



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — August 2, 2017

CONTACT: Sally Schlichting, Contaminated Sites Unit Manager, (907) 465-5076

Final Phase of Wrangell Junkyard Site Cleanup Underway

WRANGELL, Alaska — The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has contracted with the Anchorage-based environmental cleanup company, NRC Alaska, to construct a monofill to permanently dispose of treated soil from the Wrangell Junkyard site, an action which will complete cleanup of the site.

Lead and other contaminants from the Wrangell Junkyard site posed an imminent and substantial exposure risk to human health from surface water contamination and runoff to the intertidal area of Zimovia Strait.

In 2016, DEC oversaw the first phase of the final cleanup, using more than \$6 million from the Oil and Hazardous Substance Release Prevention and Response Fund for the cleanup. That effort resulted in the shipment of 22 drums and 57 containers full of contaminated debris to permitted facilities in the Lower 48. It also left 18,350 cubic yards of treated soil at the site. The soil had been stabilized with EcoBond, which made the lead non-leachable. Though the soil is treated and will not impact surface or ground water, there is threat of ingestion if it is not properly contained in an appropriate disposal site or facility.

“It was much more expensive to ship the treated soil to a landfill facility in the Lower 48 (estimated at \$9 million) than to construct a monofill in the Wrangell area (\$5.4 million),” said Sally Schlichting, DEC’s Contaminated Sites unit manager. “Over the past six months, we have worked collaboratively with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, City and Borough of Wrangell, and the DEC Solid Waste Program to find a suitable disposal site,” said Schlichting.

The site determined to be most suitable is an inactive DNR rock pit located on state land on Pat’s Creek Road. DEC has requested an additional \$5.5 million from the Response Fund in order to properly prepare the site and access road, transport the material, contour the material, and construct a cap that will include a membrane liner, sand layer, rock layer, topsoil, and vegetation. DEC is estimating it will take approximately 2,000 truck trips to move the soil to the monofill site.

This site was chosen because the pit is sheltered, road-accessible, state-owned, the right size, requires less clearing and preparation than other sites, and the pit is inactive due to the poor quality of the rock for roadbuilding. The pit, designated as ADL 107660 – Pat’s Creek Road #2 Quarry, is located on Pat’s Creek Road, 1.6 miles east of Zimovia Highway and about eight miles from the former junkyard site. After the monofill is constructed, it will be monitored for five

years to make sure the cap is stable and the site meets all regulatory standards. Additional periodic monitoring will be required into the future.

“This local long-term disposal option is the most cost-effective solution that protects human health and the environment and also provides the additional benefit of getting valuable and developable land in the city returned to reuse,” said Schlichting. “Because of the sloped land, weather exposures, and location, the original site was not an option for a monofill.”

Schlichting also explained that it is critical for all levels of government and the business community to work together to protect Alaska and its residents from future contamination.

“This cleanup is not only incredibly expensive, but it serves as a good example of why we now have and need to follow safe practices and rules for the proper storage, use, and disposal of hazardous materials,” said Schlichting. “The local, state, and federal best management practices and regulations are designed to protect our health and the environment. It is always more cost effective to handle hazardous materials properly at the beginning, rather than cleaning up contaminated sites years later.”

More information and photos of the Wrangell Junkyard cleanup, visit DEC’s Contaminated Sites webpage at https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/csp/sites/wrang_junkyard.htm.

###