Basin C Supplemental Soil Excavation Project

Frequently Asked Questions

1.) What is the project?

The Army will complete this project as part of the overall environmental cleanup of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal. The Basin C Supplemental Soil Excavation Project involves excavating approximately 1,100 cubic yards of contaminated soil in the interior north central portion of the site. (As a comparison, 1,100 cubic yards of soil is roughly equivalent to the volume of a standard-sized swimming pool.) The excavation area measures approximately a quarter acre and includes a former surface ditch that was used to transport overflow wastewater from Basin A to Basin C. The excavation area is part of the Refuge but is not accessible to visitors and is not located on the Refuge auto tour route, which will remain open to visitors.

2.) Why is the project necessary?

The purpose of the project is to remove soil that contains the pesticide dieldrin at levels higher than the human health or wildlife standards contained in the On-Site Record of Decision (ROD). (The ROD outlines the overall framework and rationale for the environmental cleanup of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal.)

In 2014, the U.S. Army collected and analyzed more than 300 soil samples from across the site. Dieldrin was detected in one sample at a level above the human health standard. The sample was taken near Basin C, which was a disposal basin for overflow wastewater generated by historic manufacturing operations at the site.

In cooperation with local, state and federal regulatory agencies, the Army conducted two additional rounds of soil sampling around Basin C to define the area containing dieldrin. The results showed that dieldrin was present in a roughly quarter-acre section of the original Basin C environmental cleanup site. The area had been excavated and backfilled with clean soil as part of the basin clean up. The additional soil sampling indicated that a small portion of the area had historically included a ditch and required further excavation at a greater depth to remove remaining contaminated soil.

3.) How is the work being done?

Arsenal crews will excavate the contaminated soil, which will then be transported to the Clean Harbors Hazardous Waste Landfill in Deer Trail, Colorado. Verification sampling will be conducted during the project to ensure the project goals are met. Clean soil will then be transported onto the Arsenal and used to backfill the excavation area. Following that work, the area will be regraded and reseeded to restore the short-grass prairie vegetation. The project is expected to cost $340,000.

4.) Are there health risks for site visitors?

No. The excavation area is not accessible to Refuge visitors, nor is it on the auto tour route or near any visitor access points. The project is being conducted in cooperation with the EPA, Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment and Tri-County Health Department to ensure the highest safety standards for public and environmental health are met.

5.) Why is soil being disposed of at an off-site location?

The project design is an extension of the Secondary Basins environmental cleanup outlined in the ROD. In 2008, following the closure of the two on-site landfills, the ROD was revised to allow disposal of site waste at an off-site hazardous waste facility. The Clean Harbors Hazardous Waste Landfill in Deer Trail, Colorado, is the closest permitted facility.

6.) How long will the project take, and what traffic impacts can the community expect?

The project will begin July 23 and conclude by the first week of September. Starting July 30, community members can expect to see six to 12 trucks leaving or entering the site each day through the north gate at 96th Avenue in Commerce City, Colorado.