessment of the Cook Inlet Beluga Whale in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. The Draft EIS will likely be available for public review in July 2009. The Army will hold tribal consultation meetings to discuss the impacts of the proposed action.

- **Aviation Stationing EIS** - The Army anticipates releasing a Draft EIS in April 2009 analyzing the potential stationing of aviation units in Alaska to Fort Wainwright, Fort Richardson and Eielson AFB. The EIS discussed two potential stationing alternatives: an aviation Task Force (710 additional Soldiers and 40 additional helicopters) and a Combat Aviation Brigade (2,360 Soldiers and 84 helicopters). Both alternatives include facility construction at Fort Wainwright. Under the proposed action, helicopters would train on military lands with no changes to existing airspace or construction of training range facilities on training lands. The frequency of helicopter training would be expected to increase. Meetings for the draft will be held in May 2009. (see *Section 106 Undertakings*)

- **Programmatic Training Range Construction and Maintenance EA** - Work is continuing on a Programmatic Training Range Construction and Maintenance Environmental Assessment (Programmatic EA) which will analyze several long-term best land management practices relating to military training range infrastructure. The Programmatic EA will also evaluate the impacts of indentifying "focus areas" of development within existing small arms range complexes. This proposed action will primarily result in beneficial impacts to training lands as the land management practices developed will serve to better sustain training lands into the future. Anticipated release date of the draft Programmatic EA is Spring 2009.

- **Grow the Army EA** - An EA and Final Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) was recently approved by USAGAK allowing the stationing of additional Soldiers and construction of new facilities at both Fort Wainwright and Fort Richardson in support of the Army's "Grow the Army" initiative. Military units stationed in Alaska primarily consist of combat support units and an Engineer Brigade. Fort Wainwright will gain 425 Soldiers and Fort Richardson will gain 1,773 Soldiers. Arrival dates for these units are scheduled out to Fiscal Year 2013.

- **Army Family Housing Privatization EA** - The Army is proposing to privatize Army family housing at Fort Wainwright to include the conveyance of 1,850 on-Post housing units to a limited liability corporation (LLC). The LLC is composed of the Army and Actus Lend Lease. The Army is also proposing to lease 626 acres of Fort Wainwright cantonment area land for 50-years to the LLC. No significant impacts are associated with this action. The public comment period closed on December 30, 2008.

United States Army Garrisons FWA and FRA  
ATTN: IMPC-FWA-PWE (Cook)  
1060 Gaffney Road #4500  
Fort Wainwright, Alaska 00703-4500