



US Army Corps
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Baltimore District

The Corps' pondent

a newsletter by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the residents of Spring Valley

March-April 2002

Glenbrook pit work continues, geophysical surveys begin

by Maj. Michael Peloquin
Spring Valley Operations Officer

Our efforts to clean up the burial pit at 4825 Glenbrook Road continues to move forward.

Recently, workers removed a a portion of retaining wall on the side of the property and are currently removing its five-foot thick concrete footer. Several munitions, bottles and one 55-gallon drum have been or are in the process of being removed.

We estimate the pit cleanup will be finished late this spring or early summer. Once the pit excavation is complete, this property and a small portion of the adjoining property at 4801 Glenbrook Road will be restored.

Work at other areas

In other work, soil removal is scheduled this spring on the grounds of American University's Child Development Center outside the playground area. This area was cleaned up last year.

During this same timeframe, we will also do soil removal on portions of the surrounding university lots and adjacent intramural fields.

The final stages of restoration in the Small Disposal Area, an area adjacent to 4801 Glenbrook Road and near American University's Kreeger Hall, will be completed once these nearby

grids of arsenic-contaminated soil are removed.

Prior to beginning these removals, the project's partners have agreed to perform geophysical surveys on these areas to investigate for potential buried ordnance. The surveying began the week of March 18 and will continue through early April. The outcome of these surveys will determine when the soil removal can proceed.

New surveys

The project's partners have also agreed that other properties within the Spring Valley project boundary should be surveyed using the same state-of-the-art geophysical detection equipment being used at American University. There are several reasons why the partnering group is recommending the additional surveying.

First, today's geophysical sensors and processing software for identifying what might be buried under the earth's surface is much more sophisticated than the equipment used by the Corps of Engineers and its contractors during the Army's previous investigation in 1993 to 1995.

Second, the technologies and equipment used to interpret and analyze topographic imagery and historical aerial photographs has

improved as well. An analysis of historical photos and data last year by the Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Photographic Interpretation Center, or EPIC, revealed that some lots may warrant geophysical investigation with the newer equipment.

And finally, because highly elevated arsenic in the soil was found associated with the ordnance burial pits at 4801 Glenbrook Road, project partners want to investigate locations with extremely elevated arsenic levels that are associated with ground scars identified by EPIC. As in the case at 4801 Glenbrook Road, these clues might be indicative of additional ordnance burial sites.

Based on these reasons, project partners feel that it is prudent and in keeping with the Army's conservative approach, that several select lots within the Spring Valley study area be surveyed using the new equipment.

System of priorities

The partnering group is committed to doing this in a logical manner and has established a system to prioritize properties based on past and current evidence. EPIC report findings, historical data, arsenic results, previous ordnance finds and others

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are the factors being used to determine which properties or lots require a geophysical investigation. Initially, surveys will be done on those lots identified for soil removal. The remaining priority properties will be surveyed based on available project funds, access to properties and other issues.

In other project news, we are close to finishing the area-wide sampling effort. To date, a total

of 1,243 properties or lots have received composite sampling and results letters have been sent out to approximately 1,000 of these properties.

Of the total properties sampled, 144 required follow-on grid sampling. This final round of sampling is nearly finished. The total number of grids requiring some amount of soil removal, and the cleanup level that will be used has not yet

been decided. The Corps is awaiting comments on the proposed arsenic cleanup level from the D.C. Mayor's Spring Valley Scientific Advisory Panel.

For more information on project activities, please visit the Spring Valley website at <http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/WashingtonDC/springvalley.htm>. Or call our toll-free information line at **1-800-434-0988**.

Restoration Advisory Board Update

At the March 12 RAB meeting, members welcomed the board's two newly elected community members, Greg Beumel and Andres Liebenthal.

Both had submitted applications for the vacant seats and were selected by existing community RAB members.

Following introductions of the new members, the RAB discussed the project's current funding status. The Corps provided a review of the amount of funds spent on the various project activities for the past few months.

The Corps also briefed the RAB on which project activities would likely receive funding over the next six months. Community

co-chair Sarah Shapley, announced that a RAB committee has been formed to begin a letter writing campaign with the goal of bringing the Spring Valley project more annual money than it currently receives.

Representatives from the D.C. Department of Health addressed various questions about the nature of the health investigations currently under way by the Health Department and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR).

Following these discussions, the Corps briefed the RAB on the planned geophysical investigation. Questions about the geophysical technology and the

prioritization of properties to be investigated were discussed. The Corps announced to the RAB that it is working on a document that will address and track all of the issues raised by RAB member, Geza Teleki, and discussed at the January and February RAB meetings.

For more details on the topics and issues discussed at RAB meetings, minutes of each meeting are posted on the project's website.

The next RAB meeting on **April 9, beginning at 7 p.m., will be at St. David's Episcopal Church, 5150 Macomb Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.** The public is welcome to attend.