



# Naval Air Station Corpus Christi Corpus Christi, Texas PFAS Drinking Water Investigation

February 2020

**The Navy is requesting permission to sample drinking water obtained from private wells within a designated area near the Naval Air Station (NAS) Corpus Christi for certain per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances, commonly known as PFAS.**

PFAS are a family of thousands of different chemicals which have been widely used in industrial and consumer products since the 1950s. The Navy developed a proactive policy to address past releases of PFAS at installations nationwide, as several PFAS are now of emerging public health concern. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued a lifetime health advisory for two commonly used and studied PFAS, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS).

The most common Navy activity that could have resulted in the historical release of PFOA, PFOS, and other PFAS to the environment is the use of firefighting foam (specifically aqueous film forming foam or AFFF) for testing, training, firefighting, and other life-saving emergency responses. PFAS are present in the groundwater at NAS Corpus Christi (Figure 1) as a result of historical activities using the AFFF firefighting foam. They may also be present in nearby private drinking water wells that are located in the direction that the groundwater flows away from the base within the designated sampling area (Figure 2).

Records indicate the majority of residents in the sampling area purchase their drinking water from the City of Corpus Christi, but some properties may be using a private well for their drinking water. The Navy is asking to sample water only from private drinking water wells in the designated area, not drinking water provided by the City of Corpus Christi.

PFAS are chemicals of emerging concern, which have no Safe Drinking Water Act regulatory standards or routine water quality testing requirements. EPA's lifetime health advisories are non-enforceable and non-regulatory and provide technical information to state agencies and



**Figure 1- NAS Corpus Christi**

other public health officials on health effects, analytical methodologies, and treatment technologies associated with drinking water contamination.

The Navy established a proactive policy to ensure the communities near our installations are not exposed to drinking water impacted from a known or likely Navy release of PFOA and/or PFOS above the EPA's lifetime health advisory level. Following this policy, the Navy identified potential PFAS release areas on NAS Corpus Christi that may present an exposure to nearby residents using private wells for their drinking water. This private drinking water well investigation will allow us to identify and address any current exposure to PFOA and/or PFOS above EPA's health advisory. There is no legal requirement to conduct this drinking water testing. The Navy is performing this voluntary testing because it is important that we ensure our neighbors in the designated sampling areas are not drinking water above PFAS health advisory levels as a result of

**To be protective, the Navy will provide bottled water for drinking and cooking to any resident in the sampling area whose private well contains PFOA and/or PFOS above the EPA lifetime health advisory levels. The Navy will provide bottled water until a long term solution is implemented.**

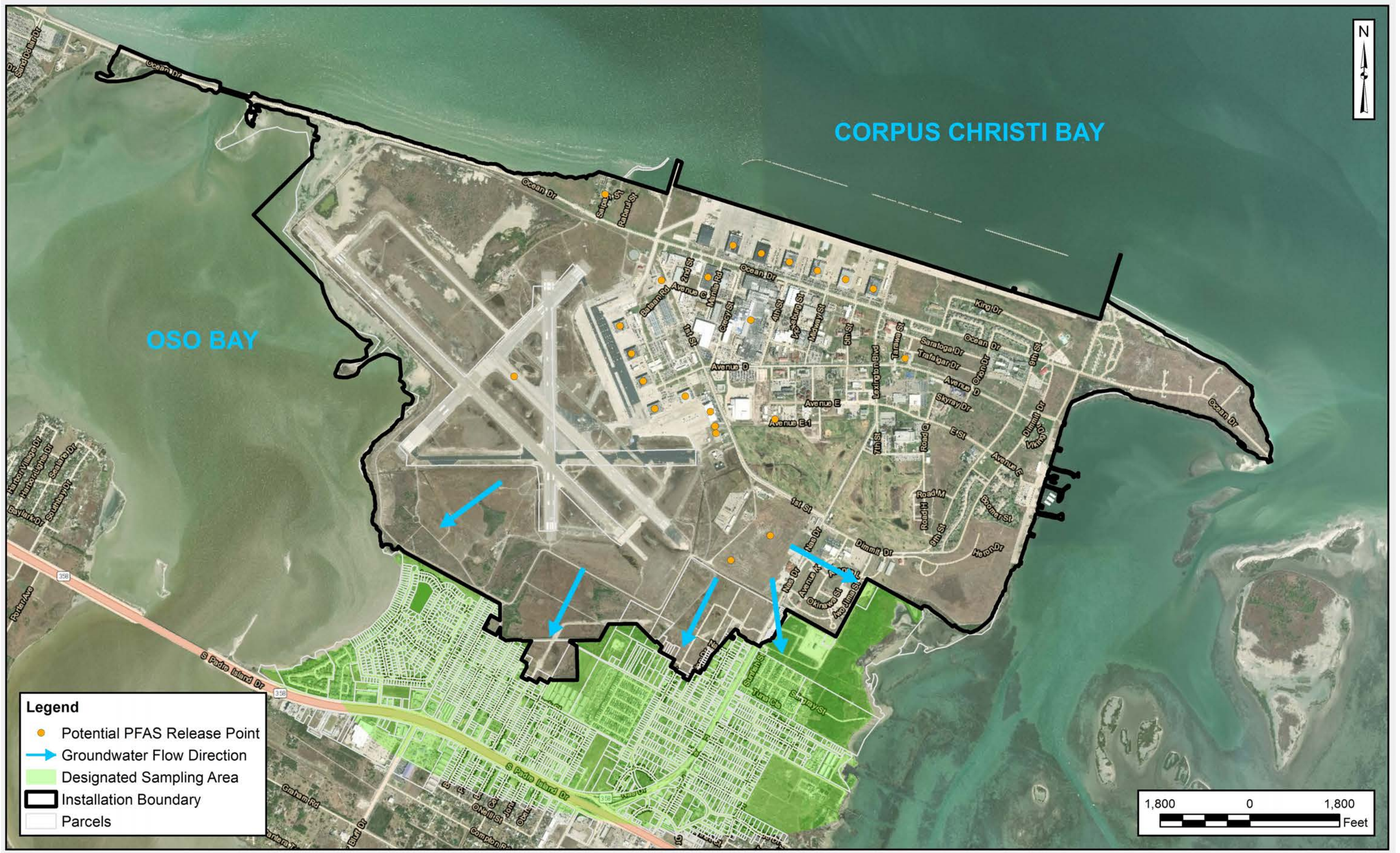


Figure 2- Designated Private Well Sampling Area

known or suspected releases of PFAS from NAS Corpus Christi. The Navy is conducting the investigation in coordination with partners such as the EPA Region 6, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Region 6, and the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS).

### **PFAS**

PFAS are man-made chemicals that have been used since the 1950s in many household and industrial products because of their stain- and water-repellent properties. PFAS are now present virtually everywhere in the world because of the large amounts that have been manufactured and used. Once these compounds are released, they break down very slowly.

The EPA has issued a lifetime health advisory for two commonly used and studied PFAS, PFOA and PFOS, and is currently studying PFAS to determine if national regulation is needed. The EPA's lifetime health advisory levels provide Americans, including the most sensitive populations, with a margin of protection from a lifetime of exposure to PFOA and PFOS in drinking water. The EPA's health advisory level for lifetime exposure is 70 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFOA and 70 ppt for PFOS. When both PFOA and PFOS are found in drinking water, the combined concentrations should not exceed 70 ppt.

### **NAVY POLICY**

Until a decision for regulating PFAS is made, the Navy has proactively developed a policy to conduct investigations at installations where there has been a known or suspected release of PFAS to the environment. The Navy's first priority with these investigations is to ensure people are not being exposed to PFOA and/or PFOS in their drinking water at concentrations exceeding the EPA's lifetime health advisory as a result of a Navy PFAS release. When a known or suspected release of PFAS is identified on a Navy installation, a sampling area is established 1-mile in the direction the groundwater flows away from the release site. To ensure protectiveness, the Navy offers sampling to all residents whose drinking water is supplied by private wells (i.e., not on public water) in these designated areas. Once any potential exposure from drinking water has been addressed, the Navy will

then complete the full investigation to determine the extent of these compounds on our installations.

### **ACTIONS BASED ON RESULTS**

The preliminary results from the off-base drinking water sampling are expected approximately 30 days after collecting the samples. We will provide notification to the property owners of their personal drinking water results and follow-up actions if needed. The Navy will do its best to keep the results of individual properties confidential to the extent permitted by law.

The Navy will provide an alternate water source, likely bottled water, for drinking and cooking to any residents in the designated sampling area whose water contains PFOA and/or PFOS above the EPA's lifetime health advisory levels. The Navy will continue to provide the alternate water until a permanent solution is implemented.

### **HEALTH INFORMATION**

**Exposure to PFOA and PFOS appears to be global. Studies have found both compounds in the blood samples of the general population. Studies on exposed populations indicate that PFOA and/or PFOS may have caused elevated cholesterol levels and possibly low infant birth weight. In studies conducted using laboratory animals, effects on developmental, neurological, immune, thyroid, and liver function were observed.**

**Health effects from exposure to low levels of PFAS are not well known and studies are continuing. At this time, it is not possible to link exposures to PFOA and/or PFOS to a person's individual health issues. Blood tests are available to measure these chemicals, but they are not routinely done because the results can be inconclusive and test results do not predict health effects. Long-term exposure effects are still being investigated by the EPA.**

**Based on what is known and still unknown about PFOA and PFOS, EPA recommends people not drink or cook with water that contains these compounds above the EPA's lifetime health advisory.**

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**[https://www.cnic.navy.mil/regions/cnrse/installations/nas\\_corpus\\_christi.html](https://www.cnic.navy.mil/regions/cnrse/installations/nas_corpus_christi.html)**

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