



U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS BALTIMORE DISTRICT

MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media invited to fern planting in Spring Valley

Corps of Engineers has big environmental hopes for little arsenic-eating fern

WASHINGTON – The fronds of a small, green, feathery plant may provide an alternative to the heavy lifting of environmental cleanup in Spring Valley. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, conducted the first field studies of phytoremediation, the use of plants to remove contamination from soil, in Spring Valley in 2004. About 2,800 ferns planted at three sites by contractor Edenspace took an average of 9 parts per million of arsenic from the soil.

Those encouraging results led to the expansion of the test for 2005. This week, Edenspace is planting about 10,000 ferns at several sites in Spring Valley. These ferns will be maintained, studied, harvested and tested to help the Corps and its regulatory partners — the Environmental Protection Agency and the D.C. Department of Health — determine the value of using phytoremediation as a tool to lower the levels of arsenic in soil in Spring Valley.

The **media is invited** to talk to the experts while the ferns are planted on **Thursday, May 19, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** on the **north side of Van Ness Street between 44th and 45th Streets NW**. While crews plant ferns along the Van Ness Reservoir fence, experts will be available for interviews:

Ed Hughes, project manager, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District

Cindy Teeter, study manager, U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, Vicksburg, Miss.

Steve Hirsh, Spring Valley remedial project manager, Environmental Protection Agency

Michael Blaylock, director of technology, Edenspace Systems Corporation

Spring Valley is the site of chemical weapons research conducted by the government during World War I. As part of its environmental cleanup project there, the Corps is in the process of removing arsenic contaminated soil from 140 residential properties, a project that is expected to last through 2009. Phytoremediation is being studied as a possible alternative tool that may be especially useful for the properties with lower levels of contamination or with large, old trees or other difficult-to-remove landscape features.

Media representatives who plan to attend should contact 410-962-2809, the Public Affairs Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District.