

INTRODUCTION

The Region 4 Office of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is using a multi-media approach that includes the EPA Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), Superfund, Air, and Water Divisions to address environmental issues in the Collegeville, Fairmont, Harriman Park and North Birmingham communities.

The EPA will continue to provide information to ensure that the community and local, state, and federal officials are informed and aware of the EPA's response activities, as well as provide opportunities for involvement.

BACKGROUND

Using the multi-media approach, the EPA is currently evaluating environmental impacts to the residential communities of Collegeville, Fairmont, Harriman Park, and North Birmingham. In addition, the EPA is conducting facility inspections and addressing compliance issues at several industrial facilities which are regulated under RCRA, the Clean Water Act (CWA), and the Clean Air Act (CAA).

The Air Division has conducted a Pilot Community Air Toxics Initiative in North Birmingham. The local government and communities in the area expressed concerns regarding safety and health impacts, sampling of residential soil for contamination, as well as ongoing and historical releases of contamination to the air, soil and water. Results of this study were presented to the community in April 2013.

SUPERFUND DIVISION UPDATE

From November 2012 until June 2013, the EPA collected soil samples from approximately 1,099 residential properties in Collegeville, Fairmont and Harriman Park. Sampling results were mailed to property owners and tenants as results were received from the laboratory. Approximately 392 properties contain concentrations of various contaminants higher than the EPA's Removal Management Levels

(RMLs). In September of 2013, the EPA mailed letters to potentially responsible parties (PRPs) notifying them of the sampling results and the planned removal action, as well as their potential liability at the site.

EPA sponsored the formation of the Northern Birmingham Community Coalition (NBCC) to plan for the future of the communities of north Birmingham (including the North Birmingham, Fairmont, Collegeville and Harriman Park neighborhoods). The Coalition includes neighborhood representatives as well as business, faith, and community leaders and government agencies.

The communities of north Birmingham face many economic, environmental and social challenges. The Coalition seeks to bring together residents, community representatives and government agencies to address issues of environmental cleanup, housing and community investment. The NBCC is working to forge a shared vision and action plan to create positive community change.

RCRA DIVISION UPDATE

The RCRA Corrective Action/Cleanup Program is focusing on the "inside-the-fence line" Walter Coke environmental areas of concern. A Cleanup Order (signed September 2012) is in place to ensure the environment and public health is protected. Recent activities include the following:

- The EPA is addressing on-site areas requiring further environmental attention at the 400-acre Walter Coke facility. In the past year, three draft Corrective Measures Studies have been submitted to EPA for evaluation. The next proposed cleanup plan will be for the former chemical plant, which includes the mineral wool pile area (due March 24, 2014).
- Under an EPA required interim measure, Walter Coke is addressing a contaminated groundwater plume by pumping the groundwater to the surface for treatment.

- The EPA is providing oversight on a vapor intrusion study in Harriman Park.

The RCRA Division will continue to keep the community engaged and informed on issues relating to on-site assessment and cleanup activities.

AIR DIVISION UPDATE

The Jefferson County Department of Health (JCDH) and the EPA sampled for toxics in the air in Collegetown, Fairmont, Harriman Park, and North Birmingham during 2011 and 2012. A risk assessment based on these data found risk from the air toxics measured in the study to be in an acceptable range. The EPA and JCDH have provided workshops and discussion opportunities for the community on topics of interest, including asthma, radon, air permitting, mold, lead, and risk assessment. The EPA and JCDH will continue to support the NBCC as it approaches issues facing the community. JCDH is the air enforcement and permitting authority in Jefferson County, and will continue to enforce all applicable regulations and engage the community when new permits are out for public notice.

WATER DIVISION UPDATE

The Water Division's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit Section overviews and comments on surface water discharge permits written by the State of Alabama's Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) and also performs enforcement inspections. In coordination with ADEM, the EPA is working to address any point source discharges that may impact water quality of the receiving water body.

The Walter Coke facility has a NPDES permit (number AL0003247) for the discharge of various treated process wastewaters, storm water runoff, treated sanitary wastewater, and treated groundwater from Arichem LLC to Five Mile Creek, which is classified as "Fish and Wildlife" at the point of discharge from the plant. This classification is intended to preserve aquatic life from adverse environmental impacts.

The NPDES permit contains technology-based limits based on the effluent guidelines as well as water-quality based limits. Parameters addressed in the permit include metals, organic substances and nutrients that are present in the discharge and that might affect fish and other aquatic life in Five Mile Creek. The current permit expires in November 2014. The facility will have to apply for a new

permit six months prior to the expiration of the permit (May 2014).

The ABC Coke division of the Drummond Company has a NPDES permit (number AL0003417) for the discharge of various treated process water and storm water runoff to Five Mile Creek.

The NPDES permit contains technology-based limits based on the effluent guidelines as well as water-quality based limits. Parameters addressed in the permit include metals, organic substances and nutrients that are present in the discharge and that might affect fish and other aquatic life in Five Mile Creek. The current permit expires in March 2014. The facility has submitted an application for its permit renewal in September 2013 in compliance with the terms of its current permit.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UPDATE

Information has been shared with the NBCC on several technical resources that have been targeted to the community and resources that the NBCC may be interested in applying for: the University of Alabama-Birmingham (UAB) Volunteer Intern Program, funding from the Office of Research Development to research the applicability of using a community-based GIS tool to collect air data in North Birmingham, GA Tech Livability and Health Study, and the Office of Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) grant. If requested by the NBCC, the Office of Environmental and Sustainability Staff will assist them in identifying opportunities for a student intern either by inviting the UAB Intern Coordinator to a meeting or scheduling a conference call with UAB and the Coalition.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To get more information on the Site and to find contact information for each division, visit our website at:

<http://epa.gov/northbhamproject/>