COMMUNITY UPDATE

Department of Environmental Conservation | Department of Health

May 2022

POESTENKILL PFAS INVESTIGATION

Updates: PFAS Assessment, Phase II Work Plan

The New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Health (DOH), and the Rensselaer County Department of Health (RCDOH), are working together to protect the public health and environment of the Poestenkill community. The following is an update from the February 2022 community update.

The State and County's comprehensive investigation began after DOH-required public water supply sampling at the Algonquin Middle School detected per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), specifically perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), at levels above New York's public drinking water standard for PFOA of 10 parts per trillion (ppt).

In December 2021, the school began installing a granular activated carbon (GAC) system to provide effective long-term treatment of the contaminants to ensure clean water for the school community. The school district is currently working with the RCDOH to test the water and ensure that the system is operational. The school remains on bottled water until the GAC testing is complete to prevent any potential exposure to contamination. In addition, DEC, DOH, and RCDOH acted to provide clean drinking water and prevent exposure at properties in the surrounding community that had private well samples exceed the public drinking water standard.

Information regarding the ongoing investigation and previous water sampling results are available on the DEC's Poestenkill Assessment Area website https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/124334.html and staff remain available to answer any questions the community may have.

Algonquin Middle School Investigations

In November 2021, DEC completed a preliminary investigation at the Middle School to help determine the source(s) of PFAS found in water supply wells. Results from this initial phase of work did not identify an obvious source(s) of contamination and warrants additional work on and off the school property.

DEC then released the *PFAS Assessment, Phase II Work Plan* in April 2022 to further define the ongoing work planned. Key components of the investigation include:

1. Installation of permanent overburden and bedrock monitoring wells to evaluate groundwater quality and flow direction;
2. Implementation of open borehole geophysics and packer testing to assess bedrock quality, composition, and interactions between the overburden and bedrock; and
3. Collection of additional surface water, sediment, soil, and groundwater samples to continue to improve our understanding of PFAS fate and transport in the vicinity of the school.

Sampling locations on school property are currently targeted in the vicinity of the septic system, existing supply wells, and where measurable concentrations of PFAS were identified during the initial phase of field work. Additional sample locations are currently planned

in the road right-of-way and may be adjusted or added pending property access and/or field conditions. Scheduling and implementation of DEC's work plan is dependent on access to sample locations and availability of drilling subcontractors.

The February 2022 data summary report and April 2022 work plan are available for download at the DEC's Poestenkill Assessment Area website: https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/124334.html

Nearby Property Investigations

In parallel to ongoing assessments on school property, DEC continues to pursue access to proximate commercial/industrial properties to evaluate if PFAS are present at source-level concentrations in groundwater and/or soil.

DEC will continue to investigate potential sources of contamination based on the evaluation of data and other information gathered from analytical testing, field exploration methods, and history of the area. DEC will take appropriate actions to address source(s) of contamination if identified during the investigations.

Waste Management Transfer Station. DEC requested and Waste Management of New York (WMNY) agreed to collect and analyze samples for PFAS from the underground leachate collection vault, the small pond, two former drinking water supply wells, and from any existing groundwater monitoring wells (if present). Those samples were collected and are now being analyzed. DEC also requested that WMNY provide documentation of leachate discharged to the Schenectady wastewater treatment plant over the past five years and results of any tests for leaks related to the leachate collection system. WMNY agreed and completed the sampling tasks. Once a final report is received and reviewed by DEC, it will be made available on the DEC's Poestenkill Assessment Area website: https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/124334.html

Other Manufacturing Plants in Poestenkill

As previously reported, DEC concluded that PFAS concentrations observed at Dynamic Systems Inc. and Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics were not contributing to contamination observed at the Middle School or private wells surrounding the school. Sampling results for both facilities are available on the DEC's Poestenkill Assessment Area website: https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/124334.html

Dynamic Systems Inc. (DSI). Due to PFOA contamination detected in a groundwater monitoring well at DSI, the State acted to further assess PFAS in groundwater at DSI and potential exposures in nearby drinking water supply wells.

DEC and DOH offered sampling to 13 properties in the vicinity of DSI. To date, six property owners responded, and those private water supplies were sampled and analyzed for PFAS and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Results for five properties were received and shared with the property owners. There were no detections of PFOA, PFOS, or VOCs in any of the samples; therefore, no actions are needed to address potential exposure in the drinking water.

At DEC's request, DSI agreed to collect additional groundwater samples for PFAS analysis from six existing onsite monitoring wells. This effort was completed during the week of April 25, 2022. Once a final report is received, it will be made available on the DEC's Poestenkill Assessment Area website.

Private Well Testing

In August 2021, RCDOH began sampling nearby private wells starting with those closest to the school. To date, the County contacted 116 private homes to sample wells, 95 wells were tested, and the County shared the results with all of the property owners. Of the 95 sampled private wells, PFOA or perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) was detected above the State's highly protective public drinking water standards in 14 private wells. New York State does not regulate PFAS in private wells, however the State's drinking water standards for PFOA and PFOS in public water supplies are used as guidelines to recommend actions to reduce exposures in private wells.

As a result, DEC is providing the 14 homes served by private wells that exceed the 10 ppt standard with point-of-entry-treatment systems (or POETs) to filter out PFAS chemicals and provide clean drinking water. The remaining 81 private wells did not show PFAS detections above the standards.

NEXT STEPS

Resampling Homes

RCDOH, DEC and DOH will implement a plan to resample those private wells that previously had a detection of PFOA or PFOS between 5 ppt and the 10 ppt New York State drinking water standard. Results will be evaluated to determine the need for additional sampling or, if necessary, take actions to address exposures.

Source Identification Ongoing

At this time, DEC has not determined a source of the detections of PFOA and PFOS impacting groundwater at the Algonquin Middle School or private drinking water supplies in the area. DEC's efforts to find the likely source or sources of drinking water contamination will continue until all reasonable avenues of investigation are exhausted and the data indicates either a distinct source or that the distribution of PFOA in groundwater is representative of nonpoint source pollution.

Property owners who have been contacted by DEC and have not yet set up a sampling plan are encouraged to do so. A second phase of DEC's investigative work will be implemented when access to additional sample locations is obtained.

Sign up to receive updates by email:
www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/61092.html

Residents who collect their own samples are encouraged to share the results with the RCDOH. None of the samples collected by residents outside of the current assessment area boundaries have exceeded public drinking water standards.

For more information on PFAS and Private Wells:
https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/pfasinprivatewells.htm

Ongoing Community Engagement

The initial assessment of private water supplies in the assessment area boundary is complete. RCDOH in conjunction with DOH and DEC will resample private wells that exhibited a detection of PFOA or PFOS between 5 ppt and the drinking water standard. If any exceedance of public drinking water standards is found, the State or County will, at the owner's request, immediately provide an alternate water supply to ensure the protection of public health.

DEC, DOH, and RCDOH experts will continue to keep the community informed about the area-wide activities throughout the process and are always available to answer questions from residents. Please see "Who to Contact" below for key points of contact.

WHO TO CONTACT

DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Eric Hausamann (518) 402-9759
Eric.Hausamann@dec.ny.gov

DEPT. OF HEALTH

Justin Deming (518) 402-7882
Justin.Deming@health.ny.gov

RENSSELAER COUNTY DEPT. OF HEALTH

Rich Elder (518) 270-2632
RElder@rensco.com