

# Lower East Fork Poplar Creek

## Is it safe? \_\_\_\_\_

The creek is safe for limited water-contact recreational uses, such as wading in footwear. Eating fish from the creek is not recommended based upon the level of mercury in the fish.

## Are there use limitations for this area? \_\_\_\_\_

Due to the contamination in sediments and fish tissue, the following restrictions are in place:

- Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation issued advisories banning fish consumption and directing people to avoid water contact. The creek has been posted by the state, but this posting is not required by the Record of Decision. The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency also provides this information in the annual fishing guide. It is also available at <https://www.state.tn.us/twra>.
- One privately owned area with mercury concentrations greater than established regulator limits was not excavated. Excavation did not occur because the area was covered with an asphalt parking lot. This area is monitored annually to ensure the asphalt remains in place and the soils remain inaccessible.

All controls and monitoring necessary for this area are performed and reported as required in the Remedial Action Report.

## Background: \_\_\_\_\_

The Lower East Fork Poplar Creek flows through Oak Ridge's business and residential areas from the Y-12 Nuclear Security Complex westward to Poplar Creek located at the East Tennessee Technology Park. The creek has been contaminated mainly from mercury lost during operations in past decades via groundwater and storm sewers.

## How was the problem addressed? \_\_\_\_\_

The DOE, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the State of Tennessee conducted contamination investigations and evaluated alternatives to determine the best plan for handling impacts to the environment and human health.



Due to the contamination threat to the community, a citizens group was formed in 1995 and was kept informed to ensure knowledgeable public participation in the decision-making process.

The selected alternative identified four floodplain soil areas with mercury concentrations greater than the regulator established limit of 400 parts per million. These areas were excavated and the disposed soils were taken to a permitted landfill. The area was backfilled with clean soils and re-vegetated. Finally, the area is appropriately monitored to ensure the effectiveness of the remediation.

A final ROD for this watershed will address the remaining ecological issues, surface water, and groundwater.

## More Information is available: \_\_\_\_\_

- *Record of Decision for Lower East Fork Poplar Creek, Oak Ridge Tennessee.* August 17, 1995.
- *Explanation of Significant Differences for the Lower East Fork Poplar Creek Record of Decision, Oak Ridge Tennessee.* November 15, 1996.
- *Remedial Action Report on the Lower East Fork Poplar Creek Project, Oak Ridge, Tennessee.* August 15, 2000.
- Administrative Record – a listing of all available documents and correspondence in reaching this decision is available at the DOE Information Center in Oak Ridge.