



National Park Service
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National Capital Region
Office of
Communications
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Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20242
202 ● 619 ● 7400 phone
202 ● 619 ● 7302 fax

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Bill Line, Toni Braxton 202 619- 7400

National Park Service informed of Arsenic levels at Fort Reno that require closure of park

Washington, D.C. – Upon learning of recently reported high levels of arsenic from United States Geological Survey (USGS) satellite imaging reports just before 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, May 13th, the National Park Service (NPS) moved immediately to close Fort Reno Park to the public, with snow- fencing being set up around the perimeter of the park beginning today at 6:00 a.m. Fort Reno Park is bounded by Fessenden, Chesapeake and 41st Streets, and Nebraska Avenue, N.W.

The USGS report was performed and conducted as part of its on- going work in the Spring Valley section of upper Northwest Washington with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The USGS report, while not specifically focusing on Fort Reno Park, revealed that the Fort Reno Park grounds contain arsenic levels in the soil and that the levels revealed in the USGS report exceed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) safety threshold.

The NPS is in contact with and is actively working with the EPA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the District of Columbia Department of Health and District of Columbia Public Schools to more fully and accurately determine possible public risk, if any, and other courses of action.

The only time the NPS would conduct field soil sampling or soil testing on national park lands is when it knows of or suspects there has been a release into the environment. The NPS had no prior reason to suspect anything other than safe conditions existed in Fort Reno Park.

The public will be notified as additional information becomes available. The NPS has contacted groups with permits to use the Fort Reno playing fields to notify them of the closure.

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