



Whistler Creek Training Site, Alaska

November 2022

Background

DoD uses and manages operational ranges to support national security objectives and maintain the high state of operational readiness essential to its mission requirements. The Department conducts non-regulatory, proactive, and comprehensive operational range assessments (ORAs) to support the long-term sustainability of these ranges while protecting human health and the environment. The purpose of an ORA is to determine if there is a release or substantial threat of a release of munitions constituents (MC) from an operational range to an off-range area that exceeds an applicable regulatory standard or creates a potential unacceptable risk to human health or the environment.

The Army ORA effort was developed to address DoD requirements detailed in DoD Directive 4715.11 (10 May 2004) and DoD Instruction 4715.14 (15 November 2018). The overall objective of the ORA is to assess operational ranges/range complexes to determine if an off-range MC release or substantial threat of an off-range MC release exists; if an off-range MC release exists, does it exceed an applicable regulatory reporting standard; and if an MC release or substantial threat of a release exists, determine whether it creates a potentially unacceptable risk to off-range human health or the environment. Army ORAs assess potential off-range migration of MC along surface water system and groundwater migration pathways.

Installation Overview

Whistler Creek Training Site is located in rural east-central Alaska, approximately 38 miles south of Delta Junction, Alaska in the Alaska Range. The installation is approximately 542.10 acres. The training site is sub-installation of Fort Wainwright and was first acquired in 1958 as a maneuver training area for light forces. The installation has been used for the preparation of troops for warfare at high altitudes and cold climates,

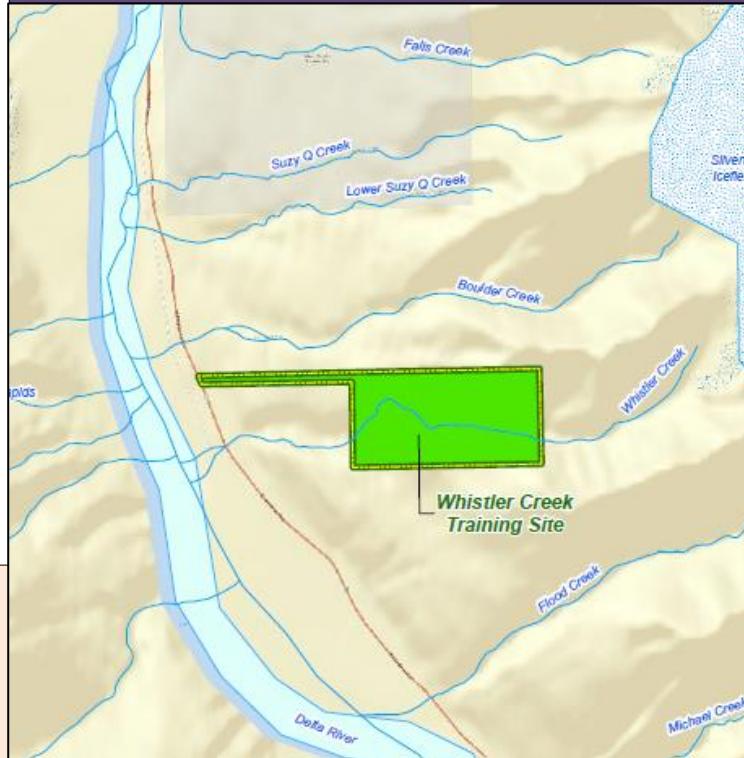
Operational Range Assessment Findings (11/2022)

Based on updated data, no off-range MC release or substantial threat of an off-range MC release currently exists. The operational range remains categorized as Unlikely.

Next Steps

Whistler Creek Training Site's operational ranges should be included in the FY23-27 cycle of ORAs to meet DoD Policy (DoDI 4715.14) re-assessment requirements.

Map of Range/Range Area



with emphasis on mountaineering skills.

The terrain at Whistler Creek Training Site is steep and heavily wooded. Whistler Creek and Boulder Creek, which originate from the Silvertip Icefield, cross through the installation and discharge into the Delta River. Topography ranges from approximately 2,300 to 4,500 feet above mean sea level, sloping to the west. The installation is located in a sub-artic climate.

Average temperatures range from a high of 69 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) in July to a low of -11 °F in January.

A review of available records and background data, indicate that training involving live-fire or non-live fire munitions have never been used at the single operational range at Whistler Creek Training Site.

Previous Assessment Overview

During the 2008 Phase I assessment, Whistler Creek Training Site included a total of one operational range, a maneuver training area totaling 543.10 acres. The operational range was categorized as Unlikely to have a source-pathway-receptor interaction and was placed into a periodic review cycle.

The Periodic Review was conducted in 2015, which consisted of collecting and evaluating available data to update the conceptual site model and determine if there was a potential interaction between on-range sources of munitions constituents of concern (MCOC) and off-range receptors (source/receptor interaction). As no live-fire or non-live-fire munitions use had occurred on the site, the range was categorized as Unlikely.

ORA Basic Assessment (2021)

The evaluation of updated data gathered during the Basic Assessment indicates that the one operational range at Whistler Creek Training Site remains Unlikely to have potential MCOC migrate off-range and adversely affect human or ecological receptors. No live-fire or non-live-fire munitions have ever been used on the range; therefore, there is no source of MCOC. This information is consistent with the CSMs developed and the conclusions reached during previous ORAs conducted at the site in 2008 and 2015.

For more information on Whistler Creek Training Site, contact USAG Alaska Public Affairs Office at (970) 353-6700.

For more information on the DoD Operational Range Assessment Program visit <https://www.denix.osd.mil/orap/home/>