



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Baltimore District

# The Corps'pondent

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

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## Investigation to resume at Lot 18

By Mary Beth Thompson  
Public Affairs Office

Digging at Lot 18 is scheduled to resume in late May or early June. A new work plan is being written, additional site and worker safeguards put in place, and additional measures for public safety established, project manager Craig Georg said.

"That ensures that we have developed our plans to accurately address what could be found," he said.

The team anticipates it will unearth debris, municipal trash and glassware, Georg said. They do not expect to uncover an explosively configured chemical round, but the possibility of finding lewisite again has raised this dig to high-probability.

"We expect to find pretty much what we've found in the past," he said. "We've been out there before, and we have a site history at this location."

Working with the Engineering and Support Center at Huntsville, the U.S. Army Technical Escort Unit, and the Edgewood Chemical Biological Center, the Spring Valley project delivery team is writing a work plan and developing a Public Protection Plan for Lot 18. At the same time, Huntsville has been revising the Site-Wide Chemical



American University Buildings can be seen beyond the Lot 18 fence.

(Photo by Christopher Augsburger)

Safety Submission Plan, which covers the entire project and affects the work plan for Lot 18.

One task was to determine a maximum credible event, or MCE, for the Lot 18 dig.

"An MCE is the worst single event that could occur at any time with maximum release of chemical agent as a result of unintended, unplanned or accidental occurrence," said Huntsville's Allyn Allison during a presentation to project partners, the Environmental Protection Agency, the D.C. Department of Health and American University. The Corps also sought input from the Spring Valley Restoration Advisory Board.

For Lot 18, the regulatory partners agreed with the Corps' analysis that the evaporative release of lewisite from a one-

liter bottle would be the MCE. The work, as well as safety and public protection plans, is being geared toward handling that MCE.

Another task was to decide under what controls the dig will be carried out. Again, the partners discussed several alternatives and agreed with the Corps' recommendation to use an engineering control structure over the dig site. The uneven terrain at Lot 18 made a tent structure the chosen option. A tent is more easily moved and sealed to the ground than a hard-sided structure.

The excavation will be conducted with further safeguards, including filters, monitors and negative pressurization of the tent. The dig is being planned so that in the unexpected event of

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## Lot 18 *continued from p.1*

an accidental release of chemical agent, multiple layers of protective measures. Should one system fail, another is there to protect the community.

"To the neighborhood, it means we're going to be a lot more visible on site with our logistical support," Georg said. "It'll look different, but the residents will be safe."

With the protections that will be used, the team believes the possibility of a chemical release that could affect the

neighborhood is extremely isolated.

"It would be a very remote possibility for all the precautions to fail," Georg said. "There are three things that would have to happen at the same time—the tent has a breach, the engineering controls fail, and we actually have a bottle of lewisite that's fallen and broken and spilled."

As an additional safety measure, the nearby occupants of American University buildings and neighborhood residents will be taught Shelter-in-Place tech-

niques, which are designed to minimize their exposure to an accidental release.



A handful of homes are in close proximity to the rugged terrain of the Lot 18 dig.

*(Photo by Christopher Augsburger)*

# Soil removal preparations underway

*by Christopher Augsburger  
Public Affairs Office*

The Corps and its regulatory partners—the Environmental Protection Agency and the D.C. Department of Health—continue their preparations to restart the residential soil removal action, tentatively scheduled to begin in about four to six weeks. The action will involve arsenic-affected soil removal at 113 properties over the next several years.

The Corps of Engineers has started contract negotiations with potential firms that would perform the work. However, the start of work cannot be definitely scheduled until the Spring Valley project delivery team receives certain approvals from higher headquarters.

The Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis study, finalized Dec. 12, led to the draft of two action memoranda that are awaiting ap-

proval at Corps headquarters in New York and Washington, D.C.

These documents outline the plans for further arsenic soil removal action in Spring Valley. The pending action memoranda also include information on which properties would receive

soil removal in 2004 and beyond. The Corps, EPA and D.C. Health previously agreed upon the order.

Those details will be released after the memoranda are signed and the property owners have been notified.

## Letters delayed, planning continues

*by Gary Schilling  
Lead Project Manager, Spring Valley*

The last newsletter said that about 113 Spring Valley residents would be receiving letters concerning soil removal in connection with the arsenic soil investigation. It also mentioned that we are awaiting approvals of documents. The letters have not been mailed because the approval process is taking longer than we expected.

One of the required steps in any review process is to accept comments from certain agencies and address or incorporate their concerns.

We apologize for the delay.

We are working diligently to get the required approvals, so that we can move ahead with the first of the soil removals.

Planning also continues for resuming the Lot 18 investigation. With Lot 18's new designation as a high-probability dig, the team and our partners are developing and revising work, safety, and public participation plans to be as thorough as possible. The higher designation means that redundant safeguards will be used.

The safety of the community and our workers is our number one priority.

# Restoration Advisory Board seeks new members

by Ben Rooney  
*Community Outreach Team*

The Restoration Advisory Board, or RAB, provides diverse input to the government agencies engaged in the investigation and cleanup of the Spring Valley formerly used defense site. The community participation is vital to the success of the cleanup process.

The RAB has 14 community stakeholders as well as representatives from the Corps,

the Environmental Protection Agency, the D.C. Department of Health, local business and academic institutions.

There are currently two open positions for community members on this board. Spring Valley residents interested in serving on the RAB are asked to submit an application to the Corps by May 11. Any applications received after this date will be considered for future elections, held twice a year. Residents can obtain an application by calling

the Public Affairs office at 1-800-434-0988 or on the Internet at: <http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/WashingtonDC/springvalley/rab.htm>.

Current community board members will review applications and select new members at the June meeting. The new members' two-year term begins in July 2004.

The RAB meets the second Tuesday evening of every month at St. David's Episcopal Church.

## February RAB Summary

The Spring Valley Restoration Advisory Board, or RAB, met Feb. 10 at St. David's Episcopal Church to discuss project updates and vote on membership and election procedures. The Corps of Engineers updated the RAB on the latest plans for Lot 18 and gave presentations on geophysical survey data and Geographic Information System, or GIS.

The Corps' Site Operations Officer, Capt. Thomas Verell, also spoke about his role on the project, and the Environmental Protection Agency provided an update to the RAB on the planned comfort letters.

The EPA has proposed a multi-stakeholder work group to coordinate information dissemination, a process that the Corps supports. This group will include representatives from EPA, the Corps, D.C. Health, American University, the RAB and other interested organizations.

Residents and organizations

affected by work at the area known as Lot 18 have been contacted, including residents of properties within the No Significant Effects boundary, or NOSE.

This outreach effort also included AU, Horace Mann School, DC Council and the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC).

Corps officials added that a draft Public Protection Plan is nearly finished, and they will be working on a Community Outreach Plan, too.

Parsons then gave the RAB a detailed presentation on the available project GIS data.

EPA then announced that D.C. Health has agreed to approve and co-sign joint comfort letters. EPA is in the final stages of drafting the letter, and will present the RAB with a timeline for distribution once the letter becomes final.

Also, RAB members discussed and voted on several new procedures concerning future election of new members.

The RAB voted to place incumbent candidates on the same ballot as new candidates. Elections will be held twice a year with the next election in June. Applications are now being accepted.

### Concerns about your health?

In December 2002, the D.C. Department of Health established a medical surveillance system to identify and monitor any arsenic-related illnesses among Spring Valley residents.

Residents who may have concerns regarding exposure to arsenic and the medical surveillance effort are asked to contact Matthew Jones at the Medical Affairs Office at 202-671-0733.

Dr. Walter Faggett, acting Chief Medical Officer for the D.C. Department of Health oversees the medical surveillance system.



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### ***Corps updating resident database***

The Corps is in the process of updating its Spring Valley resident database. Keeping the database current enables the Corps to keep all residents informed as the project evolves.

If you have moved to Spring Valley in the last two years

and have not yet contacted the Corps, please call Ben Rooney at 410-962-0157.

Additionally, residents interested in obtaining project related information about their property should also call Ben Rooney.

### ***The Corps'pondent***

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