



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

July 2002

Corps begins soil remediation

by Maj. Michael Peloquin
Spring Valley Operations Officer

A recent article in the *Northwest Current* (6-19-02) stated that some property owners in Spring Valley are upset that we are cleaning up the American University sports fields and adjacent areas to the Child Development Center before those of private property owners.

The work at AU has been scheduled for cleanup since last fall. In January 2001 the Corps conducted soil sampling at American University's Child Development Center, or CDC, several months prior to the start of the neighborhood-wide sampling.

Results from this sampling indicated elevated levels of arsenic in the CDC's playground area, in portions of the CDC grounds outside of the playground and across portions of the adjacent intramural fields. The AU administration relocated the CDC's students and staff until we complete the entire soil removal work.

At the request of the D.C. Department of Health, the Corps conducted a Time Critical Removal Action from August through October 2001 and removed contaminated soil from inside the fenced playground area.

Due to the need to begin the neighborhood-wide soil sampling in May 2001, available project funds were diverted to support the sampling effort. The removal action at the remainder of the CDC grounds and intramural fields was placed on hold until we received the new fiscal year funds. Both the District of Columbia and American University officials stressed that these areas needed to be cleaned up before the children could return to the CDC.

Planning for the cleanup work began last fall and a contract was awarded in December 2001, following the receipt of Fiscal Year 2002 project funds.

When developing the removal plan, it made good management sense to have a contractor mobilize only once to the southern portion of the AU campus and address all the areas that require soil removal, including the remaining areas of the CDC and adjacent sports fields.

At that time the neighborhood sampling effort was in full swing and we were beginning to develop our list of properties requiring grid removals.

In addition to reducing overall project costs, performing this soil removal now while school is

in summer recess and fewer students are on campus also reduces the impact to the campus. The cleanup of these areas is expected to take several months to complete and cost approximately \$1.5 million.

TCRA work

Concurrent to this work, we plan to begin in July the cleanup of seven residential properties. We have been meeting with the property owners and their immediate neighbors to discuss the details of the soil removal.

The Corps established the initial properties for soil removal using a standard risk-evaluation technique, which is routinely used at Corps and EPA sites nationwide. We also made management decisions to reduce costs where possible.

The project partners are currently evaluating the second tier of candidate properties. Cleanup of these will begin after we finish the first group of properties.

In the next several weeks the project partners will be in contact with a handful of properties with unique circumstances—these properties do not score high in the risk-based

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Fiala testifies before House subcommittee

Following is the testimony Col. Charles J. Fiala, Jr., U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, gave before the Subcommittee on the District of Columbia, Committee on Government Reform, U.S. House of Representatives, June 26.

Please visit the website at <http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/WashingtonDC/springvalley.htm> to read the written text the Corps presented to the subcommittee.

Good morning, Chairwoman Morella and Members of the Subcommittee. I am Col. Charles J. Fiala, Jr., commander of the Baltimore District of the Corps of Engineers.

Thank you for your invitation to testify before this committee. Last July I testified about our past work at the site. Today I would like to discuss our recent progress at this site and at other FUDS in the District of Columbia.

In the past year, we have made significant progress in the Spring Valley project on three fronts.

First, our project team has been extremely busy defining the scope of DoD [Department of Defense] contamination at the site and removing hazardous materials found.

Second, the project partners—that is, the Corps, EPA Region 3 and D.C. Health—have made great strides in our working relationship. All three parties agree that their effectiveness continues to improve as they move forward in openness and cooperation, drawing on the strengths each brings to the fight.

Lastly, we have actively solicited community input on key

project decisions and increased residents' opportunities to get involved.

Fieldwork in the last year has greatly reduced uncertainties about the extent and location of arsenic contamination at the site.

We have nearly completed the site-wide soil sampling effort developed by the partners in the spring of 2001.

To date, we have sampled 95 percent of the 1,158 residential properties at the site.

On the map before you, the areas shaded in green and light yellow have already been sampled.

Based on the sampling results, we expect to conduct soil removals at approximately 160 properties. Besides arsenic, the sampling results have not identified any other chemicals of concern at the site.

In addition to delineating the scope of soil contamination, we are reducing the hazards associated with this contamination.

Since last July, we have removed arsenic-contaminated soil at the American University Child Development Center playground and just began soil removal at the adjacent grounds and intramural field to address those hazards before the children return to their facility.

We are also beginning the first soil removals at residential properties with arsenic contamination.

The Corps has reduced hazards associated with buried ordnance and chemical warfare material at the site.

We safely investigated a large burial pit straddling two Glenbrook Road properties. This investigation yielded more than

370 ordnance items, a small fraction of which contain chemical warfare agents, and over 50 sealed bottles, many of which also contained agents. We conducted this work in a safe manner, ensuring no chemicals were released.

Regarding the status of the project partnership, I am confident the Corps, EPA and DC Health will continue to forge an effective working relationship.

We work together on management, technical and community issues. Let me give you a few examples of what I mean.

Last fall, the Corps tested several updated instruments used to detect potential ordnance burials. From the results, the partners selected equipment for use in future investigations.

Concurrently, the partners developed a site evaluation scheme to identify and prioritize areas for ordnance investigation.

This led to the identification of the highest priority areas, many of which have now been surveyed with the new equipment.

As another example, the EPA took a leadership role in proposing a sufficiently protective, site-wide arsenic cleanup level. In reviewing this proposal, the partners sought input from two advisory groups, the D.C. Mayor's Spring Valley Scientific Advisory Panel and the project's Restoration Advisory Board, or RAB.

Their input proved very helpful in the partners' recent adoption of the cleanup standard.

Establishment of the RAB highlights the third area of progress. Our interaction with the RAB, participation in public meetings and our daily conversations with individual residents have all helped us fully appreciate the community's diverse concerns.

Important decisions are now routinely discussed with the RAB and interested members of the community. The result is that the partners now have a better understanding of community issues as we plan future work.

Lastly, I would like to discuss the status of other FUDS [formerly used Defense sites] in the District of Columbia.

We have identified 59 sites in D.C. Of these, 45 sites have received a classification of "No DoD Action Indicated" (NDAI), and 11 sites are ineligible under the FUDS program.

We have current response activities at the remaining three sites: Spring Valley, Camp Simms, and Catholic University.

All three were NDAIs originally, but this classification is always open to reevaluation if warranted by new information.

In conclusion, we have worked hard during the past year to reduce uncertainties associated with the Spring Valley FUDS by defining the extent of DoD contamination and solidifying the partnership's collaboration.

To succeed at this challenging site, we will continue its synergistic partnership with the EPA and the District of Columbia, seeking full and open consultation with the community.

As always, we remain committed to aggressively responding to the risks associated with former Department of Defense activities at the Spring Valley FUDS.

I would like to thank the subcommittee for the opportunity to speak and I am prepared to answer your questions regarding the Corps' efforts at this site.

Corps begins remediation *(continued from p. 1)*

prioritization, but there may be a fraction of their property with relatively high arsenic levels.

The partners will consider appropriate short term actions to alleviate the concerns of these residents while they await soil removal on their properties.

Although this is a very complex project, we are working as quickly and efficiently as possible in a number of different areas. We are trying to avoid any significant lag time between completing one removal action and beginning another.

Our goal continues to make this process as transparent as possible. We are attempting to meet the needs of individuals to the greatest extent we can, and continue working with individual property owners on a variety of issues.

We are working with our partners and the RAB to provide you with the most current and up-to-date information as we can.

We are planning a community meeting **July 24** at Sibley Hospital Auditorium to discuss our current and future work.

We urge you to attend.

Please note

Upcoming RAB meeting

The next meeting of the Resident Advisory Board will be Tuesday, July 9, at 7 p.m. at St. David's Episcopal Church.

The public is invited to attend.

Community Meeting

The next Spring Valley community meeting will be **July 24** at Sibley Hospital Auditorium, beginning at 7 p.m.

Some topics to be addressed:

- current soil remediation
- next properties scheduled for remediation
- geophysical testing on Sedgwick Street

Please note that community members may park on the federal property behind the Sibley parking lot, across from the project trailer.

Before Digging

Please call the D.C. Department of Health at 202-535-1755 (**if permits are required**).

If permits are not required, please call the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at 800-434-0988.

We just want to know what and where you are digging in case we are planning any geophysical or soil sampling work in that area.



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Restoration Advisory Board Update

The Spring Valley Restoration Advisory Board met June 11, 2002, at St. David's Episcopal Church, Washington, D.C.

Tom Jacobus, chief of the Washington Aqueduct, was first on the agenda with an update on the construction of the Van Ness reservoir and the extensive testing protocol for the water in the reservoir. He made it clear that the water contained in the reservoir is safe to drink and impossible for contamination to enter the system from the surrounding soil.

Discussion then focused on the two Corps' fact sheets about the possible risks associated with elevated arsenic or buried munitions that could be encountered when digging or conducting lawn maintenance. The fact sheets will ultimately be distributed to all homes within the project and contractors who work in the area.

The group then discussed the findings of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's arsenic exposure study. Conducted earlier this year, it involved analyzing urine and hair samples from the residents of the 13 homes with the highest levels of arsenic in their soil. Results indicate levels of exposure that would not be expected to cause any health problems.

The next agenda item was the D.C. Department of Health paper which states reasons for possibly increasing the acreage of the project and listing sites within the project that need thorough investigation for the presence of buried munitions. Both D.C. Health representative Jim Sweeney and USACE representative Gary Schilling stressed that the topics covered in the paper are not new and are things that the Corps, EPA and D.C. Health have been dis-

cussing for quite some time.

Discussion followed related to properties that will need remediation, what documentation the government will provide at the end of the process, and how the government will address properties within the project boundary that due to owner refusal, will not undergo sampling.

The RAB decided by majority vote that the standing RAB scientific committee would review and evaluate RAB member Kent Slowinski's concerns with the project partners' soil sampling plan and the responses provided by the Corps and EPA on the issue.

The RAB officially selected its technical consultant for review of various project documents on behalf of the RAB members.

The minutes of the meeting will be available on the Corps website soon.

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