

Location

Naval Air Station Backwater is located near the City of Backwater and town of Backwater Beach, in Seaside County, in the State of Madison.

In addition to facility operations that generate and use hazardous materials and produce hazardous waste, NAS Backwater has a bulk fuel farm storing JP-5 jet fuel for the aircraft positioned there.

NAS Backwater has a commissary and exchange complex, numerous MWR facilities (pool, golf course, officer and enlisted clubs, etc.) and base housing areas.

There are numerous creeks that crisscross the base and flow into ponds, lakes, and waterways in the surrounding communities. Some of those community waters empty into a river that flows into the nearby ocean.

While community relations tend to be positive, the local citizenry is aware of Navy issues with fuel spills at other locations (e.g., Red Hill, NAS Oceana) and, like everyone, are bombarded with Camp Lejeune drinking water lawsuit ads on radio and television.

The areas surrounding NAS Backwater are heavily used for recreation (fishing, boating, swimming) by locals and tourists.

Initial Spill Information

At the end of the duty day (\approx 1700), the NAS Backwater CDO started receiving calls from businesses located along Backwater Boulevard about the strong smell of fuel, suggesting there might be a fuel spill. Up to that point nothing was reported from base entities.

Upon investigation, the spill response team determined that a 5,000-to-10,000-gallon spill of JP-5 occurred at the NAS Backwater Bulk Fuel Farm. The spill response team noted fuel in surrounding wetlands and in ditches that lead off-installation. Fuel was found outside the base perimeter in a ditch adjacent to the air station, along Backwater Boulevard, a four-lane commuter highway.