PROTECTING POESTENKILL'S DRINKING WATER AND INVESTIGATING PFAS CONTAMINATION

Two Public Availability Sessions Scheduled for Dec. 8, 2021

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 October 2021 community update: dec.ny.gov/docs/remediation_hudson_pdf/poestenkillupdate1021.pdf

To update the community on the ongoing efforts to protect drinking water supplies and investigate potential sources of contamination, **DEC, DOH, and RCDOH are holding two public availability sessions on Wednesday, Dec. 8, from 3 to 5 p.m. and again from 6 to 8 p.m.** At the availability sessions, DEC, DOH, and RCDOH experts will staff individual stations on the various aspects of the investigation and agency response, providing opportunities for local residents to ask questions of experts one on one. Like an open house, residents can arrive and depart at any time during the sessions.

AVAILABILITY SESSIONS

Wednesday, Dec. 8, 3-5 p.m. and 6-8 p.m.
Algonquin Middle School Cafeteria

Join representatives from DEC, DOH, RCDOH, and the Town of Poestenkill to learn about efforts to protect drinking water supplies and investigate PFAS contamination.

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, masks are required for this event and social distancing will be observed.

The State and County's comprehensive investigation began after DOH-required public water supply sampling at the Algonquin Middle School detected the emerging contaminants per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), specifically perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), at levels slightly above New York's public drinking water standards for these emerging contaminants of 10 parts per trillion (ppt). The school is currently installing a granular activated carbon (GAC) system to filter the PFOA and other PFAS and effectively treat the contaminants to provide clean water to the school community.

Private Well Testing

In August 2021, RCDOH began sampling nearby private wells starting with those closest to the school. To date the County has contacted 95 private homes to sample wells, 72 wells were tested, and the County has shared the available results for 52 wells. PFOA or PFOS was detected slightly above the State's public drinking water standards in ten of the 52 sampled private wells, and DEC is providing those homes with point-of-entry-treatment systems (or POETs) to filter out PFAS and provide clean drinking water. The remaining 42 private wells did not show PFAS detections above the standards. Results are pending for 20 private wells and are expected in the coming weeks. Residents who collect their own samples are encouraged to share the results with the RCDOH.

Potential Source Investigations

As part of the State's ongoing effort to identify potential sources of PFAS contamination in the school's water supply and surrounding private wells, DEC is taking the following actions:

Algonquin Middle School. Following the PFAS detection at Algonquin and other properties adjacent to the school, New York State developed a plan to help determine the source of PFAS found in the school's water supply. This is conducted by collecting and analyzing samples of soil and groundwater on the school property near the impacted wells, adjacent to the septic drain field, and along the property boundary.

DEC began field work on Nov. 10 and completed a total of 22 soil borings and installed six shallow temporary monitoring points along the perimeter of the property and around the septic system drain fields behind the

school using a drill rig as shown below. Samples of soil and shallow groundwater were collected during the drilling program.

DEC also collected samples of surface water and sediment from the creek which runs along the south and west of the school. All samples will be tested for multiple PFAS chemicals using a certified laboratory for analyses. Select wells will also be sampled for volatile organic compounds. Results of this sampling are anticipated to be available in early December and will further guide investigation and response efforts.

Drill rig collecting soil and groundwater samples at Algonquin Middle School

Based on the results of the initial phase of sampling at the school, additional sampling offsite may be warranted. Future work may also involve the use of specialized equipment and methods to understand the depth and orientation of bedrock fractures and help with the placement of permanent groundwater monitoring wells into bedrock. In addition to sampling groundwater, measurements of water depth will also be taken to assess groundwater flow direction and gauge whether contamination may be emanating from an off-site source or sources.

Poestenkill Landfill. DEC collected samples of groundwater from six wells at the closed landfill in late October. The samples are being analyzed for a wide range of contaminants, including PFAS and 1,4-dioxane. Final results are expected by early December. Based on the results of groundwater sampling at the landfill, properties with private wells near the landfill that are not connected to the public water supply may be targeted for sampling to evaluate any drinking water sources affected by the landfill.

Waste Management Transfer Station. A sample from the water supply well located at the transfer station was collected and analyzed for PFAS compounds in September. No exceedances of drinking water standards were found. Further investigations at the transfer station may be warranted depending on the results of DEC's investigation efforts in the area.

As part of DEC's statewide and ongoing efforts to assess facilities that have or may have used PFAS, groundwater sampling at two local manufacturing plants (Dynamic Systems Inc. and Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics) is being conducted at the request of DEC. Samples will be analyzed for PFAS and 1,4-dioxane. Results will be summarized and shared with the public.

Ongoing Community Engagement

Private well sampling by RCDOH is ongoing and will be expanded as needed based on sampling results from private wells and from the source investigations. If any exceedance of drinking water standards is found, DEC, DOH, and RCDOH will 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

Susan Edwards (518) 402-9779
Susan.Edwards@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