

Crown Cleaners Of Watertown, Inc.

New York

EPA ID#: NYD986965333

EPA REGION 2

Congressional District(s): 24

Jefferson

Carthage

NPL LISTING HISTORY

Proposed Date: 9/13/2001

Final Date: 9/5/2002

Site Description

The Crown Cleaners of Watertown, Inc. site includes a former laundry/dry-cleaning facility located in the Village of Herrings and a groundwater plume resulting from on-site contamination. The 9.82-acre property consists of a main building and several ancillary buildings situated parallel to Route 3 and along the Black River. The property is bordered to the north by Fort Drum, to the west by residential dwellings, to the east by a county-managed park, and to the south by the Black River.

From 1890 until the mid-1960s, the property was used by the St. Regis Paper Company to produce paper bags and related products. In the late 1970s, the property was purchased by Crown Cleaners, which operated a dry cleaner and laundry. Crown Cleaners' dry cleaning operation used tetrachloroethylene (PCE), as well as machine oils and greases. Waste water from the washing machines was discharged into basement storage pits, which then discharged through the foundation walls to the ground and the Black River. In 1991, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) discovered that the Village of Herrings' public water supply well was contaminated with PCE. An investigation by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) indicated that the soil and ground water beneath the Crown Cleaners building were contaminated with PCE and other organic compounds. This investigation also indicated that the Crown Cleaners facility was the source of the PCE. As a result of this study, a treatment system for the village well was installed.

Site Responsibility: This site is being addressed through state and federal actions

Threat and Contaminants

In 1991, NYSDOH discovered that the Village of Herrings' public water supply well was contaminated with PCE. Concentrations ranged from 25 to 50 micrograms per liter (ug/l). Analytical results of soil samples collected on the Crown Cleaners property by NYSDEC indicated the presence of PCE at concentrations up to 63,000 ug/l. In addition, sampling of a private well located 2,200 feet west of Crown Cleaners indicated the presence of PCE at concentrations of 22 to 40 ug/l.

Cleanup Approach

The site is being addressed in two stages: immediate actions and a long-term remedial phase focusing on the cleanup of the entire site.

Response Action Status

Immediate Actions: On June 8, 2000, NYSDEC requested that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) assess the site for a possible removal action (removal actions are taken in response to a release or threat of release of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant that may present an imminent and substantial danger to the public health or welfare) and to provide assistance in assessing contamination from the site to local private drinking water wells and the Village supply well. During EPA's evaluation, asbestos insulation materials were observed in various stages of deterioration throughout the entire facility. In addition, five aboveground or partially buried steel storage tanks were located near the building's electrical room. These vessels ranged from 275 to 10,000 gallons and appeared to contain a petroleum-derived product. Evidence of leakage was noted at each of the tanks. Based on an evaluation of previous analytical data, historical information, and the removal site evaluation, EPA determined that the site posed an immediate threat to public health, welfare, and the environment, thereby justifying the performance of a removal action. Actions taken to abate the threat included securing the site, removal and disposal of volatile organic-contaminated sludge/debris,

sump pit water, and soils/spent dry cleaning filters, removal of friable asbestos-containing materials, and removal, demolition of an unstable portion of the facility building, and disposal of approximately 5,000 gallons of waste oil.

Entire Site: In 1998, NYSDEC initiated a remedial investigation/feasibility study (RI/FS) to determine the nature and extent of contamination at and emanating from the site and to identify and evaluate remedial alternatives. Field activities included several rounds of ground water samples collected from wells in the area of the site. Analytical results from these sampling activities indicated that PCE was still present in samples collected from on-site monitoring wells, the village well, and private potable wells in the area. Other RI/FS activities included a building survey, a ground penetrating radar survey of the structures beneath the Crown Cleaners building, and a limited removal of wastes located within the building and/or residing in containers, sumps, or other locations. Supplemental RI field work was performed in 2004. The sample results indicated the need for additional groundwater monitoring wells to better delineate the contamination. These wells were installed and sampled in 2006. An analysis of the data from these wells identified an off-site groundwater hot spot. Additional groundwater monitoring wells were installed to delineate this hot spot. The data from these wells indicated that the contaminant plume had not been fully delineated and additional deep wells were needed. Several groundwater samples underwent isotopic analysis to determine if there is more than one contaminant source. A review of the analytical results determined that there is only one source and that additional monitoring wells were needed to better delineate the plume. Additional monitoring wells were installed and sampled in 2009. Supplemental soil and groundwater sampling was performed in June 2011. The RI/FS was completed in late 2011. A Proposed Plan was released to the public in December 2011 and a public meeting to discuss the preferred remedy and to solicit public comments was held on January 3, 2012. The preferred remedy includes the demolition of the buildings, excavation of VOC- and PAH-contaminated soils and chemical oxidation of the contaminated groundwater. It is anticipated that a remedy will be selected in February 2012.

Site Facts: EPA has initiated a search for Potentially Responsible Parties.

Cleanup Progress

Securing the site, removing contaminated materials, and demolishing an unstable portion of the building has mitigated the immediate threat posed by the site.

Site Repositories

EPA Region 2 Superfund Records Center, 290 Broadway, 18th Floor, New York, NY 10007-1866 Carthage Free Library, 412 Budd Street, Carthage, NY 13619