



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is now completing its initial evaluation of its Musconetcong River sampling data, reviewing soil data from several historic sludge disposal areas, working with state and local partners regarding agricultural use of the sludge disposal areas, and conducting maintenance on recently installed individual well water treatment systems. EPA plans to host a public meeting to discuss its findings and next steps for the investigation in the coming months.

PFAS Results from the Musconetcong River

Last year, EPA sampled 4.5 miles of the Musconetcong River in Washington and Franklin Townships along the site, as well as several streams on residential or state-owned properties connected to the river. The purpose was to assess if per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance contamination, also known as PFAS or forever chemicals, from the site could be impacting the river. EPA found PFAS contamination in the samples taken from the river, including low levels of the compounds perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid, or PFOS. While there are no current NJ state or federal standards for PFAS in surface water (i.e. lakes or rivers), EPA analyzed the data to evaluate potential health risks associated with recreational use of the river. **EPA's analysis found that common recreational activities including swimming, canoeing, and wading pose a low risk to people who use the river, even on a daily basis over several months.** PFAS are not readily absorbed through the skin, so the main concern is swallowing small amounts of river water.



Musconetcong River near Shurts Road, Franklin Township, NJ, July 2025

Steps to Reduce Your PFAS Exposure in the River

Take the following steps to reduce your exposure to PFAS when using the river for recreation:

- **Avoid Swallowing Water:** Avoid drinking or swallowing water from the river. This is especially important for children who are more likely to swallow water while playing in the river.
- **Avoid River Foam:** PFAS can concentrate at high levels in the foam that builds up on the surface of parts of the river. Avoid this foamy water and if you are swimming or wading in the river, rinse off with non-foamy river water if you accidentally touch the foam.
- **Rinse Off After Swimming:** Absorption through skin is not a major risk, but showering and washing after swimming in the river is a good precaution.

Fish Consumption Advisory in the Musconetcong

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection tested fish from the Musconetcong River for PFAS at the same time as EPA's river and stream sampling and published an advisory for eating certain types of fish caught in the Musconetcong River near the Route 31 Sludge Disposal site. For general information, please visit their website: <https://dep.nj.gov/dsr/fish-advisories-studies/> and for recommendations, see <https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/dsr/fish-advisories-2026.pdf>



Site Background

For several decades, a historic textile manufacturing facility known as Castle Creek Fabrics and Northern Dyeing Corporation spread sludge as fertilizer, which was unknowingly contaminated with PFAS, over several fields near Route 31 in Washington Township. The PFAS contaminated the groundwater in parts of Washington and Franklin Townships as it spread out from the fields underground.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection first discovered the contamination in 2019 while sampling a drinking water well at a local business in Washington Township. Following a 2020-2024 investigation and the installation of 24 individual PFAS treatment systems, in late 2024, the NJDEP referred the site to EPA for investigation and cleanup. EPA sampled over 350 residential drinking water wells and installed treatment systems at over 200 properties.

What is PFAS?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances are a group of man-made chemicals that are not found naturally in the environment. The two types of PFAS made in the largest amounts in the United States were PFOA and PFOS. PFAS can be found in air, soil, and water as a result of manufacture and use. They do not break down in the environment very easily. PFAS can seep through the soil into groundwater and may adversely impact people's health and the environment. See <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/our-current-understanding-human-health-and-environmental-risks-pfas> for more information.

EPA Contact Information

Joel Waddell

Community Involvement Coordinator
929-656-3416
Waddell.joel@epa.gov

Margaret Gregor

On Scene Coordinator
908-421-2624
Gregor.Margaret@epa.gov

Jon Byk

On Scene Coordinator
347-899-6210
Byk.Jonathan@epa.gov

www.response.epa.gov/Route31Sludge

