

Dear neighbors,

I'd like to fill you in on two items related to the Rennie Farm cleanup project.

First, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) has issued the [groundwater management permit](#) for the site. The permit establishes a groundwater management zone, manages the use of contaminated groundwater, and monitors remedial progress. It requires certain testing and remedial actions to be completed on the site and on some surrounding properties, consistent with and as depicted in Dartmouth's investigation report and application. The permit includes sampling of groundwater, streams, and private water supply wells by Dartmouth. It is issued initially for a period of five years and will be renewed until site clean-up is complete. All monitoring results will be filed with DES and are publicly available.

Second, as part of the remedial work at the site, we sample the water discharged from the groundwater treatment system. The sampling schedule, protocol, and limits are set in the Remedial General Permit (RGP) under which the College is authorized to discharge treated water by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The monthly sample of treated water from the groundwater treatment system collected during August detected a low concentration of cyanide (6 micrograms per liter). The detected concentration does not exceed the New Hampshire human health-based groundwater (200 micrograms per liter) or surface water (fish and water ingestion [700 micrograms per liter] and consumption of fish only [220,000 micrograms per liter]) standards, but exceeds the site's authorized discharge limit of the RGP for concentration of total cyanide, which is 5.2 micrograms. As a result of this finding, we notified DES and EPA, and temporarily shut down the treatment system on August 17, while we assessed the reason for the concentration detected.

Cyanide occurs naturally and is produced by many plants. It is not a known site contaminant at Rennie farm. Cyanide has been detected within the United States in uncontaminated water and potable water supplies at concentrations above the concentration detected in the treated water from the system.

In investigating the cyanide finding, we determined that one of the groundwater pumping wells had been temporarily shut off for maintenance at the time the sample was collected. We believe that this may have resulted in an increased concentration in the groundwater entering the system. As a protective measure, the individual pumping wells were each sampled, without discharging water from the treatment system, and cyanide was not detected in any of the samples. With the approval of the DES and EPA, the system was restarted on August 22 and the treated water sampled for cyanide. Cyanide was not detected in the treated water after restarting the system.

Collectively, the results from the sampling of the system, including sampling since startup of the system in May, support the conclusion that the detection in August was due to the reduction in total system flow associated with one well being shut down. We will continue to perform further supplemental sampling over the next month to confirm the cyanide concentration.

While there is no danger to human health from the cyanide finding, we want you to have this information and will be happy to address your questions at the next drop-in session, which is scheduled from 4 to 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 12, at the farm. We look forward to talking with you and answering your questions.

Sincerely,

Maureen

Maureen O'Leary, PhD, MBA, CBSP  
Director, Environmental Health & Safety  
Dartmouth College  
37 Dewey Field Road  
Hanover, NH 03755  
<https://www.dartmouth.edu/~ehs>  
[Maureen.O'Leary@Dartmouth.edu](mailto:Maureen.O'Leary@Dartmouth.edu)  
(603) 646-1762 (P)  
(603) 359-5543 (C)