



NEWS RELEASE

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Conclusions from first round of Spring Valley groundwater elevation data announced

WASHINGTON – Elevation data from the first round of sampling for the Spring Valley Formerly Used Defense Site groundwater study indicates that the groundwater beneath the area where wells have been installed is generally flowing west toward the Potomac River and the Dalecarlia Reservoir, an important component of the local drinking water system. The information was released jointly today by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency and the D.C. Department of Health.

This groundwater elevation data provides the first significant snapshot of groundwater movement beneath the Spring Valley project area, answering the first investigative question as to whether groundwater flows toward the Dalecarlia Reservoir and the Potomac River. It is not yet known whether the groundwater flows into or out of the reservoir and whether there is contamination in the groundwater, officials said. Addressing these important questions will be done as more data become available in the weeks and months ahead.

The Corps, EPA and D.C. Health, the three partnering agencies working to investigate and clean up Spring Valley, will next examine the groundwater chemical analysis data that is due later this month. The partnership will then use both the elevation and analytical data from this first round of sampling to identify the next steps for this multi-season groundwater study.

This initial groundwater sampling is the beginning of the study to assess whether World War I era activities at the Army's former American University Experiment Station have affected the local groundwater and could potentially pose a risk to the reservoir water. The drinking water system is tested extensively and has consistently been shown to be safe.

The elevation data was collected in August from 23 monitoring wells and other groundwater sampling locations in the northwest Washington, D.C., neighborhood, most of them between Dalecarlia Parkway and the reservoir.

Elevation data is collected by measuring the groundwater's height in feet above mean sea level. Just as water on the ground surface generally flows from an area of higher elevation to an area of lower elevation, so does groundwater.

The groundwater samples are being analyzed for up to 165 separate chemicals and compounds selected by the three agencies and believed to have been used at the experiment station. The results of the chemical analysis are expected in late September. The partnership will release the analytical results after the data have been reviewed and fully validated.