



Area 6 Landfill Naval Air Station Whidbey Island Oak Harbor, Washington Drinking Water Sampling for PFAS

January 2024

The Navy is requesting permission to sample drinking water obtained from wells within a sampling area near the Area 6 Landfill at Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island 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 many household and industrial products since the 1950s. The Navy and Department of Defense (DoD) have developed proactive policies to address past releases of PFAS, including perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), at installations nationwide.

The most common activity associated with the historical release of PFAS to the environment at the Area 6 Landfill (**Figure 1**) is the historical disposal of PFAS-containing materials, including the disposal of materials containing firefighting foam (specifically aqueous film-forming foam, or AFFF). Due to this historical use, PFAS are present in the groundwater on-base and may also be present in nearby off-base drinking water wells located in the direction that groundwater flows away from the base.

In 2018, the Navy completed a Site Inspection (SI) for PFAS at the Area 6 Landfill. Groundwater is used as drinking water near the Area 6 Landfill, and PFOA and/or PFOS were detected in groundwater above 70 parts per trillion (ppt). As a result, in 2018, the Navy established an off-base drinking water sampling area in the direction groundwater flows from the detections of PFOA and/or PFOS above 70 ppt at the Area 6 Landfill. PFOA and/or PFOS were detected above 70 ppt in five drinking water wells, which prompted the Navy to expand the sampling area in 2019. PFOA and/or PFOS were detected above 70 ppt in one drinking water well in the expanded area.

To monitor drinking water in this area, in 2019, the Navy began sampling drinking water at certain properties twice per year. This includes properties with prior PFAS detections and those next to the six properties with PFOA and/or PFOS above 70 ppt in drinking water wells. In 2022, the Navy connected the six properties with PFOA and/or PFOS above 70 ppt in drinking water wells to the City of Oak Harbor water system. In December 2023, as part of the twice per year sampling program, a drinking water well within the 2018 sampling area had PFOA and/or PFOS detected above 70 ppt. The Navy will continue to provide bottled water to this homeowner until a long-term solution is implemented.

During the Remedial Investigation in 2023, the Navy obtained additional information about groundwater flow and detections



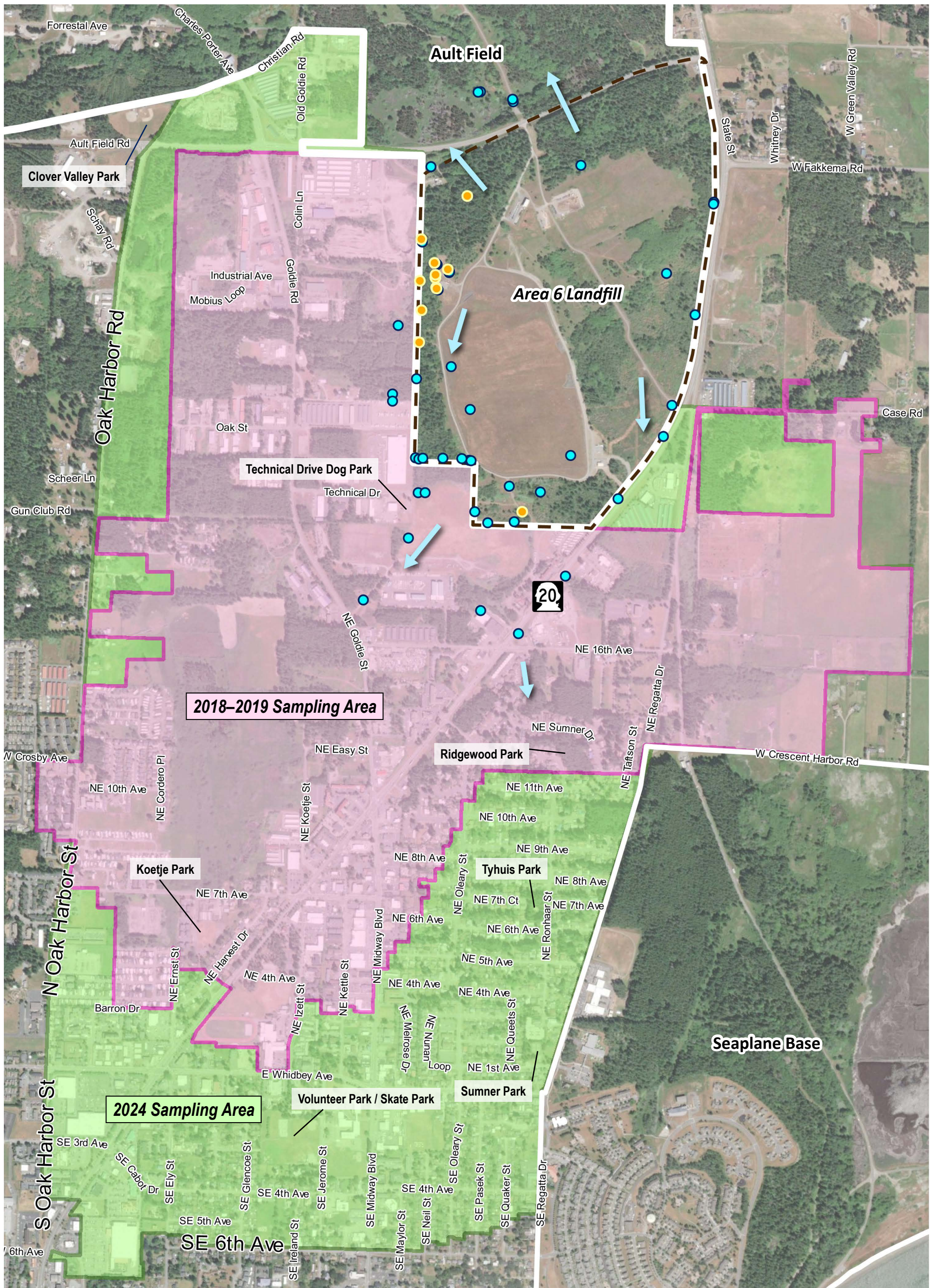
Figure 1 – NAS Whidbey Island

of PFOA and PFOS above 70 ppt at the Area 6 Landfill. Based on this new information, the Navy established a new sampling area 1 mile from detections of PFOA and/or PFOS above 70 ppt in the direction that groundwater flows away from the detections (**Figure 2**).

Records indicate the City of Oak Harbor water system provides drinking water for most of the properties within the 2024 sampling area; however, some properties within the sampling area may use a well for drinking water. If your drinking water is provided by the City of Oak Harbor water system, the Navy does not need to sample your drinking water. The Navy requests property owner permission to sample drinking water wells in the 2024 sampling area to determine if PFOA and PFOS, individually or combined, are above 70 ppt. The Navy also requests property owner permission to sample drinking water wells located within the 2018–2019 sampling area not previously sampled by the Navy.

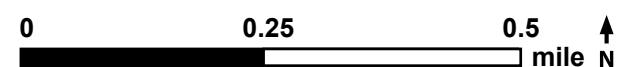
**The Navy will provide bottled water for drinking and cooking to any property owner or tenant in the sampling area whose well contains drinking water with PFOA and PFOS, individually or combined, above 70 ppt.
The Navy will provide bottled water until a long-term solution is implemented.**

Figure 2 – Sampling Area



LEGEND

- Navy groundwater well with PFOA and/or PFOS above 70 ppt
- Navy groundwater well with PFOA and/or PFOS below 70 ppt
- Base boundary
- Area 6 Landfill boundary
- ➔ Groundwater flow direction
- 2018–2019 Sampling Area
- 2024 Sampling Area



There is no regulatory requirement to conduct this drinking water sampling. The Navy is conducting the sampling in collaboration with partners such as the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 10, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Region 10, Washington State Department of Ecology, Washington State Department of Health, and Island County Public 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 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. The advisories provide technical information to states and other public health officials on health effects, analytical methodologies, and treatment technologies.

On March 14, 2023, the EPA proposed a draft regulatory drinking water standard for certain PFAS, including PFOA and PFOS. In response, the DoD has issued the following statement:

“DoD respects and values the public comment process on this proposed nationwide drinking water rule and looks forward to the clarity that a final regulatory drinking water standard for PFAS will provide. In anticipation of the final standard that EPA expects to publish by the end of 2023, the DoD is assessing what actions DoD can take to be prepared to incorporate EPA’s final regulatory standard into our current cleanup process, such as reviewing our existing data and conducting additional sampling where necessary. In addition, DoD will incorporate nationwide PFAS cleanup guidance, issued by EPA and applicable to all owners and operators under the federal cleanup law, as to when to provide alternate water when PFAS are present.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS OFF-BASE DRINKING WATER SAMPLING
<https://pacific.navfac.navy.mil/NASWIPFAS>

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT
 Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Northwest
 Public Affairs Officer
(360) 340-5592 or navfacnwpao@us.navy.mil

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

For now, the Navy is continuing to follow the policy it issued 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 PFOA and PFOS concentrations in drinking water wells are not above 70 ppt, individually or combined, as a result of Navy operations.

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, if possible) 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. Final drinking water sampling results are available online at: <https://www.acq.osd.mil/eie/eer/ecc/pfas/map/pfasmap.html> for transparency with the public. 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 well contains PFOA and PFOS, individually or combined, above 70 ppt and will continue to provide bottled water until a long-term solution is implemented.

The Navy will continue to investigate PFAS at the Area 6 Landfill and evaluate if actions are needed on base. The Navy is committed to ensuring the safety of the property owners and tenants in the community. The public can view additional documents about the environmental restoration program at NAS Whidbey Island by visiting: <https://go.usa.gov/xh2Rd>.

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 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>