



## **Benner Township PFAS HSCA Investigation Fact Sheet**

*Updated 2/18/2022*

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's ("DEP") Bureau of Environmental Cleanup and Brownfields Program in the Northcentral Regional Office has prepared this information sheet to provide additional details to the public on the investigation into a groundwater contamination plume located between Buffalo Run Road and Big Hollow Road in Benner Township, Centre County, currently being conducted in accordance with the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act ("HSCA").

### **What is DEP Investigating?**

DEP is investigating a groundwater plume located in Benner Township, Centre County. The primary goal is to determine the extent of the plume and whether there are any potential impacts to residents living within the vicinity of the plume or the environment. Public drinking water is available in part of the area of concern, but the water supplied by the public drinking water system has not been impacted by the contamination. DEP is also aware that a number of residences and businesses rely on private drinking water supply wells in the area. Ingestion of potentially contaminated groundwater through those private wells is therefore considered a possible risk.

### **What Are the Contaminants?**

The contamination consists of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), specifically perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), along with other PFAS compounds. US EPA set a Health Advisory Level (HAL) of 70 parts per trillion (ppt) for the combination of PFOS and PFOA compounds. US EPA's Health Advisory Fact Sheet for PFOS and PFOA states that the health advisory of 70 parts per trillion was developed "to provide Americans, including the most sensitive populations, with a margin of protection from a lifetime of exposure to PFOA and PFOS from drinking water." DEP uses the EPA level as its cleanup standard for these compounds under Pennsylvania's Land Recycling and Environmental Remediation Standards Act, or "Act 2."

PFAS compounds are commonly found in many household and industrial products that repel water or oil or are heat resistant. These include some fabric protectors such as Scotchgard, non-stick cookware containing Teflon, some fire-fighting foams, and food packaging, among other products. To learn more about PFAS in Pennsylvania, scan the QR code or visit [www.dep.pa.gov/pfas](http://www.dep.pa.gov/pfas).



*To learn more  
about PFAS in  
Pennsylvania,  
scan the QR code  
above.*

### **What Are the Concerns?**

DEP's investigation will primarily focus on determining whether the contaminant plume poses any risk to residents and businesses who are utilizing the groundwater from private wells for consumptive purposes. During our investigation, we plan to collect soil samples, and later install groundwater

monitoring wells and collect area surface water and spring samples, to delineate the extent of the plume and identify any potential exposure pathways. We are also collecting additional samples from existing private water supply wells in the area of investigation. The sample results will be compared to the Act 2 cleanup standards.

### **How Was the Groundwater Plume Discovered?**

DEP established a PFAS Task Force following EPA's adoption of the Health Advisory Level (HAL). A primary goal of the Task Force was to begin sampling public drinking water supplies for PFAS compounds to identify any that exceed the HAL. During the first round of sampling in 2019, a business in Benner Township was found to contain PFAS in excess of the HAL, and DEP reached out to them for further testing. Once the results were confirmed, DEP conducted sampling at two additional businesses in close proximity, and again PFAS was detected above the HAL.

### **What Will the Investigation Involve?**

DEP's next phase of investigation will include the collection of soil samples in areas where PFAS compounds were known or suspected to be used historically and additional sampling of water supply wells. Once the results of these samples are evaluated, DEP contractors will begin assessing the geology of the area to determine groundwater flow conditions and define the best locations for installation of groundwater monitoring wells. Sampling of the groundwater monitoring wells will hopefully permit us to further delineate the plume containing PFAS compounds. This data may help to pinpoint any additional residents or businesses who may be at risk of consuming impacted groundwater and also to better identify the source(s).

### **Who is Paying for the Investigation?**

The Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act ("HSCA") provides DEP with the funding and the authority to conduct investigations at sites where hazardous substances have potentially been released and a responsible party has not been determined or is not able to perform the cleanup. HSCA funding will be used for all aspects of DEP's investigation and may be applied to any remediation or mitigation of the groundwater contamination. HSCA allows DEP to seek recovery of the costs it expends from the parties responsible for the contamination, in cases where they can be identified.

### **How Long Will the Investigation Take?**

There is no specified time frame for the investigation and any potential mitigation activities. Data will first be collected from soil samples and any further activities will be determined based on the initial data collected and will follow the processes outlined in the HSCA program. For more information on the HSCA program, please visit [www.dep.pa.gov/hasca](http://www.dep.pa.gov/hasca).

### **Where Is the Investigation Being Conducted?**

The area of investigation continues to evolve. The current investigation area is depicted on the map at the end of this document.

## **What is the Current Status of the Investigation?**

In recent months, DEP has taken several steps to advance the investigation:

- Compiled a summary of historic industrial and commercial operations along the High Tech and Fox Hill Road vicinity, including the University Park Airport as well as several companies.
- Finalized a Work Plan with the selected HSCA contractor to conduct soil sampling in focused areas to determine whether PFAS compounds are present in soil where these compounds may have been utilized. This sampling is scheduled to occur February 2022.
- Begun sampling private water supply wells in an effort to identify the extent of the plume and impacts associated with the PFAS contamination.

Results of the soil and well sampling will provide information regarding potential sources contributing to the PFAS groundwater plume.

This fact sheet and additional information can be found at [www.dep.pa.gov/BennerHSCA](http://www.dep.pa.gov/BennerHSCA).

## **What Residential Samples Have Been Collected to Date?**

In December 2021, DEP began residential water sampling by reaching out to a particular set of local property owners who rely on private water wells for their water supply. These locations were chosen to represent groundwater quality where wells are being utilized in different directions leading away from the known area of contamination and potential sources. The results of this first round of sampling were received by DEP on February 7, 2022, and several wells were found to contain PFAS compounds. The residents whose wells were sampled were immediately contacted to relay the results of their water sample. The impacted wells are located in the residential neighborhood along Walnut Grove Drive to the south of the University Park Airport.

## **What Can Residents Expect Next?**

DEP is in the process of reaching out to residents who were not previously sampled in the neighborhood where PFAS compounds were detected to gather information and make arrangements to sample their residential wells. DEP is currently working with a contractor to schedule sampling at a certified laboratory for additional residents in this immediate vicinity. At the current time, there are limits on how many samples can be analyzed at a given time by the laboratories, so scheduling may take a number of weeks. This sampling is tentatively scheduled to occur in February and March of 2022. Sample results are typically reported back to DEP within 4-6 weeks. Once those results are received, they will be relayed to the property owner(s).

If you have not yet been contacted and are using a private well in the area of concern, please contact DEP at 570-327-3418 or 570-321-6594.

## **What if My Well Tests Positive for PFAS?**

The current Act 2 cleanup standard for PFOS and PFOA combined in drinking water is 70 parts per trillion. Sample results from a residential drinking water supply well are compared to this standard to evaluate the potential risk of exposure. For water samples, one part per trillion (ppt) is the same as one nanogram per liter (ng/L) or 0.001 micrograms per liter (ug/L or part per billion (ppb)).

If your well contains PFOS and PFOA above the 70 parts per trillion Act 2 cleanup standard, an alternate drinking water supply should be considered. This may consist of the use of bottled water or the installation of a home water carbon filtration system. As part of DEP's investigation, the provision of alternative drinking water supplies for residents impacted above the Act 2 cleanup standard will be evaluated.

There are also other PFAS compounds that may be present in residential water supplies that do not currently have standards. The understanding of PFAS contaminants and their risks is rapidly evolving. As the science allows, the standards may change, and we will continue to keep you updated. DEP has proposed new maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) for some specific PFAS compounds, and if they are adopted, our cleanup standards may change.

### **Were Any Other Samples Collected?**

Initially, DEP sampled several businesses along High Tech Road for PFAS. These results were discussed at the November Benner Township supervisors meeting; that presentation is available at DEP's Northcentral Region Community Information Page. As part of the December sampling, both the water supply well for Benner Spring hatchery and the Benner Spring discharge were also sampled.

### **What's Next?**

Following collection and analysis of the soil and drinking water samples outlined above, DEP will be evaluating the data to determine what additional investigation activities may be needed. We will also continue our conversations with the Penn State University about their PFAS investigations on the University Park airport property. Following investigation, remediation alternatives are often the next step once enough information has been collected.

DEP's goals are to make sure that everyone has safe drinking water, understand the location and migration of the contamination, and, in accordance with DEP's mission, to ensure that both the environment and the citizens of the commonwealth are protected. DEP will continue to stay in touch with the residents in the impacted area, local and state government officials, and the university.



**Figure 1: Map of Investigation Area (See Final Page)**

# Benner Twp PFAS Investigation Area

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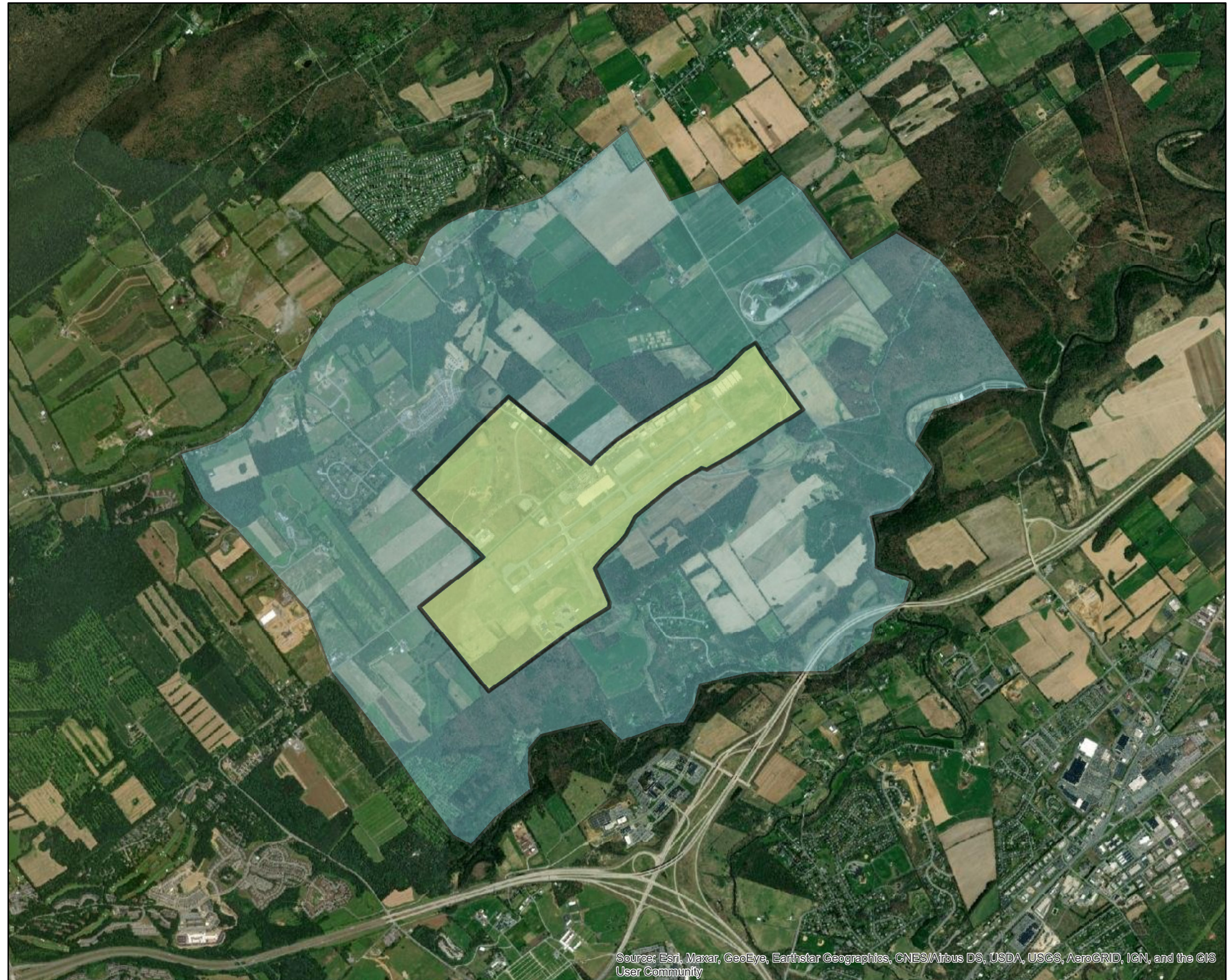


## Legend

-  Potential Source Investigation Area
-  Investigation Area

The Investigation Area is primarily bounded in the north by Buffalo Run Road, in the west by Bernal Road, in the south by Big Hollow Road, and in the east by Rock Road/Barns Lane.

The Potential Source Investigation Area is centered around the University Park Airport and various industry located to the north along High Tech Road.



Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

