



# ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE

May 2010

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

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## **Kincheloe Air Force Base**

The former Kincheloe Air Force Base (AFB) is a formerly used defense site located in Kinross, Mich.

The majority of the property is now occupied by the Chippewa County International Airport, Kinross Township and several state correctional facilities. Most of the industrial portions of Kincheloe AFB are owned by either the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) or the Kinross Township

## **History**

The former Kincheloe AFB was utilized by the Department of Defense (DoD) from 1942 to 1977. The installation was originally used as a refueling stop for aircrafts bound for Alaska and was deactivated after World War II to be used as a civilian airport by the city of Sault Ste Marie. The Air Force reactivated the installation in 1952 to serve as the 91<sup>st</sup> Air Base Squadron and renamed it Kinross Air Force Base. In 1959, the Strategic Air Command (SAC) established a presence at Kincheloe AFB. A number of larger aircraft, including B-52H jet bombers, began flying out of the base necessitating extension of the runway to 12,000 feet. The base closed in September 1977.

Congress established the Defense Environmental Restoration Program/Formerly Used Defense Site (DERP/FUDS) program to clean up properties that were under the jurisdiction of the Secretary and owned, leased, or possessed by the United States and transferred from Department of Defense (DoD) control prior to Oct. 17, 1986. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) manages the FUDS program.

## **Major Milestones/Accomplishments**

Environmental response actions at DERP/FUDS conform to the requirements of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP). USACE has been working in conjunction with the Michigan EPA to assess potential environmental issues associated with past Army activities on the site.

- USACE completed the construction of a new well house and two new 220-foot wells in October 1999 after low-levels of trichloroethylene (TCE) were detected in the township's municipal wells. The level of contamination never exceeded federal drinking water standards but was a serious concern to the community and the State. The wells now serve as the primary source of drinking water for residents.
- In April 2001, the well house was transferred to the Kinross Township Department of Public Works. In September 2002, the township won the American Water Works Association's award for the best tasting drinking water in the State of Michigan.
- Approximately 150 tons of soil and tar material were removed from the Tar Spill Area at the south end of the main runway during 2001 and was properly disposed.
- A field investigation, including a geophysical survey and confirmatory test pits and trenches, was conducted to search for rocket propellant sticks reportedly buried in an area west of the former Kinross Manufacturing Company area. No rocket propellant sticks were found during this investigation.



*An old ammunition bunker located on the former Kincheloe AFB, a formerly used defense site in Kinross, Mich.*

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## Where We Are Now

- Long-term monitoring of groundwater wells will be required at these sites by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) for a projected period of at least 10 years prior to close-out.
- An interim response action is ongoing at a former fire training area. The location's soils have been impacted by volatile compounds from previous fire fighting training activities. A soil vapor extraction system removes residual fuel compounds protecting the area's ground water.
- USACE is completing six remedial investigations under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) at several discrete areas across the installation. The areas of concern are from former fuel storage, maintenance activities, or landfills. The projected completion date for the remedial investigations is fall 2011.
- The property has been used extensively by other parties since DoD disposed of the property in 1977. USACE is actively evaluating the historical uses and operations at the site by DoD and non-DoD parties who may share in the responsibility for the site