



Naval Support Facility Thurmont Thurmont, Maryland Drinking Water Sampling for PFAS

February 2023

The Navy is requesting permission to sample drinking water obtained from sources within a sampling area near Naval Support Facility (NSF) Thurmont for certain per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, commonly known as PFAS.

PFAS are a family of thousands of different chemicals that have been widely used in many household and industrial products since the 1950s. The Navy developed a proactive policy to address past releases of PFAS at installations nationwide, as several PFAS are of emerging public health concern.

The most common activity associated with the historical release of PFAS to the environment at NSF Thurmont is the use of firefighting foam (specifically aqueous film-forming foam, or AFFF) for firefighting and life-saving emergency responses. Because of this historical use, PFAS may be present in the groundwater at NSF Thurmont and may also be present in drinking water sources near NSF Thurmont in the direction that groundwater flows away from the base. Properties with water supplied by the Town of Thurmont are not located within the sampling area.

In 2021, a comprehensive PFAS Preliminary Assessment was initiated for NSF Thurmont, which identified known and potential PFAS release areas. Records indicate that public water is not available near NSF Thurmont and groundwater and surface water are used as sources of drinking water. The Navy would like to sample nearby drinking water sources to determine if perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), individually or combined,

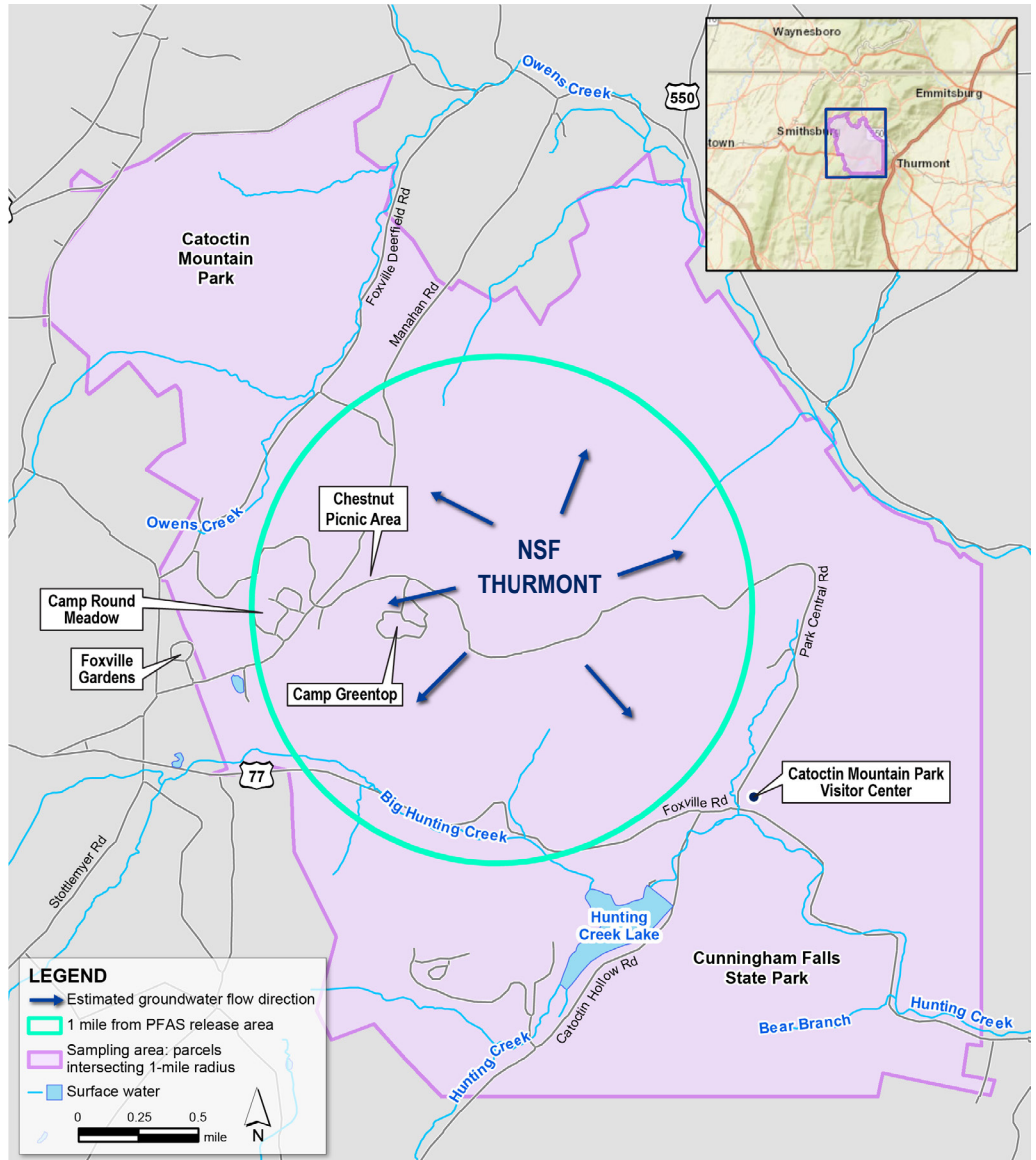


Figure 1 – Sampling Area

are above 70 parts per trillion (ppt). As a result, a sampling area has been established 1 mile in the direction that groundwater flows away from the identified PFAS release area (Figure 1).

The Navy will provide bottled water for drinking and cooking to any property owner or tenant in the sampling area whose primary drinking water source contains PFOA and PFOS, individually or combined, above 70 ppt. The Navy will provide bottled water until a long-term solution is implemented.

There is no legal requirement to conduct this drinking water testing. We are conducting the sampling in collaboration with partners such as the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, the Maryland Department of the Environment, and the Frederick County Health Department.

PFAS

PFAS have been used 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, many of them tend to stay in the environment for a very long time. Several PFAS are chemicals of emerging concern. Although the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has started the process to establish regulatory levels for several PFAS in drinking water, there are currently no Safe Drinking Water Act regulatory standards. The EPA has developed drinking water health advisories for a small number of PFAS; these advisories are non-enforceable and non-regulatory. These advisories provide technical information to states and other public health officials on health effects, analytical methodologies, and treatment technologies. More information about EPA's actions for PFAS in drinking water is online at: <https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>.

NAVY POLICY

The EPA issued lifetime drinking water health advisories for PFOA and PFOS in May 2016. These health advisories recommended that concentrations of PFOA and PFOS, individually or combined, in drinking water should not be above 70 ppt. In response, the Navy proactively developed a policy in June 2016 to conduct investigations at installations where there has been a known or suspected release of PFAS to the environment. The first priority with these investigations is to ensure that concentrations of PFOA and PFOS, individually or combined, in drinking water are not above 70 ppt as a result of a Navy PFAS release.

In June 2022, the EPA issued new, interim drinking water health advisories for PFOA and PFOS. Because these interim health advisories are non-regulatory and below detectable limits for certain PFAS, the Navy is instead looking to EPA to propose a regulatory drinking water standard, which is anticipated in 2023. The Department of Defense is currently evaluating its efforts to address PFAS in drinking water, and what actions it can take to be prepared to incorporate this standard.

ACTIONS BASED ON RESULTS

Preliminary drinking water sample results are typically received from the laboratory within 30 days after the samples are collected, and final laboratory reports are typically available within 3 months. Property owners and tenants will be called to notify them of their preliminary drinking water sample results. Final drinking water sample results will be mailed to property owners and tenants. Property information will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. For transparency with the public, final drinking water sampling results are also available online at: <https://denix.osd.mil/dod-pfas/section-345-data-search/section-345-data-reporting>. Individual drinking water sample results cannot be linked with the sampled property on this website.

The Navy will provide bottled water for drinking and cooking to any property owner or tenant in the sampling area whose drinking water source contains PFOA and PFOS, individually or combined, above 70 ppt and will continue to provide bottled water until a permanent solution is implemented.

The Navy will continue to investigate the presence of PFAS on NSF Thurmont and evaluate if actions are needed on base. The public can find out more about all NSF Thurmont environmental investigations, including those for PFAS, by visiting <https://go.usa.gov/xJtHJ>.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

about this off-base drinking water sampling

www.navfac.navy.mil/ThurmontSampling

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

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HEALTH INFORMATION

Studies on PFOA and PFOS have found both compounds in the blood samples of the general population. Research to better understand health effects from exposure to low levels of PFOA, PFOS, and other PFAS is ongoing. Federal agencies such as the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) and the EPA continue to conduct and support research into health effects associated with PFAS exposure. More information about health effects can be found online at:

ATSDR: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html>

EPA: <https://www.epa.gov/pfas>