



US Army Corps
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Baltimore District

The Corps'pondent

A newsletter by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for Spring Valley Project area residents

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The Corps' mission in Spring Valley is to identify, investigate and remove or remediate threats to human health, safety or the environment resulting from past Department of Defense activities in the area.

Moving ahead at Glenbrook Road



House demolition underway

As the excavator scraped the side of the stately colonial brickhouse at 4825 Glenbrook Road N.W., people gathered to watch the long-awaited demolition in Spring Valley.

“Today marks a milestone of an extremely complicated project that continues with a strong collaborative partnership with our regulatory partners and other stakeholders,” said Dave Morrow, deputy district engineer for Programs and Project Management for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District.

This property is part of the Spring Valley Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS), which consists of approximately 660 acres in the northwest section of Washington, D.C. During the World War I-era, the U.S. government used the site, known as the American University Experiment Station, for research and testing of chemical agents, equipment, and munitions. Today, the site encompasses approximately 1,600 private properties, including several embassies and foreign properties, as well as the American University and Wesley Seminary.

The Army Corps of Engineers has been actively investigating and cleaning up the Spring Valley FUDS for almost 20 years. This work includes the identification and removal of arsenic-contaminated soil, a groundwater investigation, and the search for additional munitions, both in burial pits and isolated items on residential properties.

Crews from Demolition Services Inc. began work on Nov. 29 and by noon on Nov. 30, all that remained was one lone-standing chimney at 4825 Glenbrook Road — which sits on a piece of property believed to be the site of the Sgt. Maurer Burial Pit.

“In the mid-1990s, the Corps of Engineers received a 1918 photo from the Maurer family depicting Sgt. Maurer disposing of chemical-filled carboys,” said Brenda Barber, project manager for 4825 Glenbrook

Road. “This is the only historical photo we have that shows disposal at the American University Experiment Station.”

The team used a technique called photogrammetry, which is the science of making measurements from photographs, to pinpoint the location of the Sgt. Maurer pit by comparing historical aerial photos to current day maps.

“In addition to the historical photos, we started investigating the Korean embassy property next door in 1999 and realized that items of concern also were present on 4825 Glenbrook Road,” Barber said.

The 4825 Glenbrook Road property has since been the focus of two thorough investigations (2000-2002 and 2007-2010).

“More than 500 munitions items, 400 pounds of laboratory glassware, and more than 100 tons of contaminated soil were recovered and safely removed during the two past investigations,” Morrow said.

During these previous investigations the Corps of Engineers discovered the materials of concern not only on the lot, but adjacent to the foundation of the house and encased into the foundation of a portion of the retaining wall on the site.

The Corps of Engineers, along with our partners on the project, the Environmental

See Glenbrook Demolition page 2

Protection Agency and the District Department of the Environment, considered various cleanup alternatives for the property.

“Based on input from several government agencies, the property owner (American University) and the public, we chose to remove the house, cleanup, and restore the property to residential standards, providing for unrestricted future use of the property,” Barber said. “Removing the house allows for the best access to clean up any material that is immediately adjacent to the structure, as well as any material that might be under it.”

Moving forward, Demolition Services Inc., along with Parsons, the project’s prime contractor, will begin debris removal and clean up at the site to prepare for excavation. The basement slab and exterior basement walls will remain in place and be removed during high probability work.

“After the holidays, we will begin relocating site utilities and performing some limited low probability excavation work in the backyard of the property, where we do not expect to find American University Experiment Station materials based on historic and investigative field data,” Barber said.

Following completion of the initial low probability work, contractors plan to place a large Engineering Control Structure over the site to prepare for high probability excavation, including removal of the basement slab, as well as continued excavation underneath the structure to competent saphrolite or bedrock. Historical and field data indicate the high probability areas of the property have a greater likelihood of containing American University Experiment Station debris and/or glassware items.

“The Engineering Control Structure will fully enclose the high probability excavation areas, and the use of three Chemical Agent Filtration Systems will filter the air leaving the control structure so that any person



outside of the tent is safer than those working inside the tent,” said Barber.

All of the materials removed during the high probability phase will be safely disposed.

Following completion of the high probability phase, the Corps of Engineers plans to finish up with the remaining low probability excavation areas. After completion of the low probability work, the team will restore the site and release it back to American University by spring 2014.

Safety remains the focus for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. “The safety of our site workers and members of the community remains our number one priority and serves as the driving force behind each and every decision made on this Spring Valley Formerly Used Defense Site,” Morrow said.

By Brittany Bangert
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District



Next steps after demolition

Tentative schedule for the Remedial Action:

- ➔ **December 2012 - January 2013:**
Site Preparation/ Initial Low Probability Work
(Excavate test pits in backyard and relocate utilities)
- ➔ **February - December 2013:**
Engineering Control System Set Up and High Probability Excavation.
- ➔ **January - March 2014:**
Final Low Probability Excavation
- ➔ **April 2014:**
Site Restoration

Groundwater study update

On November 14th, Spring Valley inter-agency partners held a groundwater meeting to review the annual sampling results, and also begin discussions on proposals for new wells and ongoing efforts at existing well and surface water locations. The inter-agency partners concluded they needed more time to review the proposals, with the sizable amount of sampling data now collected, and meet again to discuss the proposals further.

The partners also discussed the isotopic analysis results from samples collected at the American University campus and on the Sibley Hospital campus. The results show a

unique perchlorate isotopic signature indicating that the perchlorate at both locations came from the Atacama Desert in Chile. Chilean nitrate deposits have been mined since the 1820's for use as fertilizer and in production of gunpowder. These results tell us that the source of the perchlorate in groundwater could be the same, but it is also possible that separate sources could have contributed to perchlorate groundwater contamination. The source could be related to military use or from use of fertilizer in the area.

Restoration Advisory Board seeks new member

The RAB is comprised of 14 Spring Valley community stakeholders as well as representatives from the Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, the District Department of the Environment, as well as the nearby public school and American University. The RAB acts in an advisory capacity to assist the government agencies engaged in the investigation and cleanup of the Spring Valley Formerly Used Defense Site.

Community participation is vital to the success of the cleanup process. The primary purpose of the RAB is to involve the local community in the decision making process. This is done through making information about the environmental processes, risks and cleanup progress available to the public and by establishing a formal forum for public participation on the project. There are currently 13 active RAB members with an opening for one community member on this board.

If you live and/or work within the project area and are interested in serving on the RAB, please complete an application and mail it to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Residents can obtain an application by calling the Community Outreach Team at 410-962-0157 or call or email Malcolm Pritzker, RAB membership chair, at 202-537-9595 or malpritz@aol.com.

The RAB meets at 7 p.m. the second Tuesday of the month at St. David's Episcopal Church, 5150 Macomb Street, N.W. **Meetings are open to the public.** Also, please note that no RAB meetings are held in the months of August and December.

**Coming Up:
The next
Restoration
Advisory Board
meeting will be
Tuesday,
January 8th, 2013.**



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Spring Valley Information Repository

Do you know about the Spring Valley FUDS Information Repository at the Tenley-Friendship Branch Library?

Upstairs, in the Reference Section of the Tenley-Friendship Branch Library, hard copies and digital records of key documents are available to the public. The document collection includes a variety of materials created since the start of the project, 20 years ago. Check with the reference librarian to direct you to our shelves of materials.

Also, on your next visit to the library, ask at the Reference Desk for the Spring Valley FUDS large binder, which has a table of contents and almost a hundred disks that contain years of digital records available for research and review. These disks must be checked out from the librarian and are only available for use on the library's public computers during your visit. For instance, the Remedial Design/Remedial Action Work Plan for the 4825 Glenbrook Road project will be available in January at the information repository or online on our project website.

You can also use the library computers to search our website for additional maps and documents that are not available in the library. If there is a piece of information you cannot locate, or have any questions, please contact the Community Outreach Team: look for our contact links on the website, or call us at 410-962-0157.

