

Region 3 GPRA Baseline RCRA Corrective Action Facility

Air Products and Chemicals, Inc.

**357 Marian Avenue
Tamaqua, PA 18252
Congressional District 6
EPA ID #: PAD069778967
Site Property Area: 175 Acres
Last Updated: 06/10/2008**

Current Progress at the Site

On June 1, 2007, Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. (APCI) submitted a formal request for renewal of its Corrective Action Permit at the current terms which has since expired on December 1, 2007. After reviewing this request as well as other options available to allow APCI to fulfill its RCRA Corrective Action requirements, discussions have led to EPA and APCI agreeing to APCI fulfilling its Corrective Action requirements under the less formal Facility Lead Agreement (FLA). EPA sent a letter on November 13, 2007 inviting APCI to participate in the FLA by responding with a Letter of Commitment. EPA is in receipt of APCI's Letter of Commitment as of December 14, 2007. EPA considers this letter the commitment by APCI to perform the requirements set forth in the Facility Lead Agreement at the APCI facility.

Groundwater Monitoring Reports have shown an overall decreasing trend in chlorinated compound concentrations since initiating monitoring approximately 15 years ago. Based upon the groundwater sampling, the plume is contracting, the source mass is reducing, and the migrating concentrations appear to be being attenuated.

Site Description

Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. is located in Hometown, Schuylkill County, PA and consists of 175 contiguous acres of which 60 are the industrial site and the rest are leased fields, wooded, or a wildlife refuge. Since 1972, APCI has manufactured fluorine gas and fluorine compounds as well as conducted transfilling, purification, and distribution of specialty gasses.

In November, 1992 PADEP issued a RCRA operating permit to APCI. EPA issued a permit for Corrective Action in December 1997.

APCI discovered that PCE tanks and a cooling unit containing PCE had leaked and, in 1994, removed contaminated soil. They also discovered that some of the PCE had entered the groundwater. Most of the rest of the soil and groundwater contamination at the site does not have an identifiable source and is most likely due to inadequate care when using solvents.

Groundwater flow in this area is primarily through fractured bedrock into east-west channels. The solvents form plumes in the groundwater that are stretched in the east-west direction following these fractures in the bedrock. Because the contamination is in fractured bedrock it is very difficult to remove. The Corrective Action Permit allowed APCI to sample the groundwater

for 2 years to show whether or not the contaminants in the groundwater are naturally degrading.

Between January 1998 and January 2000, APCI conducted 8 quarters of groundwater sampling to determine if the groundwater contamination is decomposing due to natural attenuation. APCI submitted a final report during 2000. EPA worked with APCI to determine if the solvents in the groundwater are naturally attenuating, to modify the existing sampling plan and, to determine which further steps are necessary. Based on discussions with EPA during a Fall 2002 meeting, APCI submitted a proposed revised monitoring plan in Spring, 2003.

EPA approved the revised monitoring plan on October 22, 2003 which is a revision to the RCRA Corrective Action Permit. This modification reduced the groundwater sampling from the semi-annual schedule to a once-per five quarter schedule. EPA determined that this reduction was warranted based on the declining levels of constituents of concern. There was no change to the required monitoring parameters.

Within one mile of APCI are drinking water wells in the fractured bedrock. No contamination from APCI has been found in these wells.

Site Responsibility

RCRA Corrective Action activities at APCI were conducted by EPA.

Contaminants

Air Products removed contaminated soils in 1994. The surface water in Neiferts Creek is not contaminated. Air Products monitors the groundwater for chloroethane (CE), 1, 1-dichloroethene (1,1-DCE), tetrachloroethene (PCE), TCE), 1,1,1-trichloroethane (TCA), cis-1,2-dichloroethene (cis-1,2-DCE), trans-1,2-dichloroethene (trans-1,2-DCE), and vinyl chloride (VC).

Community Interaction

APCI conducts monthly Community Advisory Panel (CAP) meetings. If there is further action, EPA or APCI will inform the public immediately or at one of the CAP meetings.

Institutional Controls

There are currently no institutional controls established at this facility.

Government Contact

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For more information about EPA's corrective action webpage, including Environmental Indicators, please visit our site at: www.epa.gov/reg3wcmd/correctiveaction.htm