



Threat of Well Contamination Eliminated on Fragile Alaskan Coast

Potential contamination on Alaska's Drew Point has been averted, thanks to a \$16.8 million ARRA contract to plug and abandon the Drew Point Well which was threatened by coastal erosion. The well is located on the



Coastal erosion along Drew Point

Beaufort Sea on the northern coast of Alaska in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPRA). The remediation project was completed in April 2010.

Severe coastal erosion along the Beaufort Sea has threatened a number of old exploratory wells drilled before BLM became manager of these lands. The Drew Point Well was drilled in 1978 by the United States Geological Survey as an exploratory well and has served as a temperature monitoring well since its completion. Annual temperature readings were taken in the well hole to help scientists understand global temperature patterns and effects on permafrost.

The contract to plug, remediate and abandon the well was awarded to a small company owned by Native Alaskans. The communities of Nuiqsut, Barrow

and Atkasook were afforded employment through a business providing catering to the contractors.

In addition to plugging and abandoning the well, the contractors remediated the reserve of harmful contaminants. This

required removal of 13,500 gallons of diesel fuel from the wellbore prior to plugging, and approximately 5,000 cubic yards of petroleum-contaminated mud from the reserve pit. The contaminated muds were hauled 35 miles from Drew Point to the Ikpik-puk site for disposal. A final inspection will be completed during the summer for final site closure.



Well head with Beaufort Sea in the background



Surveys are done before work starts

This project has prevented the release of harmful contaminants that would have impacted fisheries and marine mammals in the Beaufort Sea. Native Alaskans are dependent on these resources for a subsistence lifestyle. Legacy well remediation is a high priority of Alaska BLM.

BLM Contact: Danielle Allen, Alaska State Office, 907-271-3335

U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

