DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS 10TH AIR BASE WING
USAF ACADEMY COLORADO

SEP 18 2019

Dear Woodmen Valley Residents,

Unfortunately, the Sept. 12 Woodmen Valley Fire Protection District meeting we were invited to be a part of was postponed due to capacity issues at the venue. In the meantime, I want to provide some historical background on the use of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) at the Academy and give an update on where we are with sampling.

Firefighting foam containing PFOS and PFOA was used for firefighter training at the Academy from the 1970s until 1990, when we began to consolidate all of our training at Peterson Air Force Base. After that time, the equipment used to dispense the foam was periodically tested until approximately 2005.

This firefighting foam has never been used to extinguish a petroleum-based aircraft fire at the Academy. However, there was and still is an Air Force requirement to have the firefighting foam on our trucks for real world crash rescue operations. The foam now in use at the Academy is a more environmentally friendly formula that we began using in approximately 2017.

As for the next steps in the process, if PFOS and PFOA levels are found to be above the Environmental Protection Agency's Lifetime Health Advisory level at an installation, the Air Force first tests to the base boundaries to determine how far ground and surface water is impacted before initiating private well sampling.

However, out of an abundance of caution, the Air Force moved quickly to begin sampling private drinking water wells off the installation, primarily within the Woodmen Valley Fire Protection District boundaries. We are working closely with our local Air Force Civil Engineer Center representatives even in advance of knowing what our additional on-base sampling results will be.

As for the well sampling conducted Sept. 4-9, 2019 in the WVFPD boundaries, AFCEC identified 37 private wells used for drinking water at homes closest in proximity to the southern base boundary for sampling. To date, 35 of the 37 wells have been sampled. We expect preliminary results from those samples to come back to AFCEC in early October. If results show PFOS and PFOA levels above the EPAs LHA, AFCEC will provide bottled water to those homeowners, then work to develop a long-term solution in coordination with homeowners and potentially broaden the off-base sampling should levels from the WVFPD area show levels above the EPA's LHA.

If you live in Woodmen Valley or Thunderbird Estates and use a private well as your primary drinking water source and you have not been contacted for sampling, please contact us at AFCEE.CZOM.ColoradoPFAS@us.af.mil or 719-556-8060.

As this process continues to progress, I will continue to work closely with you and our local, state and federal partners in order to keep you apprised of any developments.

In the meantime, if you have any questions at all regarding the additional testing or findings at the Academy, please email the Academy Public Affairs Office at publicaffairs@usafa.edu or visit

https://tinyurl.com/AFCEC-PFOS-PFOS to learn more about PFOS and PFOA. Please keep in mind, your local health department, water utility, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and your medical professionals of choice can best address any concerns you may have about drinking water consumption.

Your health and safety is my priority. I can assure you the Air Force is taking aggressive action to identify and respond to anyone with drinking water wells potentially impacted by our past firefighting activities as quickly as the process allows. I pledge to work cooperatively with residents of Woodmen Valley as the process progresses.

BRIAN S. HARTLESS, Colonel, USAF
Commander