



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

November 2001

Corps provides project update at October meeting

by Maj. Michael Peloquin
Spring Valley Operations Officer

At the Oct. 23 community meeting, we provided an update on the status of the area-wide soil sampling effort that began May 31. To date, we have completed sampling at approximately 1,049 residential and non-residential properties. Of these, we have received preliminary arsenic results on 943 properties. Roughly 12 percent of these properties will require more detailed follow-on grid sampling. This effort is ongoing.

Arsenic found in AU Park

Also at the meeting, we announced that we have found much higher than anticipated levels of arsenic in the soil at several properties in the 4400 block of Tindall Street in the AU Park neighborhood. This portion of AU Park is within the Spring Valley project area. Grid sampling results of this area have identified a pocket of contamination at levels as high as 400 parts-per-million or ppm. These levels are similar to those we found last January at American University's Child Development Center. Similar to the cleanup at the Child Development Center, we plan to expedite the cleanup of the Tindall Street properties under a Time Critical Removal

Action, which allows the Corps to initiate work in a much shorter timeframe than typically possible.

We are also increasing ongoing efforts to gain a right of entry to other properties in the immediate area and nearby Friendship "Turtle" Park. Historical records indicate that portions of the AU Park neighborhood were used by the military between 1917-1918 as a soldier training area known as Camp Leach.

Records indicate that Camp Leach was independent of the American University Experiment Station and that it was not used for chemical research or testing. Therefore, we did not anticipate finding the arsenic levels in this area that we did.

Source of arsenic unknown

There could be many sources for the arsenic. The arsenic could be the result of soil movement during the development of the area, or it could be from a source totally unrelated to past military activities. Whatever its origin, the Army is committed to sampling all the properties within the project's boundaries and cleaning up those areas that present a risk to residents. The cleanup of the properties in this area will be done in the same manner as the Child Development Center. This involves excavating the top layers

of contaminated soil and replacing it with clean fill and topsoil and then restoring the damaged landscaping. We have begun coordinating this action with the particular property owners. At this point, we do not have a schedule of when this work might begin.

Corps expands outreach

As our investigation proceeds, we continue to work with neighborhood associations, the Restoration Advisory Board and others to ensure we are distributing this newsletter and other mailings to those individuals who wish to receive project information, whether they live inside or outside the project's boundary. For this reason, we have recently added several streets in the AU Park neighborhood that are outside the project's boundary to our information distribution list. We encourage residents to visit our Spring Valley web site at <http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/WashingtonDC/springvalley.htm> for more information on project activities. We also encourage individuals to visit our public document repository at the Palisades Library, 49th and V streets N.W., Washington, D.C. We are currently updating the documents and have moved them to the filing cabinets, instead of on top.

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Project update continued

Validated sampling results for each property has also been placed in the repository in a binder titled Spring Valley OU5 Arsenic Sampling. For library hours, please call the library at 202-282-3139.

If you have questions about Corps activities in the Spring Valley neighborhood, please call our toll-free information line at 1-800-434-0988.

Elsewhere in Spring Valley, we have resumed our excavation of a burial pit at 4825 Glenbrook Road. Since May, workers have safely removed ten, 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 on these found eight of the bottles contained mustard or mustard derivatives, and 14 contained lewisite or its derivative. One glass carboy lid, one crushed 5-gallon metal can and several pieces of broken glassware were also removed.

In addition to restoration activities at 4801 Glenbrook Road and an adjacent area referred to as the Small Disposal Area, we have completed the removal of contaminated soil at the AU's Child Development Center playground area. Clean fill and topsoil have been placed in this area, and the entire area has been reseeded. Cleanup of the center's remaining grounds and the adjacent intramural field will begin in December.

In other work activities, the

Corps has received grid sampling results for three properties in the vicinity of the old trench system on Sedgwick Street. The results from one of the properties found that a majority of the grids were over 12.6 ppm, and 14 of the 89 grids were over 43 ppm. The two other properties did not have any results over 43 ppm.

In this same area, we will soon conduct an intrusive investigation to further identify two anomalous items on two properties in the Sedgwick Street area.

We are working with the Corps' Huntsville Office to expedite a plan for this work, and we must receive approval from the Department of the Army Safety Office prior to beginning this investigation.

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