



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

January-February 2004

Corps plans for residential soil removals, Lot 18 work

by Gary Schilling

Lead Project Manager, Spring Valley

Since the last newsletter, the Corps of Engineers has made progress in its plans to continue with the residential arsenic soil removals.

The Corps and its regulatory partners, the Environmental Protection Agency and the D.C. Department of Health, are preparing for this large residential removal action to occur in March, and will involve approximately 115 properties over the next several years.

During a November meeting, the Corps, EPA and D.C. Department of Health agreed on which properties would receive soil removal in 2004, but will not release those details until after the properties owners have been notified.

This effort will begin after the approval of two documents that stem from the earlier released Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) study.

One document responds to the public comments to the EE/CA, and is named the Responsiveness Summary.

The other outlines the plans for further arsenic soil removal action in Spring Valley, and is called an Action Memorandum.

These documents essentially

provide the guidance to the project partners on the remainder of the residential soil removals.

Lot 18 excavation

The Corps and project regulators have agreed on the additional safety measures that will be employed when excavation work resumes at this site in April.

These new measures consist of an airtight tent under which the digging will occur. The tent will have two main air filters inside, with additional air monitors placed around the outside of the tent as well. The measures are being added because of the quantity of items that have been removed at the site, as well as the discovery of a small amount of Lewisite found in a sealed glass bottle.

The Lot 18 area is located near the southwestern border of the American University campus and several residential properties along Rockwood Parkway.

To date, several scrap ordnance items, broken and intact glassware and residential-type trash dating from 1900 to the 1950s have been removed from this debris field.

The Corps will soon begin educating residents about an additional safety measure that they can take while this work is underway.

Other project activities

In other project activities, a study of the groundwater in Spring Valley is planned to begin this year. The initial effort will be in two phases.

Phase I will identify general conditions of groundwater use and occurrence near the neighborhood.

Phase II, scheduled after the completion of Phase I, will examine the groundwater flow system in greater detail.

In this phase, monitoring wells will be installed in key locations to collect the water, and the samples will be analyzed to determine if DoD activities have impacted local groundwater.

The Corps is currently reviewing work plans and is scheduled to install groundwater monitoring wells in the summer and begin collecting and analyzing samples soon after.

The Corps welcomes a new member to the Spring Valley team, Craig Georg.

Georg will serve as the Corps' project manager for ordnance, explosives and chemical warfare materiel and will oversee the Lot 18 investigation.

Georg comes to this position after having spent the last five years with the Corps' D.C. Public Schools renovation program.

Corps responds to Dec. 24 Northwest Current article

The following information is provided to clarify misperceptions that may have been generated by the Dec. 24 Northwest Current article entitled “\$11 million doesn’t go far for Army in Spring Valley,” by Charlie Bermphohl.

First, the Spring Valley partnering minutes are made available to the public to maintain transparency and build trust.

These working meetings are deliberative in nature, and because an idea is raised during discussion, it does not mean it is agreed to by the partners and implemented within the project.

The Spring Valley project team maintains an ongoing list of priorities, which are discussed with and agreed to by the partners—Corps, EPA Region III and DC Health. The list is also discussed with American University and the Spring Valley Restoration Advisory Board.

Ken Shuster, EPA Headquarters, expressed concern at the last partnering meeting about the Brandt property not being the first priority.

With the exception of Shuster, the partnership agreed that Lot 18 is the first priority.

Factors considered in this

prioritization include:

- Lot 18’s proximity to several homes in the 4600 block of Rockwood Parkway.
- The presence of the Lot 18 debris field on American University campus.
- The finding of Lewisite near the surface at Lot 18 and the greater potential for incidental encounter at Lot 18 compared to 4825 Glenbrook.

Following the time period where Brandt revoked access to the Corps to address 4825 Glenbrook, a lease agreement was completed, compensating Brandt at a rate of approximately \$160,000 per year.

No other ordnance/chemical warfare materiel work is delaying the start of Lot 18 work.

Finalizing work plans, getting approval from the Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board, and coordinating with the partners, American University, Restoration Advisory Board and the general public makes April the earliest start date for the Lot 18 excavation.

Corps of Engineers will meet the needs of other community members by conducting intrusive anomaly investigations on seven residential properties between February and April, while Lot 18 plan-

ning is being finalized.

The Current’s reference to \$170,000 per week is the cost for the various ordnance and chemical warfare specialists, engineering controls, air monitoring, site security, paramedic support and other practices used to conduct this work safely and protect the surrounding community.

During the working meeting with the partners, the potential to conduct several ordnance removals concurrently was explored in an effort to maximize cost effectiveness.

This discussion determined that moving from different excavations (and different work plans) could compromise safety, and was discarded as an option.

If the allotted funding for the Lot 18 work appears to be short for this fiscal year as the summer progresses, the Spring Valley program manager will look for additional funds, both within and outside the Spring Valley project, in order to keep digging operations moving forward until fiscal year 2005 funds become available.

The Corps will continue to meet other commitments made, such as the residential soil arsenic removal slated to begin in March and continue through September 2007.

December 2003 RAB meeting

The Spring Valley Restoration Advisory Board met at St. David's Episcopal Church on Dec. 9.

At the meeting, RAB members discussed key issues regarding how the Corps will conduct the cleanup efforts at the area behind American University known as Lot 18.

Among the main topics were defining what safety measures the Corps would employ, including Engineering Control

Structures and Maximum Credible Event, or MCE.

The RAB heard information about the principles guiding the Corps' plans to return to Lot 18.

A major point shared included the explanation of a worst-case single event that could occur during digging, known as the maximum credible event, as well as sharing details on what engineering controls will be used to protect the nearby residents.

The RAB learned that regula-

tory partners agreed on an MCE that uses one liter of Lewisite, and that a protective tent with two air filtration systems will serve as the engineering controls for the dig.

In other matters, RAB members agreed that all future board members must live in Spring Valley.

Also, Dorothy Zolandz was elected to a second one-year term as the the RAB's community co-chair.

January 2004 RAB meeting

The Spring Valley Restoration Advisory Board met on Jan. 13 at St. David's Episcopal Church.

The meeting began with a discussion on the status of the planning effort to resume excavation of American University's Lot 18. The review of geophysical data collected for the area surrounding Lot 18, and the RAB's mission and objectives were also discussed.

Gary Schilling, Spring Valley project manager for the Corps, also clarified any misperceptions that may have resulted from an article in the Dec. 24 issue of the *Northwest Current*.

Schilling said that project priorities are decided with full concurrence of the project's

regulatory partners. Schilling noted that excavation of Lot 18 is the top project priority for fiscal year 2004, and the Lot 18 effort will not be delayed by the planned geophysical investigation on various residential properties.

Information in the *Northwest Current* article was obtained from minutes of a past project partnering meeting.

A two-page Lot 18 planning update discussing these topics is available on the project's web site. A copy is also available upon request.

Schilling also stated that the Corps would employ ground penetrating radar (GPR) technology at the Lot 18 site at the request of the D.C. Department of Health.

The Corps has begun contact-

ing residents who live in immediate area of Lot 18.

To increase safety in the remote chance that the tent structure placed over the dig area should fail during the recovery of any chemical agent, the residents in eight homes immediately adjacent to Lot 18 and those who are present daily on a small portion of American University, will be taught how to shelter-in-place to protect themselves should such an incident occur.

Minutes of all RAB meeting are available on the project web site: <http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/WashingtonDC/springvalley.htm>

The next meeting will be held Feb. 10 at the St. David's Episcopal Church from 7 to 9 p.m.



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Residents awaiting soil removal to receive letters

Approximately 113 Spring Valley residents will soon receive letters from the Corps detailing plans to remediate approximately 200 elevated 20 foot by 20 foot grids per year over the next four years.

The soil in these grids above the cleanup goal of 20 parts per million (ppm) will be removed and replaced with clean soil.

This cleanup goal was selected by consensus with the project's regulatory partners, the Environmental Protection Agency and D.C. Department of Health, as well as the Mayor's Scientific Advisory Panel and the Spring Valley Restoration Advisory Board.

The Corps gave properties with the highest remaining arsenic levels first priority, with consideration also given to the Corps' ongoing ordnance investigation and the desire to minimize the impacts to the residents.

As the remediation of these properties moves forward, the Corps and its partners understand that plans will continue to change and adapt as additional site information becomes available.

Although the prioritization list is set at this point, it remains possible that the sequencing of properties could be changed in the future.

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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