



DCRA site activity and background through end of May 2021

- Dane County has taken the lead on investigating and mitigating the presence of PFAS contamination at the Airport.
- The County and its partners are eager to clean up these chemicals. It must be done responsibly, which involves learning and managing risks to the community and worker safety as the process evolves. For instance, we have to make sure that any plan for disposing of PFAS will not create more problems in the future.
- The County is one of three parties the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) identified in October 2019 as responsible for remediating the Airport PFAS contamination.
- The other responsible parties are the Wisconsin Air National Guard and the City of Madison. The County is working in cooperation with those other responsible parties.
- The Madison Dane County Public Health Department has posted warning signs and updated fish consumption advisories near Starkweather Creek and placed more signs near Lake Monona.
- Currently, there is little scientific guidance and no EPA or DNR regulation governing the safe removal or disposal of PFAS-contaminated wastes.
- The County retained Mead & Hunt to promptly respond to the contamination found. Mead & Hunt is a national expert on PFAS issues at airports.
- Mead & Hunt prepared work plans to investigate how PFAS is entering the Airport storm water system and to investigate two former fire training areas, commonly referred to as burn pits, in the Airport vicinity.
- Over the years, numerous Wisconsin firefighting organizations used the burn pits to train their firefighting staff. Firefighting training activities also took place over the years on the Truax Wisconsin Air National Guard Base.
- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) rules have and continue to legally mandate that airports use a firefighting agent containing PFAS known as Aqueous-Film-Forming Foam, or AFFF, for training and emergencies because AFFF is the most effective chemical available to quickly extinguish aircraft fires and save lives.
- DCRA currently receives its fire suppression services from the Wisconsin Air National Guard. At one time, the Guard conducted trainings on the Truax Field Air National Guard Base. The Guard Base is located adjacent to the Airport and shares some infrastructure with the Airport.
- The first phase of the storm water investigation identified the specific locations of PFAS contamination in the system. Storm water basins in numerous locations around



the airport property were sampled. That sampling found a few “hotspots,” which are mostly associated with the Truax Guard Base.

- A second phase of sampling the storm water system was completed in July 2020. The sampling provided additional insight into where the PFAS is coming from. You can find the storm water investigation work plan and storm water sampling results by going to the DNR BRRTS site and searching for activity number 02-13-584472. The DNR website is: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Brownfields/botw.html>.
- Investigation of the former fire training areas was completed in July 2020. The work was postponed for a time by the circumstances caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The investigation plans included soils and groundwater grab sampling. The former fire training areas work plan can be found on the DNR BRRTs website by searching for activity numbers 02-13-583366 and 02-13-584369.
- In addition, a pilot study to mitigate areas of the highest concentrations found in the storm water system started in June 2020. There are a series of steps involved to design and install mitigation technology that are appropriate to the site conditions. Ongoing testing is being done to determine the effectiveness of the system on reducing PFAS levels.
- The mitigation pilot study is focusing on reducing PFAS contamination in a hot spot found in the storm water system. A hot spot was detected in an area that receives drainage exclusively from the Guard Base.
- The initial results of the pilot remediation are promising, but more testing and potentially more adjustments are needed to improve efficacy as we learn more.
- In the meantime, the National Guard Bureau awarded a CERCLA (Superfund) remedial investigation (RI) for Truax Field and an off base drinking water assessment study. The RI is the third step in the CERCLA remediation process and involves a more comprehensive site investigation than prior steps. This is an essential step to designing the best plan for remediation.
- The RI process will integrate the data gathered from Mead & Hunt’s investigation processes to date to help plan further investigation steps, including additional investigation of the fire training areas.
- In addition, last month Dane County and its partners proposed a plan for additional mitigation/interim actions to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in response to DNR’s January letter about discharge of PFAS to Starkweather Creek.
- DNR approved the plan. You find the response letter to the DNR here: <https://www.msnairport.com/documents/pdf/20210416-43-Response-SIWP-Ltr.pdf> and the approval letter from DNR here: <https://www.msnairport.com/documents/pdf/20210428-99-Proposed-Interim-Action-Plan-PFAS-Contamination.pdf>