



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Baltimore District

Former Manassas Air Force Communications Facility

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Project Overview

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District is studying ways to improve the property formerly used by the Department of Defense in the 1950s, previously known as the Manassas Air Force Communications Facility (MAFCF). The area is now the southern portion of the Prince William County Public Schools property located in Independent Hill, VA. The Corps of Engineers is initiating a remedial design (RD) for remedial action (RA) to cleanup groundwater contamination associated with past military activity (see Site History below).

In August 2013, the Corps of Engineers completed a risk assessment to determine if remaining contaminants from past government use posed any hazards. The assessment showed there are no risks from site contaminants to students and staff in the northern part of the site where the Independence Nontraditional School is located (presentation link/slide 11).

However, elevated concentrations of contaminants (presentation link/slide 12) were detected in groundwater in the southern portion of the site. It is important to clarify this groundwater is not used for drinking water and there is no direct pathway between the public and the contaminated groundwater. This groundwater contamination could affect construction workers under very specific circumstances. A worker would have to spend four hours a day, 125 days a year, for a year working in a very confined trench to potentially experience any health risks.

The Corps of Engineers conducted a supplemental site characterization from 2015 to 2018 to help outline the best course of action to clean up the remaining groundwater contamination in the southern part of the site. Using the results from this investigation, the Corps of Engineers developed remedial alternatives to remediate the groundwater at MAFCF (presentation link/slide 14).

The Corps of Engineers, in coordination with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, will treat the contaminated groundwater to reduce future risks. This is to be done through a combination of in situ chemical oxidation (ISCO) and in situ enhanced bioremediation (ISEB) to address the contamination in the groundwater. This is to be completed by injecting materials into the groundwater that will treat the contamination. Within nested/flush mounted groundwater wells onsite, ISCO would be used to treat the source areas by injecting chemical oxidants into the bulk of the contamination. ISEB would subsequently be used to treat groundwater contamination further away from the source area by injecting natural materials to promote environmental conditions necessary for biodegradation of contaminants.

Former Manassas Air Force Communications Facility Site History

The former MAFCF was used as an aircraft control and warning station in the Air Defense Command Radar Network from 1952 to 1959. The site is located on State Route 619 at its intersection with State Route 646 in Prince William County, Virginia, approximately 11 miles southwest of Manassas, VA (presentation link/slide 2).

The Department of Defense (DoD) declared the installation excess to the needs of the Air Force in 1964. The Air Force transferred approximately 4 acres to the Department of the Army in 1966. In 1968, the government deeded approximately 45 acres in fee-owned land and 32 buildings to the Prince William County School Board.



*Volunteers served in the Ground
Observer Corps at MAFCF in the 1950s.*



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In 1986, the Virginia Department of Waste Management performed an assessment of the former drinking water production wells where petroleum and chlorinated solvents were detected in sample results. This assessment showed that trichloroethylene (TCE) and perchloroethylene (PCE) had been found in the groundwater. As a result, the Prince William County School Board abandoned the water system and tied into the county water system.

In 1987, the Corps of Engineers conducted a confirmation study of the groundwater and determined that the 45 acres fee-owned portion of this parcel was formerly owned and used by the DoD. This made it eligible for the Defense Environmental Restoration Program, Formerly Used Defense Site Program.

Once the Corps of Engineers established the property as a Formerly Used Defense Site, the project team started conducting a series of studies to determine if contamination associated with former DoD use is present above the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality standards.

Proposed Plan and Path Forward

The Corps of Engineers is conducting the work using the processes under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA/presentation link/slide 4), which was enacted by Congress in 1980. This law provides broad federal authority to respond directly to releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances that may endanger public health or the environment. The MAFCF project Proposed Plan (PP) was presented to the public in September 2020 to explain the preferred alternative for cleaning up the contaminated groundwater at MAFCF, and a Decision Document was signed/approved in December 2021 for receipt of funding to initiate RD/RA as described above. The Corps of Engineers is currently in the process of RD development (presentation link/slide 18).

Administrative Record File

The Corps of Engineers has made a full file of documents related to the project available for public review in the Administrative Record file available during normal business hours at the **Facilities Services Administrative Office, Independent Hill Complex, Building 51, 14800 Joplin Road, Independent Hill, VA 20112.**

The point of contact is Wayne J. French, Administrative Coordinator, Engineering and Environmental, (703) 791-7205, or Michael Weakland, Environmental Technician, Environmental Division, Facilities Department, 703-791-8120.

For More Information

If you have questions, please contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, Public Affairs Office at 410-962-2809 or via email address cenab-cc@usace.army.mil.