



Fort Howard

What You Need to Know

Site Location

The 155.64-acre Fort Howard site is comprised of 94.64 acres owned by the Veterans Administration (VA) and 61 acres owned by Baltimore County for the Fort Howard Park. The site is located on North Point at the end of North Point Road in Fort Howard, Baltimore County, Maryland. The Patapsco River is south of the site and the Chesapeake Bay is to the east.

Site History

Fort Howard was an artillery battery from the late 1800s through the 1920s. The fort was closed in 1926 and the property excised to the Veterans Administration in 1940. A hospital was then constructed on the property. Subsequently, the hospital was closed and an outpatient clinic operated on the site. The clinic was closed in the 2000s.

During the Vietnam War, part of the Fort Howard property was returned to the military and used as a practice Viet-Cong village for training intelligence officers. These activities were terminated in 1973 and the property returned to the VA.

Environmental Investigations and Actions

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) performed several investigations on former dump sites located on the property. Heavy metals, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) and volatile organic compounds were identified on the property. The USACE determined that the levels of contamination were below action levels. Munitions and Explosives of Concern (MEC) were also identified on the site. A 2008 investigation did not find evidence to require further action.

In 1988, Engineering Science and Technology conducted a Site Investigation (SI) for the USACE. Three former landfills were identified on the property, the USACE referenced them as Areas A, B, and C.

The USACE conducted confirmatory sampling of Fort Howard Area C in 1999. Thirty-seven surface soil samples were collected and field screened for PCB and lead contamination. Eleven of these samples, plus four subsurface samples, were submitted to a laboratory for further analysis. Lead was detected in levels above action limits in five of the eleven surface soil samples and three of the subsurface soil samples. The USACE determined that the elevated levels of contamination were due to the materials deposited in the landfill.

In August 2008, Alion Science and Technology conducted an SI of Fort Howard for the USACE. This inspection focused on MEC, which concluded that there was not sufficient contamination to require further action. The report indicates that previously recovered items included practice (dummy) grenades, a cannon ball and spent small arms casings.

An inspection of the site was performed by Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) in December of 2009, and a Preliminary Assessment finalized in June 2010. MDE recommended



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that the three landfill areas be further evaluated because the property was under consideration for future development.

In 2015, the Environmental Protection Agency reviewed an SI of the former Fort Howard Medical facility that was conducted for the VA. The SI summarized the results of numerous previous investigations that have been performed at Fort Howard and included sampling of some areas of concern not previously identified. The SI report documented areas of soil contamination that exceed Maryland cleanup standards and sediments that have some elevated levels of PAHs. Based on the information provided, the EPA indicated that the site was categorized as No Further Remedial Action Planned (NFRAP) status.

Current Status/Planned or Potential Future Action

The Veterans Administration Hospital, including the outpatient clinic, has been closed.