



National Park Service (NPS)  
 U.S. Department of the Interior  
 Washington DC and Prince George's County, Maryland  
**Oxon Cove Park & Oxon Hill Farm**

# Oxon Cove Landfill Site

## COMMUNITY UPDATE WINTER 2024

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Oxon Cove Landfill Site occupies approximately 155 acres within the Oxon Cove Park. Oxon Cove Park, which includes Oxon Hill Farm is managed by the National Capital Parks—East (NACE) administrative unit of the National Park Service (NPS). The Oxon Cove Landfill Site consists of two areas: (1) the northern landfill area (88 acres) which straddles the boundary between Washington DC and Prince George's County, Maryland and (2) the eastern landfill area (67 acres) located entirely within Prince George's County Maryland. The two areas are separated by Oxon Cove and Oxon Creek, which is a small tributary to the Potomac River. The Site was used by the District of Columbia as a disposal area and landfill from the 1940s to 1972.

- Between 1937 and 1963, the cove was modified with fill materials likely from multiple sources including possibly soil and construction materials from the Interstate 1-295 construction.
- From October 1969 to 1971, the District used the Site to dispose of 1,500,000 tons of raw refuse and 275,000 tons of incinerator ash. The District also disposed of sludge from the nearby Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) at the Site.
- When the landfill was closed, the waste reportedly had an average depth of 30 feet. The landfill was covered with soil at closure and eventually revegetated with grasses and trees.

The Oxon Hill Farm Hiker-Biker Trail, which is part of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, passes along the western edge of the eastern landfill area and crosses the eastern portion of the northern landfill area.

### ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS

- NPS is completing environmental investigations of the Site pursuant to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) (see next page for description of CERCLA). NPS completed a Preliminary Assessment/Site Inspection of the Site in 2002. The results indicated the presence of low levels of hazardous substances in soil, groundwater and sediment.
- NPS has completed investigations to determine the potential for landfill gas generated from breakdown of waste to migrate through the subsurface and pose a threat to visitors or nearby buildings. Based on the results of these investigations, NPS concluded that landfill gases were not posing a threat to visitors or nearby buildings.



### NEXT STEPS

- NPS is in the process of completing a Remedial Investigation (RI) of the Site. The RI will involve collection of surface and subsurface soil, surface water and sediment samples, installation of monitoring wells and collection of groundwater samples. NPS anticipates the field work associated with Phase I of the RI to begin in early 2024. After the RI is completed, NPS will prepare an RI Report to summarize the results and provide the human health and ecological risk assessments.
- If the results of the risk assessments conclude that there is contamination present at the Site that poses unacceptable risks, NPS will evaluate the effectiveness and costs of different alternatives to address the unacceptable risk in a Feasibility Study and will choose a preferred alternative to clean up the Site.
- The preferred alternative will be described in a Proposed Plan which will be released for public review and input.

If you have questions or would like more information on NPS's work at the Oxon Cove Landfill Site, please see the Oxon Cove Landfill website or contact: **Donna Davies, Oxon Cove Landfill Site NPS CERCLA Project Manager** | donna\_davies@nps.gov | 202.359.3234



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### WHAT IS CERCLA?

CERCLA stands for the **Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act**, commonly known as “The Superfund Law”.

The law was passed in 1980 as a response to the discovery of contaminated sites such as “Love Canal” in New York and “Valley of the Drums” in Kentucky. The law provides the federal government authority to respond to contaminated sites that exist due to the disposal of wastes being dumped or otherwise improperly managed. These sites include manufacturing facilities, processing plants, landfills and mining sites. CERCLA and the related National Contingency Plan (NCP) regulations provide the framework for the federal government to follow to assess and clean up contaminated sites.

### HOW DOES CERCLA WORK?

As shown below, assessing and cleaning up CERCLA sites is a complex, multi-step process:

