



Maryland Department of the  
Environment

**FACTS ABOUT:  
OLD FORT ROAD  
MD-171**

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## **Site Location**

The Old Fort Road site is located about 2 miles north-northwest of Piscataway in southwestern Prince George's County, Fort Washington, Maryland. The site is bordered to the north by a residence and a wooded area, on the south and east by new housing developments and wooded areas, and on the west by Old Fort Road and more woods.

## **Site History**

This 4.82-acre parcel of property was operated from 1956 to 1983 as a sand and gravel quarry by Mr. E. E. Thomas. Mr. Thomas was known to have accepted various demolition, sanitary, and hazardous wastes without the necessary State and County waste disposal permits.

Throughout 1982 and 1983, the State conducted several inspections of the property. On numerous occasions, Mr. Thomas disregarded landfill permitting requirements and continued to allow dumping at the site.

In October 1982, the State ordered Mr. Thomas to remove a pool of heavy waste fuel oil from the site. A subsequent inspection indicated he had removed the oil by excavating the area. On November 18, 1982, the State had a certified hazardous waste hauler remove three 55-gallon drums containing waste paints from the site.

In 1985, Mr. Thomas was found to be in contempt of a court injunction to clean the site and was sentenced to serve time in the County detention center. In approximately 1985, he transferred the property to a relative, Mr. Alvin E. Thomas. Since the operations ceased in the early 1980s, the site has been fallow and is now heavily vegetated.

## **Environmental Investigations**

In 1988, NUS Corporation, under contract with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), conducted a Screening Site Inspection of the site, which included the collection of stream samples and a sample from an on-site dug home well. Sample results of on-site stream sediments revealed levels of cadmium (up to 33 mg/kg) and zinc (793 mg/kg). The abandoned home well revealed cadmium at 4.2 µg/L.



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The Prince George's County Health Department has sampled the stream coming from the site on several occasions. Sample analysis for volatile organics in 1990 indicated the presence of tetrachloroethene at 2 µg/L in the surface water. The latest sampling in March 1997 showed no presence of volatile organics.

In 1994, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) conducted a Level III Site Inspection Prioritization, which focused on source soil sampling to determine types of waste present and to delineate the source area. Surface water and sediment samples were collected to determine whether a release to surface water had occurred. A sample was obtained from the on-site well to determine whether a release to ground water had occurred. The Site Inspection Prioritization concluded that ground water from the site was unlikely to impact residential wells due to their distance and direction from the site, depth, and area geology. The surface water sampling did not conclusively indicate downstream impact from the site; however, the on-site surface water location under a waste pile showed elevated metals and slightly elevated volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds.

In 1999, MDE performed a Site Survey to determine if site conditions had changed since the last site investigation in 1994. The result of the survey determined that the site was the same as in 1994 with the exception that the vegetation had become denser. The survey concluded that MDE has further requirements for the site but it did not warrant further investigation from the EPA. The site was given a No Further Remedial Action Planned status from the EPA sometime around 1999.

In July of 2000, MDE performed a State Superfund Assessment on the site. The assessment included testing soil, sediments, groundwater and surface water at the site. The test results were consistent with the results obtained in the 1994 investigation. Groundwater did not appear to be impacted. It was concluded that the site does not present an imminent danger to human health or the environment. The assessment recommended that Prince George's County monitor the stream for VOCs and the site was fenced off by MDE personnel to limit human access to the site.

On January 3, 2002 MDE wrote a letter to the owner, Mr. Alvin Thomas, explaining that a deed restriction was placed in the records prohibiting construction on the site without written authorization from the MDE. In April of 2002, MDE wrote another letter to the property owner explaining the requirements needed before the site could be developed.



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## **Current Status**

There has been no activity at the site since the property was transferred to Mr. Alvin E. Thomas in 1985. However, County records indicate that all property taxes have been paid. No additional work has been conducted to determine the impact from prior land filling operations. A re-inspection of the site in January 2012 found no evidence of activity on the site with the exception of some possible additional illegal dumping.



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