



Frequently Asked Questions - Spring Creek Park Site

Why is the NPS implementing a closure at Spring Creek Park?

The National Park Service's (NPS) first priority is ensuring the safety of our visitors and employees. The closure of Spring Creek Park is a pre-emptive measure to protect the public in advance of environmental investigations that will begin in 2023. Environmental investigations will involve clearing vegetation over large areas of Spring Creek Park, such that these areas will be made accessible to the public. The closure of Spring Creek Park is being performed to ensure the safety of the public while the site is investigated.

Spring Creek Park was created through landfilling activities conducted in the 1940s and 1950s. Environmental investigations of other parks with a similar operational history to Spring Creek Park (i.e., Great Kills Park) have determined that chemical and radiological contamination is associated with waste fill from this time period.

Has contamination been found at Spring Creek?

In December 2017, NPS conducted a gamma walkover survey at Spring Creek. The survey identified five manmade radioactive articles containing radium, which were removed from Spring Creek Park, as well as other localized areas of elevated levels of radioactivity. Also, soil sampling results for the Spring Creek Resilience and Ecosystem Restoration Project previously identified contaminants in the soil, including pesticides, PCBs, and various metals (e.g., lead).

What is Radium?

Radium is a naturally occurring element that is radioactive. It is formed by the decay of uranium and thorium, which exist naturally in rock and soil. Small quantities of naturally occurring radium are present in building materials, such as granite, cement, and clay brick. Radium was also used in numerous industrial, medical, and consumer products, such as luminescent paint for watches, switches, clocks, and instrument dials. Most uses of radium have been replaced by other radioactive materials or radiation generating devices.

Should I be concerned if I have visited Spring Creek Park in the past?

A majority of Spring Creek Park is not accessible because it is covered with dense vegetation. The fire roads, which are frequently used as walking paths, were evaluated as part of a December 2017 gamma walkover survey. The survey results indicated there was a low risk of exposure to man-made radioactive articles containing radium from passive use (i.e., walking or jogging on the fire roads) of established trails.

Should I be concerned if I live in the neighborhood adjacent to Spring Creek Park?

The available information supports that chemical and radiological contamination is associated with the waste fill that was placed at Spring Creek Park during landfilling activities in the 1940s and 1950s. NPS is conducting a historical records search to better understand these operations. The available information



indicates that landfilling activities were focused within the boundary of Spring Creek Park (i.e., not in the adjacent neighborhood).

NPS will monitor outdoor air during the planned environmental investigations at Spring Creek Park to ensure that contamination is not mobilized from the Site during fieldwork. Airborne contamination has not been detected during air monitoring performed to support environmental investigations at other parks with a similar operational history to Spring Creek Park (i.e., Great Kills Park).

Has residential New York City drinking water been impacted by the contamination at Spring Creek Park?

Based on information received from New York City, your water supply is not impacted by this contamination and is entirely safe to use and drink. New York City does not obtain drinking water from the New York City area, instead, the City's water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the City and is of extremely high quality. The City's water quality monitoring program – which is far more extensive than that required by law – demonstrates that the quality of New York City's drinking water remains high and meets all health-related State and federal drinking water standards. For more information on the results of those tests go to

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dep/about/drinking-water-supply-quality-report.page>

Does NPS intend to re-open Spring Creek Park after the environmental investigations are complete?

NPS will work with the United States Army Corps of Engineers to evaluate the investigation results and assess whether portions of Spring Creek Park can be reopened or if the closure should be permanent while the Site is fully evaluated in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) and the National Oil and Hazardous Substance Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP).

How will the NPS keep the public aware of the most up-to-date information about the status of the park?

The NPS will continue to update our website (www.nps.gov/gate) and use Facebook (www.facebook.com/GatewayNPS) and Twitter (@GatewayNPS) to keep the public informed. The NPS also will send out update emails periodically to those who have elected to receive email updates. Please email us at SpringCreekCleanup@nps.gov to be added to this list.

A Community Involvement Plan (CIP) for the project is available in the Site Administrative Record File. The addresses, contact information, and operating hours for the information repositories housing the Site Administrative Record File are provided on the Spring Creek Park Environmental Cleanup Project page.

The NPS will continue to update the CIP to reflect the most recent information. The NPS will also continue to host public meetings and/or attend local Community Board meetings as the NPS begins different phases of the project and new information becomes available.