

# NPL Site Narrative for Fort Eustis (US Army)

## FORT EUSTIS (US ARMY) Newport News, Virginia

**Conditions at Proposal (January 18, 1994):** Fort Eustis, owned and operated by the U.S. Department of the Army, occupies approximately 8,300 acres in southeastern Virginia, within the City of Newport News. The site is located on the western side of a low-lying peninsula formed by the York River and the James River estuaries, approximately 30 miles upstream of the confluence of the James River and the Chesapeake Bay. The facility is bounded on the west and south by the James River and to the east by the Warwick River, a large tributary of the James River. The James River is a major commercial fishing and recreational resource area.

The site began operations in 1918 as a training center known as Camp Abraham Eustis. In 1923, it became a permanent military installation renamed Fort Eustis. From 1931 to the early 1940s, Fort Eustis was operated by several nonmilitary Federal agencies for various uses. During World War II, it resumed military operations and was used for intensive antiaircraft training. In 1946, Fort Eustis became the Transportation Corps Training Center, providing training in rail, marine, and amphibian operations and other modes of transportation. Currently, Fort Eustis is the U.S. Army Transportation Training Center. Approximately 17,500 military personnel, their dependents, and civilians live or work at the installation.

In 1988, the U.S. Army Toxic and Hazardous Materials Agency identified 34 potential waste sources at Fort Eustis. The sources include unlined landfills, pesticide storage areas, firefighting training areas, maintenance shops, range and impact areas, and numerous other areas that were created as a result of operations. Sanitary landfills at Fort Eustis are currently undergoing closure. EPA initially evaluated seven sources based on documented releases of hazardous substances to surface water. Two of the sources are adjacent to Bailey's Creek, a 160-acre, low-lying wetland area used for fishing. Thirteen of the 34 identified sources are presently undergoing a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study. Sampling conducted in 1987 and 1990 indicated contamination of sediments from Bailey's Creek. The contamination included PCBs, chlordane, dichlorodiphenyldichloroethane (DDD), dichlorodiphenyldichloroethylene (DDE), DDT, and lead. Fish collected from Bailey's Creek contained PCBs. A sanitary landfill that received hazardous waste is located at the headwaters of Bailey's Creek. In addition, the Central Heating Fuel Spill Area, where waste oils were stored, is on a bluff overlooking the creek.

Brown's Lake once was used as a drainage lagoon for the adjacent Helicopter Maintenance Area (HMA) and the upgradient Locomotive Area. The lake was used for recreation but was closed to water sports and fishing in the late 1970s by the Fort Eustis Preventive Medicine Group. A 1990 survey of Brown's Lake indicated that fish had lesions, ectoparasites, and skeletal deformities. Contaminants detected in the lake in 1987 included PCBs, pesticides, and polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). Sediment sampling in 1990 revealed contamination by PCBs and heavy metals in the lake and a tributary to the lake below the Locomotive Area. Surface drainage from Brown's Lake flows south through a sanitary landfill that is adjacent to the HMA and enters wetlands along the Warwick River and Milstead Island Creek drainage way. Both the Warwick River and Milstead Creek are used for fishing. In 1988, sampling in Milstead Island Creek found sediments contaminated with PAHs and pesticides.

The site includes all the sources identified in the package and areas where contamination has come to be located. In addition, the site may include other sources and suspect areas later determined by EPA after NPL listing of the initial sources; conversely, if an area is later determined to be uncontaminated, it will not be included in the NPL site.

**Status (December 1994):** EPA is currently considering various alternatives for the site.

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.