



# NAS Pensacola Pensacola, Florida Drinking Water Investigation Fact Sheet

February 2019

**The Navy is requesting permission to sample drinking water obtained from private wells within a designated area near NAS Pensacola.**

## INTRODUCTION

The Navy is requesting permission to sample drinking water obtained from private wells within a designated area near NAS Pensacola (Figure 1). The Navy has developed a protective policy to address past releases of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances, commonly known as PFAS. These substances may be present in the soil and/or groundwater at Navy sites as a result of historical firefighting activities using aqueous film forming foam (AFFF), including response to crashes, equipment testing, training, etc. Since AFFF was used in response to plane crashes on Sherman Field Runway 7R of NAS Pensacola, there is the potential for these substances to also be present in certain private drinking water wells because of their proximity and location relative to the NAS Pensacola crash sites (Figure 2). Although available records indicate that some of the drinking water in the designated area is supplied by Peoples Water Service Company (Peoples), the Navy has identified private drinking water wells within this designated area. We are seeking the public's assistance to identify additional private drinking water wells located in the shaded area depicted on Figure 2. The Navy is testing only private drinking water wells, not water supplied by public utilities like Peoples.

The Navy is asking for permission to sample drinking water wells in a designated area near NAS Pensacola because there is the potential for these wells to contain perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS). There is no legal requirement to conduct this drinking water testing. It is a voluntary measure because water quality for our off-base neighbors is a priority for the Navy. The



**Figure 1- NAS Pensacola**

Navy is performing this drinking water sampling in coordination with partners, including Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Region 4, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), Florida Department of Health (FDOH) and the Escambia County Natural Resources Management Department.

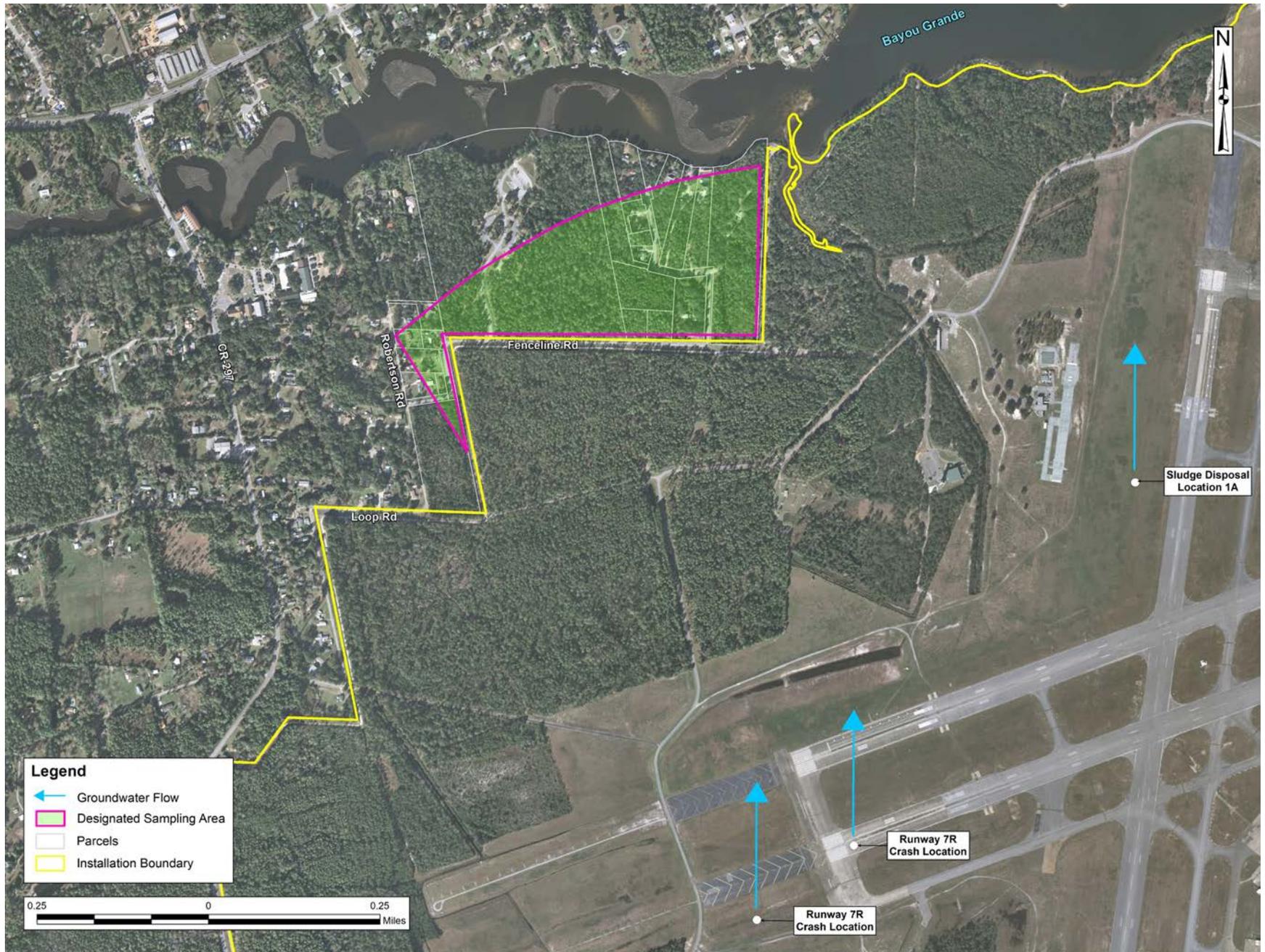
## BACKGROUND

PFAS are man-made chemicals that have been used since the 1950s in many household and industrial products because of their stain- and water-repellant properties. PFAS are now present virtually everywhere in the world because of the large amounts that have been manufactured and used. PFAS have been found in non-stick cookware, food wrappers, and stain resistant fabrics. Once these compounds are released to the environment, they break down very slowly.

PFAS are “emerging” contaminants, which have no Safe Drinking Water Act regulatory standards

**If preliminary results show that drinking water from your private well contains PFOS and/or PFOA above the EPA lifetime health advisory, then the Navy will provide bottled water for drinking and cooking until a long-term solution is implemented.**

Figure 2- Designated Private Well Sampling Area



or routine water quality testing requirements. The EPA is currently studying certain PFAS to determine if regulation is needed. In May 2016, the EPA released lifetime health advisory levels for two PFAS, specifically PFOS and PFOA. **Health advisory levels are not regulatory standards. They are health-based concentrations which EPA states offer a margin of protection for all Americans throughout their life from exposure to PFOS and PFOA in drinking water.**

The EPA health advisory level for lifetime exposure is 70 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFOS and 70 ppt for PFOA. When both PFOS and PFOA are found in drinking water, the combined concentrations should not exceed 70 ppt.

### **NAVY POLICY**

Until enforceable regulations are promulgated for PFAS, the Navy has developed a policy to ensure drinking water from private wells is not impacted by PFOS and/or PFOA near installations where there has been a nearby known or suspected release of PFAS to the environment. Navy policy is to sample private drinking water wells downgradient (in the direction of groundwater flow) from a known or suspected release of PFAS. Sampling in this area will allow the Navy to identify if our neighbors are exposed to PFOA and/or PFOS in private drinking water wells above the EPA health advisory level.

Because of the AFFF previously released at NAS Pensacola, it is possible that PFAS reached the groundwater off-base. Our first priority is determining if PFOS and/or PFOA are present in drinking water wells of nearby residents, and taking appropriate action if so. Once any potential exposures from drinking water have been addressed, the Navy will complete the investigation at NAS Pensacola to better determine the presence of these compounds.

### **ACTIONS BASED ON RESULTS**

The preliminary results from the off-base drinking water sampling are expected approximately 30 days after the samples are collected. The Navy will do its best to keep personally identifiable information related to sampling results confidential, to the extent permitted by law. We will provide notification to the property owners of their personal drinking water results and follow-up actions if needed.

The Navy will provide an alternate water source, likely bottled water, for drinking and cooking to any property owner in the sampling area whose water contains PFOS and/or PFOA above the EPA health advisory levels. The Navy will continue to provide the alternate water until a permanent solution is implemented.

### **HEALTH INFORMATION**

Exposure to PFOS and PFOA appears to be global. Studies have found both compounds in the blood samples of the general population. Studies on exposed populations indicate that PFOS and/or PFOA may have caused elevated cholesterol levels and possibly low infant birth weight. In studies conducted using laboratory animals, effects on developmental, neurological, immune, thyroid, and liver function were observed.

Health effects from exposure to low levels of PFAS are not well known and studies are continuing. At this time, it is not possible to link exposures to PFOS and/or PFOA to a person's individual health issues. Blood tests are available to measure these chemicals, but they are not routinely done because the results can be inconclusive and test results do not predict health effects. Long-term exposure effects are still being investigated by the EPA.

***Based on what is known and still unknown about PFOS and PFOA, EPA recommends people not drink or cook with water that contains these compounds above the EPA's lifetime health advisory.***

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

[https://www.cnic.navy.mil/regions/cnrse/installations/nas\\_pensacola.html](https://www.cnic.navy.mil/regions/cnrse/installations/nas_pensacola.html)

If you have specific questions: contact the NAS Pensacola Community Planning and Liaison Officer at: 850-452-8715 or [stephen.j.opalenik@navy.mil](mailto:stephen.j.opalenik@navy.mil)