

Northrop Grumman Bethpage Facility: Site Update

New York State Superfund Program

Bethpage, Town of Oyster Bay, New York

WHO TO CONTACT



Comments and questions are always welcome and should be directed as follows:

PROJECT-RELATED QUESTIONS:

Sarah Johnston
Project Manager NYSDEC
Remedial Bureau D, Section B
625 Broadway
Albany, New York 12233
(518) 402 3854
sarah.johnston@dec.ny.gov

HEALTH RELATED QUESTIONS:

James Sullivan
Project Manager NYSDOH
Empire State Plaza
Corning Tower, Room #1787
Albany, New York 12237
(518) 417 5584
jim.sullivan@health.ny.gov

FOR INFORMATION ON THE NORTHROP GRUMMAN AND NWIRP SITE REMEDIATION PROGRAM:

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/ch/emical/35727.html>

UPDATE: Discovery of Underground Drums at Former Grumman Settling Ponds (Present-Day Bethpage Community Park)

The New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Health (DOH) are working to protect the public health and environment of the towns of Oyster Bay and Hempstead as part of the State's comprehensive investigation and cleanup of the Navy Grumman groundwater plume. To advance the cleanup, DEC and DOH investigated the source of contamination, selected a comprehensive cleanup plan, and are now closely overseeing the implementation of actions by the parties responsible for the contamination, Northrop Grumman and the U.S. Navy. New York State is committed to keeping the community informed about the cleanup.

In March 2024, during the construction of a thermal remediation system at the former ballfield area of Bethpage Community Park (Former Grumman Settling Ponds) contractors working for Northrop Grumman at DEC's direction discovered six buried drums encased in a concrete vault. See the Figure on Page 3 for the approximate location of the buried drums. The drums showed no visual signs of a release of contamination to the environment. Upon discovery, Northrop Grumman notified DEC and the Town of Oyster Bay. Northrop Grumman, along with their engineer and specialized environmental response contractors, are currently coordinating the removal and proper disposal of these drums with DEC, Town of Oyster Bay, DOH, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

DEC continues to oversee cleanup activities at this location, including use of geophysical techniques, such as ground-penetrating radar, as well as subsurface drilling and sampling to determine the full nature and extent of contamination and the presence of any additional drums buried deep beneath the site. DEC will provide regular updates to the community regarding the results of samples taken around the encased drums and provide additional information as it becomes available.

DEC will continue to hold Northrop Grumman accountable for the cleanup of Bethpage Community Park.

Please Note: The discovery of the drums presents no immediate threat to public health and safety at the site.

Immediate Next Steps

Following discovery, the liquid contents of the drums was sampled for laboratory analysis to determine the best manner to remove the drums and how and where the waste should be disposed of. This week, Northrop Grumman is working to remove the concrete that surrounds the drums prior to transferring the contents of the drums to approved containers for transport off-site to an appropriate disposal facility. The concrete surrounding the drums extends to a depth of approximately 12 feet below ground surface.

Once the drums are removed, DEC is directing Northrop Grumman to expand their excavation to determine if there are additional drums. If additional drums are found during the expanded investigation, these drums will also be appropriately characterized and properly disposed of. In addition, Northrop Grumman will be performing a geophysical survey to determine if there are any additional drums buried beneath the site.

DEC's next step is to review the laboratory results from the drum samples and oversee their off-site transport to the disposal facility.

As required, Northrop Grumman is conducting air monitoring in the immediate work area and along the margins of the former ballfield to ensure public health is protected. To date, the air monitoring has found no exceedance of action levels. Air monitoring will continue throughout the removal of the drums from this area.

DEC will provide ongoing and rigorous oversight of Northrop Grumman's efforts during the inspection and removal of the drums, as well as regular updates to the community regarding the results of samples taken around the encased drums and provide additional information as it becomes available and continue to hold Northrop Grumman accountable for the cleanup of Bethpage Community Park.

Recent Site History

Prior to the site's donation to the Town of Oyster Bay in 1962, portions of the present-day Bethpage Community Park were operated by Grumman as a series of settling ponds and sludge drying beds. The historic use as settling ponds/drying beds resulted in both soil and groundwater contamination that is currently being addressed in accordance with a Record of Decision with DEC. To understand the extent of contamination, DEC used the latest science and engineering analysis to carefully design the cleanup goals to fully protect public health and the environment. Based on the ongoing collection of data, the State's cleanup plan is providing full protection from contamination and will be effective in addressing sources of contamination once complete.

The Former Grumman Settling Ponds is located immediately east of the former 600-acre Northrop Grumman-Bethpage Facility and Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant Site. Cleanup has been occurring in accordance with the Record of Decision under DEC oversight. Following a successful initial thermal remediation program to address site contamination present in deep soil (approximately 35 to 45 feet beneath the ground surface), Northrop Grumman contractors began a second phase thermal remediation program within and adjacent to the former ballfield area. This includes the drilling of more than 350 thermal/heating wells. During the drilling of these wells the contractor encountered an obstruction at approximately four feet below ground surface. See the Figure on Page 3 for the approximate location of the buried drums within the former ballfield area. To inspect this obstruction, Northrop Grumman brought an excavator to the site to remove soil and discovered the concrete vault during the week of March 25, 2024.

The careful and methodical excavation work subsequently identified six, 55-gallon steel drums encased in reinforced concrete. The Northrop Grumman environmental cleanup and response contractor continued to expose and sample the contents of the six drums for disposal purposes and determined the concrete sides extended to a depth of 12 feet below ground surface. Northrop Grumman staff immediately notified DEC and staff at the Town of Oyster Bay Department of Public Works on March 27, 2024.

Liquid samples collected from the drums are currently being analyzed by a laboratory, but initial results suggest the six drums contain various petroleum hydrocarbons (benzene, trimethylbenzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylene, etc.) and chlorinated solvents (trichloroethene), which is consistent with contamination that has been historically found related to the former settling ponds. Review of these results is important to determine the proper handling and disposal of the drum contents.

Field crews documented no signs of leakage from the drums. Soil samples were also collected from stockpiles (soil excavated from around the drums) and the excavation side-walls and sent to the lab for analysis. Laboratory results are expected in early April and will be used to determine the proper disposal of the excavated soil. At the conclusion of activities on Friday, March 29, 2024, the drums were covered with plastic sheeting and sandbags within a cordoned off area already secured by chain link fencing to protect the public and ensure the safe continuation of work to construct the thermal remedy.

Northrop Grumman is currently coordinating the drum removal with DEC, DOH, EPA, and the town and work is expected to resume soon.

It is not uncommon for DEC to encounter buried underground storage tanks, intact drums, drum carcasses, drywells, tank lines, etc., when investigating and remediating former industrial sites. This sometimes occurs during active redevelopment or site cleanup, as is the case at the Bethpage Community Park.



Further Information

New York State's top priority continues to be cleanup of the legacy contamination at Bethpage Community Park as well as the hydraulic containment and expedited cleanup of the Navy Grumman groundwater plume.

WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION



Project documents are
at these location(s):

Bethpage Public Library
47 Powell Avenue
Bethpage, New York 11714
(516) 931 3907

Region 1 NYSDEC Headquarters
SUNY at Stony Brook
50 Circle Road
Stony Brook, NY 11790
(631) 444-0200
(call for an appointment)

Project documents are also available
on the NYSDEC website at:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocs/130003A/>

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/35727.html>

DEC encourages residents and other community stakeholders to sign-up for our **LISTSERV** to continue receiving updates on these actions: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/61092.html>

The DEC site webpage contains further information on the current status of the site, along with information on site history and links to previous site documents:

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/35727.html>

DEC is committed to ongoing cleanup at Bethpage Community Park and the Navy Grumman groundwater plume while keeping the Oyster Bay community informed of our actions. Both the U.S. Navy and Northrop Grumman are actively performing major cleanup activities to meet these objectives.