



Maryland Department of the
Environment

FACTS ABOUT: FOREST GLEN ANNEX

Site Location

The Forest Glen Annex (FGA) is located in the Forest Glen area of Silver Spring, Maryland in Montgomery County. The land use north, east and south of the installation is residential and commercial. The Rock Creek Regional Park is located immediately adjacent to the western boundary of the installation. Ireland Creek runs in a westerly direction across the property and joins Rock Creek west of the FGA. The current facility includes approximately 132 acres.

Site History

Historically, portions of the FGA property served as solid waste disposal landfills for wastes from the Army's Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the Forest Glen Annex. The wastes buried in the landfills reportedly include construction debris, medical waste, incinerator ash, household waste, and office waste.

At one time the Diamond Ordnance Research Facility (DORF) operated a nuclear reactor on the property. In 1977 the DORF was decommissioned under contemporaneous Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) requirements. Since that time, the NRC decommissioning requirements have changed and the Army is currently conducting new decommissioning activities in order to achieve NRC closure. No spills or accidents resulting in contamination by radioactive materials have been reported at FGA.

Environmental Investigations And Actions

The Army completed a Remedial Investigation (RI) in 2012. The RI was conducted for the following four sites:

- FTGL-02: Ball Field / Helipad / Rubble Dump Site,
- FTGL-03: Commissary Landfill,
- FTGL-04: Building 511 Landfill and
- FTGL-05: Building 607 Washdown Rack (Stream E)

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) Land Management Administration's Federal Installation Restoration Program (FIRP) is acting as the lead regulator while the Army is conducting remedial activities as the lead agency.



During the course of the RI it was determined that buried waste, including medical waste, extended beyond the current Forest Glen installation security fence, at site FTGL-02. Exposed waste including syringes, scalpels, and laboratory glassware was also discovered on the steep landfill slopes. Because this buried and exposed waste is outside the installation security fence, it is within easy public access from the adjacent Rock Creek Regional Park trails and the Ireland Trail, a publicly accessible historic foot path heavily used for dog walking, physical exercise, and general nature viewing. These foot paths have been used by the public for many years. Although the Ireland Trail is situated on Army property, the public has had unfettered access to the trail. There is no barrier between the Ireland Trail and the slopes of the landfill.

The RI also determined that contaminants from the waste disposal area are migrating into Ireland Creek. The creek flows through the installation along part of the Ireland Trail, and is accessible to the public and pets that use the trail.

Current Status

The Army is currently planning to construct a fence around one of the landfills (FTGL-02). In preparation for this action, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has prepared an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA). MDE has reviewed this document and has concurred with the proposed action.

Because of the rugged and wooded topography, the current security fence line for the FGA does not lie along the FGA property boundary, but rather has been routed well inside the property boundary in order to follow more level terrain. The security fence surrounds the ball park/helicopter landing pad that sits atop FTGL-02 as an engineering control to prevent the public that are currently using the ball fields from being able to access the areas of concern where there is exposed waste from landfill FTGL-02. The result is that significant FGA acreage lies outside the installation fence and is accessible to the public. Most of this acreage is wooded and has no property signs. Because it lies adjacent to Rock Creek Park, this property appears as part of the Park and there are no engineering controls to prevent the public using Ireland Trail from potentially coming into contact with the exposed wastes from the former landfill if they leave the designated path.

The installation of a fence proposed in the EE/CA is intended to be an interim action to prevent exposure to the wastes at FTGL-02. The FIRP has informed the Army that MDE requires a more protective remedy that complies with Solid Waste regulations (COMAR 26.04.07) that addresses all contaminated media for final MDE concurrence with the cleanup.

