

**EPA Superfund
Record of Decision:**

**GRIFFISS AIR FORCE BASE (11 AREAS)
EPA ID: NY4571924451
OU 17
ROME, NY
06/05/2000**

**Final Record of Decision for the
Landfill 7 Area of Concern
at the
Former Griffiss Air Force Base
Rome, New York**

March 2000

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List of Acronyms

| | |
|--------|---|
| AFB | Air Force Base |
| AFBCA | Air Force Base Conversion Agency |
| AOC | Area of Concern |
| ARAR | Applicable or Relevant and Appropriate Requirement |
| ATSDR | Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry |
| BGS | below ground surface |
| CERCLA | Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act |
| DFAS | Defense Finance and Accounting Services |
| DoD | Department of Defense |
| EPA | United State Environmental Protection Agency |
| FFA | Federal Facility Agreement |
| GPR | ground-penetrating radar |
| HI | Hazard Index |
| HQ | Hazard Quotient |
| IRP | Installation Restoration Program |
| NCP | National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan |
| NEADS | Northeast Air Defense Sector |
| NPL | National Priorities List |
| NYANG | New York Air National Guard |
| NYCRR | New York Codes, Rules and Regulations |
| NYSDEC | New York State Department of Environmental Conservation |
| PCB | polychlorinated biphenyl |
| RAB | Restoration Advisory Board |
| RCRA | Resource Conservation and Recovery Act |
| RI | Remedial Investigation |
| ROD | Record of Decision |
| SAC | Strategic Air Command |
| SVOC | semivolatile organic compound |
| VOC | volatile organic compound |

1.1 Site Name and Location

The Landfill 7 Area of Concern (AOC) is located at the former Griffiss Air Force Base (AFB) in Rome, Oneida County, New York.

1.2 Statement of Basis and Purpose

This Record of Decision (ROD) presents the presumptive remedy alternative as the selected remedial action for the Landfill 7 AOC at the former Griffiss AFB. This alternative has been chosen in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980, as amended, and the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP). The Air Force Base Conversion Agency (AFBCA), the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) have adopted this ROD through joint agreement. Information supporting this decision is contained in the administrative record file for this site.

1.3 Assessment of the Site

Actual or threatened release of hazardous substances from the AOC, if not addressed by implementing the response action selected in this ROD, may present a potential threat to public health, welfare, or the environment.

1.4 Description of Selected Remedy

The selected remedy for the Landfill 7 AOC is the Presumptive Remedy, which was developed in accordance with EPA Presumptive Remedy Guidance for Military Landfills, dated April 29, 1996, for the expeditious cleanup of sites that are similar in character to a large number of CERCLA sites that have already been remediated. Presumptive remedies are preferred technologies for common categories of sites based on historical patterns of remedy selection and EPA's scientific and engineering evaluations of performance data on technology implementation. The remedy addresses the threats to human health and the environment that are posed by exposure to soil, sediment, surface water, and groundwater at the site. The major components of the selected remedy include:

- Installation of a low-permeability soil cover in accordance with 6 NYCRR Part 360 landfill closure regulations, dated April 1, 1987; this action would include placing a minimum of 18 inches of low-permeability soil and 6 inches of topsoil over the entire landfill surface to reduce the amount of water infiltration through the landfill;
- Maintenance of the cover and long-term monitoring of the groundwater and stream environment; the groundwater will be monitored in accordance with the Air Force's On-base Groundwater Monitoring Plan and the stream environment will be monitored in accordance with a future plan to be prepared for the Six Mile Creek AOC; both plans will be subject to the review and approval of the EPA and NYSDEC;
- Monitoring of the groundwater and stream environment downgradient of the site to evaluate the effectiveness of the presumptive remedy;
- Implementation of institutional controls in the form of deed restrictions of the main landfill boundary to prohibit use of the area and groundwater, and to ensure the cap is not damaged and the area is maintained as a landfill; and
- Evaluation of site conditions at least once every five years to ensure that the remedy is protective of human health and the environment.

Executive Order 11990 Finding of No Practicable Alternative – Wetlands

There are no practicable alternatives to prevent disturbance of the wetlands during construction of the landfill cover. Some disturbance and discharge of fill material may occur either in or immediately adjacent to the wetlands. The Air Force will take all prac-

licable measures to minimize harm to the wetlands, which will include appropriate mitigation (e.g., wetlands restoration in consultation with the Army Corps of Engineers, EPA, and NYSDEC). The Air Force will obtain the necessary funding, to the extent Congress appropriates such funds, to complete the wetlands restoration.

1.5 Declaration Statement

The AFBCA, EPA, and NYSDEC have determined that the selected remedy will be protective of human health, and the environment and meets the requirements for remedial action set forth in CERCLA, Section 121. The Presumptive Remedy is cost effective and includes a review of the remedial action, which will be conducted five years after commencement of the remedial action, to ensure that the remedial action continues to provide adequate protection to the human health and the environment. Future potential risks associated with the site will be abated through the implementation of the selected remedy of landfill capping, groundwater restrictions, and monitoring. Installation of a soil cover, in accordance with 6 NYCRR Part 360 landfill closure regulations, will eliminate the possibility of human exposure to the landfill mass and reduce the amount of water infiltration through the landfill, which will reduce the production of leachate and reduce further groundwater degradation. In addition, institutional controls in the form of land use restrictions will prohibit use of the area, with groundwater consumption being specifically restricted.

In every case, the goal of each institutional control will be to prevent exposure to residual contamination, while at the same time allowing for redevelopment of the property in a manner that will not endanger human health and the environment. Each identified institutional control will specify the restriction imposed on the property, how such restriction will be implemented, monitored, and later enforced in the event a violation occurs.

The selected remedy represents the most appropriate approach to containment and reliable long-term protection of human health and the environment at the Landfill 7 AOC.

1.6 Signature of Adoption of the Remedy

On the basis of the remedial investigations (RIs) performed at the Landfill 7 AOC and the baseline risk assessment, the presumptive remedy is the selected remedy for the

Landfill 7 AOC. The selected remedy meets the requirements for remedial action set forth in CERCLA, Section 121. NYSDEC has concurred with the selected remedial action presented in this ROD.

Albert F. Lowas, Jr.
Director
Air Force Base Conversion Agency

Date

Jeanne M. Fox
Regional Administrator
United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2

Date

2.1 Site Name, Location, and Description

Regional Site Description

The former Griffiss AFB covered approximately 3,552 contiguous acres in the lowlands of the Mohawk River Valley in Rome, Oneida County, New York. Topography within the valley is relatively flat, with elevations on the former Griffiss AFB ranging from 435 to 595 feet above mean sea level. Three Mile Creek, Six Mile Creek (both of which drain into the New York State Barge Canal, located to the south of the base), and several state-designated wetlands are located on the former Griffiss AFB, which is bordered by the Mohawk River on the west. Due to its high average precipitation and predominantly silty sands, the former Griffiss AFB is considered a groundwater recharge zone.

Landfill 7 Area of Concern

Landfill 7 is approximately 10.7 acres in size and is located in the east-central portion of the former base between the main runway and Perimeter Road. The landfill, which is unlined, was active from 1950 to 1954. In 1985, the landfill was capped with an additional 6 inches of clay, covered by 6 inches of topsoil, and seeded with grass. With the exception of the paved access drive to the observation point, the landfill is completely covered by grass. Ponding occurs along the base of the landfill, where the ground surface is below the elevation of a series of storm water catch basins situated between the runway and the landfill. Jurisdictional wetlands and New York state-regulated wetlands are also present along the area between the base of the landfill and the runway. An open

wet-meadow wetland at the site is considered a special interest area in the New York Natural Heritage Program.

The site is located on a topographical high relative to the runway. The southern boundaries of the site are generally evident by topography; however, the remaining boundaries are not well defined. No fences, gates, signs, or markers exist to indicate the location or extent of the landfill.

Surface water features in the area of Landfill 7 include Six Mile Creek and a tributary of Six Mile Creek that flows along the north side of the landfill. North of Landfill 7, Six Mile Creek is diverted into an underground culvert, and the creek flows through this culvert as it passes to the southwest of the landfill. A tributary of Six Mile Creek flows into this culvert northwest of Landfill 7.

Groundwater flow is generally to the southwest across the site. The uppermost 2 feet of soil at Landfill 7 consists of silt to variably silty fine sand. Deeper soils consist primarily of variably silty fine sand.

2.2 Site History and Investigation Activities

The Former Griffiss AFB Operational History

The mission of the former Griffiss AFB varied over the years. The base was activated on February 1, 1942, as Rome Air Depot, with the mission of storage, maintenance, and shipment of material for the U.S. Army Air Corps. Upon creation of the U.S. Air Force in 1947, the depot was renamed Griffiss Air Force Base. The base became an electronics center in 1950, with the transfer of Watson Laboratory Complex (later Rome Laboratory). The 49th Fighter Interceptor Squadron was also added in that year. In June 1951, the Rome Air Development Center was established with the mission of accomplishing applied research, development, and testing of electronic air-ground systems. The Headquarters of the Ground Electronics Engineering Installations Agency was added in June 1958 to engineer and install ground communications equipment throughout the world. On July 1, 1970, the 416th Bombardment Wing of the Strategic Air Command (SAC) was activated with the mission of maintenance and implementation of both effective air refueling operations and long-range bombardment capability. Griffiss AFB was designated for realignment under the Base Realignment and Closure Act in 1993 resulting

in deactivation of the 416th Bombardment Wing in September 1995. Rome Laboratory and the Northeast Air Defense Sector (NEADS) will continue to operate at their current locations; the New York Air National Guard (NYANG) operated the runway for the 10th Mountain Division deployments until October 1998 when they were relocated to Fort Drum; and the Defense Finance and Accounting Services (DFAS) has established an operating location at the former Griffiss AFB.

Environmental Background

As a result of the various national defense missions carried out at the former Griffiss AFB since 1942, hazardous and toxic substances were used and hazardous wastes were generated, stored, or disposed at various sites on the installation. The defense missions involved, among others, procurement, storage, maintenance, and shipping of war materiel; research and development; and aircraft operations and maintenance.

Landfill 7 was active from 1950 to 1954 and was the first landfill operated at the base. It reportedly received domestic refuse and solid waste; unknown types of liquid wastes, which may have included spent solvents and petroleum products; and miscellaneous wastes such airplane parts. Wastes were burned in four trenches running parallel to the runway. Each trench measured 20 feet deep by 400 feet long by 50 to 60 feet wide. Liquid wastes were reportedly disposed of in small pits dug in the bottom of the trenches. In 1985, the landfill was capped with an additional 6 inches of clay, covered by 6 inches of topsoil, and seeded with grass. This was confirmed during an investigation in 1997.

Numerous studies and investigations under the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Installation Restoration Program (IRP) have been carried out to locate, assess, and quantify the past toxic and hazardous waste storage, disposal, and spill sites. These investigations included a records search in 1981, interviews with base personnel, a field inspection, compilation of an inventory of wastes, evaluation of disposal practices, and an assessment to determine the nature and extent of site contamination; Problem Confirmation and Quantification studies (similar to what is now designated a Site Investigation) in 1982 and 1985; soil and groundwater analyses in 1986; a base-wide health assessment in 1988 by the U.S. Public Health Service, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR); base-specific hydrology investigations in 1989 and 1990; a groundwater investigation in 1991; and site-specific investigations between 1989 and 1993. ATSDR

issued a Public Health Assessment for Griffiss AFB, dated October 23, 1995, and an addendum, dated September 9, 1996.

Pursuant to Section 105 of CERCLA, Griffiss AFB was included on the National Priorities List (NPL) on July 15, 1987. On August 21, 1990, USAF, EPA, and NYSDEC entered into a Federal Facility Agreement (FFA) under Section 120 of CERCLA.

Under the terms of the agreement, the Air Force was required to prepare and submit numerous reports to NYSDEC and EPA for review and comment. These reports address remedial activities that the Air Force is required to undertake under CERCLA and include identification of Areas of Concern on base; a scope of work for an RI; a work plan for the RI, including a sampling and analysis plan and a quality assurance project plan; a baseline risk assessment; a community relations plan; an RI report; a work plan and the report for a supplemental investigation; and a Landfill Cover Investigation Report. The Air Force delivered the draft-final RI report covering 31 AOCs to EPA and NYSDEC on December 20, 1996, and the final SI report was delivered on July 24, 1998. The Final Landfill Cover Investigation Report was delivered on December 8, 1997.

This ROD for remedial action is based on an evaluation of potential threats to human health and the environment due to contamination in the soil, sediment, surface water, and groundwater media at the Landfill 7 AOC and adjacent areas. During the RI, a site-specific baseline risk assessment (using appropriate toxicological and exposure assumptions to evaluate cancer risks and non-cancer health hazards) was conducted in order to evaluate the risks posed by detected site contaminants to the reasonably maximally exposed individual under current and future land use assumptions. The risk assessment for this site evaluated an unrestricted use scenario. In the RI report, the results of the risk assessment were compared to available standards and guidance values using federal and state environmental and public health laws that were identified as potentially applicable or relevant and appropriate requirements (ARARs) at the site. Chemical-specific ARARs are usually health- or risk-based numerical values or methodologies that result in a numerical value when applied to site-specific conditions. Currently, there are no chemical-specific ARARs for soil (other than for PCBs), sediments, or air. Therefore, other non-promulgated federal and state advisories and guidance values, referred to as To-Be-Considereds (TBCs), and background levels of the contaminants in the absence of TBCs,

were considered. This comparison was used in the selection of the preferred remedial action.

Initial Site Investigations

Between 1981 and 1990, seven groundwater monitoring wells were installed in the vicinity of the Landfill 7 AOC. The monitoring wells were sampled after well development and also during quarterly groundwater sampling in 1992 and 1993. Analytical results indicated the presence of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), metals, total organic carbon, pesticides, glycols, oil and grease.

In 1991, samples of soil, sediment, and surface water were collected from the tributary of Six Mile Creek that flows north of Landfill 7. The analytical results indicated that VOCs, pesticides, and metals were present in the surface water; and semivolatile organic compounds (SVOCs), methylene chloride, pesticides, and metals were present in the creek bank soils and sediments.

Remedial Investigation

In 1994, an RI was performed. The main objective of the RI was to investigate the nature and extent of environmental contamination from historical releases at the AOC in order to determine whether any remedial action was necessary to prevent potential threats to human health and the environment. The RI included a geophysical survey consisting of a magnetometry survey and ground-penetrating radar (GPR) survey; a passive soil gas survey; sampling and analysis of surface soil, surface water, and sediment; the installation of four additional monitoring wells and the replacement of two existing wells; and the collection and analysis of groundwater samples.

Geophysical Surveys. The geophysical survey results indicated the presence of four major trenches and several small, discrete anomalous areas.

Passive Soil Gas Survey. The passive soil gas survey, indicated the presence of VOCs in four of the 24 soil gas samples collected in the southern area of the landfill.

Surface Soil Investigation. Analysis of the surface soil samples indicated the presence of 11 SVOCs, four pesticides, and 20 metals and petroleum hydrocarbons of potential concern. The concentrations of one SVOC, one pesticide, and one metal exceeded the most stringent criterion for surface soil (see Table 1).

Surface Water Investigation. Analysis of surface water samples indicated the presence of seven SVOCs, three pesticides, 11 metals, glycols, and petroleum hydrocarbons. The concentrations of three SVOCs, and four metals exceeded the most stringent criterion for surface water (see Table 2).

Groundwater Investigation. Analysis of the groundwater samples indicated the presence of four VOCs, four SVOCs, 18 pesticides, 17 metals, glycols, dioxins/furans, and petroleum hydrocarbons. The concentrations of one VOC, three pesticides, and five metals exceeded the most stringent criterion for groundwater (see Table 3).

Sediment Investigation. Analysis of the sediment samples indicated the presence of five VOCs, 13 SVOCs, 16 pesticides, and 21 metals, cyanide, and petroleum hydrocarbons. The concentrations of nine SVOCs, nine pesticides, and eight metals, were detected at concentrations exceeding the most stringent criterion for sediments (see Table 4).

Supplemental Investigations

An RI supplemental investigation performed in 1997 for the Landfill 7 AOC included the excavation of three test pits, collection and analysis of two leachate/seep samples, installation and sampling of two temporary wells, and the sampling of six existing wells. No drums were found during test pit excavation; therefore no samples were collected from the test pits. The leachate results identified only iron and magnesium at concentrations exceeding the screening criteria. In the groundwater samples, the concentrations of five VOCs, including trichloroethene (TCE), exceeded the RI most stringent criterion.

Groundwater analytical results from the RI and Supplemental Investigation indicate the presence of a narrow (approximately 500 feet wide and 600 feet long) TCE

plume at this AOC. The plume is hydraulically isolated from the potential future receptors.

A Landfill Cover Investigation performed in 1997 included the following tasks: Historical records search, field survey, aerial photographic survey, auger investigation, permeability sample collection, and a landfill performance model analysis. The investigation further defined the areal extent of the landfill and the landfill boundary and revealed that the thickness of the existing landfill soil cover ranges from 1.2 to 4 feet.

2.3 Highlights of Community Participation

The final proposed plan and a fact sheet for the Landfill 7 AOC indicating the Presumptive Remedy as the selected remedial action were released to the public on February 7, 2000. The document was made available to the public in both the administrative record file located at Building 301 in the Griffiss Business and Technology Park and in the Information Repository maintained at the Jervis Public Library. The notice announcing the availability of this document was published in the Rome Sentinel on February 5, 2000. A public comment period lasting from February 7, 2000, to March 8, 2000, was set up to encourage public participation in the remedial action selection process. In addition, a public meeting was held on February 23, 2000. At this meeting, representatives from AFBCA, EPA, and NYSDEC answered questions about issues at the AOC and the Presumptive Remedy proposal under consideration. A response to the comments received during this period is included in the Responsiveness Summary, which is part of this ROD (see Section 3).

2.4 Scope and Role of Site Response Action

The scope of the Presumptive Remedy Alternative for the Landfill 7 AOC addresses the concerns for human health and the environment. In 1985, the landfill was capped with an additional 6 inches of clay, covered by 6 inches of topsoil, and seeded with grass. No other response actions have been taken at this site. The Presumptive Remedy will bring the landfill cap into compliance with NYSDEC's standards of April 1987.

2.5 Summary of Site Risks

Site risks were analyzed based on the extent of contamination at the Landfill 7 AOC. As part of the RI, a baseline risk assessment was conducted to evaluate current and future potential risks to human health and the environment associated with contaminants found in the soils, sediments, surface water, and groundwater at the site. The results of this assessment were considered in the cleanup goal selection process.

Human Health Risk Assessment

A baseline human health risk assessment was conducted during the RI to determine whether chemicals detected at the Landfill 7 AOC could pose health risks to individuals under current and proposed future land uses in an unrestricted-use scenario. As part of the baseline risk assessment, the following four-step process was used to assess site-related human health risks for a reasonable maximum exposure scenario:

- Hazard identification-identifies the contaminants of concern at the site based on several factors such as toxicity, frequency of occurrence, and concentration;
- Exposure Assessment-estimates the magnitude of actual and/or potential human exposures, the frequency and duration of these exposures, and the pathway (e.g., ingestion of contaminated soils) by which humans are potentially exposed;
- Toxicity Assessment-determines the types of adverse health effects associated with chemical exposures and the relationship between magnitude of exposure (dose) and severity of adverse effects (response); and
- Risk Characterization-summarizes and combines outputs of the exposure and toxicity assessments to provide a quantitative (e.g., one-in-a-million excess cancer risk and non-cancer Hazard Index value) assessment of site-related risks and a discussion of uncertainties associated with the evaluation of the risks and hazards for the site.

Chemicals of potential concern were selected for use in the risk assessment based on the analytical results and data quality evaluation. All contaminants detected in the soil, soil gas, sediments, surface water, and groundwater at the site were considered chemicals of potential concern with the exception of inorganics detected at concentrations less than twice the mean background concentrations; iron, magnesium, calcium,

potassium, and sodium, which are essential human nutrients; and compounds detected in less than 5% of the total samples (unless they were known human carcinogens).

Petroleum hydrocarbons as a class were not selected as chemicals of concern in the risk assessment, but the individual toxic constituents (e.g., benzene, toluene, and ethylbenzene) were evaluated. The presence of petroleum hydrocarbons as a class of contaminants was considered in the selection of the preferred remedial action.

The current and future land use designations for the Landfill 7 AOC are open space and wetlands/surface water. The human health risk assessment evaluated exposure to potential future residential and agricultural receptors, current and future recreational receptors, and occupational workers (current and future landscape workers and future industrial workers) that may be exposed to chemicals detected in the site media. The various exposure scenarios for each population are described in Table 5. Intake assumptions, which are based on EPA guidance, are more fully described in the RI.

Quantitative estimates of carcinogenic and noncarcinogenic risks were calculated for the Landfill 7 AOC as part of a risk characterization. The risk characterization evaluates potential health risks based on estimated exposure intakes and toxicity values. For carcinogens, risks are estimated as the incremental probability of an individual developing cancer over a lifetime as a result of exposure to the potential carcinogen. The risks of the individual chemicals are summed for each pathway to develop a total risk estimate. The range of acceptable risk is generally considered to be 1 in 10,000 (1×10^{-4}) to 1 in 1,000,000 (1×10^{-6}) of an individual developing cancer over a 70-year lifetime from exposure to the contaminant(s) under specific exposure assumptions. Therefore, sites with carcinogenic risk below the risk range for a reasonable maximum exposure do not generally require cleanup based upon carcinogenic risk under the NCP.

To assess the overall noncarcinogenic effects posed by more than one contaminant, EPA has developed the Hazard Quotient (HQ) and Hazard Index (HI). The HQ is the ratio of the chronic daily intake of a chemical to the reference dose for the chemical. The reference dose is an estimate (with uncertainty spanning perhaps an order of magnitude or greater) of a daily exposure level for the human population, including sensitive sub-populations, that is likely to be without an appreciable risk of deleterious effects during a portion of a lifetime. The HQs are summed for all contaminants within an exposure pathway (e.g., ingestion of soils) and across pathways to determine the HI. When the HI

exceeds 1, there may be concern for potential noncarcinogenic health effects if the contaminants in question are believed to cause similar toxic effects.

EPA bases its decision to conduct site remediation on the risk to human health and the environment. Cleanup actions may be taken when EPA determines that the risk at a site exceeds the cancer risk level of 1 in 10,000 (1×10^{-4}) or if the noncarcinogenic HI exceeds 1. Once either of these thresholds has been exceeded, the 1 in 1,000,000 (1×10^{-6}) risk level and an HI of 1 or less may be used as the point of departure for determining remediation goals for alternatives.

The carcinogenic risks to the adult residential, agricultural, and recreational receptor were presented in the RI report. Specific exposure assumptions are described in the RI report.

The total carcinogenic risk to potential future adult residents was calculated as 2 in 10,000 (2×10^{-4}), which exceeded EPA's target lifetime excess cancer risk range of 1 in 10,000 (1×10^{-4}) to 1 in 1,000,000 (1×10^{-6}) as a result of the risk posed by ingestion of groundwater. The chemicals contributing to this risk were arsenic, TCE, and dioxins.

The total carcinogenic risk to a future adult recreational receptor was calculated as 1 in 100,000 (1×10^{-5}), which is within EPA's target risk range.

The total carcinogenic risk for current and future adult landscape workers (25-year exposure assumption) were calculated, respectively, as 2 in 1,000,000 (2×10^{-6}) and 4 in 100,000 (4×10^{-5}) both of which are within EPA's target risk range.

For all other receptors, the results are within EPA's target risk range, indicating that potential adverse carcinogenic health effects are not expected to occur from exposure to chemicals at the site.

For noncarcinogenic risks, the child is the receptor generally assumed to have the greatest estimated risk; therefore, HIs were calculated for the adult, adolescent, youth, and child. The total HIs for the future residential adult, adolescent, youth, and child were calculated as 10, 10, 20, and 30, respectively, all of which exceed the acceptable level of 1. Ingestion of groundwater contaminated with manganese and arsenic contributed the majority of the risk. The HIs for all other exposure pathways for receptors of all ages were below the acceptable level of 1.

The total HIs calculated for current and future recreational adult, adolescent, youth, and child receptors were 0.05, 0.07, 0.1, and 0.4, respectively, all of which are

below the acceptable level of 1, indicating that adverse noncarcinogenic health effects are not expected to occur.

The total HI for current and future adult landscape workers exposed to surface soil at the Landfill 7 AOC was 0.004, which is below the acceptable level of 1. Therefore, potential adverse noncarcinogenic health effects are not expected to occur.

The total HI for future adult industrial workers was calculated as 4 due to ingestion of groundwater contaminated with manganese. The HIs for the other groundwater exposure pathways were less than 1.

The results of the human health baseline risk assessment indicate that chemicals detected at the site pose a risk to potentially exposed populations. However, this risk may be significantly reduced if groundwater is not used for potable purposes. The quantitative evaluation of risk is subject to several conservative assumptions and should not be considered an absolute measure of risk.

Uncertainties exist in many areas of the human health risk assessment process. However, use of conservative variables in intake calculations and health protective assumptions throughout the entire risk assessment process results in an assessment that is protective of human health and the environment. Examples of uncertainties associated with the risk assessment for the Landfill 7 AOC include: (1) Chemical samples were collected from the suspected source of contamination rather than through random sampling, which may result in a potential overestimation of risk; (2) The HIs associated with dermal contact with soil and sediment were not quantified for the majority of COPCs, which may lead to underestimation of the overall risk due to dermal contact; (3) The models used in the RI are likely to overestimate exposure point concentrations in air, which would cause an overestimation of risk for the inhalation pathway; (4) The model used in the RI to estimate exposure point concentrations in crops irrigated with groundwater may under- or overestimate risk through the crop ingestion pathway; and (5) Toxicological criteria were not available for all chemicals found at the site, which may result in an underestimation of risk.

Ecological Risk Assessment

A baseline risk assessment for ecological receptors at the Landfill 7 AOC was conducted during the RI. The environmental evaluation modeled risks to raccoons,

shrews, and American woodcocks from exposures to surface soil, surface water, and sediment. Ingestion of contaminated media was the only exposure route considered by the ecological evaluation.

The HQs indicative of risks to the three indicator species were calculated to be less than 1, therefore, the potential for adverse impacts to these ecological receptors is considered to be insignificant. The highest calculated values for the raccoon, short-tailed shrew, and American woodcock were 0.028, 0.46, and 0.81, respectively. Manganese contributed the majority of the risk.

Modeling of bioaccumulation to higher order species was not performed, nor was the cumulative effect of multiple contaminants considered; this tends to underestimate the risk to ecological receptors. Also, the risks to ecological receptors in impacted areas (e.g., wetlands, and Six Mile Creek) were not considered in this AOC's risk assessment but were considered in the selection of the preferred remedial action.

Although certain state-listed endangered plants and animals have been observed on or in the vicinity of the base, no threatened and/or endangered species have been identified at this site. There are no federally listed (U.S. Department of the Interior) threatened or endangered plant or animal species at the former base.

Despite periodic disturbances by mowing and brush-hogging, the site shows a great diversity of plant species, including a healthy stand of whorled mountain-mint, a listed New York State threatened plant species. Also, one New York State threatened bird species (upland sandpiper) and one New York State bird species of special concern (grasshopper sparrow) have bred in the vicinity of Landfill 7. Disturbances to these bird species can be minimized by conducting remedial operations after the breeding season. The whorled mountain-mint is not present in the affected area.

Overall, this AOC poses no current or potential threat to the environment.

2.6 Remedial Action Objectives

The following are the remedial action objectives developed for this site based upon the use of the presumptive remedy guidance and the site data:

Containment of Contamination

- Consolidation of various debris and waste areas into the main landfill boundary in order to reduce the area to be capped and the potential for nearby wildlife and human populations to be exposed to the landfill mass; and
- Reduce infiltration of rain water and snow-melt water through the landfill mass in order to minimize the potential for leachate generation and groundwater contamination.

Evaluate Effectiveness of the Remedy by

- Monitoring the groundwater and stream environment (which may include, but is not necessarily limited to, sediment, surface water, and biota) downgradient of the site.

Restrict Exposure to Contamination

- Implementation of institutional controls in the form of deed restrictions of the main landfill boundary to prohibit use of the area and groundwater.

2.7 Description and Evaluation of Remedial Action Alternatives

Superfund remedial and removal programs have found that certain categories of sites have similar characteristics, such as types of contaminants, types of disposal practices, or how environmental media are affected. Based on information acquired from evaluating the past cleanup at these sites, the Superfund program has developed presumptive remedies to accelerate future cleanups of these sites. Containment has been established as the presumptive remedy for CERCLA municipal landfills. Containment technologies are generally deemed appropriate for municipal landfills because the volume and heterogeneity of the waste can generally be presumed to make excavation and/or treatment impractical as well as more costly than containment.

CERCLA regulations mandate that a remedial action must be protective of human health and the environment, cost effective, and utilize permanent solutions and treatment technologies to the maximum extent practicable. These regulations also establish a preference for remedial actions that employ, as a principal element, treatment to permanently reduce the volume, toxicity, or mobility of contaminants at a site. As part of

the presumptive remedy approach, the proposed plan evaluated a no action scenario as dictated by CERCLA and compared it to the presumptive remedy alternative. A summary of the two alternatives is presented below.

No Action Alternative

CERCLA requires that the no action alternative be compared with other alternatives. Under the No Action Alternative, no remedy would be implemented at the Landfill 7 AOC. The site would remain as it is now and there would be no monitoring of contaminants in the groundwater. No institutional controls restricting habitation or use would be established. Costs and construction time are not associated with this alternative.

Presumptive Remedy Alternative

The Presumptive Remedy Alternative includes (1) installation of a low-permeability soil cover in accordance with 6 NYCRR Part 360 landfill closure regulations, dated April 1, 1987; this action would include placing a minimum of 18 inches of low-permeability soil and 6 inches of topsoil over the entire landfill surface to reduce the amount of water infiltration through the landfill; (2) maintenance of the cover and long-term monitoring of the groundwater and stream environment; the groundwater will be monitored in accordance with the Air Force's Long-Term Groundwater Monitoring Program and the stream environment will be monitored in accordance with a future plan to be prepared for the Six Mile Creek AOC; both plans will be subject to the review and approval of the EPA and NYSDEC; (3) monitoring the groundwater and stream environment downgradient of the site to evaluate the effectiveness of the presumptive remedy; and (4) implementation of institutional controls in the form of deed restrictions of the main landfill boundary to prohibit use of the area and groundwater, and to ensure the cap is not damaged and the area is maintained as a landfill.

Any rare plants or wetlands disturbed during the remedial action will be restored. In addition, if leachate discharges are observed during routine walkovers of the landfill, leachate management will be considered at that time.

2.8 Summary of Comparative Analysis

Remedial alternatives are assessed on the basis of both a detailed and a comparative analysis pursuant to the NCP. The detailed analysis of Landfill 7 consisted of (1) an assessment of the individual alternatives against nine evaluation criteria and (2) a comparative analysis focusing upon the relative performance of each alternative against the criteria. In general, the following “threshold” criteria must be satisfied by an alternative for it to be eligible for selection:

1. Overall protection of human health and the environment addresses whether a remedy provides adequate protection and describes how risks posed through each exposure pathway (based on a reasonable maximum exposure scenario) are eliminated, reduced, or controlled through treatment, engineering controls, and/or institutional controls.
2. Compliance with ARARs addresses whether a remedy would (1) meet all of the ARARs or (2) provide grounds for invoking a waiver.

In addition, the following “primary balancing” criteria are used to make comparisons and identify the major trade-off among alternatives:

3. Long-term effectiveness and permanence refers to the ability of a remedy to maintain reliable protection of human health and the environment over time once cleanup goals have been met. It also addresses the magnitude and effectiveness of the measures that may be required to manage the risk posed by treatment residuals and/or untreated wastes.
4. Reduction of toxicity, mobility, or volume via treatment refers to a remedial technology’s expected ability to reduce the toxicity, mobility, or volume of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants at the site.
5. Short-term effectiveness addresses (1) the period of time needed to achieve protection and (2) any adverse impacts on human health and the environment that may be posed during the construction and implementation periods until cleanup goals are achieved.
6. Implementability refers to the technical and administrative feasibility of a remedy, including the availability of materials and services needed.
7. Cost includes estimated capital, operation and maintenance, and present-worth costs.

Finally, the following “modifying” criteria are considered fully after the formal public comment period on the Proposed Plan is complete:

8. State acceptance indicates whether, based on its review of the RI and the Proposed Plan, the State supports or opposes the preferred alternative and/or has identified any reservations with respect to the preferred alternative.
9. Community acceptance refers to the public’s general response to the alternatives described in the Proposed Plan and the RI reports. Factors of community acceptance include support, reservation, or opposition by the community.

A comparative analysis of the two alternatives based on the nine evaluation criteria follows:

1. Overall Protection of Human Health and the Environment

The No Action alternative would potentially not provide adequate protection of human health and the environment. Based on the levels of contaminants and the risk assessment results, there would be a potentially unacceptable risk from incidental ingestion of groundwater by residential or industrial receptors if groundwater were used for domestic purposes in the future.

The Presumptive Remedy will provide adequate protection from exposure to groundwater by limiting the future use of the landfill through the implementation of institutional controls. In addition, the additional landfill cover materials will eliminate the possibility of human exposure to the landfill mass. The Presumptive Remedy will also be effective in limiting infiltration of rain water, which will potentially reduce leachate generation and the transportation of contaminants from the landfill to the creek via groundwater migration.

2. Compliance with ARARs

Contaminant concentrations in the groundwater will not immediately comply with the groundwater ARARs under the No Action alternative or the Presumptive Remedy alternative.

However, the institutional controls proposed by the Presumptive Remedy alternative will restrict the ingestion of groundwater, which is the only pathway that poses a potential risk to human health from the landfill waste. In addition, the TCE plume, which contains TCE in concentrations that exceed the most stringent criterion, appears to be hydraulically isolated from potential future receptors and will be monitored to assure that there is no further contaminant migration and that groundwater standards will be met over time.

3. Long-term Effectiveness and Permanence

Due to the potential for future groundwater ingestion and potential production of leachate, the No Action alternative would not allow for reliable protection of human health and the environment.

For the Presumptive Remedy alternative, the installation and maintenance of a low-permeability soil cover will reduce water infiltration and eliminate contact with the landfill mass. This action coupled with the long-term monitoring program of the groundwater, surface water, sediment and biota is the most aggressive approach to containment and reliable long-term protection of human health and the environment.

4. Reduction of Toxicity, Mobility, or Volume through Treatment

The No Action alternative provides no treatment or containment of contaminant migration, therefore, it does not result in any reduction in toxicity, mobility, or volume.

The construction of a low-permeability soil cover will decrease the opportunity for infiltration of rain and surface water through the landfill. In addition, the cover is expected to reduce leachate generation, which in turn will reduce the potential for transporting contaminants from the landfill to the creek via groundwater. Although treatment will not be employed, this alternative will reduce mobility and volume.

5. Short-term Effectiveness

The No Action alternative would not be an effective alternative because potential risks from the ingestion of groundwater would continue to exist.

For the Presumptive Remedy alternative, construction of the landfill cover would be completed in approximately three to five months. During this time, no exposure to hazardous substances would occur in the community. Potential risks to construction workers would primarily be associated with equipment movement. Any rare plants or wetlands disturbed during the remedial action would be minimal and would be restored. Disturbances to state-threatened bird species at the site could be minimized by conducting remedial operations after the breeding season.

6. Implementability

There would be no limitations to implementing the No Action alternative.

Construction of the landfill cover for the Presumptive Remedy is relatively straightforward. Materials and equipment necessary for the cover construction are readily available. Likewise, implementation of institutional controls in the form of deed restrictions of the main landfill boundary and performance of a

long-term monitoring program should pose no significant impediments to the implementation of the Presumptive Remedy alternative.

7. Cost

There would be no costs associated with the No Action alternative.

Capital costs for capping of the landfill will be approximately 0.5 to 1.0 million dollars. Operation and Maintenance (O & M) costs will be approximately \$10,000 per year. The project construction duration will be approximately three to five months.

8. Agency Acceptance

AFBCA, NYSDEC, and EPA have mutually agreed to select the Presumptive Remedy alternative. The Presumptive Remedy alternative satisfies the threshold criteria and ensures compliance with applicable regulations.

9. Community Acceptance

Community acceptance of the Presumptive Remedy alternative was assessed at the public meeting and during the public comment period. The Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) supported selection of the Presumptive Remedy Alternative.

2.9 Description of the Selected Remedy

The selected remedial action alternative for the Landfill 7 AOC is the Presumptive Remedy. This alternative was chosen because it has been demonstrated to be effective for similar military landfills and is known to be both cost-effective and easy to implement. The threshold criteria are satisfied by the Presumptive Remedy. The Presumptive Remedy includes the following actions:

1. Preparation of the landfill surface prior to providing cover materials. The landfill cover will be cleared and grubbed, and low areas will be backfilled. The landfill surface also will be regraded to prevent future erosion or ponding. Any rare plants or wetlands disturbed during the remedial action will be restored.
2. Decommissioning of monitoring wells located within the construction limits.
3. Installation of a low-permeability soil cover in accordance with 6 NYCRR Part 360 landfill closure regulations, dated April 1, 1987; this action would include placing a minimum of 18 inches of low-permeability soil and 6 inches

of topsoil over the entire landfill surface to reduce the amount of water infiltration through the landfill.

4. Maintenance of the cover and long-term monitoring of the groundwater and stream environment; the groundwater will be monitored in accordance with the Air Force's Long-Term Groundwater Monitoring Program and the stream environment will be monitored in accordance with a future plan to be prepared for the Six Mile Creek AOC; both plans will be subject to the review and approval of the EPA and NYSDEC.
5. Monitoring the groundwater and stream environment downgradient of the site to evaluate the effectiveness of the presumptive remedy.
6. Implementation of institutional controls in the form of deed restrictions of the main landfill boundary and groundwater to prohibit use of the area and groundwater, and to ensure the cap is not damaged and the area is maintained as a landfill.
7. Evaluation of site conditions at least once every five years.

2.10 Statutory Determinations

In general, the selected remedy must meet the statutory requirements of CERCLA, Section 121, which are itemized in Section 1.5 of this ROD and described below.

Protection of Human Health and the Environment

The Presumptive Remedy will provide adequate protection from exposure to groundwater by limiting the future use of the landfill through the implementation of institutional controls. Also, the additional landfill cover materials will eliminate the possibility of human exposure to the landfill mass. The Presumptive Remedy will also be effective in limiting infiltration of rain water, which will potentially reduce leachate generation and the transportation of contaminants from the landfill to the creek via groundwater migration.

Compliance with ARARs

Contaminant concentrations in the groundwater will not immediately comply with the groundwater ARARs under the No Action alternative or the Presumptive Remedy alternative.

However, the institutional controls proposed by the Presumptive Remedy alternative will restrict the ingestion of groundwater, which is the only pathway that poses a potential risk to human health from the landfill waste. In addition, the TCE plume, which contains TCE in concentrations that exceed the most stringent criterion, appears to be hydraulically isolated from potential future receptors and will be monitored to assure that there is no further contaminant migration and that groundwater standards will be met over time.

Cost-Effectiveness

The cost of the remedy is typical for the scope of the remedial action.

Utilization of Permanent Solutions and Alternative Treatment Technologies to the Maximum Extent Practicable

Installation and maintenance of a low-permeability cover does not represent a completely permanent solution to contamination at the site. However, the combination of capping and long-term monitoring of the groundwater and the stream environment present the most aggressive approach to this contamination short of landfill excavation. Thorough investigations during the RI and SI demonstrated that no distinct sources of contamination are present in the landfill. Thus, the approach adopted by the selected remedy represents the greatest long-term effectiveness appropriate for this AOC.

Preference for Treatment as a Principal Element

The presumptive remedy does not employ treatment of the groundwater because no distinct sources of contamination were identified in the landfill and exposure to groundwater will be limited by the implementation of institutional controls at the landfill. The installation and maintenance of the landfill cover will potentially benefit groundwater quality by reducing the amount of leachate generated, thus limiting transportation of contaminants to the creek through groundwater migration.

2.11 Documentation of Significant Changes

No significant changes have been made to the selected remedy from the time the proposed plan was released for public comment.

**Table 1
COMPOUNDS EXCEEDING GUIDANCE VALUES
LANDFILL 7 AOC
SURFACE SOIL SAMPLES**

^a NYS-recommended soil cleanup objective.

^b Background screening concentration.

Key:

J = Estimated concentration.

| Compound | Range of Detected Concentrations | Frequency of Detection Above Most Stringent Criterion | Most Stringent Criterion |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| SVOCs (µg/kg) | | | |
| Benzo(a)pyrene | 130 J | 1/3 | 61 ^a |
| Pesticides (µg/kg) | | | |
| beta Endosulfan | 1.98 J | 1/3 | 0.9 ^a |
| Metals (mg/kg) | | | |
| Beryllium | 0.76 | 1/3 | 0.64 ^b |

**Table 2
COMPOUNDS EXCEEDING GUIDANCE VALUES
LANDFILL 7 AOC
SURFACE WATER SAMPLES**

| Compound | Range of Detected Concentrations | Frequency of Detection Above Most Stringent Criterion | Most Stringent Criterion |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| SVOCs (µg/L) | | | |
| Bis(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate | 2 | 1/6 | 0.6 ^a |
| Phenanthrene | 0.041 J - 0.045 J | 2/6 | 0.003 ^b |
| Pyrene | 0.007 J | 1/6 | 0.003 ^b |
| Metals (mg/L) | | | |
| Aluminum | 3.5 | 1/5 | 0.1 ^a |
| Copper | 0.021 | 1/5 | 0.006 ^a |
| Iron | 0.59 - 10 | 5/5 | 0.3 ^a |
| Manganese | 0.23 - 0.88 | 5/5 | 0.05 ^b |

^a NYSDEC Class C surface water standard.

^b Federal aquatic water quality criterion for protection of human health.

Key:

J = Estimated concentration.

**Table 3
COMPOUNDS EXCEEDING GUIDANCE VALUES
LANDFILL 7 AOC
GROUNDWATER SAMPLES**

| Compound | Range of Detected Concentrations | Frequency of Detection Above Most Stringent Criterion | Most Stringent Criterion |
|--------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|
| VOCs (µg/L) | | | |
| Trichloroethylene | 1.3 - 31 | 1/10 | 3 ^a |
| Pesticides (µg/L) | | | |
| Aldicarb | 5 J - 8 J | 1/30 | 7 ^b |
| Dieldrin | 0.002 J | 1/9 | ND ^c |
| p,p'-DDT | 0.011 J | 1/10 | ND ^c |
| Metals (mg/L) | | | |
| Aluminum | 0.15 - 0.59 | 7/10 | 0.05 ^b |
| Iron | 0.14 - 24.7 | 7/10 | 0.3 ^c |
| Manganese | 0.053 J - 4.2 | 9/10 | 0.05 ^d |
| Nickel | 0.032 - 0.14 | 1/10 | 0.1 ^b |
| Sodium | 2.4 - 34 | 1/10 | 20 ^c |

^a NYSDEC Class GA ground-water guidance value.

^b Federal maximum contaminant level.

^c NYSDEC Class GA ground-water standard.

^d Federal secondary maximum contaminant level.

Key:

J = Estimated concentration.
ND = Nondetect.

**Table 4
COMPOUNDS EXCEEDING GUIDANCE VALUES
LANDFILL 7 AOC
SEDIMENT SAMPLES**

| Compound | Range of Detected Concentrations | Frequency of Detection Above Most Stringent Criterion | Most Stringent Criterion |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| SVOCs (µg/kg) | | | |
| Anthracene | 33 J - 130 J | 1/2 | 85 ^a |
| Benzo(a)anthracene | 69 J - 550 J | 5/22 | 1.3 ^b |
| Benzo(a)pyrene | 40 J - 390 J | 5/22 | 1.3 ^b |
| Benzo(b)fluoranthene | 32 J - 450 J | 9/22 | 1.3 ^b |
| Benzo(k)fluoranthene | 12 J - 240 J | 7/22 | 1.3 ^b |
| Bis(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate | 120 J - 6,900 | 2/22 | 199.5 ^c |
| Chrysene | 48J - 420J | 8/22 | 1.3 ^b |
| Fluoranthene | 59 J - 1,100 J | 1/22 | 600 ^a |
| Phenanthrene | 20 J - 530 J | 6/22 | 120 ^c |
| Pesticides (µg/kg) | | | |
| alpha BHC | 1.1 J - 3.5 J | 3/22 | 0.06 ^b |
| beta Endosulfan | 1 J | 1/22 | 0.03 ^c |
| BHC | 2.5 J - 2.9 J | 2/22 | 0.06 ^c |
| Dieldrin | 6.3 J - 16 | 3/22 | 0.1 ^b |
| Methoxychlor | 5.5 J | 1/22 | 0.6 ^c |
| Mirex | 4.4 J - 7.8 | 2/22 | 0.07 ^b |
| p,p'-DDD | 1.5 J - 44 J | 9/22 | 0.01 ^b |
| p,p'-DDE | 0.98 J - 14 J | 13/22 | 0.01 ^b |
| p,p'-DDT | 1.7 J - 73 | 3/22 | 0.01 ^b |
| Metals (mg/kg) | | | |
| Arsenic | 1.1 - 339 J | 4/24 | 6 ^d |
| Chromium, total | 2.4 - 33.8 | 2/24 | 26 ^d |
| Copper | 3.5 - 53.5 | 2/24 | 16 ^d |
| Lead | 4.9 - 140 | 6/24 | 31 ^d |
| Manganese | 152 - 22,100 | 16/24 | 480 ^d |
| Nickel | 4.8 - 157 | 10/24 | 16 ^d |
| Silver | 2.6 | 1/24 | 1 ^d |
| Zinc | 18.9 - 179 | 2/24 | 120 ^d |

* Criterion expressed as µg per gram of organic carbon; sediment concentrations adjusted based on sample-specific total organic carbon before comparison reported in "Frequency of Detection Above Most Stringent Criterion" column.

^a Federal guidance value, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

^b NYSDEC criterion for protection of human health – bioaccumulation.

^c NYSDEC criterion for protection of benthic aquatic life.

^d State sediment criteria for metals.

Key:

J = Estimated concentration.

**Table 5
LANDFILL 7 AOC
RISK ASSESSMENT EXPOSURE SCENARIOS**

| RESIDENTIAL AND AGRICULTURAL RECEPTORS | RECREATIONAL RECEPTOR | LANDSCAPE WORKER | INDUSTRIAL WORKER |
|---|---|---|--|
| Adult, Child, Youth, Adolescent | Adult, Child, Youth, Adolescent | Adult | Adult |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inhalation of airborne chemicals • Inhalation of fugitive dust from surface soils • Ingestion of groundwater • Dermal contact with groundwater (during showering) • Inhalation of VOCs from groundwater (during showering) • Ingestion of crops irrigated with groundwater | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inhalation of airborne chemicals • Inhalation of fugitive dust from surface soil • Incidental ingestion of surface soil • Dermal contact with surface soil • Incidental ingestion of surface water • Dermal contact with surface water • Incidental ingestion of sediments • Dermal contact with sediments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incidental ingestion of surface soil • Inhalation of fugitive dust from surface soil • Dermal contact with surface soil • Inhalation of airborne chemicals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ingestion of groundwater • Dermal contact with groundwater (during showering) • Inhalation of VOCs from groundwater (during showering) |

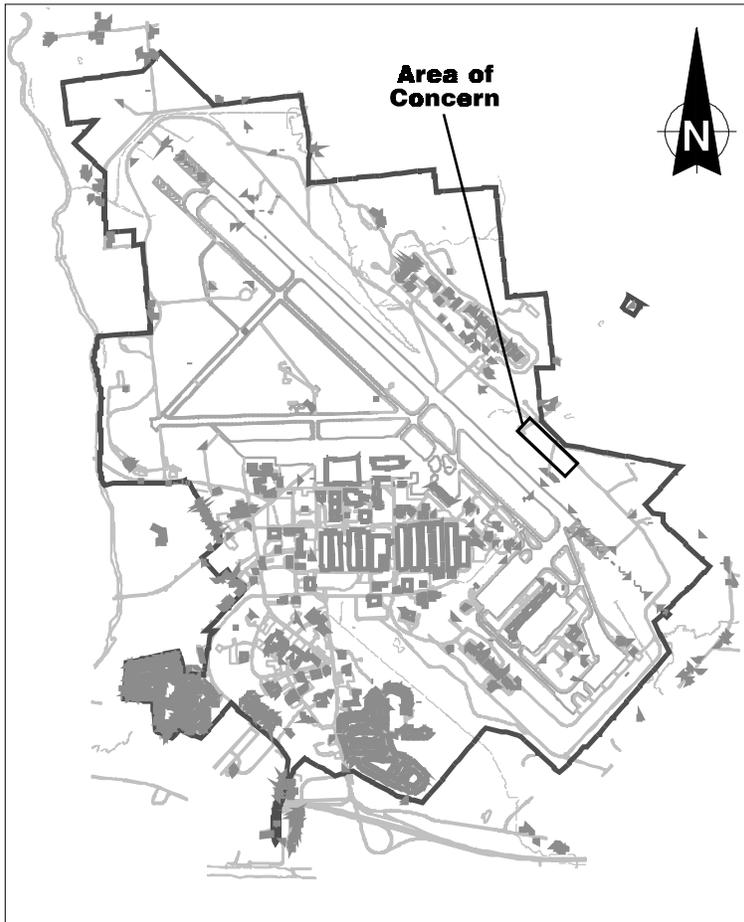
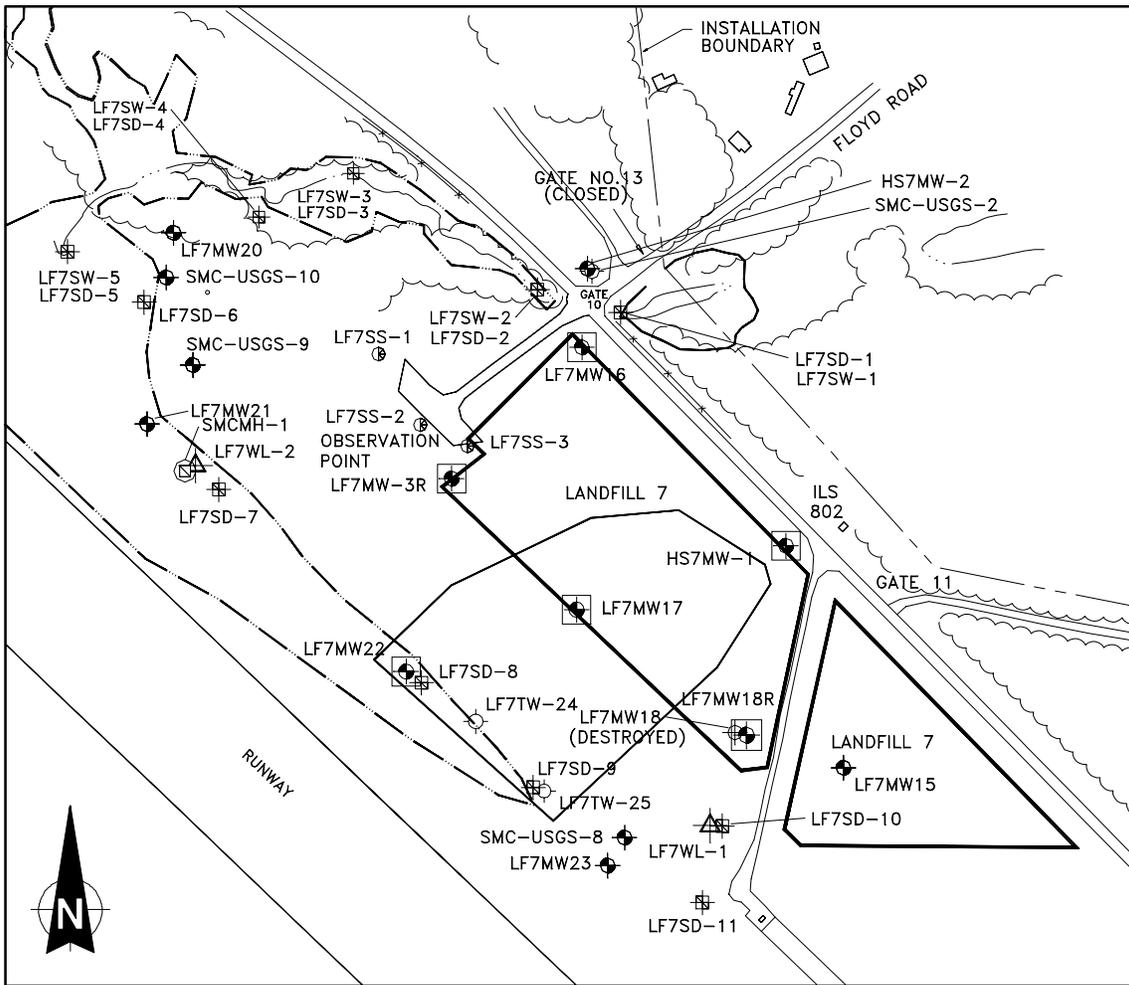


Figure 1: Landfill 7 AOC is located in the east-central portion of the former Griffiss AFB.



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | RI SURFACE WATER AND/OR SEDIMENT SAMPLE | | SUPPLEMENTAL INVESTIGATION TEMPORARY WELL |
| | RI SURFACE SOIL SAMPLE | | SUPPLEMENTAL INVESTIGATION LEACHATE SAMPLE |
| | ESTIMATED CONTAMINATION PLUME | | SUPPLEMENTAL INVESTIGATION STORM SEWER WATER SAMPLE |
| | FENCE | | RI MONITORING WELL RESAMPLED DURING SUPPLEMENTAL INVESTIGATION |
| | JURISDICTIONAL WETLANDS BOUNDARY | | RI MONITORING WELL |
| | INSTALLATION BOUNDARY | | USGS PIEZOMETER |
| | APPROXIMATE LIMITS OF LANDFILL | | |

SCALE IN FEET



Figure 2: Landfill 7 AOC

3

Responsiveness Summary

On Monday, February 7, 2000, AFBCA, following consultation with and concurrence of the EPA and NYSDEC, released for public comment the proposed plan for remedial action at the Landfill 7 AOC at the former Griffiss Air Force Base. The release of the proposed plan initiated the public comment period, which concluded on March 8, 2000.

During the public comment period, a public meeting was held on Wednesday, February 23, 2000, at 5:00 p.m. at the Floyd Town Hall located at 8299 Old Floyd Road, Rome, New York. The public meeting included a presentation and discussion of four landfill AOCs: Landfills 2/3, Landfill 4, Landfill 5, and Landfill 7. A court reporter recorded the proceedings of the public meeting. Copies of the transcript and attendance list are included in the Administrative Record. The public comment period and the public meeting were intended to elicit public comment on the proposals for remedial action at Landfills 2/3, 5, and 7, and the proposal for no further action for soils with groundwater monitoring at Landfill 4.

This section summarizes and provides responses to the verbal comments received at the public meeting and the written comments received during the public comment period.

Comment #1 (oral - John Fitzgerald)

Mr. Fitzgerald expressed the following concerns: a) Contaminant levels are exceeding standards or criteria, but the public has been told not to worry about it because, “we are going to put a cover on it and we will walk away, and you will be fine, just don’t

drink the water....I seem to be the only one worried about it.” b) He believes that there is a mess on the base with the landfills and that the Federal government has the capability to clean them up, but instead they’re going to walk away and leave the mess to the residents. He doesn’t think that an unlined landfill should be capped, but rather the material should be dug up and put in a lined landfill. c) He indicated that some people kept their old wells when the new water main was installed because the new water is metered and they use the water from the wells to wash cars, water gardens, fill pools, and kids also drink from the hose.

Response #1

a) Although certain contaminant concentrations exceeded the most stringent criteria, the risk assessments performed for these AOCs (which take into account site-specific conditions and reuse planning options) determined that the risks associated with these contaminants fall within EPA’s acceptable risk range, with the exception of groundwater ingestion for Landfills 2/3, 4, and 7 and groundwater ingestion and surface soil ingestion and contact for the child receptor at Landfill 5. Low-level contamination is limited to isolated areas. The Presumptive Remedy for Landfills 2/3, 5, and 7 calls for long-term monitoring of the groundwater; installation of a low-permeability soil cover in accordance with 6 NYCRR Part 360 landfill closure regulations, which will reduce exposure to the landfill mass; and implementation of institutional controls in the form of deed restrictions of the main landfill boundary to prohibit use of the area and groundwater. For Landfill 4, long-term monitoring of the groundwater will be performed and deed restrictions will be incorporated into all property transfer documents.

b) Capping the landfill as it exists now is expected to reduce the amount of rain water/snowmelt that infiltrates the landfill, comes into contact with the waste, and potentially creates leachate that may affect groundwater and surface water. The landfill cap should help to minimize the leaching of contaminants from the landfill mass into the groundwater and surface water. Capping and long-term monitoring of environmental media is often the preferred remedy for unlined landfills as opposed to excavation, removal, and reburial of the landfill mass. This is due to the chemical exposure potential (both to the workers and the nearby residents due to wind dispersion and runoff) and the

potential for release of contaminants and creation of more leachate when the existing cap is removed. The physical hazards and the considerable additional costs associated with waste excavation and reburial also were considerations.

c) As long as the old wells were disconnected from household plumbing served by the public water supply, homeowners were able to keep their old wells active as a completely separated system. There is no rule or regulation that would prevent a homeowner from making that decision. Fortunately, even for the highest levels of contamination found during the sampling programs performed in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the risks associated with watering gardens and filling swimming pools would be negligible. Very occasional ingestion, such as drinking from a garden hose several times a summer, would also pose a negligible risk, considering that most contaminants were detected at the same magnitude as drinking water standards. The actual area of possible contaminated groundwater where potential exposure would be a concern was much smaller than the extent of the new water main installation, which was a large loop for design purposes. The Landfills 2/3, 4, 5, and 7 AOCs have not been shown to contribute to off-site contamination. In addition, the on-base groundwater monitoring wells have shown isolated areas of low-level contamination and will be part of a long-term groundwater monitoring program designed to detect contamination before it migrates to off-site locations.

Comment #2 (oral – Carmen Malagisi)

Mr. Malagisi asked if the public will be allowed to comment on the long-term groundwater monitoring plan.

Response #2

Yes, a meeting will be set up to discuss the plan with the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB). The general public will be invited to attend this meeting.

Comment #3 (oral – John Fitzgerald)

Mr. Fitzgerald asked if it would be possible to recruit new members for the RAB because some of the current members have shown little interest.

Response #3

The AFBCA will forward this request to Mark Reynolds, the RAB Co-Chairman, and recommend that he seek new members.

Comment #4 (oral – Freda Melkum)

Ms. Freda Melkum relayed an incident in which she thinks that barrels filled with antifreeze were disposed in one of the landfills because the antifreeze made a group of airmen sick. She believed this incident occurred in the late 1960s or early 1970s and wanted to know which landfill the barrels were disposed in.

Response #4

The geophysical surveys performed during the RI did not detect a significant number of drums within these landfills. However, the AFBCA has researched the possibility of this incident (interviews with past base employees and base environmental engineering records), and no recollection or mention of an incident involving the use of antifreeze that made airmen sick or the disposal of such antifreeze can be found. The drums that were found in Landfills 2/3 and Landfill 5 were excavated and properly disposed, and stained soil surrounding the drums was removed. Analytical results for confirmatory soil samples collected following excavation indicated that there was no residual contamination from the drums. No drums were found in Landfill 7 or Landfill 4.

Comment #5 (oral – Roger Krol with Ocuto Blacktop in Rome)

Mr. Krol asked if the capping of the landfills would be a competitive bid.

Response #5

The present contracting strategy for Landfills 2/3 and 7 is to solicit open competitive bids. Contracts for Landfills 2/3 and 7 will be handled in a manner similar to the contracting methods used for a previous hardfill capping contract. The Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence (AFCEE) will be the contracting service center. The remedial actions are completed at Landfill 4, so there is no additional work programmed for this site. A contracting strategy has not yet been developed for Landfill 5.

Comment #6 (written – Freda Melkum)

In her letter, Ms. Melkum expresses concern that just capping the landfills with a dirt cover would not be enough. She states that during periods of snow thaw and heavy rain, the water table rises and when it recedes it takes dissolved chemicals with it. She states, “ So for decades these chemicals are going to drain into 3 and 6 mile creeks.” Ms. Melkum requests that a) besides monitoring and deed restrictions, an advertisement program be initiated to warn the residents not to use the well water under any circumstances; and b) signs be posted warning people to stay away from the creeks, particularly at Rickmeyer Road, Route 365, Skyline Heights, and River Road near the creeks. She states, “Considering that you are spending millions and millions of dollars on this questionable cleanup, I don’t think it’s too much to ask of you to spend a few hundred dollars to post some signs to warn people to the dangers. I feel we are entitled to them due to what’s in these landfills.” She also states that she was pleased with the cleanup of Landfill 4.

Response #6

a) As long as the old wells were disconnected from household plumbing served by the public water supply, homeowners were able to keep their old wells active as a completely separated system. There is no rule or regulation that would prevent a homeowner from making that decision. Fortunately, even for the highest levels of contamination found during the sampling programs performed in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the risks associated with watering gardens and filling swimming pools would be negligible. Very occasional ingestion, such as drinking from a garden hose several times a summer, would also pose a negligible risk, considering that most contaminants were detected at the same magnitude as drinking water standards. The actual area of possible contaminated groundwater where potential exposure would be a concern was much smaller than the extent of the new water main installation, which was a large loop for design purposes. The Landfills 2/3, 4, 5, and 7 AOCs have not been shown to contribute to off-site contamination. In addition, the on-base groundwater monitoring wells have shown isolated areas of low-level contamination and will be part of a long-term groundwater monitoring program designed to detect contamination before it migrates to off-site locations.

b) Presently, the Air Force does not plan to post signs along Three or Six Mile Creeks. When purchasing a New York State fishing license, a pamphlet is also provided that indicates the fish advisories for each individual body of water within the limits of the state. This advisory is based upon the results of independent periodic sampling performed by NYSDEC. Presently there are no specific New York State fish advisories indicated for Six Mile Creek and only the white sucker (no more than one meal a month) for Three Mile Creek. However, the general health advisory for sport fish is that you eat no more than one meal (one-half pound) per week of fish taken from the State's fresh waters. This general advisory is to protect against eating large amounts of fish that have not been tested or may contain unidentified contaminants. This advisory is based upon the results of independent periodic sampling performed by NYSDEC. In addition, human health risk assessments were performed during the remedial investigations for the creeks. The results of the assessments indicate that the risks associated with the incidental ingestion of surface water and sediments, and the dermal exposure to them resulting from swimming or wading in the water, are within the acceptable limits required by the EPA. Separate proposed plans, which will address these concerns, will be issued for Three Mile Creek and Six Mile Creek.