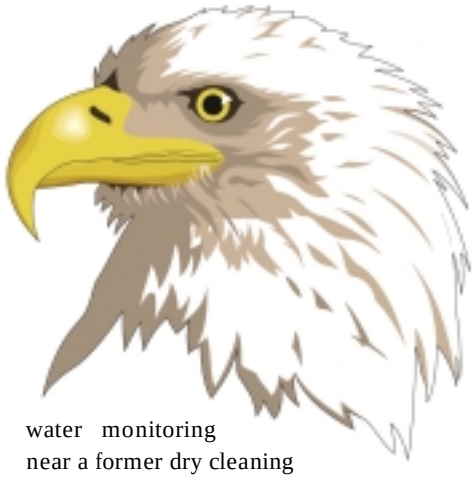
Extra Effort Required When Sampling



Remediation teams must be flexible and responsive to last-minute changes including packing up equipment and coming back another day if eagles are sighted.

Half-kneeling in the cold February drizzle, an environmental scientist jiggles a length of plastic tubing rapidly up and down a narrow monitoring well. Collecting enough water for groundwater sampling using the jiggle tube (technically, a manual inertial lift pump) requires considerable elbow grease. It takes several minutes of pumping before a trickle of water begins to flow—a task that a standard-size well could easily accomplish with a motorized pump.

Why the extra effort? Because the scientist is working at Fort Riley, Kan., in an area designated by the state of Kansas as critical habitat for the American bald eagle.

Eagles are winter residents at Fort Riley. Burns & McDonnell performs groundwater monitoring near a former dry cleaning facility on the Army post with extra care to ensure not only that, as federal and state regulations require, the eagles are not disturbed, but that the birds also find the most hospitable environment possible.

"We're not sure exactly what makes the area so attractive to the eagles, so we're careful not to do anything to change the habitat," said Fort Riley threatened and endangered species biologist Jeff Keating. "We try to maintain the integrity of the woods across the installation so that wherever the eagles choose to land, they'll find the conditions they need to survive and to return to breeding grounds in tiptop condition with the energy to lay eggs and raise their young."

Testing at the former dry cleaning area and other operable units are part of the CERCLA remedial investigation being conducted at Fort Riley. Burns & McDonnell designs procedures around habitat protection measures ranging from prohibition of trucks or heavy machinery in the stands where eagles are known to frequent, to a timetable of when work can be performed according to temperature, wind chill and wind speed at the site. Remediation teams must be flexible and responsive to last-minute changes including packing up equipment and coming back another day if eagles are sighted.

"Sampling at Fort Riley requires coordination and some extra effort," said Paul Hustad, head of Burns & McDonnell's waste consultants division.

The remediation team samples groundwater using a jiggle tube so as to not disturb the American bald eagles that nest nearby.