

Montgomery Township Housing Development

New Jersey

EPA ID#: NJD980654164

EPA REGION 2

Congressional District(s): 12

Somerset
Montgomery Township

NPL LISTING HISTORY
Proposed Date: 12/1/1982
Final Date: 9/1/1983

Site Description

The Montgomery Township Housing Development Site (Site) is located in the southern part of Somerset County, New Jersey. Originally, the 71 homes at the 72-acre Site depended on private wells drawing water from the underlying aquifer. In 1978, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) were detected in the public well of the neighboring municipality of Rocky Hill. Concerned that the contamination might have spread to the groundwater beneath the housing development, State officials sampled the housing development's wells. Results indicated widespread contamination with various VOCs. Because of the proximity and the similarity of the contaminants present, a decision was made to address the Montgomery Township Housing Development Site and the Rocky Hill Municipal Well Site, also on the NPL, jointly. The area immediately surrounding the Site is wooded and predominantly residential. Beden Brook skirts the northwestern corner of the Site, and the Millstone River bounds it on the east. The Site includes the 71 homes in the original development and six additional homes nearby.

Site Responsibility: This Site is being addressed through Federal actions.

Threat and Contaminants

Private wells in the housing development have been contaminated with VOCs, primarily trichloroethylene (TCE). Drinking contaminated water may result in adverse health effects. However, all residents were offered connections to the public water supply. Most residents are connected to that public water supply. In addition, in 2004 and 2005, EPA sealed a number of private supply wells within the Site.

Cleanup Approach

This Site has been addressed in three stages: emergency actions and two long-term remedial phases which focus on the provision of an alternate water supply and the remediation of the groundwater.

Response Action Status

Emergency Actions: In 1981, the Township of Montgomery connected 20 homes in the development to the Elizabethtown Water Company's waterline. A total of 38 residences were connected to the Elizabethtown public water supply before the alternate water supply remedy described below was implemented.

Alternate Water Supply: Under a cooperative agreement with EPA, the State began a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) of the contamination in 1984, and completed its investigation 1987. EPA selected a remedy for supplying clean water to the housing development in 1987. Implementation of this remedy, involving a continuation of the emergency actions conducted throughout the 1980s, began in 1988 and was completed in 1990. It featured extending the Elizabethtown Water Company distribution system already serving a portion of the development to residents using water from contaminated or threatened wells. Sealing of 43 of the residential wells was completed in 2005.

Groundwater: After completion of a supplemental RI/FS, EPA selected a remedy for cleaning the contaminated groundwater plume in 1988. This cleanup covers not only the housing development areas, but also the Rocky Hill Municipal Well Site. The remedy features: (1) extracting contaminated groundwater from the primary plume area; (2) treating the groundwater to Federal and State cleanup standards using carbon; (3) discharging the treated water to surface water; (4) connecting additional residences to the public water supply as needed; (5) sealing private wells within the contaminant plume; and (6) implementing a groundwater sampling program to monitor the effectiveness of the cleanup.

The State of New Jersey began the design of the groundwater system in December 1991. The lead on design and implementation of the cleanup activities was transferred from the State to EPA in December 1996. A potentially responsible party (PRP) had indicated an interest in implementing the remedy and EPA initiated enforcement negotiations. As a result, remedial design activities were temporarily suspended. In June 1998, EPA performed a field investigation at the Former Fifth Dimension Facility, located in the vicinity of the Rocky Hill Municipal Well. EPA installed a deep monitoring well on this property, conducted soil gas sampling, and sampled groundwater. Results of this investigation confirmed that elevated levels of TCE exist within the soil and groundwater beneath this property. The complaint for cost recovery, which was initially filed in 1991, was amended to add two parties as a result of this investigation. A PRP associated with this property also joined the enforcement negotiations. Enforcement negotiations have resulted in a monetary settlement with one of the PRPs. EPA established a special account for settlement funds that are to be used for future remedial action at the site. In August 1999, EPA restarted remedial design activities. The design included specifications for the construction of two groundwater pumping and treatment plants. EPA completed remedial design of the groundwater pump and treatment remedy in 2003. Construction of the groundwater treatment system began in 2004 and was completed in January 2005.

Cleanup Progress

Construction of two groundwater treatment plants was completed in January 2005. Over 60 million gallons of water have been pumped from the aquifer and cleaned since the plants started operations.

Sealing private wells located within the contaminant plume has been completed. EPA has sealed a total of 43 private wells.

By supplying most residences affected by contaminated groundwater with a municipal water supply, the potential for exposure to contaminated groundwater has been greatly reduced.

Site Repositories

Montgomery Township Municipal Building, 2261 Route 206, Belle Mead, N.J. 08502

Mary Jacobs Memorial Branch Library, 62 Washington Street, Rocky Hill, N.J. 08553