



# Sampling for PFAS in St. Mary's River surface water and oysters

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is launching a pilot study to assess whether surface water and oysters in portions of the St. Mary's River and its tributaries near Naval Air Station (NAS) Patuxent River's Webster Field Annex have elevated levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). This pilot study is an integral part of MDE's development of a comprehensive plan.

## Approach

---

PFAS refers to a large group of human-made chemicals that for decades were used in a range of products, including stain- and water-resistant fabrics and carpeting, cleaning products, paints, cookware, food packaging and fire-fighting foams. Some PFAS can last a long time in the natural environment and can potentially accumulate in the food chain. Some scientific studies even suggest that certain PFAS may affect systems in the human body.

MDE is putting a priority on developing a comprehensive plan for understanding, communicating, and reducing risks related to PFAS. This includes identifying and inspecting areas with the highest potential exposure risks such as drinking water, surface water and fish and shellfish, while also researching other potential areas such as sediment and sewage sludge.

## Partnerships

---

MDE is working with the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to assess, remediate and monitor DoD sites in Maryland where PFAS are/were present, including the NAS Patuxent River (Pax River). On March 3, 2020, the Navy sponsored a public meeting at NAS Pax River where they discussed how PFAS from firefighting foam used at the Webster Field Annex may have reached surface waters through runoff or groundwater.

In response to residents' concerns, MDE is working in partnership with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to gather information on PFAS, including sampling methodologies and results.

## Pilot Study

---

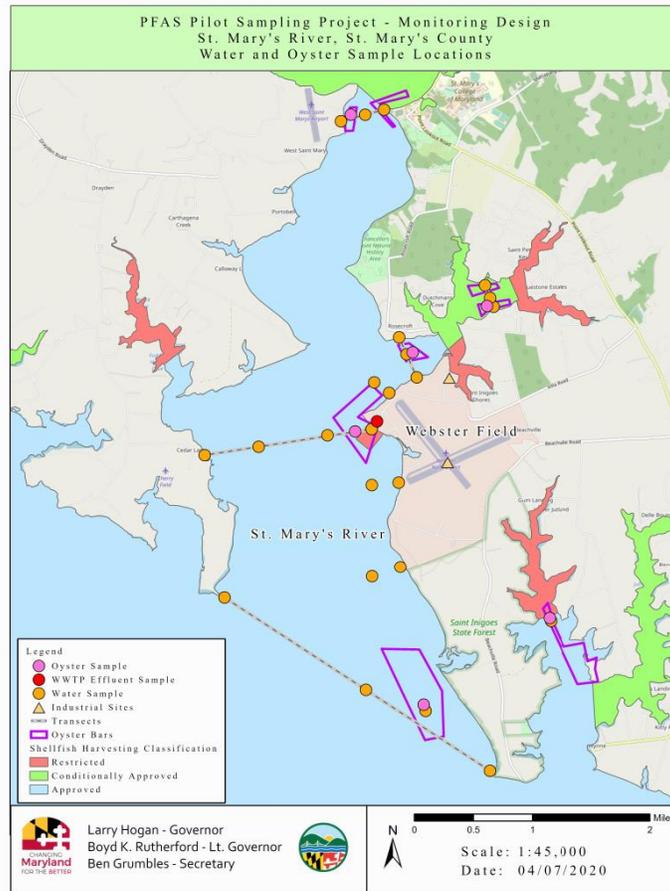
The purpose of this monitoring effort is to assess the occurrence of certain PFAS in shellfish and surface water in and around St. Inigoes Creek, the St. Mary's River and the mouth of the Patuxent River. This pilot study may help inform future MDE decisions on identifying, monitoring, sampling occurrences of PFAS elsewhere in the state.

DNR and MDE teams will collect samples of surface water, oyster tissue and effluent from the Webster Field wastewater treatment facility in the spring or early summer 2020 with plans to produce a preliminary pilot study report by summer or early fall 2020. Due to the COVID-19 state of emergency, this timeline is subject to change to assure the safety of the public and staff.

For sampling locations, please see the following map.



# Sampling for PFAS in St. Mary's River surface water and oysters



## Additional information

Executive Summary, St. Mary's River PFAS Pilot Study [mde.maryland.gov/stmarysplansummary](https://mde.maryland.gov/stmarysplansummary)

St. Mary's River Sampling Plan [mde.maryland.gov/stmaryssamplingplan](https://mde.maryland.gov/stmaryssamplingplan)

St. Mary's Sampling Plan map [mde.maryland.gov/stmarysplanmap](https://mde.maryland.gov/stmarysplanmap)

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry fact sheet

[atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/docs/pfas\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](https://atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/docs/pfas_fact_sheet.pdf)

U.S. Food and Drug Administration fact sheet

[fda.gov/food/chemicals/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas](https://fda.gov/food/chemicals/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas)

## Questions?

Email [lee.currey@maryland.gov](mailto:lee.currey@maryland.gov)