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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

October 2001

Most properties okay, some to require more sampling

by Maj. Michael Peloquin
Spring Valley Operations Officer

I'm pleased to report that to date we have received preliminary arsenic sampling results for 753 Spring Valley properties.

These results indicate that a large majority of the properties had arsenic concentration levels at or below the 12.6 parts-per-million soil screening level, which is based on background levels found in the general vicinity. For properties at or below this threshold, no additional sampling is required. We are currently awaiting results for another 224 properties.

We have determined that 94 properties thus far exceed the threshold and will require follow-on grid sampling. If, after completing this sampling, it is determined that an elevated health risk exists in a particular area, we will evaluate the best course of action to respond to the risk. We are coordinating the follow-on sampling with property owners and have been working with them to obtain additional right of entries to conduct this sampling.

In addition to the arsenic results, we have also received good news on the testing for contaminants associated with chemical warfare materiel, explosives and break-down products. We gathered and analyzed soil samples from those

areas of the neighborhood where World War I field-testing was believed to have occurred, also known as Points of Interest. From this testing, we did not detect any of the contaminants. We are also testing about 15 percent of areas outside the POIs for these chemicals in order to better characterize the site. So far we have results on about half of the properties in these areas, and we've not detected any of these chemicals.

For a specific list of the contaminants and the areas sampled, please visit our sampling plan information on the Spring Valley web site at http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/WashingtonDC/spring_valley.htm.

Elsewhere in Spring Valley, we continue to investigate and remove items from a burial pit at 4825 Glenbrook Road. Since May, workers have safely removed 10, 75-mm ordnance rounds from the pit. None of the rounds was configured for detonation and none contained chemical warfare material.

We've also removed 40 glass bottles. Test results found eight contained mustard or mustard derivatives and 14 contained lewisite or its derivative. One glass carboy lid, one crushed 5-gallon metal can and many pieces of broken glassware were also removed.

In addition to restoration activities at 4801 Glenbrook Road and

Community Meeting

The next Spring Valley community meeting will be Tuesday, Oct. 23, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Sibley Hospital Auditorium.

All residents are invited to attend.

an adjacent area referred to as the Small Disposal Area, we have removed all contaminated soil and have begun to place clean fill soil at the American University Child Development Center. Once completed, clean fill and topsoil will be placed in this excavated area. In conjunction with this effort, we are developing a plan to expedite the cleanup of the university's adjoining intramural field, which also has elevated arsenic levels in the surface soil.

In other work activities, we have developed a draft plan to conduct an intrusive investigation to further identify two anomalies in the Sedgwick Street area. If you have questions or concerns about Corps activities in the Spring Valley neighborhood, please call the Corps of Engineers' Public Affairs Office at 410-962-2809 or our toll-free information line at 1-800-434-0988.



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Restoration Advisory Board meeting review

The Spring Valley Restoration Advisory Board or RAB met Sept. 25 at St. David's Episcopal Church. Discussions focused on a number of issues to include rights of entry received to date, arsenic results and appropriate cleanup levels.

More ROEs have been returned in recent weeks, and currently, there are less than 200 outstanding residential ROEs. The RAB expressed concern about ROEs that have not been returned from properties in the AU Park area since arsenic has been detected at a few properties here. The Corps intends to focus on additional efforts to increase the return of outstanding ROEs from property owners in this area in the weeks ahead.

The EPA representative summarized their work in this investigation of Spring Valley. Among these, EPA is collecting split soil samples to ensure data quality dur-

ing the area-wide arsenic sampling and is actively discussing soil remediation goals, potential groundwater studies and the best administrative process for conducting removals at specific properties.

The RAB also discussed the appropriate cleanup levels for arsenic in Spring Valley. The Corps stressed that it wants to achieve a cleanup decision process that is protective, consistent from one property to another, and is flexible enough to address individual property owner needs. RAB members agreed that the Corps should provide a variety of scenarios to EPA and the D.C. Department of Health for review and comment. After this review, EPA and D.C. Health would provide the RAB with each of the agencies' comments, which the RAB would then review and discuss further at future meetings.

The possible long-term health of residents remains a concern for RAB members as well as the community. The RAB agreed that a further look at the current health of residents was needed and that more light would be shed on this topic once the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) announces its plans in response to requests for health surveillance testing of individuals and a broader Public Health Assessment.

The RAB members also discussed the upcoming evaluation of geophysical detection equipment as part of a "prove-out" exercise planned soon in Spring Valley. The results from this and other topics relating to unexploded ordnance will be the subject of the next RAB meeting, **Oct. 9, 7 p.m., at St. David's Episcopal Church.**

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