The Corps' mission in Spring Valley is to identify, investigate and remove or remediate threats to human health, safety or the environment from past Department of Defense activities in the neighborhood.

US Army Corps of Engineers
Baltimore District

The Corps'pondent

http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/WashingtonDC/springvalley.htm

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

May 2005

Project update: ferns planted, Lot 18 to resume

by Gary Schilling
Program Manager

Phytoremediation

About 10,000 ferns are being planted this month on 11 properties for the 2005 phytoremediation study. This year's work is an expansion of the initial study done in 2004.

The team modified the study approach to address concerns specific to Spring Valley. Soil sampling was done before the planting to help ensure the grid is adequately delineated. At Lot 15, along the fence at the Van Ness Reservoir, the plot has been reconfigured to focus the ferns along the fence where the highest levels of arsenic contamination are concentrated.

The results will allow the partners to better evaluate the potential for phytoremediation in Spring Valley.

Lot 18

$5 million and $4.6 million were committed for the completion of Lot 18 and the surrounding anomalies by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters respectively.

Plans to re-start digging in June remain on target. Work to accommodate improvements that will increase productivity is ongoing. Construction of a new, larger engineering control structure is in progress at the site, along with preparations of the chemical agent filtration systems and staff training.

The on-site emergency siren and the emergency ring-down system will be tested May 31 at noon. When digging

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Replacement trees go in on city-owned property

by Mary Beth Thompson
Public Affairs Specialist

The Corps of Engineers coordinated with the Friends of Friendship Park to plant 22 trees of varied species in Friendship Park, a children's playground sometimes called Turtle Park, in April. Eleven trees were planted on 44th Street between Van Ness and Warren Streets in May.

"By planting trees on city-owned property, we are repaying the city for trees we had to take out for our arsenic-affected soil removal project," said Ed Hughes, project manager.

Hughes manages the Corps' hazardous and toxic waste projects in Spring Valley. One of those projects is the removal of arsenic-affected soil from about 140 properties, including some city-owned land.

"When a tree has to be removed due to elevated arsenic levels, we owe the property owner — in this case, the city — for that tree," Hughes said.

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Workers plant trees in Friendship Park.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo by Maj. Thomas Verell

Groundwater investigation gets going

by Mary Beth Thompson
Public Affairs Specialist

Twelve out of the planned 30 monitoring wells have been installed for the groundwater investigation. The remaining wells should be completed by early summer, according to Ed Hughes, project manager.

Preliminary data

"The preliminary groundwater elevation data from nine of the completed new wells near the Dalecarlia Reservoir indicate that water elevations are higher than the reservoir surface," Hughes said. "This early data suggests that groundwater is flowing toward the reservoir and may possibly be entering the reservoir."

The data does not definitively answer whether the groundwater flows from the Dalecarlia Woods area into the reservoir, and it does not tell us whether there is contamination in the groundwater, Hughes explained.

"This data is preliminary, and more testing will be done and data will be gathered before a clearer picture will be drawn," he said.

Key questions

The Corps and its regulatory partners — the Environmental Protection Agency and the D.C. Department of Health — began planning in 2004 to develop a monitoring network to provide usable data to help better define subsurface conditions and water movement in Spring Valley. They established "data quality objectives" for the study that generally encompass three goals:

- to learn whether the groundwater from Spring Valley is flowing into the reservoir;
- to learn whether there is groundwater contamination as a result of past military activities;
- and, if contaminants are present, to learn whether they are reaching the reservoir.

The groundwater study will provide information on the water elevation, and the water will be tested for a list of target analytes and compounds that the partners are currently developing. Hughes expects to have initial chemistry data from the monitoring wells by the end of September.

"The results of this phase of the study may provide information that leads us into additional avenues that need to be investigated," he said. "For example, if contaminants are found in the groundwater, additional tests such as soil sampling or geophysical surveys may be needed to help determine the source of the contamination."

A groundwater monitoring well is installed.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo by Chris Augsburger

Drinking water safety

To ensure the safety of the drinking water it produces, the Washington Aqueduct thoroughly tests the raw and finished water. In addition, after the EPA detected perchlorate in the groundwater at a Potomac River outfall and from a Sibley Hospital sump sample in 2003, the Aqueduct began a series of tests to confirm that the drinking water is safe. The trace amounts detected by the Aqueduct in a few samples are approximately 20 times below the potential threshold concentration EPA might set as a contaminant level, as reported by the National Academy of Sciences in its report on the human health effects of perchlorate.

Having digging done on your property?

Safety fact sheets designed for contractors working in Spring Valley are available from the Corps of Engineers:

- Call the toll-free information line at 1-800-434-0988; or
- Call the community outreach team at 410-962-0157; or
- Send a request via email to Ben.Rooney@usace.army.mil.

Provide a mailing address, and the safety fact sheet will be sent to you.

Restoration Advisory Board meeting summaries

by Danielle Stegman
Community Outreach Team

April 12

Gary Schilling, military co-chair, provided information on several partnership meetings for Tiers 1, 2 and 3. He also mentioned efforts that had taken place to recruit new board members. Information on the groundwater investigation, the phytoremediation study and Lot 18 were provided.

Schilling gave an update on the project's long-term schedule, which targets completion of the project in fiscal year 2010. (This schedule is available on the project web site.)

Maj. Thomas Verell, the project's site operations officer, presented a summary of the recent visit to the Dalecarlia Woods, attended by representatives from all partnering agencies and the Washington Aqueduct, the technical advisory to the board, a Congressional staff member and a safety specialist. Rick Woods, a private citizen, led the group on this walk to locate the area where he had found World War I-era munitions in the 1980s. The Corps and its partners have plans to further investigate this area in the future.

The board's Science Task Group provided an update on their discussions regarding the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry 's Health Consultation for Spring Valley, the groundwater and phytoremediation reports and the recent funding the D.C. Council set aside for Spring Valley. The board's technical advisor is also reviewing these issues.

May 10

Schilling presented an update on various partnering meetings, noting that the next Tier 1 partnership meeting will be held June 1 & 2. He also provided updates on the ongoing groundwater and phytoremediation studies,

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Restoration Advisory Board meeting

Tuesday, June 14, 7 p.m.
St. David's Episcopal Church
Macomb Street

Community session from 6:30 to 7 p.m. with EPA, D.C. Health and the Corps

Update

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has resumed, the siren will be tested on the first Friday of the month at noon.

Soil removal

The 34th property was completed in the ongoing project to remove arsenic-affected soil from Spring Valley properties. The project consists of remediating about 1,000 contaminated grids on 140 properties that were identified as having one or more grids above the 20 parts per million cleanup level.

Roughly 50 percent of the project — about 500 grids of the most contaminated soil — has been completed since this work began in 2002. The project is scheduled to continue through 2009.

A new, much larger engineering control structure is being constructed at Lot 18, one of the improvements that will speed the work there. *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo by Maj. Thomas Verell*

Residential anomalies

The partners — the Corps, the D.C. Department of Health and EPA — chose nine properties for intrusive investigation this summer. The community outreach team is meeting with the property owners, and field work is scheduled to begin by the end of June.

Area of Interest Task Force

Of the 28 Areas of Interest that the task force has on its agenda to research, 12 written reports have been given to the Tier 1 partners. The partners set aside time at each monthly meeting to review one or two final reports presented by a task force member. Seven have been reviewed so far. The Tier 1 partners will decide what, if any, action is to be taken on the area of interest and prioritize it among the other Spring Valley projects.

Groundwater investigation

See story on p. 2.

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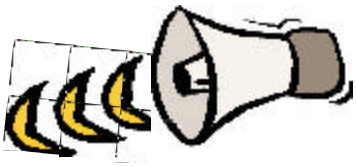
Siren to be tested

The Lot 18 emergency siren and ring-down system will be tested **May 31 at noon.**

The test will begin with a wail sound, which is the emergency notification, followed after a delay with a steady tone, which is the all-clear notification.

After digging resumes at Lot 18, which is expected to be in mid-June, the siren will be tested on the first Friday of each month at noon.

In the unlikely event that, during the planned dig at Lot 18, a chemical release occurs and escapes the engineering controls, the siren will sound to let people in the immediate



area know they should shelter-in-place. The residents and university staff who are potentially affected have been notified and taught shelter-in-place techniques. Others need take no action unless directed by fire or police officials.

The equipment is routinely tested to ensure that it is working properly.

Lot 18 is located near the southwestern edge of the university campus and behind several Rockwood Parkway residential properties.

Trees

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"Everyone hates to see mature trees go, and replacing them tree for tree is impossible."

To resolve this difficulty, the city and the Corps agreed that the Corps will compensate for the lost trees by planting an equivalent number of diameter-inches of trees on city-owned property. For example, five four-inch-diameter trees would replace one 20-inch-diameter tree.

The tree planting in Friendship Park and on 44th Street are examples of that process.

RAB report

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neighborhood arsenic removals and Lot 18 planning.

Mark Baker, a Corps historian, summarized the efforts of the Area of Interest Task Force.

The Membership Selection Task Group provided the board with copies of all the applications received for board membership. Elections will take place at the June meeting.

The board discussed how the audience could increase their participation in meetings. The board decided to leave the agenda format as is, but if a particular discussion ends early, the community co-chair will have the discretion to use the extra time for audience questions pertaining to that specific subject.

The board members also talked about future agenda items they would like to discuss. The items will be integrated into future meetings.

Detailed minutes of these meetings and slides from presentations to the board are also available on the web site at: **http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/WashingtonDC/springvalley.htm.**

The Corps'pondent

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