

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) FOR BAY HEAD ROAD ANNEX (BHRA) PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES (PFAS) REMEDIAL INVESTIGATION

These Frequently Asked Questions or “FAQs” provide information on the environmental history and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) investigation conducted at the former Bay Head Road Annex (BHRA), only. For general FAQs regarding PFAS, please see <https://www.secnav.navy.mil/eie/pages/pfc-pfas.aspx>.

Bay Head Road Annex (BHRA) is safe to visit and use.

- Drinking water at the park is supplied through a municipal water supply by Anne Arundel County, which has been tested for PFAS.
- The Navy’s environmental investigation activities are ongoing and are coordinated with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE).

Q1: The Remedial Investigation (RI) report says that per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) have been present at the former BHRA for years. Why did the Navy only begin investigating the issue recently?

A1: PFAS are unregulated “emerging chemicals of concern.” At the time of the original RI in January 2000, PFAS was not recognized by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) as a chemical of potential concern and would therefore not be included in a Navy environmental restoration investigation.

The potential for PFAS at the former BHRA was identified through the 2015 5-year review. Investigations into the issue began soon after and are ongoing.

Q2: What is a 5-year review and why does the Navy conduct them at the former BHRA?

A2: A 5-year review is Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) study designed to ensure that a selected environmental cleanup remedy is working as intended and continues to protect human health and the environment. Five-Year reviews are conducted at any site where the Record of Decision (ROD) included a remedy that does not allow for unrestricted use of the site. The ROD for the former BHRA allows for recreational use of the site but included the prohibition against residential use. The ROD was signed in 2000 and 5-year reviews have been conducted at the former BHRA since 2005 (2005, 2010, 2015, 2020).

Q3: What is Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)?

A3: CERCLA is a federal law that governs all aspects of the investigations and environmental cleanup conducted by the Navy. The act was passed by Congress on December 11, 1980.

Q4: Other websites indicate that PFAS are a large group of compounds. Why does the RI report focus on perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA)?

A4: There are thousands of chemicals that are classified as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). PFOS and PFOA are the PFAS compounds that have been the most widely researched and they are the chemicals for which a health advisory has been established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). The Lifetime Health Advisory (LHA), set at 70 parts per trillion, was established in 2016 for the combined concentrations of PFOS and PFOA in drinking water.

Q5: *The RI report often refers to “environmental media”. Please define the term.*

A5: “Environmental media” refers to elements of the environment that were sampled as part of the RI: soil; sediment; surface water; and groundwater.

Q6: *Are per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) present in the fish, crabs, and oysters in the Little Magothy River?*

A6: At this time, it is not known whether or not PFAS is present in the aquatic life of the river, including the local seafood. The laboratory methods to detect PFAS are still evolving. Currently there is no approved U.S. EPA method for the analysis of PFAS in tissue. U.S. EPA approved methods are both validated and standardized, meaning they will produce quality data that is representative, accurate, and repeatable.

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is undertaking a pilot study to assess PFAS levels in surface water and oyster tissue in the St. Mary’s River, a tributary of the Chesapeake Bay. More information regarding this study can be found on the following MDE website:

https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Water/FishandShellfish/Pages/StMarys_PFAS.aspx

Q7: *Is the Navy going to clean up the former BHRA?*

A7: Previous environmental investigation of BHRA found the park and the river are safe as is for recreational purposes and there is no need for cleanup action. The only area on site which may require cleanup action in the future is from the PFAS release from the Former Burn Pad at BHRA which is currently under investigation. The Navy *Draft Final Phase I Remedial Investigation Report* outlines the following additional actions required to complete the PFAS investigation associated with the Former Burn Pad at BHRA.

- Additional on- and off-site groundwater sampling
- Revise conceptual site model
- Revise risk assessment

Future decisions regarding the site will be made by the Navy in consultation with its regulatory partner, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), the Anne Arundel County Bureau of Environmental Health and with input from the public.

Q8: *Is it safe to use Bay Head Park?*

A8: Yes. Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) have been detected in soils in a limited area of the park, but the concentrations are well below that which would generate a risk to users of the park. Drinking water at the park is supplied through a municipal water supply by Anne Arundel County, so PFAS detected in groundwater does not pose a risk to the park users.

Q9: *Do the PFAS detections in the Little Magothy River make it unsafe to swim?*

A9: No. Although there were detections of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in the sediment and surface water samples collected in limited areas of the river, the concentrations are well below that which would generate a risk to recreational users of the river.

Q10: *The Little Magothy River discharges directly to the Chesapeake Bay. Is the per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) at the former BHRA impacting the Bay?*

A10: Future sampling will be conducted by the Navy to determine where potential PFAS is present in the Little Magothy River. The findings of this sampling will determine if additional investigation is needed.

Q11: *Is it possible that there is per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) from the former BHRA in any of the numerous, private drinking water wells in Cape St. Claire?*

A11: It is extremely unlikely. Shallow groundwater from the former BHRA discharges to the unnamed tributary of the Little Magothy River, immediately to the north of the park and to the river itself.