

Olean Well Field

New York

EPA ID#: NYD980528657

EPA REGION 2 Congressional District(s): 31

Cattaraugus

Olean

NPL LISTING HISTORY

Proposed Date: 10/1/1981

Final Date: 9/1/1983

Site Description

The 1.5 square-mile Olean Well Field Superfund Site is comprised of three public and 50 private wells which are contaminated with trichloroethylene (TCE). Much of the groundwater contamination is believed to be the result of industrial operations at several nearby commercial establishments. Contamination of the areas was discovered in 1981. The public wells were constructed in the 1970s to alleviate the need for a surface water treatment plant, which draws water from Olean Creek. However, use of the wells was discontinued after Olean city officials detected TCE in the groundwater. In 1990, the public wells were reactivated after two air strippers were constructed to treat the groundwater. Site-related contaminants have migrated from shallow groundwater to deeper levels. The groundwater located in the upper level flows toward and discharges into the Allegheny River. Approximately 18,200 people live in the City of Olean.

Site Responsibility: This site is being addressed through Federal and potentially responsible party actions.

Threat and Contaminants

The groundwater is contaminated with volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Three municipal water supply wells are located within the area of groundwater contamination. On-site soil at the manufacturing facilities is contaminated with TCE and other VOCs. Area residents may have been exposed to the contaminants in their drinking water and through direct contact.

Cleanup Approach

This site is being addressed in three stages: immediate actions and two long-term remedial phases, which are focusing on groundwater cleanup and controlling sources of contamination to the groundwater.

Response Action Status

Immediate Actions: Thirty-two home carbon treatment units for drinking water were installed on private wells and subsequent monitoring services were performed by the EPA between 1983 and 1985. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and the EPA developed an interim cleanup action that provided for regular monitoring and the installation of additional carbon adsorption units, as necessary, until a permanent remedy was put in place. In 1990, contaminated soil was excavated and removed during the construction of an office building addition.

Groundwater: Based on the results of the initial site investigation, the remedies selected to clean up the site included: (1) reactivation of the three public wells and treatment of the groundwater using air strippers to reduce the TCE contamination to a level that protects human health; (2) extension of the city waterlines from the Town of Olean to connect approximately 93 residences served by private wells; (3) inspection of the McGraw-Edison industrial sewer and performing any necessary repair and/or replacement; and (4) recommendation of institutional controls to restrict withdrawal of contaminated groundwater for drinking purposes. Five thousand feet of sewer line have been replaced or cleaned. Water main extension work was completed in 1989. The extended water main also provides hydrants and fire protection to the targeted areas. Two air strippers were constructed at the public (municipal) wells in 1989 and, in 1990, the wells were reactivated.

Source Control: A supplemental RI/FS study, which was completed in June 1996, investigated thirteen properties for the presence of contamination. The study identified soil and groundwater contamination at four of the properties.

Site Facts:

The supplemental RI/FS identified four areas on-site which are acting as sources of VOC contamination to the ground water. These properties are AVX, Alcas, Cooper Industries, Inc., (formerly McGraw-Edison) and the former Loohn's Dry Cleaners and Launderers property. A second operable unit ROD ("OU2"), signed by the Regional Administrator in September 1996, required the following remedies for the source areas:

Alcas: Vacuum Enhanced Recovery

Loohn's Dry Cleaners: Vacuum Enhanced Recovery/Soil Vapor Extraction/Excavation

AVX: Excavation

Cooper Industries, Inc.(formerly McGraw-Edison): Groundwater Pump and Treat

In January 1998, Consent Decrees ("CDs") were lodged in the U.S. District Court of New York for the implementation of the above remedies at the Alcas, AVX and Cooper Industries facilities. (The Loohn's Property is a Fund-lead project.)

Cleanup Progress

Alcas: (Vacuum Enhanced Recovery).

Based upon remedial design field investigation studies conducted by the PRP (from 1999 to 2001), EPA has determined that the application of the selected ROD remedy, Vacuum Enhanced Recovery, is not an effective technology for cleaning up the site contamination. A supplemental remedial design investigation is in progress and a remedy amendment to the ROD is imminent. Additional site characterization studies are ongoing.

AVX: (Soil Excavation).

In July 2000, approximately 5,055 tons of contaminated soils were removed from the AVX facility. However, post removal sampling has shown that significant soil contamination still remains at the AVX facility. Additional studies are ongoing to determine the source of a groundwater contamination plume along and across the southern boundary of the property. Further investigation of significant groundwater contamination discovered across the southern boundary of the AVX property may be pursued under a separate operable unit. A feasibility study process to select and design a site remedy to address the contamination at the AVX property, via a ROD amendment, is underway and should be in place within two years.

Cooper Industries: (Groundwater Pump/Treatment).

A ground water pump/treatment system was installed at the Cooper Industries facility in July 2002 and was formally approved by EPA on October 2, 2003.

Loohn's Dry Cleaners: (Vapor Enhanced Recovery/Soil Vapor Extraction; Soil Excavation)

After completion of a 1998 remedial design investigation, EPA selected soil excavation in lieu of soil vapor extraction as the preferred remedy for this source area. In April 2004 EPA completed the soil excavation activities, which included the demolition and removal of the old dry cleaner's building and over 2,000 tons of contaminated soils for off-site disposal. A groundwater monitoring program has been instituted and will be used to assess the need for further response action at this site.

Site Repositories

Olean Public Library, Second and Laurens Streets, Olean, New York, 14760 .