

Pilon, Janet

Subject: 2023 PFOS levels in Lake Niapenco
Attachments: 2210_HIA.pdf

From: Joseph Minor
Sent: October 2, 2023 1:36 PM
To: Joshua Diamond <jdiamond@npca.ca>; Chandra Sharma <csharma@npca.ca>
Subject: Re: 2023 PFOS levels in Lake Niapenco

Thank you Watershed Monitoring Manager Diamond.

What you said:

"PFOS concentrations for Lake Niapenco: on June 20th 2023 29 ng/L, June 20 2022 41 ng/L, and July 30 2021 82 ng/L."

Is really good news -

Three straight years of decline is beginning to look like a trend. A simple analysis (not completely valid due to it being post hoc) is that the odds of this being at random are the same as getting "tails" on a coin flip three times in a row (1 out of 8).

If this trend holds the improvement at Binbrook CA is occurring faster than I would have expected (particularly due to the recent changes at the airport):

(see attached pdf)

I would have thought that the entire stream bed and banks of the upper Welland River between the airport and Binbrook would be significantly contaminated with PFAS/PFOS, and that disturbance of these deposits (either construction or flooding) would send more PFAS/PFOS contamination downstream.

Perhaps the 2023 value of 29 ng/L PFOS can be thought of as a benchmark for comparison for what may happen if there is disturbance in the significantly PFAS/PFOS contaminated portion of the upper Welland River (upstream of Binbrook CA).

I wish we could have a better informed discussion about the ongoing PFAS/PFOS contamination problem at the airport (and downstream), but the only new piece of datum that I have seen is the 29 ng/L PFOS measurement that you have provided (thank you).

What I do not have access to is any recent information regarding the levels of contamination at the airport (both surface and subsurface), contamination leaving the airport (surface and subsurface), and contamination in the upper Welland River (including in the Hwy 6 S Study Area).

I think it would be in the public interest if this information was made publicly available.

There are many publicly funded people who have been and still are taking measurements about this contamination that is on public property and that contaminates public access waterways where people catch and eat the highly PFOS contaminated fish.

This includes both consultants and government employees.

It would improve the quality of public discourse about the big toxic mess of PFAS/PFOS at the airport if this information were made publicly available.

But since this is not happening, I have some questions about the little that I can see (see attached pdf).

It appears that the most recent changes at the big toxic mess of PFAS/PFOS at the Hamilton International Airport are once again inadequate in dealing with the problem (in comparison to the more extensive efforts that were undertaken at CFB Borden).

At CFB Borden, the entire fire fighting practice pad was excavated, the PFOS contaminated surface soils were "encapsulated" and then placed in a large prepared area where they were capped. In contrast, in Hamilton only a small portion of the fire fighting practice pad has been "capped", leaving large areas still exposed to precipitation and resulting runoff (not to mention whatever is occurring subsurface).

Another concern that I have is that it appears that once again food is being grown in a PFAS/PFOS contaminated ditch near the PFAS/PFOS toxic hotspot.

(see plowed rows across the ditch to the West of the PFAS/PFOS toxic hotspot)

While this ditch (draining to the West) is not as contaminated as the ditch that drains to the South, the last publicly available information the public has been given (OMOE Fowler, 2011) is that this West ditch is contaminated with PFAS/PFOS.

When I raised the issue of food being grown in the PFOS contaminated South ditch many years ago, the resulting investigation turned up the fact that the farmer had not been made aware of the contamination problem.

Perhaps the farmer to the West has not been told about the contamination, and that plowing across a PFOS contaminated ditch to grow food is not a good idea?

Perhaps the problem is that since the focus has been on the South Ditch, that the West Ditch contamination problem was viewed as not important?

Considering that the levels of PFOS that are viewed by modern (2023) medical science as a health risk are hundreds of times lower than what was thought just a few years ago, that it is now time to consider the contamination in secondary sites (e.g., the West Ditch and the Highway 6 S Study Area) as significant?

It will be interesting to see what happens in the years ahead. Hopefully nothing will happen upstream that causes the levels of PFOS in Binbrook CA to rise above 29 ng/L.


Good luck and keep up the good work,

Joe Minor

October 2022

Cleanup at primary site of contamination is still incomplete.

Legend

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