

Universal Oil Products

New Jersey

EPA ID#: NJD002005106

EPA REGION 2 Congressional District(s): 09

Bergen
East Rutherford

NPL LISTING HISTORY
Proposed Date: 12/30/1982
Final Date: 9/8/1983

Site Description

The Universal Oil Products site is located on 75 acres adjacent to Route 17 in East Rutherford. Various chemicals were manufactured there from 1932 until 1979, when the company ceased operations and dismantled the plant. The company also recovered solvents and waste chemicals at the site from 1960 through 1979. Approximately 4.5 million gallons of waste solvents and solid chemical wastes were dumped into two unlined lagoons during this time, which resulted in contamination of the soil, surface water, and groundwater. Approximately 36,500 people within 3 miles of the site depend on groundwater for their source of drinking water. Groundwater also provides process cooling water to local industries. The site is in the coastal wetland management area of the Hackensack River Basin. Berry's Creek borders the southeastern part of the site, and Ackerman's Creek, which is a tributary to Berry's Creek, passes through the site. Berry's Creek joins the Hackensack River about 3 miles downstream from the site. Local residents use the area's surface water for recreation.

Site Responsibility:

This site is being addressed through a combination of Federal, State, and Potentially Responsible Party actions.

Threat and Contaminants

Ground water is contaminated with volatile organic compounds (VOCs) including benzenes, trichloroethylene (TCE), vinyl chloride, and toluene, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and lead. Sediments contain PCBs. Soils contain VOCs, PCBs, Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) and lead. People who come into direct contact with or accidentally ingest contaminated soil, sediments, groundwater, or surface water may suffer adverse health effects .

Cleanup Approach

Contamination at the site is being addressed in three phases. The first cleanup phase addressed contaminated soils in the upland portions of the site. The second phase of the cleanup was to address contaminated groundwater. The third phase is addressing contaminants in the adjoining wetland/creek areas.

Response Action Status

Immediate Actions : Lagoons were addressed on an expedited basis by the potentially responsible party (PRP). Liquids, sludges, and sediments were removed from these surface impoundments by the PRP under New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) oversight .

Entire Site: The PRP, under NJDEP and EPA monitoring, completed a study of the nature and extent of contamination of site soils and groundwater. Based on the results of the study, the site cleanup has been divided into multiple remedial actions. A Record of Decision detailing the response actions for the site was signed in September 1993 and amended in December 1998. Remedial actions that address the contaminated soils and a portion of the groundwater have been completed. PCB/PAH-contaminated soil has been addressed through a combination of thermal desorption and offsite disposal. A portion of the VOC-contaminated soils has been treated using soil vapor extraction. Lead-contaminated soils have been excavated and placed under the on-site cap. Groundwater was remediated by an on-site treatment system which operated from October 1997 through November 1998.

Field studies to evaluate the wetland/creek areas were initiated in 2005, and are expected to be completed in 2009.

Site Facts : Under an Administrative Order on Consent from NJDEP, the PRP (Honeywell International, Inc.) has taken the lead in studying the nature and extent of contamination at the site as well as conducting the remedial actions.

Cleanup Progress

Under the immediate response actions, the PRP removed 950,000 gallons of contaminated water from the lagoon areas. Of the 950,000 gallons of water removed from the lagoon areas, 271,589 gallons were treated and discharged on-site and 678,411 gallons were transported to a treatment facility in Newark, New Jersey. Approximately, 8,600 tons of contaminated soils/sediments were removed from the lagoon area and transported to a hazardous waste landfill.

As specified in the Record of Decision, 8,200 tons of PCB/PAH-contaminated soils were treated by soil vapor extraction and 6,600 cubic yards of PCB/PAH-contaminated soils were disposed off-site. Additionally, 45,000 cubic yards of lead and PCB/PAH-contaminated soils were placed beneath a multi-media cap. A Vapor Extraction system treated 3,200 tons of VOC contaminated soils. Approximately six million gallons of contaminated water from the shallow groundwater collection system were pumped and treated.

Additional soil excavations occurred in 2005 to address contamination discovered during activities associated with the construction of a home center and restaurant on a portion of the site. Excavated soils were sent off-site for disposal.

The first and second phases of cleanup are generally completed. An initial investigation of the adjoining wetland/creek areas (the third phase of cleanup) was completed in 1990. Additional studies were necessary after the 1990 investigation, but were delayed until the first and second phases of the cleanup were near completion. Additional remedial investigations of the wetland/creek areas and site-wide groundwater were necessary to evaluate contaminant exchanges with nearby Berry's Creek. Those investigations began in 2005.

A rail line to connect the Meadowlands Sports Complex with the Pascack Valley Line is being constructed across the site. Contaminated soils under the rail alignment were excavated to a depth of approximately four feet below the current grade, at which there is a natural layer of clay which confines contaminant transport. In some areas, marginally contaminated soils will be covered by surcharge soils. Contaminated soils excavated during the rail installation are being sent off-site for disposal. The construction of the rail line through the site curtailed completion of the wetlands investigations. The investigations are planned to be completed in 2009.

Site Repositories

USEPA Records Center 290 Broadway, 18th floor New York, NY 10007 (212) 637-4308

East Rutherford Municipal Building 1 Everett Place East Rutherford, NJ 07073

East Rutherford Memorial Library 143 Boiling Springs Avenue East Rutherford, NJ 07073