The Navy is conducting the investigation in coordination with partners such as the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Region 1.

PFAS

PFAS are man-made chemicals that have been used since the 1950s in many household and industrial products because of their stain- and water-repellent properties. PFAS are now present virtually everywhere in the world because of the large amounts that have been manufactured and used. Once these compounds are released, they break down very slowly.

The EPA has issued a lifetime health advisory for two commonly used and studied PFAS, PFOA and PFOS, and is currently studying PFAS to determine if national regulation is needed. The EPA's lifetime health advisory levels provide Americans, including the most sensitive populations, with a margin of protection from a lifetime of exposure to PFOA and PFOS in drinking water. The EPA's health advisory level for lifetime exposure is 70 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFOA and 70 ppt for PFOS. When both PFOA and PFOS are found in drinking water, the combined concentrations should not exceed 70 ppt.

In August 2020, the Navy received results from the sampling of a drinking water well at NSA Cutler's Fire Station. The combined results of PFOA (55.0 ppt) and PFOS (66.6 ppt) is 121.6 ppt, which is above the EPA lifetime health advisory of 70 ppt.

NAVY POLICY

Until a decision for regulating PFAS is made, the Navy has proactively developed a policy to conduct investigations at installations where there has been a known or suspected release of PFAS to the environment. The Navy's first priority with these investigations is to ensure people are not being exposed to PFOA and/or PFOS in their drinking water at concentrations exceeding the EPA's lifetime health advisory as a result of a Navy PFAS release. When a known or suspected release of PFAS is identified on a Navy installation, a sampling area is established one mile in the direction the groundwater flows away from the release site. Because the groundwater flow in the area is not yet well understood, the Navy decided to take a protective approach and sample all drinking water wells to the east of Holmes Bay within a mile of the NSA Cutler Fire Station. To ensure protectiveness, the Navy offers sampling to all residents whose drinking water is supplied by private wells in the designated sampling area. Once any potential exposure from drinking water has been addressed, the Navy will then complete the full investigation to determine the extent of these compounds in the area near the fire station.

ACTIONS BASED ON RESULTS

The preliminary results from the off-base drinking water sampling are expected approximately 30 days after collecting the samples. We will provide notification to the property owners of their personal drinking water results and follow-up actions if needed. The Navy will do its best to keep the results of individual properties confidential to the extent permitted by law.

The Navy will provide bottled water for drinking and cooking to any properties in the designated sampling area whose water contains PFOA and/or PFOS above the EPA's lifetime health advisory. The Navy will continue to provide bottled water until a long-term solution is implemented.

HEALTH INFORMATION

Exposure to PFOA and PFOS appears to be global. Studies have found both compounds in the blood samples of the general population. Studies on exposed populations indicate that PFOA and/or PFOS may have caused elevated cholesterol levels and possibly low infant birth weight. In studies conducted using laboratory animals, effects on developmental, neurological, immune, thyroid, and liver function were observed.

Health effects from exposure to low levels of PFAS are not well known and studies are continuing. At this time, it is not possible to link exposures to PFOA and/or PFOS to a person's individual health issues. Blood tests are available to measure these chemicals, but they are not routinely done because the results can be inconclusive and test results do not predict health effects. Long-term exposure effects are still being investigated by the EPA.

Based on what is known and still unknown about PFOA and PFOS, EPA recommends people not drink or cook with water that contains these compounds above the EPA's lifetime health advisory.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://go.usa.gov/xwfdW

If you have specific questions, please contact the Navy Public Affairs office at:
1-800-915-4705 or NAVFAC_ML_PAO@navy.mil

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND COVID-19 CONCERNS

Ordinarily, the Navy would host an Open House public meeting to present information pertaining to this drinking water investigation and to interact with the community to address questions and concerns. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, the Navy and our partnering agencies agree that holding a public meeting is not safe at this time. Therefore, we have prepared a virtual open house to open communication with the local community; the virtual open house is available at https://go.usa.gov/xfGMx.

Throughout this drinking water investigation, COVID-19 safety protocols will be implemented to protect members of the community and our samplers.

Naval Support Activity (NSA) Cutler Fire Station Cutler, Maine PFAS Drinking Water Investigation

September 2020

The Navy is requesting permission to sample drinking water obtained from private wells within a designated area near the NSA Cutler Fire Station for certain per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, commonly known as PFAS.

PFAS are a family of thousands of different chemicals which have been widely used in industrial and consumer products since the 1950s. The Navy developed a proactive policy to address past releases of PFAS at installations nationwide, as several PFAS are now of emerging public health concern. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued a drinking water lifetime health advisory for two commonly used and studied PFAS, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS).

The most common Navy activity that could have resulted in the historical release of PFOA, PFOS, and other PFAS to the environment is the use of firefighting foam (specifically certain types of aqueous film forming foam or AFFF) for testing, training, firefighting, and other life-saving emergency responses. PFAS were recently detected in the groundwater at the NSA Cutler Fire Station, which is approximately 3.5 miles north of the installation (Figure 1). PFAS may also be present in nearby private drinking water wells that are located in the designated sampling area (Figure 2). There is no public water supply in the vicinity of the NSA Cutler Fire Station, and therefore it is assumed that residents in the designated sampling area use private wells for drinking water. The Navy is seeking the public's assistance to identify drinking water wells located in this area and to obtain permission to sample the drinking water from these wells.

PFAS are chemicals of emerging concern, which have no Safe Drinking Water Act regulatory standards or routine water quality testing requirements. EPA's lifetime health advisories are non-enforceable and non-regulatory and provide technical information to state agencies and other public health officials on health effects, analytical methodologies, and treatment technologies associated with impacted drinking water.

The Navy established a proactive policy to ensure the communities near our installations are not exposed to drinking water impacted from a known or likely Navy release of PFOA and/or PFOS above the EPA's lifetime health advisory level. Following this policy, the Navy conducted a PFAS investigation at the NSA Cutler Fire Station property in March 2020 and found PFAS in shallow groundwater samples. Once released to the environment, PFAS can move easily with groundwater; therefore, it is possible that nearby residents using private wells for their drinking water could be exposed to PFAS released from the Navy property. Additionally, recent Navy sampling found PFAS in the drinking water at the NSA Cutler Fire Station,

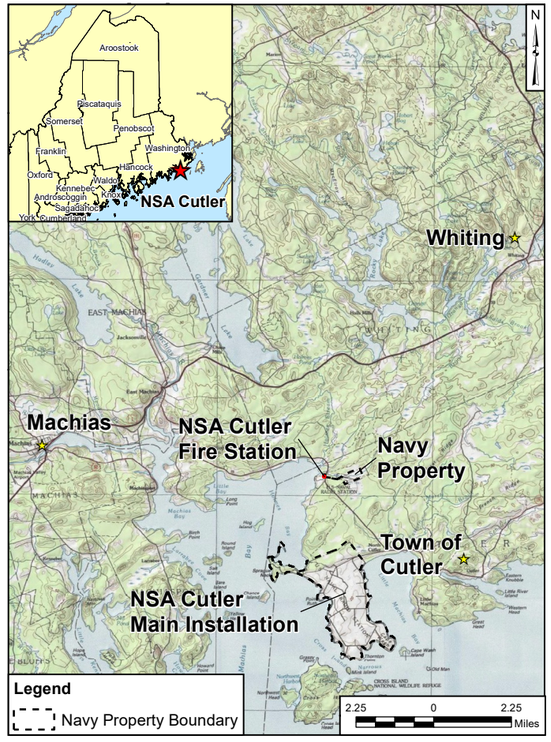

Figure 1- NSA Cutler

which is supplied by a deeper well located on the property. These results warrant an off-base private drinking water well investigation that will allow us to identify and address any current exposure to PFOA and/or PFOS above EPA's lifetime health advisory. There is no legal requirement to conduct this drinking water testing. The Navy is performing this voluntary testing because it is important that we ensure our neighbors in the designated sampling area are not drinking water with PFOA and/or PFOS concentrations above the EPA lifetime health advisory as a result of this known release of PFAS on NSA Cutler Fire Station property.

To be protective, the Navy will provide bottled water for drinking and cooking to any property in the sampling area whose private drink water well contains PFOA and/or PFOS above the EPA lifetime health advisory levels. The Navy will provide bottled water until a long-term solution is implemented.

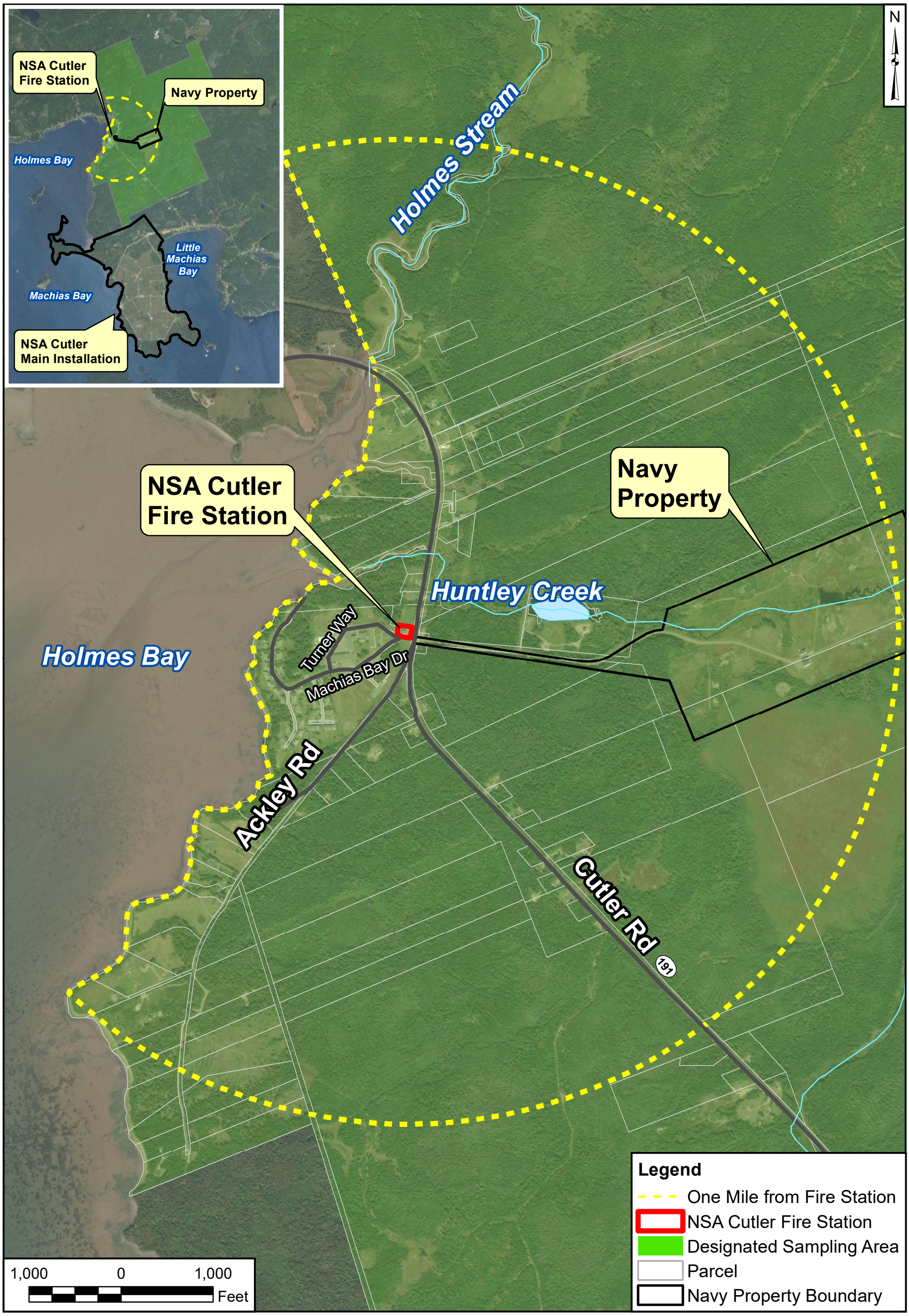

Figure 2- Designated Sampling Area