

Corps closes Pearce Creek area to hunters

By Jacob Owens jowens@cecilwhig.com | Posted: Thursday, November 5, 2015 7:02 pm

EARLEVILLE — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced Thursday that its property at Pearce Creek is closed to hunters, effective immediately.

Richard Pearsall, public affairs officer for the Corps' Philadelphia District, said closure of the 260-acre Pearce Creek Dredge Material Containment Area was necessary due to safety liabilities as the agency begins work on the placement of a synthetic liner on the property, which aims to prevent leaching of contaminants into local water tables.

The site drew controversy two years ago, when a U.S. Geological Survey report found that disposal of dredge spoils at the site had degraded water quality in local wells. Several harmful, albeit naturally-occurring, contaminants were found in varying levels in water samples of that study.

Sealaska, a contracted firm from Alaska, has begun the work of clearing vegetation, grading and compacting slopes on the site before it places a cushioning material and the liner, according to Tim Kelly, the Corps' C&D Canal project manager.

He previously told county officials that work would be completed in 60-acre parcels at a time.

Pearsall said Thursday that the work will continue at the site for the next 18 months, meaning hunters will likely have to forgo using the site for two full seasons.

“The Maryland Department of Natural Resources permits hunting in the state, and the Corps has traditionally allowed hunting on the Pearce Creek site,” he said. “Because of the ongoing work, however, we will have to close the site to hunters and any other recreational activities.”

Pearsall said noted that Natural Resources Police does patrol the federally-owned site and would continue to do so in order to enforce the prohibition.

“It’s really for everyone’s safety,” Pearsall said.



Pearce Creek closed

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers closed the Pearce Creek Dredge Material Containment Area to the public Thursday as work gets underway for placement of a synthetic liner.