

Wyeth-Ayerst Laboratories

EPA ID Number: NYD054065909

Other (Former) Names of Site

Lederle Laboratories, American Cyanamid Company

Site Description

The plant is located on 401 North Middletown Road in the village of Pearl River on a 580-acre site that lies within Clarkstown and Orangetown in Rockland County, New York. The facility is located about 1.5 miles north of the New Jersey State border and 20 miles northwest of New York City. It is bounded by Middletown Road on the East, Crooked Hill Road to the south, and forested and residential areas to the west and north respectively.

The facility produces pharmaceutical products, generating hazardous wastes (e.g., spent solvents, toxic and mixed wastes) and large quantities of nonhazardous solid waste (e.g., incineration ash, composting and wastewater sludge) in the process. Hazardous wastes are stored in 250 55-gallon containers on-site. Releases of contaminants have occurred from the leachate generated at landfills, the burning of solvents in an open pit, leaks of industrial wastewater from underground sewers, and chemical spills.

There are 4 landfills at this site (1, 2, 2A, and 3A). Landfills 1, 2, and 2A received a mix of waste including incinerator ash, glass, debris, plant trash and rubbish, vitamins, wastewater treatment plant sludge, fermentation cake, animal remains, and small quantities of laboratory chemicals. These three landfills were closed in early 1980 and they were covered with a relatively low permeability material to prevent water seepage. However, groundwater monitoring indicates that releases of organic contaminants have occurred from these units. Landfill 3A, which remains open, receives solid waste generated onsite and operates under a New York State Part 360 Solid Waste Management permit.

The landfill area is in the western portion of the facility, adjacent to Muddy Creek, which bisects the Wyeth-Ayerst facility, flowing into the Pascack Brook and then discharging into the Hackensack River. The nearest New York State regulated freshwater wetland is located about 1.5 miles northwest of the site.

Site Responsibility and Legal Instrument

A NYS Part 373 hazardous waste management permit regulates the storage and management of hazardous waste in tanks, containers including lab packs, the treatment

of hazardous wastes, and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) corrective action.

Permit Status

A NYS Part 373 hazardous waste permit was issued 9/28/93 and expired 9/29/98. This permit has been extended as required by State law and will stay in effect until issuance of the renewal permit, which is projected by 2004.

Potential Threats and Contaminants

Several chlorinated and non-chlorinated volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs) have been detected in the groundwater at this site. A few of these organic constituents, such as chloroform and 1,1,1-trichloroethylene, have been found to exceed New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) groundwater quality protection standards. These exceedances have been limited to on-site areas: one immediately down-gradient of the closed landfills, and one close to the burn pit.

Soils have been found to be contaminated with mercury and methyl isobutyl ketone (MIBK) at two different spill locations. This contamination has been removed by direct excavation.

This solid waste landfill has released mercury and phenols into the groundwater. Mercury has been found also in a routine excavation near Building 100.

Wyeth-Ayerst is located in Rockland County, which is serviced by a public water supply system. Contaminated groundwater from the site is not used for any purpose on-site or off-site. However, the State considers all its groundwater to be a potential source of potable water and thus it should be remediated to groundwater quality protection standards. Current groundwater monitoring data indicates that the contaminated groundwater generated from releases at the landfills does not migrate off-site nor does it adversely impact Muddy Creek. Further contamination is not leaving the landfills. Trespassers are kept off most of the site by fencing and security, and groundwater exposure is unlikely should they gain access to the site.

There are no known direct potential threats to humans from the site's contaminated soil. The closed landfills are covered and the contaminated soils were removed from areas where spills have occurred. Contaminated ash remaining in the burn pit remains inaccessible to trespassers because of site security and fencing.

Cleanup Approach and Progress

The closed landfills were investigated during the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Facility Investigation (RFI) and found to have contaminated groundwater flowing under them. Wyeth-Ayerst is implementing a three year natural attenuation and

monitoring program, with the intention of demonstrating that the groundwater contamination will meet the State's protective standards before reaching the property line of the facility. Actual groundwater data for the first year verifies this conclusion.

A number of interim corrective measures (ICMs) have been implemented at the site: eight hazardous waste above-ground storage tanks were closed in 2002, including two 100,000-gallon spent combined-acid filtrate tanks and their bottom sludge; removal of 598 tons of discolored soil in the vicinity of the tanks contaminated with methyl isobutyl ketone (MIBK); an ICM program repaired or replaced 9,200 feet of ruptured underground sewers servicing production and pilot plant buildings, by placing new plastic piping inside the old pipeline, and excavating and removing several severely damaged sections of sewer pipe. In April 1998 the facility discovered a mercury spill of unknown origin while doing routine maintenance outside a building. An ICM removal action was immediately implemented, and 144 cubic yards of mercury-contaminated soil were excavated and replaced with clean fill. The contaminated soil was sent off-site for mercury recovery.

Site Repository

Copies of supporting technical documents and correspondence cited in this site fact sheet are available for public review at:

NYS DEC
Division of Solid and Hazardous Materials
Bureau of Radiation & Hazardous Site Management
625 Broadway, 8th Floor
Albany, NY 12233-7252

