

Community Fact Sheet

Poplar Point Site CERCLA Actions

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Capital Region
National Capital Parks – East

Anacostia Park

Fall 2011



A SITE HISTORY...

The Poplar Point Site (the Site) is located in Anacostia Park in S.E. Washington, D.C., along the east side of the Anacostia River, between the South Capitol Street Bridge, 11th Street Bridges, Anacostia Freeway (Interstate 295), and the Anacostia River, approximately one mile upstream from the confluence of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers. Anacostia Park is a unit of the National Park Service (NPS) within National Capital Parks-East (NACE).



A 19th century engraving of Poplar Point in the foreground, with the Navy Yard across the Anacostia River (Circa 1834)

The Site was created in part by the filling of tidal marshes along the Anacostia River between 1882 and 1927. The Poplar Point area has undergone a variety of uses since that time. The southwestern portion of the approximately 110-acre Site has historically been divided into two parcels, both of which supported nurseries and greenhouse operations from the mid-1920s until 1993. One of those parcels was used by the Architect of the Capitol (AOC), and the other by the District of Columbia's Lanham Tree Nursery (DCL). The central and eastern portions of the Site were occupied by the Naval Receiving Station (NRS) from the 1940s through the 1960s. Between 1959 and 1980, the Navy either demolished or transferred the remaining buildings located at the NRS to NPS.

AND NOW...

In 2006, Congress enacted legislation (Public Law 109-396 commonly referred to as the DC Lands Act) directing the United States to transfer the Site to the District of Columbia (District), but the transfer has not yet occurred. Currently, the NPS Headquarters for NACE, the U.S. Park Police Anacostia Operations Facility (AOF), and the U.S. Park Police Aviation Unit facilities occupy the portion of the Site formerly occupied by the NRS. The former greenhouse and nursery areas are unused and vegetation has been allowed to grow naturally there. The District's METRO Green line runs underground through the western end of the former NRS area. The Site also includes various storage buildings, wetlands, and managed meadows. The existing wetlands, meadows, scrub-shrub areas, and willow thickets at the Site provide important habitat for a diversity of plants and animal life, including some species of special concern.

ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS...

Beginning in the early 1990s, a number of environmental investigations have been performed at the Site. Most of these investigations focused on the southwestern portion of the Site, in the areas formerly operated

as nurseries and greenhouses. Those investigations identified metals, pesticides, semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), petroleum hydrocarbons, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in Site soils above concentrations that may pose unacceptable risk to human health or the environment (referred to as screening levels). Sediments at the Site were found to contain metals, pesticides, PCBs, and SVOCs above screening levels. Site groundwater sampling detected metals, pesticides, PCBs, VOCs, SVOCs, and petroleum hydrocarbons, and surface water sampling revealed manganese and VOCs all above screening levels. In addition to the prior environmental investigations, abandoned drums and inactive underground and above ground storage tanks were removed from the Site previously.

In September 2008, NPS and the District entered into a Consent Order under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), by which the District agreed to conduct a CERCLA Remedial Investigation (RI) and Feasibility Study (FS) of the entire Poplar Point Site under the oversight of NPS. The RI will characterize the environmental conditions of the Site, and will include ecological and human health risk assessments. The FS will present a range of cleanup alternatives and evaluate those alternatives using prescribed criteria. Following completion of the RI and FS, a



Proposed Plan identifying the preferred cleanup alternative will be issued. Currently, the District and NPS are developing the RI/FS Work Plan for the Site to identify data needs. Subsequently, the District and NPS will implement a comprehensive Site investigation in 2012, followed by the RI Report, FS Report, and Proposed Plan.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT...

Community involvement is an important part of the CERCLA process, and the public will have the opportunity to review and comment on the Proposed Plan. An administrative record file containing copies of the documents upon which the selection of cleanup actions will be based will be established prior to initiation of the RI field activities. Once established, NPS will publish a notice of availability of the administrative record file in a local newspaper, indicating where the documents can be reviewed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

If you have any questions concerning the Poplar Point Site CERCLA response actions, please contact Emily Ferguson, project manager, at (202) 692-6033.