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WATERSHED WATCH

ST. MARY'S RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

PO Box 94
St. Mary's City, MD 20686

March 10, 2020

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Navy Asserts Drinking Water is Safe Leaves Many Questions Unanswered **Association to move quickly in getting answers-**

INSIDE THIS EDITION

>>Navy Asserts Drinking
Water is Safe—Leaves Many
Questions Unanswered

SAVE-THE-DATE

A River Affair

Monday, May 25, 2020

1 to 4 pm

Ruddy Duck Seafood &
Alehouse

[Purchase Tickets](#)



Lexington Park, MD—On Tuesday March 3, the Navy held a public meeting at the local library to inform the public on the pollutants in the PFAS family of chemicals. The Navy reported that PFAS was not detected in drinking water at the sprawling Patuxent Naval Air Station. But the Navy had no information regarding testing at the adjacent facility in St. Inigoes, known locally as Webster Outlying Field. The meeting was attended by more than 275 local residents, many concerned after hearing about an open water sample taken in St. Inigoes Creek that had resulted in a laboratory report suggesting the PFAS total level there was worrisome.

"We don't know how that sample was collected and the laboratory was not certified for PFAS testing," Navy spokesperson Kyle Rambo told the Association at the March 3 meeting.

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of man-made chemicals that include PFOA, PFOS, GenX, and many other chemicals. PFAS have been manufactured and used in a variety of industries around the globe, including in the United States since the



Source: Australian Department of Defence

1940s, according to the EPA's website. PFAS has been used extensively in fire-fighting foams at both Patuxent NAS and Webster Field. Minute amounts of PFAS are a known health concern especially for pregnant women and their unborn children. PFAS levels are reported in parts per trillion (ppt) or in nanograms per gram dry weight. PFAS are found in some clothing, food packaging, stain guard formulas, non-stick frying pans, and other household items. Therefore the sampling can be easily contaminated resulting in both false positive tests and results lower than actually present.



"Obviously we need to know more," said Association executive director Bob Lewis. "We are concerned that both the state and Navy might act too slowly in developing protocols and making test results public."

The Navy told attendees they were a year or more away from doing any testing at Webster Field. The state did indicate that they would fast track their planning and "likely use St. Inigoes as a pilot study," according to Lee Currey, director of Water and Science Administration for MDE, in an email to the Association late last week.

"We're talking about a minuscule amount of PFAS causing a human danger," said Lewis, "and testing at this level of accuracy is extremely difficult and only a small number of laboratories are certified to test for PFAS."

PFAS chemicals are known as 'forever chemicals' as they do not break down over time. They take a long time to depart from animals where they accumulate mostly in the bloodstream.

"Essentially everyone has these compounds in our blood," says Linda Birnbaum, director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the National Toxicology Program.

The Association met last week in a special meeting and is taking aggressive actions to address many of the concerns relating to PFAS contamination in open waters and in seafood. If you would like to help, we are taking donations specifically earmarked for this campaign— donate through PayPal on our webpage at <http://www.SMRWA.org> and indicate "PFAS" in the comment line. Donations are tax deductible. Or call Lewis at 301-904-2387 to learn more about the Association's campaign.

To learn more about PFAS and the dangers to human health, visit the EPA's web page: <https://www.epa.gov/PFAS/basic-information-PFAS>



OUR MISSION

To protect, improve, and promote the sustainability of the St. Mary's River Watershed through the collaborative efforts of economic, agricultural, environmental, social, cultural, and political stakeholders in the community.

We're on the web!
www.smrwa.org



Upcoming Events:

- River Clean Up
Saturday April 18
time TBD
Chancellor's Point Community Center
- Earth Day on the Square
Sunday April 19
12:30 to 4:30
Leonardtwn
- A River Affair
SAVE THE DATE
Monday, May 25
1:00 to 4:00 pm
Ruddy Duck Seafood & Alehouse
[Purchase Tickets](#)
- RiverFest 2020
Saturday, September 26

SAVE THE DATE
11:00 am to 4:00 pm
Historic St. Mary's City

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