

## "The BIA Site"



Built in 1958, the Bethel Air Force Station was part of the White Alice Control System – a comprehensive communications system to connect remote Air Force sites across the state of Alaska. It encompassed a large area with several buildings and other structures related to the radar and communications equipment. The system was advanced for its time but became obsolete following the use of satellite

communications.

In 1963, the Air Force had no use for the facility and issued a permit to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) granting them use of the site as administrative offices. It became known as the BIA Bethel Headquarters. It was eventually abandoned around 1992 and the land was turned over to the Bureau of Land Management and currently managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The 45-acre site still contains 11 abandoned buildings that are no longer functional. Most were damaged by fire, vandalism and their overall age.

Today, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service collaborates with the Bureau of Indian Affairs to demolish these old structures and to address the hazardous materials such as asbestos, PCB, lead, and POL that were used in their construction. Ahtna Global is the contractor leading the project.

Abatement of all the hazardous waste has been completed and this material will not remain in Bethel. The hazardous waste has been sealed into 25 containers and it will ship out in the last barge in October to Waste Management. The next step will be the actual demolition of the structures set to begin on September 28<sup>th</sup>. This stage will be completed exclusively with the use of excavators and heavy equipment. Clean concrete will be crushed and reused as gravel for Refuge projects.

While some headway has been made in removing the old structures, more work remains to be done. The complete clean-up of this property also warrants soil testing and soil remediation, work without a timeline in sight. Still, this is the first phase to reclaim the land and to eventually, provide a new service to the community of Bethel.

For more information on this project, contact Deputy Manager Ray Born at [Vernon\\_Born@fws.gov](mailto:Vernon_Born@fws.gov)



*Affected by a fire, this is one of the many hazards at the BIA site. The site is closed to the public for safety reasons.*



*Despite the safety risks, some trespassers use the site as a form of self-expression.*

# BIA Bldg Map - 6-18-18

Tags for all the buildings with some notes, updated bldg numbers

## Legend

 BIA Site Bldg



Google Earth

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400 ft