

Community Update

Investigation of Former Staging Area at Fort Totten Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Rock Creek Park

January 2018



AREA HISTORY

Fort Totten Park is located within the Civil War Defenses of Washington and is owned by the United States. This park is administered by the National Park Service (NPS) and managed by Rock Creek Park. The park occupies approximately 40.3 acres located in the Fort Totten neighborhood of northeast Washington, D.C. In 1992, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) placed approximately 60 yards of fill material for rehabilitation of an area used by WMATA for construction of the Greenbelt Line and Fort Totten Metro Station.



The fill material placed by WMATA was obtained from property that was formerly used in the production, testing, and disposal of chemical warfare agents and munitions. Potential contaminants in soil at the source property for the fill material could include volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds, metals, cyanide, explosives, and chemical warfare materials. Records indicate that WMATA removed most of the fill material from the staging area at NPS direction. However, some of the fill material reportedly spilled down a wooded slope on the northwest corner of Fort Totten Park, and this material was not removed.

NOW...

NPS has determined that a Preliminary Assessment/Site Inspection (PA/SI) of the former staging area should be conducted pursuant to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). The purpose of the PA/SI is to determine if contaminants associated with the source property for the fill material are present at Fort Totten Park at concentrations that exceed human health or ecological screening criteria and if there is the potential for off-site migration of contamination. NPS will use data collected during this field investigation to decide if further response action is warranted.



The former staging area is currently overgrown with dense vegetation. Park staff will clear vegetation from the test area prior to the investigation to allow access for sample collection.

The first field investigation activity will be surface soil and surface sediment sampling. Additional phases for subsurface soil and groundwater sampling will be conducted if warranted based on the first phase results. Samples will be analyzed for groups of contaminants identified in soil at the property from which the fill was sourced.

FIELD INVESTIGATION ACTIVITIES WILL BEGIN IN FEBRUARY 2018

The majority of Fort Totten Park will be open during investigation activities. An exclusion zone of 25 feet will be established around active sample collection areas using safety cones and caution tape.

Field investigation activities will be planned and implemented in close coordination with park staff to protect public safety and preserve public enjoyment of the park. During the first field investigation phase, samples will be collected using hand-operated corers. Depending on the results of the first investigation phase, one or more additional phases may be conducted in 2018. During subsequent investigation phases, soil samples will be collected using hand-operated corers and a drill rig may be used to install groundwater monitoring wells.

Field investigation activities are not anticipated to create excessive dust, vapor, odor, or noise. Activities requiring heavy equipment will be limited to normal work hours (i.e., between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.) to minimize potential noise impacts to residents in the area and park visitors.

Depending on the findings of the first phase of the investigation and subsequent field work schedules, a final PA/SI Report is anticipated by fall 2018.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

If you have questions concerning the field work or any aspect of the PA/SI process for the former staging area at Fort Totten, please contact Tammy Stidham, NPS federal government lead, at Tammy_Stidham@nps.gov or (202) 619-7474.
