

CALIFORNIA DRUM SITE California, Maryland

MD-185

St. Mary's County

Hazardous waste was buried in trenches on the McLeod farm in the mid-1970s.

Maryland Bank and Trust assumed ownership of site through a loan foreclosure in December 1980.

EPA completed On-Scene Coordinator Report in 1983 on immediate removal action of drums and contaminated soils.

Maryland Waste Management Administration conducted Preliminary Assessment in 1987.

NUS Corporation completed Site Inspection in 1990.

Mr. Terry Clarke of Solomons, Maryland purchased site from Maryland Bank and Trust in March 1994.

Site Location

The California Drum Site occupied 2 acres of a 87.43-acre tract of land in California, St. Mary's County, Maryland. The site is bounded by a Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative easement to the north and agricultural property to the east, south, and west.

Site History

During the mid-1970s, Mr. Mark Wayne McLeod, son of the owner Herschel McLeod, witnessed the dumping and storage of hazardous materials on the site. Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) files indicated two trenches, both measuring 5 to 10 feet deep and 40 by 6 feet wide were used for disposal of hazardous waste. In December 1980, Maryland Bank and Trust assumed ownership of the property from a loan foreclosure by Mr. Herschel McLeod. Mr. Mark McLeod informed the St. Mary's County Health Department about his eyewitness encounter of his father's dumping activities. The site came to the attention of the Maryland Waste Management Administration (WMA) after the St. Mary's County Health Department informed WMA of Mark McLeod's testimony. In July 1983, WMA performed a State investigation of the site that included collecting solid waste samples. Laboratory analyses of the solid waste samples indicated elevated levels of organics, PCBs, and inorganics. WMA noted the close proximity of deteriorated drums containing acrylic acid might react with on-site drummed cyanide to form hydrogen

cyanide gas. The potential for release of hydrogen cyanide, the nearness of environmentally sensitive areas and the threat of direct contact with on-site contaminants influenced the decision for a emergency removal action. After WMA discovered the waste, EPA performed an emergency removal action in 1983 to dispose of on-site drums and contaminated soil. Maryland Bank and Trust finally sold the site to Mr. Terry Clarke of Solomons, Maryland in March 1994.

Environmental Investigations

The EPA On-Scene Coordinator's Report issued in 1983 documented the emergency removal action of drums and contaminated soil between October and December 1983. The removal action was deemed necessary to abate the direct contact threat associated with contaminants on site, the potential for offsite contaminant migration, the proximity of environmentally sensitive areas, and the presence of incompatible wastes. O.H. Materials, EPA's contractor, removed 237 drums and 1,180 tons of solid waste

containing cyanide, PCB, ethylbenzene, and other organic solvents. These wastes were transported to CECOS Landfill in Niagara Falls, New York.

In 1987, the Maryland Waste Management Administration (WMA) conducted a Preliminary Assessment to document current site conditions and to determine the need for additional response actions.

This was followed by a 1990 Site Inspection conducted by NUS Corporation which analyzed samples from two existing monitoring wells, three residential wells, eleven subsurface soils and three surface water and sediment locations. The Site Inspection's toxicological evaluation concluded aluminum, chromium, copper, iron, lead, and zinc approached or exceeded Maryland Water Quality Standards for the protection of aquatic life from surface water samples collected in the St. Mary's River adjacent to the site. However, the toxicological evaluation concluded no significant threat to human health exists from the organic and inorganic contaminants in the soil or the migration of these organic and inorganic contaminants in the perimeter monitoring wells and off-site residential wells.

Current Status

For the 1999 Cooperative Agreement with EPA, MDE is conducting a site survey of the California Drum Site. The Site Survey Initiative was proposed to reassess the status of those sites that were previously designated No Further Remedial Action Planned by EPA. This initiative is intended to determine if site conditions have remained stable, provide a current description of the site, and identify and address any new pathways for contamination. The initiative is also intended to determine whether the State should recommend further investigation by EPA, oversight by the State and no further investigation by EPA, or no further action be taken by EPA or the State and the State designate the site as a Formerly Investigated Site.