

TOLCHESTER NIKE (BA-30/31) (MD-220)

Kent County, Maryland

Site Location

The Tolchester NIKE site is located in Tolchester Beach, a small town on the western shore of the Delmarva Peninsula. The site is situated along Tolchester Road (MD Rt. 445), approximately 0.5 mile east of the Chesapeake Bay. The area is characterized as rural with small farms and residences which utilize private groundwater supply wells.

Site History

The Tolchester NIKE site was part of the Baltimore-Washington air defense system and was constructed, operated, and deactivated between 1954 and 1967. It was under the control of the 2AA Regional Command, Fort Meade, Maryland, and was operated by the Department of Defense (DOD) during this period. Of the total of 340 acres originally acquired for the site, the DOD utilized 235 acres for three operations: the Control Area (23 acres), the Housing Area (12 acres) and the Launch Area (22 acres), the remaining 178 acres were left undeveloped. Sometime after deactivation, ownership of the Control, Launch and undeveloped areas were transferred to Kent County. The Control Area is currently used as an agricultural center. The General Services Administration conveyed the Housing Area to a private developer (C&D Enterprises) in August 1983. This Area currently houses the Delta Heights Condominiums.

This summary is focused on the Launch Area of the Tolchester NIKE site. The entire Launch Area is surrounded by a six-foot chain link fence. The area contains a concrete missile magazine area, approximately one-acre in size, which houses six magazines. Locked and or welded shut steel doors prevent access to these magazines. Several abandoned administrative, maintenance and barracks buildings are present on the eastern half of the site. Open grassland and heavily vegetated scrubland characterize the remaining 23 acres of the Launch Area. Kent County Roads Department currently uses the site for storing and stockpiling road construction equipment. Waste streams previously generated within the Launch Area during its operation included: chlorinated organic solvents, waste fuels, fuel starters, oils and hydraulic fluids, battery acids, and waste paints and paint thinners.

Environmental Investigations

The DOD began investigating the environmental impact from previous facility operations in the early 1980s. In 1983, the DOD and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene conducted an inspection that confirmed that transformers at the site were in compliance with the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). In 1985 and 1986, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) installed a series of monitoring wells to determine if contamination of groundwater had occurred. Local residential wells were also sampled in this effort. These efforts revealed on-site volatile organic compound contamination in groundwater, but the residential well samples demonstrated that there was no impact to off-site residential wells.

In 1988, a Confirmation Study was conducted to further delineate the trichloroethylene (TCE) plume found beneath the site. These efforts included the installation of two additional monitoring wells to assess the migration of TCE onto the adjoining property. In 1997, the Remedial Investigation, which included installation of four additional monitoring wells, was completed. This was followed by a Focused Feasibility

Study, which evaluated five remedial alternatives for the groundwater contamination at the Tolchester NIKE site.

A Proposed Plan was issued by the USACE to address TCE groundwater contamination. The USACE held a public meeting in compliance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act on March 14, 2000 at the Kent County Public Library to discuss the release of the Proposed Plan to the public. The proposed remedial alternative for the Tolchester Site was Monitored Natural Attenuation (MNA). A Decision Document was produced late in 2000. In response to public concerns on the Proposed Plan, the USACE increased the frequency of future monitoring to support the MNA remedy.

A long term monitoring plan has been reviewed and accepted for the approved remedial alternative of MNA.

The six underground missile silos located at the Tolchester Nike Site were permanently closed in 2003. This closing included removal of hydraulic oil tanks, asbestos removal and backfilling with gravel/soil.

Current Status

Regularly scheduled sampling for the MNA remedy.

Facility Contacts

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