



Ault Field

Naval Air Station Whidbey Island

Oak Harbor, Washington

Off-Base Drinking Water Sampling for PFAS



December 2024

The Navy is requesting permission to sample drinking water obtained from wells within the sampling areas (Figure 2) near Ault Field 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 and Department of Defense (DoD) have developed policies to address past releases of PFAS at installations nationwide.

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.

The most common activity associated with the historical release of PFAS to the environment at Ault Field (Figure 1) is the use of firefighting foam (specifically aqueous film-forming foam, or AFFF) for testing, training, firefighting, and life-saving emergency responses. Due to this historical use, PFAS are present in the groundwater on base and have been detected in nearby off-base drinking water wells located in the direction that groundwater flows away from the base.

SEPTEMBER 2024 POLICY FOR PFAS IN OFF-BASE DRINKING WATER WELLS

On April 26, 2024, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a final National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR) establishing nationwide drinking water standards for certain PFAS under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The regulation applies to public drinking water systems. Operators of public drinking water systems regulated by the NPDWR have five years to meet these standards. In September 2024, DoD published "Prioritization of Department of Defense Cleanup Actions to Implement the Federal Drinking Water Standards for Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances under the Defense Environmental Restoration Program," which describes DoD's plans to incorporate the EPA's drinking water regulation into DoD's ongoing PFAS cleanups and prioritize actions to address private drinking water wells with the highest levels of PFAS from DoD activities. **Table 1** shows the DoD Action Levels for PFAS in Private Drinking Water Wells.

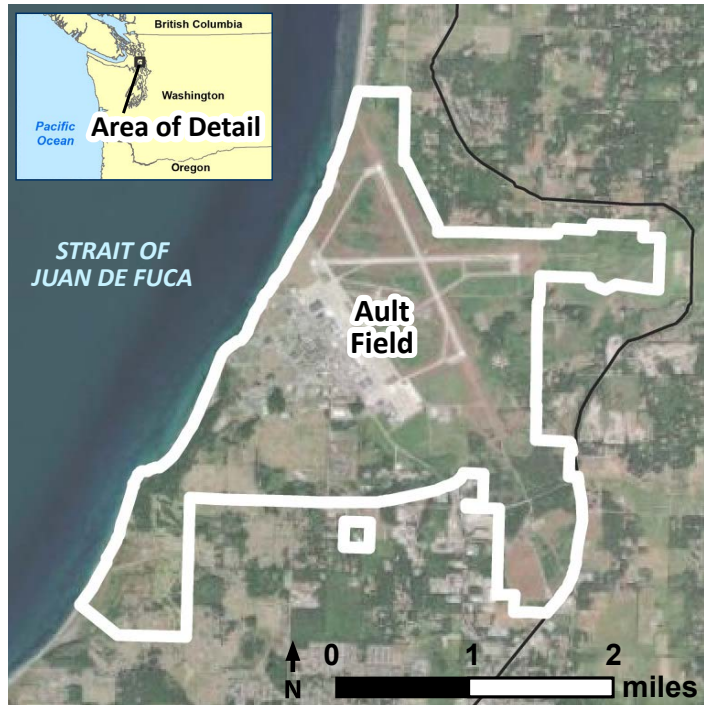


Figure 1 – Ault Field

Table 1: DoD Action Levels for PFAS in Private Drinking Water Wells

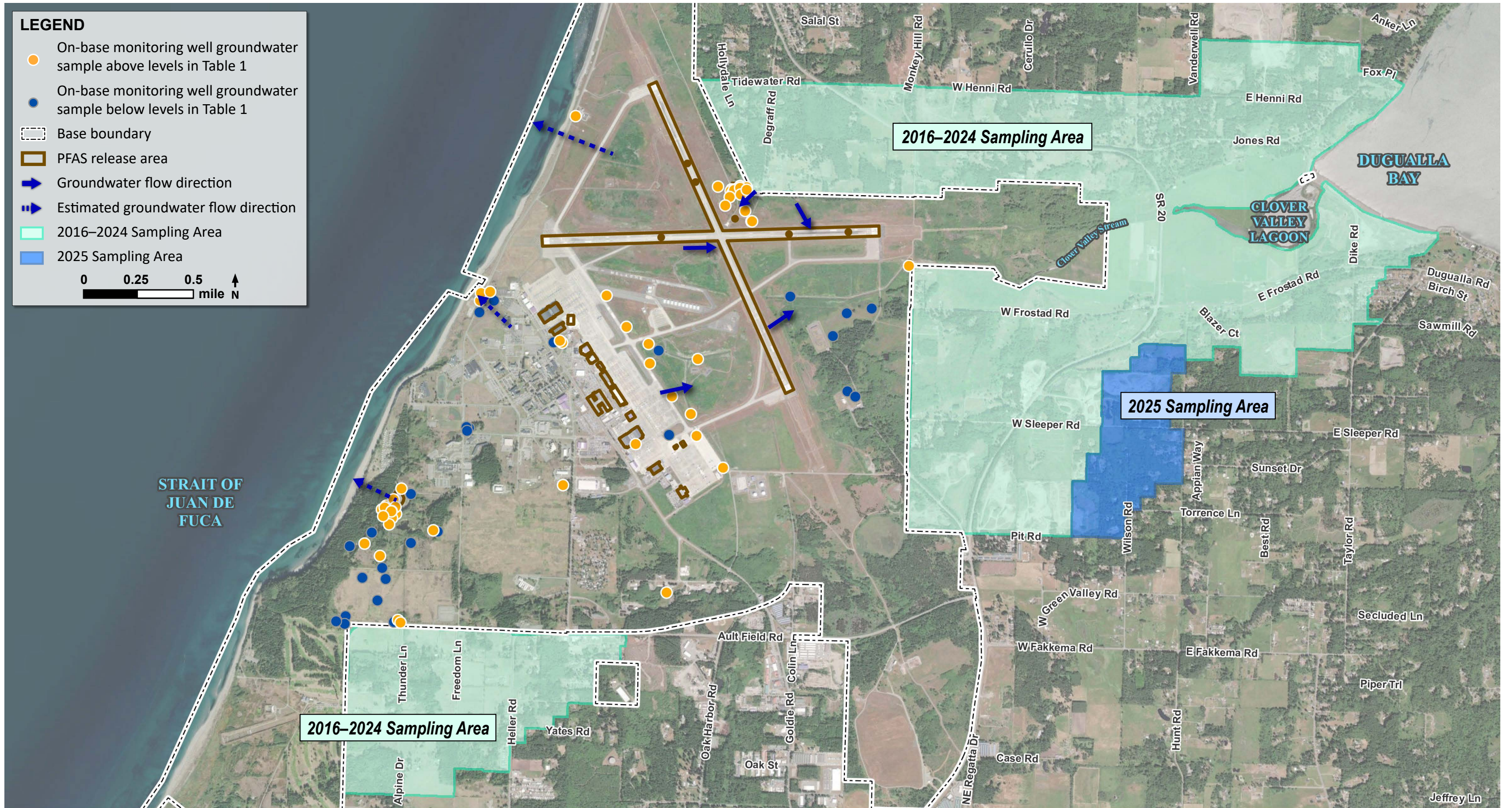
| PFAS | Level |
|--|--------------|
| perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) | 12 ppt |
| perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS) | 12 ppt |
| perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA) | 30 ppt |
| perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS) | 30 ppt |
| hexafluoropropylene oxide dimer acid (HFPO-DA, or GenX) | 30 ppt |
| hazard index for mixture of at least two of PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and perfluorobutane sulfonic acid (PFBS) | 3 (no units) |

ppt = part(s) per trillion

For long-term remedial actions, DoD will work with EPA and state regulators on a site-specific basis to determine final cleanup levels, in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and related EPA policies.

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

Figure 2 – Ault Field PFAS Sampling Areas



PREVIOUS OFF-BASE DRINKING WATER WELL SAMPLING SUMMARY

From 2016 through 2024 the Navy sampled drinking water wells near Ault Field (**Figure 2**). PFOA and/or PFOS were detected in three drinking water wells above 70 parts per trillion (ppt), the Navy's action level at the time. In 2021, the Navy connected one property to a public water system, and installed a new, deeper drinking water well at a second property. The Navy continues to provide bottled water to the third property for drinking and cooking until an enduring solution can be implemented.

The Navy has determined that three of these drinking water wells near Ault Field have detections above the September 2024 DoD Action Levels for PFAS in Private Drinking Water Wells (**Table 1**). The Navy will implement enduring solutions for these properties as soon as possible.

2025 OFF-BASE DRINKING WATER WELL SAMPLING

Due to the September 2024 policy, the Navy re-evaluated on-base groundwater results and off-base drinking water well results. Based on this information, the Navy has determined that additional sampling is needed in the off-base drinking water sampling area near Ault Field (**Figure 2**).

The Navy also identified drinking water wells sampled between 2016 and 2020 that should be resampled because the laboratory method at that time could not detect PFAS at the current lower levels. Because of the laboratory method limitations, PFAS previously reported as not detected may now be detectable at low levels in these drinking water wells.

This drinking water well sampling is being conducted to determine if certain PFAS are at or above the DoD Action Levels for PFAS in Private Drinking Water Wells (**Table 1**).

The Navy requests property owner permission to sample drinking water wells in the sampling areas that have not been previously sampled by the Navy. The Navy also requests property owner permission to resample certain drinking water wells that were sampled between 2016 and 2020.

The Navy is conducting the sampling in collaboration with partners such as EPA Region 10, the Washington State Department of Ecology, the Washington State Department of Health, and the Island County Public Health Department.

Records indicate most of the properties within the sampling areas use a private or community well for drinking water (**Figure 2**). **If your drinking water is provided by the City of Oak Harbor water system, the Navy does not need to sample your drinking water.**

ACTIONS BASED ON RESULTS

Typically, preliminary drinking water sample results are received from the laboratory within 30 days after sample collection. Property owners (and tenants, if present) will first be called and notified of their preliminary drinking water sample results.

PFOA and PFOS, individually or combined, above 70 ppt – The Navy will provide bottled water for drinking and cooking to property owners or tenants and will continue to provide bottled water until an enduring solution is implemented.

PFAS above the DoD Action Levels for PFAS in Private Drinking Water Wells (Table 1) – The Navy will work with property owners to provide an enduring solution, such as a treatment system or connection to public water supply, as soon as possible.

Final drinking water sample results will be mailed to property owners (and tenants, if present) within 3 months after sample collection. They will also be available online at: <https://www.acq.osd.mil/eie/eer/ecc/pfas/map/pfasmmap.html>. Individual results cannot be linked with the sampled property on this website. This website also contains information on planned DoD PFAS testing in off-base drinking water within a covered area.

The Navy will continue to investigate the presence of PFAS at Ault Field and evaluate if actions are needed. The Navy is committed to ensuring the safety of its neighbors. To find out more about all on-base environmental investigations, visit <https://go.usa.gov/xh2Rd>.

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

HEALTH INFORMATION

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>