2.10 Security Fence

USAG-AK has proposed to construct a security fence around the portion of the cantonment that is south of the Chena River and including Training Areas 102 and 104 and the Military Operations in Urban Terrain site at Fort Wainwright. The proposed fence will follow the southern bank of the Chena River through post, then follow Badger Road south to the Richardson Highway, follow the Richardson Highway west where it will meet up with the main gate and then the Chena River (Figure 14). A residential community within the cantonment, Birchwood, will also be fenced in with a separate chain-link fence. Birchwood Housing is located on the north side of the Chena River.

The fence is intended to increase the security of the base by limiting vehicular access from the river as well as along the rest of the proposed fence route. The portion of the fence along the Chena River will be of pipe-rail construction. The portion of the fence from the Chena River south along Badger Road and for several miles east along the Richardson Highway will be chain-link, as will the portion around the Birchwood Residential area. The remainder of the fence along the Richardson Highway to the main gate will be a high security chain-link fence which will have cable running through it. Clearing of brush and trees will be necessary along some parts of the fence route to create maintenance and security access. Fence posts will be installed with a vehicle mounted pile-driver or will be cemented in place after a hole has been excavated for the post, depending on soil conditions. It is predicted that the majority of the pipe-rail fence posts will be installed with a vehicle mounted pile-driver. Much of the area along the Chena River, particularly the south side, is already heavily disturbed by housing, roads and other previous military activities. The remainder of the proposed fence route consists of previously disturbed areas, areas of low potential for locating cultural material and wetlands. The surveyed area is located on map quadrangle FAI D2, T. 1 S., R. 1 W., Sections 11, 12, 13 and 14 and T. 1 S., R. 1 E., Sections 5-9 and 16-17.

Survey and Inventory

In May and June of 2005 a portion of the proposed fence route was investigated by a crew of two to four archaeologists employed by the Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands (CEMML, Colorado State University). The crew walked linear transects approximately 10-15 meters wide along the proposed fence route for the length of the Chena River as it runs through Fort Wainwright.

The proposed route along the river was inspected visually for artifacts and disturbance. Sub-surface testing was undertaken in areas determined to have potential for intact deposits, as determined by the supervising archaeologist based on the surface disturbance and debris in the area. Shovel tests were approximately 40cm x 40cm, and were screened through ¼" hardware cloth.

Almost the entire length of the Chena River portion of the proposed fence route was determined to have been previously disturbed by military activities. Portions of the riverbank had been paved (asphalt and concrete were still present), bulldozed, and used as an area to dump various materials. Concrete blocks, pieces of broken machinery, the remains of temporary structures, fifty-five gallon drums and various types of trash were all found along or in the riverbank, near or along the proposed fence route (Figure 15). The remains of several structures were also found in the vicinity of the proposed fence route and the river corridor. Just east of Glass Park, where the river and fence route

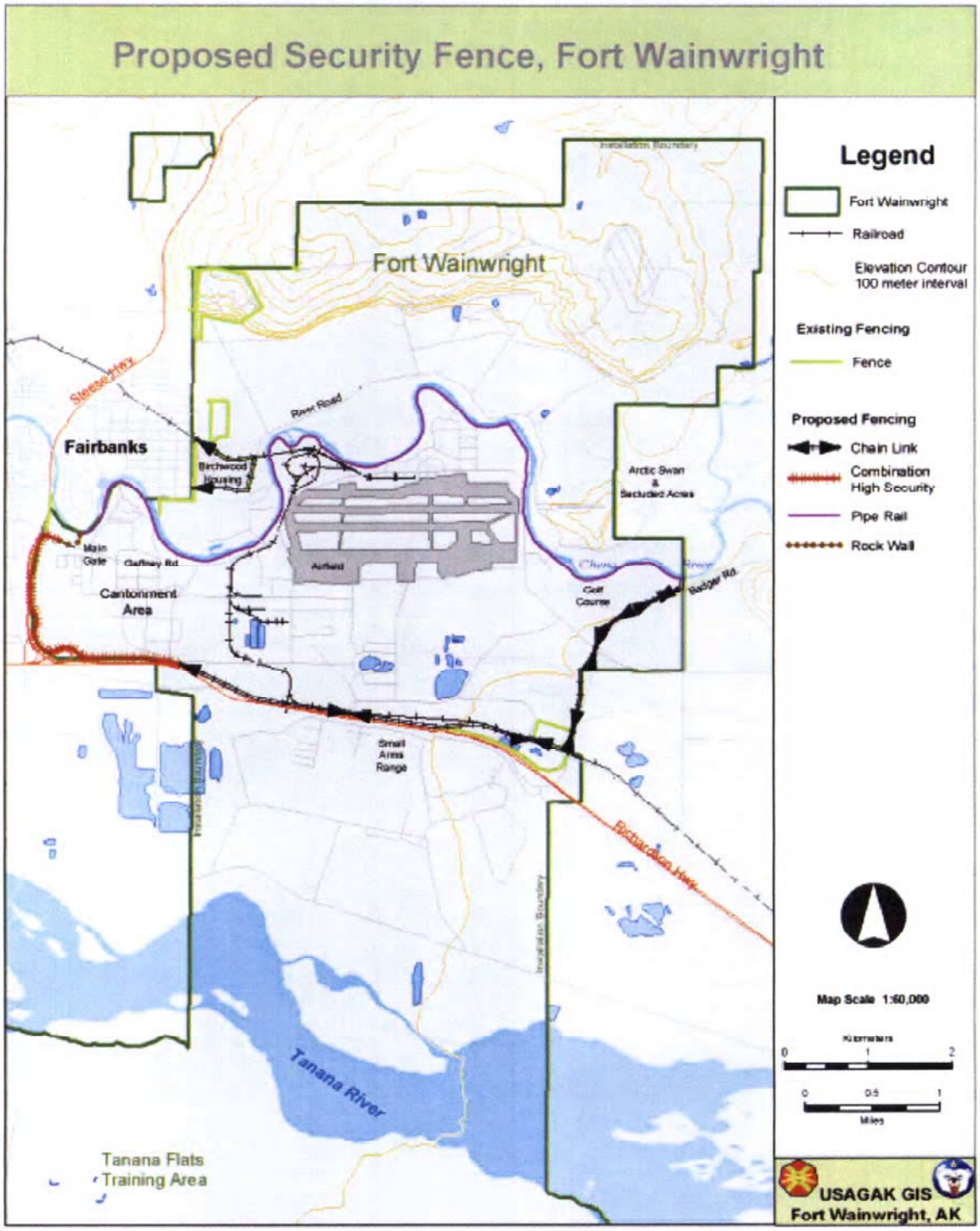

Figure 14. Route of proposed security fence

parallel Gaffney Road, a building foundation was located. Additionally, just north of the rail yard the remains of two partially standing structures were located. One of the structures near the rail yard has been identified as a late-1940s era concrete block-making plant (Figure 16). The proposed fence route passes by, but will avoid and not directly impact any of the three structures or structural remains.

A separate security fence will enclose the Birchwood Housing and this area was also archaeologically surveyed. This area was less disturbed than the corridor along the Chena River, however no cultural remains were located.

Cultural Resources

Historical records indicate that several homesteads with cabins and associated buildings were located in the survey area at various times, but military uses of the area have left no traces of preexisting structures. Additionally, no other signs of archaeological sites or other types of historic properties were found.

Results

No historic properties were identified by visual inspection or shovel testing within the project area. The remains of three structures were located in the vicinity of the project area along the Chena River, but all three will be avoided by, and not impacted by, the proposed fence. A large variety and volume of trash and military debris was found along the surveyed portion of the proposed fence route. Much of the area immediately adjacent to the river has been paved, cut, filled with rip-rap, or otherwise heavily used and disturbed. Additionally, the other portions of the proposed fence route were determined, through literature review and vehicle based reconnaissance, to have a very low potential to contain cultural resources and were not surveyed on the ground.

There are no known historic properties located within the APE for this project. All other previously recorded archaeological sites or historic properties on the main post fall outside of the proposed project area. USAG-AK determined that no historic properties will be affected by the proposed project.

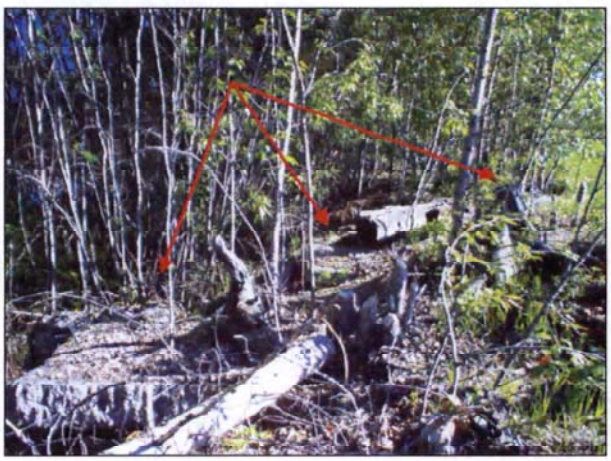

Figure 15. Debris along proposed fence route along the Chena River

Figure 16. Former concrete block making plant in the vicinity of the Chena River and proposed security fence