

Ellsworth Air Force Base Restoration News

Keeping local residents informed of cleanup activities

March 2022 Issue 20

NEXT NEWSLETTER

The next newsletter will be released in June 2022.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.ellsworth.af.mil/About-Us/environmental/

View the following:

- Past newsletters
- PFOS/PFOA Updates
- Presentations
- Public announcements

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT THE ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD WEBSITE

<https://ar.afcec-cloud.af.mil/>

- From the "Installation List" on the left, scroll down and select "Ellsworth AFB, SD"
- If you know the AR number enter it next to "AR #" and click "Search"
- Click on the magnifying glass to open
- Numerous other search blocks can be used

Community Town Hall Meeting

Tuesday March 22nd from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.
130 Kansas City Street, Suite 100

The Pennington County Board of Commissioners is hosting a community town hall meeting.

The purpose of the town hall is to update the community on the Federal and State government response regarding per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Scheduled speakers are listed below.

The town hall will be in the Commission Chambers at the Pennington County Administration Building in Rapid City. Pennington County residents will recognize this building as the place to pick up license plates. The meeting will also be available remotely via an online forum**

All are welcome to attend!

**To attend the Community Town Hall via Zoom use one of the following links:

<https://tinyurl.com/2p9hysz5>

or

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7755207200?pwd=eHB0NGoyRXVkekk2dFhZaEJwRVdEUT09>

Speaker	Organization	Topic
Travis Lasseter	Pennington County Board of Commissioners	Opening remarks Closing remarks and questions
Chris Poulet	Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry	PFAS health impacts
Natasha Lohwater	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA)	Superfund 101 and community participation
Rita Krebs and Jens Christensen	Air Force Civil Engineer Center	Environmental restoration projects underway at Ellsworth
Glen Kane	South Dakota Ellsworth Development Authority	New community water system
Joane Lineburg	South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (SD DANR)	Community participation in the State permitting process

RW028 No Further Action Record of Decision Signed

In 1997, two concrete burial monoliths presumed to contain low-level radioactive waste were removed from RW028 (Low Level Radioactive Waste Burial Site; Operable Unit 14), located at the southern boundary of the Base (see *Figure 1 on next page for location*). Based on historical records, the monoliths may have contained luminous instrument dials and markers, electronic tubes, valve knobs and handles, and experimental items. Chemical Agent Identification Sets used as training aids were also removed during the 1997 removal action.

In 2019, an Interim Removal Action was conducted at RW028 to remove a third monolith un-

expectedly discovered in 2011.

A Remedial Investigation was also completed in 2019 to make sure no additional monoliths or other waste remain at the site. No contamination was identified and no risks to current and future receptors were identified.

The Record of Decision (ROD) documents the no further action decision at RW028. The ROD was signed by the Air Force on January 19, 2022 and was also signed by the U.S. EPA and SD DANR.

The document is AR# 8739 on the Administrative Record website (see sidebar on the left side for instructions).

Innovative Technology Demonstration/Validation Projects

The Ellsworth Environmental Restoration Program is at the forefront of remediation technology implementation, most notably for innovative technology projects associated with treating PFAS. These emerging contaminants are toxic and difficult to treat because of their high stability and mobility.

Three demonstration/validation projects are currently underway.

1. The first demonstration/validation project was initiated in 2019 to assess the spread of PFAS above the water table at the former fire training area (FT001P; see *Figure 1* for location). Studies have shown that PFAS are retained in surface soils. Twelve pairs of devices called lysimeters were installed to measure the amount of PFAS contamination leaching from the soil to the groundwater within the source area at FT001P.

The Department of the Air Force will use

the study results to evaluate the degree to which PFAS leaches from soil to groundwater. The default regulatory guidelines for assessing the potential for PFAS in soil to leach to groundwater are conservative. The results of this study are important to show that using current conservative guidelines could result in cleanups that may be excessive.

2. The second demonstration/validation project was initiated in 2019 to evaluate the viability of chemically stabilizing (or solidifying) PFAS-impacted sediment. The project initially focused on Pond 3; however, Pond 1 (see *Figure 1* for location) was selected for this project since it receives runoff from the former fire training area and then discharges surface water off-Base which impacts downgradient drinking water wells.

Although the project is a demonstration project that will be useful during future

Feasibility Studies, it may prove to be the final remedy for impacted material in Pond 1.

3. The third demonstration/validation project was initiated in 2020 to determine if sorbent flow-through barriers (a.k.a. clay mats) are effective at reducing PFAS transfer from groundwater to surface water. Clay mats were installed along a 400-foot length of the surface water drainage flowing into Pond 1 adjacent to FT001P (the site with highest PFAS concentrations).

Quarterly monitoring will be conducted for two years following installation to measure PFAS concentrations and the capability of the clay mats to reduce PFAS discharges from groundwater into surface water. The results of the demonstration will be useful when it comes time to evaluate remedial alternatives for PFAS contamination in future Feasibility Studies across the Department of the Air Force.

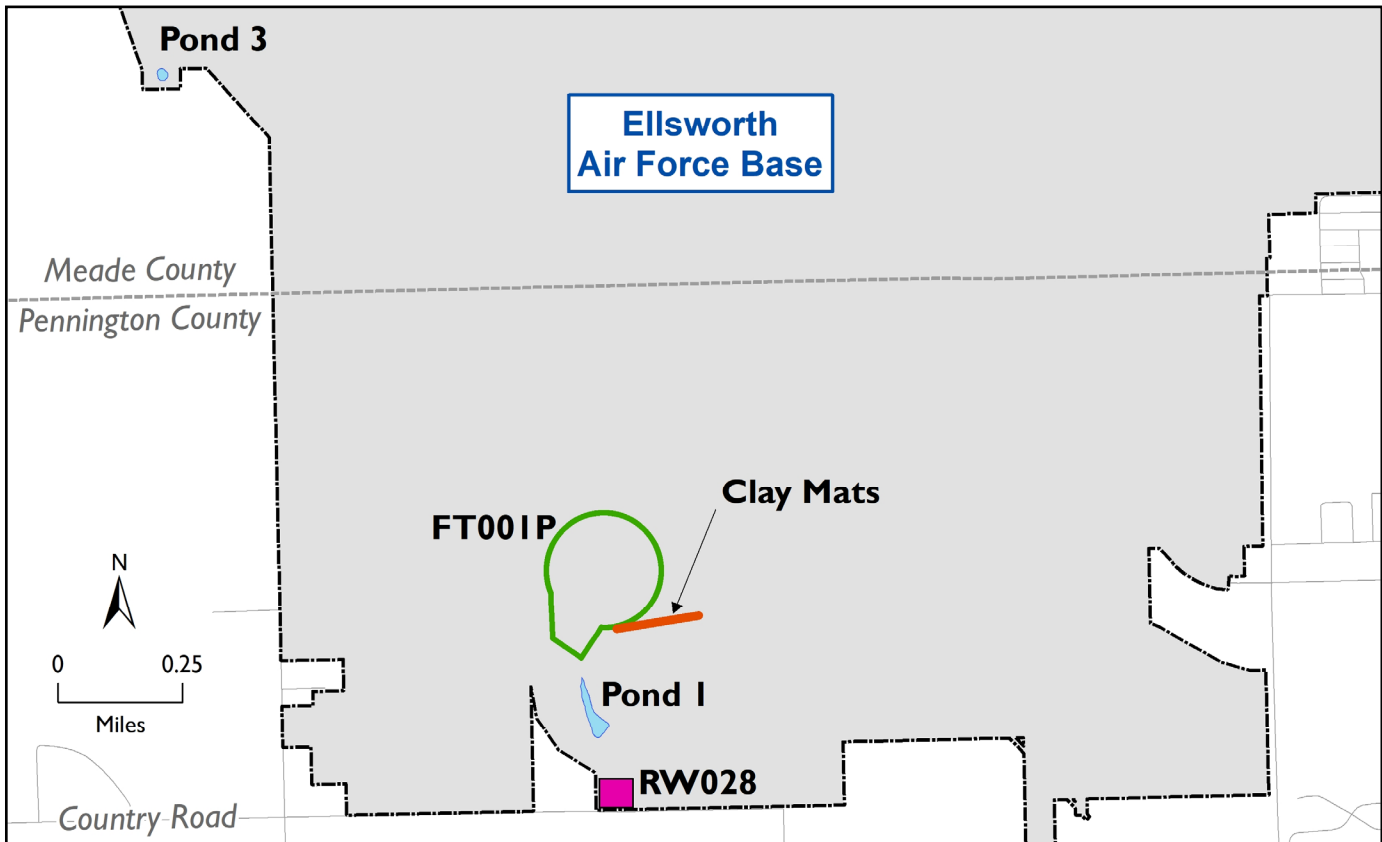


Figure 1. Location of Site RW028 and the technology demonstration projects underway at Ellsworth AFB.

Helpful Sources of Information on PFOS/PFOA:

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov/pfas
- U.S. Air Force Civil Engineer Center: www.afcec.af.mil/WhatWeDo/Environment/Perfluorinated-Compounds/