



Southern Maryland Wood Treating

What You Need to Know

Site Location

The former Southern Maryland Wood Treating (SMWT) site occupied 25 acres in the northwestern portion of a 94-acre parcel near Hollywood, St. Mary's County, Maryland. Residential, agricultural and wooded tracts of land bound the site. Site drainage flows into two tributaries that combine to form Old Tom's Run, which flows from the site and eventually reaches Breton Bay and the Potomac River.

Site History

A wood treating facility was operated on the 25-acre portion from 1965 to 1978. Wood was pressure treated with creosote and pentachlorophenol, and the wastewater was discharged into six on-site, unlined lagoons. The operators of the facility abandoned the site in the 1980s leaving the process equipment to deteriorate.

As a result of such disposal practices, on-site soils and groundwater beneath the lagoons became contaminated. Additionally, sediments in Old Tom's Run were also contaminated. Contaminants of concern were polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and pentachlorophenol along with low concentrations of the less toxic dioxin congeners in on-site tanks.

Environmental Investigations and Actions

Because the site was abandoned and no financially viable responsible parties were identified, the investigation and cleanup activities were conducted with Superfund cleanup funds. The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) listed the site on the National Priorities List (NPL) on June 10, 1986.

EPA completed a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) in 1988 and issued a Record of Decision (ROD) on June 29, 1988. The 1988 ROD called for the construction of a subsurface barrier wall around the former lagoon area, excavation and on-site incineration of contaminated soil and pumping and treatment of contaminated groundwater. Construction of the subsurface barrier (sheet pile wall) was completed in November of 1990. By May 1992, design of the incinerator and the groundwater treatment system were nearing completion. At that point, the community, local citizens and government representatives expressed opposition to an on-site incinerator. The design work was suspended and EPA conducted a Focused Feasibility Study (FFS) to reevaluate the remedy.

In June 1993, a second removal action was initiated. This action included the demolition of several buildings that were in danger of collapse; the removal and off-site disposal of liquid and solid waste in numerous tanks and retorts; maintaining the pile of previously excavated and stabilized sediment; the construction of an underflow dam to reduce the amount of contaminated material migrating from the on-site pond into the west tributary stream; the construction of a trench upgradient of the pond to collect contaminated groundwater; and the



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construction of a water treatment facility. The water treatment plant became fully operational in 1995.

The FFS was completed in February 1995. Based on the FFS, the EPA issued a ROD on September 8, 1995, which revised the remedy from incineration to thermal desorption. This remedy was accepted by the community. The final Remedial Action (RA) began in October 1997. Contaminated soils and sediment were treated in two low temperature continuous thermal desorption units. Contaminated condensate, shallow groundwater and storm water run-off from contaminated areas were treated in three water treatment plants.

A total of approximately 270,000 tons of contaminated soils and sediment were treated by the completion of RA activities in the spring of 2001. These remediated soils and sediments were backfilled into the original excavations.

Implementation of the post-closure groundwater monitoring program confirmed the effectiveness of soil remediation at the site. The monitoring wells were last sampled and tested in September 2002. These monitoring wells were abandoned during the summer of 2003. No operation and maintenance is required.

Current Status

The Site has been cleaned to residential standards and has unrestricted use. In April 2005, the Southern Maryland Wood Treating Superfund Site was deleted from the NPL.

Planned or Potential Future Action

No further environmental actions are known to MDE.