

Fact Sheet

The Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) at the Benning Road Facility



Constructed Wetland at the Benning Road Facility

We are committed to conducting operations at the Benning Road facility with respect and care for the environment. We are also committed to maintaining an ongoing dialogue with our neighbors. We want to hear their concerns and share with them information about the on-going environmental evaluation of the Benning Road facility and adjacent portion of the Anacostia River, known as a Remedial investigation/Feasibility Study or RI/FS. We are performing this RI/FS with the oversight of the District Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE). We have completed the Remedial Investigation (RI) phase of the project. The findings of this investigation are presented in a Draft Final RI report, which was approved by DOEE and released for public review and comment on October 04, 2019. Here are answers to some of the questions you may have about the facility and the Draft Final RI Report.

What is the Benning Road Facility?

The Benning Road facility is an important part of our electric power transmission and distribution system, serving the Washington, D.C. area. It is an industrial facility that has operated for over 100 years. The facility is currently home to the Benning Service Center. The Service Center occupies the largest part of the property, and accommodates approximately 700 Pepco employees. Service Center employees work in construction and maintenance of our electric transmission and distribution system, system engineering, vehicle fleet maintenance and refueling and central warehousing for all the materials, supplies and equipment needed to operate our electric transmission and distribution system. The Benning Road facility also used to be the site of an electric generating station. The generating station was shut down in 2012 and was completely demolished by May 2015.



Aerial view of the Benning Road facility with Landside and Waterside Investigation Areas.

What is the purpose of the RI/FS?

The purpose of the RI is to: (1) evaluate environmental conditions at the Benning Road facility and the adjacent portion of the Anacostia River; (2) determine if and to what extent historical operations at the facility have contributed to the contamination of the river, and (3) assess potential risks to human health and the environment as a result of these conditions. The purpose of the FS is to develop and evaluate cleanup options to mitigate the identified risks, if needed. The RI/FS activities are conducted in accordance with the Benning Consent Decree, a court-approved agreement between Pepco and DOEE.

What was involved in the RI?

The RI work was conducted in accordance with a DOEE-approved RI/FS Work Plan and three addenda to the Work Plan. The RI field activities included extensive investigation of the Benning Road facility and an adjacent segment of the river, including the collection and testing of nearly 2,000 samples of soil and groundwater at the facility and surface water and sediments in the river. The sampling results have been extensively evaluated, including an assessment of the types and extent of contamination present at the Benning Road facility and in the river in comparison to background sources of contamination such as combined sewer overflows and urban runoff. The RI evaluations also included a baseline human health risk assessment (BHHRA) and a baseline ecological risk assessment (BERA) to assess the risks from exposure to the contamination detected in the environmental media. The results of this work are described in detail in the Draft Final RI Report. The report also contains 620 pages of tables and 76 pages of figures and charts summarizing the data collected, as well as 28 appendices containing supplemental evaluations and information, such as copies of the laboratory analytical data reports.



Boat-mounted drilling equipment was used to collect sediment samples from the bottom of the Anacostia River.

Where can I access the Draft Final RI Report?

The Draft Final RI Report was made available for public review and comment on DOEE's website on October 04, 2019 and can be accessed at doee.dc.gov/page/pepco-benning-road-facility-plans-and-deliverables. The report is also available on the Benning Service Center website at benning-service-center.com.

What are the findings of the RI?

The site investigation has revealed the following:

- 1) The RI identified some areas of contamination consistent with the historical industrial use of the Benning Road facility and other sites along the river and the general urban character of the surrounding area. These conditions do not present any immediate health risk to people who live, work, or spend time in the area.
- 2) The RI sampling results suggest that sediments from the Benning Road facility's storm drain system may have historically contributed to polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) found in the Cove of the river into which the facility's stormwater outfall discharges (along with three other outfalls not related to the facility). Storm drain residues sampled during the RI consisted of sediments accumulated over a period of several decades. These accumulated sediments were removed from the storm drains subsequent to the RI sampling and therefore do not represent a current potential source of PCB contamination to the river. No PCBs have been detected in stormwater discharged to the river from the Benning Road facility during the regular sampling required by the facility's discharge permit. (PCBs are manmade chemicals that were used in many different industries and products, including electrical equipment, prior to being banned in the US in 1979).
- 3) The BHHRA identified potentially unacceptable risk from fish consumption due to the presence of PCBs in fish tissue. This is a River-wide phenomenon that is attributable to multiple sources of PCBs, including sites adjacent to the river as well as upstream areas that drain to the river.
- 4) The BERA identified low potential risks (no different from background) to benthic macroinvertebrates (i.e., worms and insects) in the river sediment. The BERA did not identify any unacceptable risks to the local fish community or wild life.

What are the next steps for the RI/FS project?

Pepco and DOEE will review and respond to comments on the Draft Final RI Report, and then we will proceed to finalize the RI Report. We also will complete a Treatability Study to collect information needed to evaluate potential cleanup options. Using the results of the RI and the Treatability Study, we will conduct a Feasibility Study to identify and evaluate potential cleanup options and other actions as necessary to ensure there are no long term risks to human health or the environment as a result of our operations at the Benning Road facility. For further information contact:

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