Forever chemicals found in Androscoggin River after foam spill

by Mal Meyer, WGME

 $\underline{https://wgme.com/news/local/forever-chemicals-found-in-androscoggin-river-after-foam-spill-\underline{pfas}}$

Fri, September 13th 2024 at 5:14 PM Updated Fri, September 13th 2024 at 7:28 PM





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Forever chemicals have now been found in the Androscoggin River. (WGME)

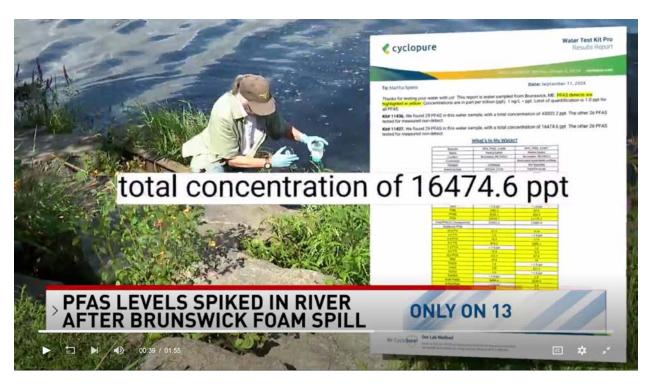
<u>PFASAndroscoggin RiverFirefighting foamBrunswick Naval Air</u> <u>StationContaminationFriends of Merrymeeting BayWastewater treatmentEnvironmental</u> monitoring

BRUNSWICK (WGME) – Forever chemicals have now been found in the Androscoggin River.

A group took water samples around the area after a massive spill of toxic firefighting foam last month at the former Brunswick Naval Air Station.

Now, the results are in.

"It's heartbreaking," one volunteer said.



The nonprofit Friends of Merrymeeting Bay collected samples right by a sewer treatment plant discharge pipe.

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"The contamination from the outfall pipe was very high, the highest we've ever seen it," Friends of Merrymeeting Bay Chair Ed Friedman said.

Test results show the total concentration of all the PFAS in the sample was 16,000 parts per trillion.

"The highest we've ever gotten from the outfall pipe before has been like two or three hundred parts per trillion," Friedman said.

The testing happened three days after the AFFF spill at Hangar 4 last month, when officials say the foam loaded with PFAS got into the sewer system, reaching the treatment plant within a couple of hours.



More than 1,400 gallons of firefighting foam containing forever chemicals spilled at Brunswick Executive Airport and leaked into a nearby pond in Aug. (WGME)

[&]quot;It's not possible to treat wastewater because of the amount of solids in it through a filter," Brunswick Sewer District General Manager Robert Pontau said. "So that's really not an option for us at this time."



The Department of Environmental Protection has also been monitoring the discharge.

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A spokesperson says preliminary data shows a declining trend in PFAS levels.

CBS13 has requested the results.

"There will be residual for quite some time where it either sticks to the pipes or sticks to the pump station," Pontau said.

Pontau says they're doing what they can while understanding the problem started elsewhere.

"We really need to stop it at the source," Pontau said. "We need to stop using these products. Get it out of the system all together."