



Musconetcong River PFAS & Fish Advisory FAQ (2026)

What residents and recreational users need to know about PFAS in the Musconetcong Watershed

What is this advisory about?

Recent testing has identified PFAS (“forever chemicals”) in parts of the Musconetcong River and nearby areas. These chemicals can build up in the environment and in fish. This has led to the development of updated guidance from NJDEP on fish consumption.

What are PFAS?

PFAS, or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are a large group of synthetic chemicals that have been used in consumer products since the 1950s. They are commonly found in items such as non-stick cookware, stain-resistant fabrics, and firefighting foams. PFAS are often referred to as “forever chemicals” because they do not break down easily in the environment and can accumulate in the human body over time. They are of concern because

- they do not break down easily;
- they move through soil, groundwater, and surface water; and
- they accumulate in fish and wildlife

Where is this coming from?

The primary source is a historic sludge disposal site along Route 31 in Washington Township. PFAS have migrated through groundwater and tributaries into the Musconetcong River.

Is the river safe to use?

Yes—for recreation. Fishing, kayaking, and swimming are still allowed. The advisory is about eating fish, not water contact.

Why are fish a concern?

PFAS build up in fish tissue over time. Eating contaminated fish is one of the main exposure pathways.

Fish Consumption Guidance

Is it safe to eat fish?

It depends on species, location, and frequency. Follow the 2026 NJ Fish Advisory for meal limits.

Are all fish affected the same? No, it depends on the fish species.

- Resident fish: highest PFAS levels
- Wild trout: lower PFAS levels
- Stocked trout: lowest PFAS levels



Can cooking remove PFAS?

No. PFAS are not removed by cooking or cleaning.

Who should be cautious?

- Pregnant women
- Women who may become pregnant
- Children

Follow NJDEP guidance to reduce exposure.

How large is the affected area?

The most impacted stretch is approximately 4.5 miles near the Route 31 site. Fish movement means advisories may extend beyond this area.

What about soil, crops, and farmland?

Soil sampling is ongoing to evaluate contamination on farms and residential areas. This work helps determine whether PFAS may impact crops or livestock and informs future decisions. MWA is tracking this research and is available for consultation to interested parties.

What is MWA doing?

- Conducted surface water sampling in the focus area
- Submitted proposals to USDA and AWCF to expand monitoring
- Investigating source pathways like septic effluent
- Providing in-home well testing services
- Serving as a community hub for PFAS information

What is being done overall?

- EPA evaluating site for potential cleanup
- NJDEP monitoring fish, water, and health risks and updating fish consumption advisories

What should I do?

- Check NJDEP fish advisory
- Follow meal limits
- Consider catch-and-release
- Stay informed



Learn More

NJDEP Fish Advisories: <https://dep.nj.gov/dsr/fish-advisories-studies/>

EPA Site Info: https://response.epa.gov/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=16763

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