

NPL Site Narrative for Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (USDA)

BELTSVILLE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTER (USDA) Beltsville, Maryland

The Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) covers 7,000 acres in suburban Washington, D.C. Beltsville is located in the northern portion of Prince Georges County, Maryland. Owned and operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the facility has conducted research on animal husbandry, dairying, and animal diseases since 1910. Large agricultural plots and 800 buildings, including research laboratories, administrative offices, shops, greenhouses, barns, and a few houses are located on the site.

Of the 16 sources of hazardous wastes BARC has identified to date, only the Biodegradable Materials Disposal Site was evaluated in detail initially. From at least 1946 to the mid-to-late 1970s, the 4-acre area was used for disposal of metal drums, plastic containers, casings for transformers, and laboratory wastes. USDA analyses in 1990 and 1992 of soil, ground water, surface water, and surface water sediments detected elevated levels of polyaromatic hydrocarbons; several pesticides; PCBs; 1,1,1-trichloroethane; trichloroethene; xylenes; arsenic; barium; beryllium; copper; lead; manganese; mercury; nickel; and zinc.

A trailer park, high school, several housing developments, and many other Federal installations are located within 4 miles of the site. Paint Branch, Little Paint Branch, Indian Creek, and Beaver Dam Creek collect drainage from BARC, which flows to the Anacostia River and eventually to the Potomac River. Hazardous substances threaten the wetlands adjacent to Beaver Dam Creek. Fisheries in the Northeast Branch and the Anacostia River provide a habitat for the Bald Eagle, a species designated as endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and for the Swamp Pink, a flower designated as a threatened species.

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at [ATSDR - ToxFAQs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.