

Durham Meadows Superfund Site

U.S. EPA | HAZARDOUS WASTE PROGRAM AT EPA NEW ENGLAND



THE SUPERFUND PROGRAM protects human health and the environment by investigating and cleaning up often-abandoned hazardous waste sites and engaging communities throughout the process. Many of these sites are complex and need long-term cleanup actions. Those responsible for contamination are held liable for cleanup costs. EPA strives to return previously contaminated land and groundwater to productive use.

SITE BACKGROUND & CLEANUP PLAN

The Durham Meadows Superfund Site includes an area of groundwater contamination generally centered on Main Street. The site is centered around the Durham Manufacturing Company, an operating manufacturer, and the former location of Merriam Manufacturing Company (MMC), both located on Main Street. Both companies manufactured metal cabinets, boxes and other items. The companies' past disposal of wastewater to the soil and inadequate drum storage practices at MMC, among other things, contributed to the contamination at each facility and in the overall area of groundwater surrounding both facilities.

In 1982, CT DEP detected volatile organic compounds (VOCs - commonly found in solvents, paints and degreasers) in private drinking water wells in the Durham area. Under a CT DEP order, MMC and Durham Manufacturing Company installed carbon filters on impacted residential wells.

In 2005, EPA issued a Record of Decision outlining the cleanup remedy for the site, including soil excavation and off-site disposal at the Durham Manufacturing Company Study Area, and an extension of an alternate water supply from the City of Middletown Water Distribution System to address the overall area of site-wide groundwater contamination.

The MMC Study Area is located at 281 Main Street, where MMC was formerly located, and 275 Main Street, a neighboring residential parcel. In the Record of Decision, EPA selected a cleanup remedy for the MMC Study Area that included a combination of two alternatives: soil vapor extraction (SVE) would run for up to seven years, followed by soil excavation and off-site disposal. Subsequent investigations at the MMC Study Area indicated that the SVE portion of the remedy is unlikely to be cost-effective. In September 2011, EPA, in conjunction with CT DEEP, issued an Explanation of Significant Differences, which outlines changes to the MMC Study Area remedy. These changes include: deletion of the SVE

component of the remedy and the increase in volume and cost of soil requiring excavation and off-site disposal; identification of wetlands impacted by soil excavation and restoration of these wetlands; changes to institutional control provisions; and changes to the environmental monitoring program. The Explanation of Significant Differences is available on EPA's website and at the public information repository.

CLEANUP WORK TO CONTINUE THROUGH THIS WINTER

EPA, in conjunction with the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, is notifying the public that cleanup work at the Merriam Manufacturing Company Study Area is expected to continue through the winter. Excavation and off-site disposal of contaminated soil will occur six days a week, including Saturdays. Work will continue until such time that weather conditions, such as heavy snowfall accumulation, prevent work from continuing.

EPA further notifies the public of a proposed Consent Decree to resolve the liability of certain entities related to the MMC Study Area, including the Merriam Manufacturing Company, the Estate of Allan Adams, and Aztec

KEY CONTACTS:

ANNI LOUGHLIN

EPA New England
Project Manager
(617) 918-1273
loughlin.anni@epa.gov

KATE RENAHAN

EPA New England
Community Involvement
Coordinator
(617) 918-1491
renahan.kate@epa.gov

GENERAL INFO:

EPA NEW ENGLAND

5 Post Office Square
Suite 100
Boston, MA 02109-3912
(617) 918-1111
www.epa.gov/region1/

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Industries, L.L.C. The proposed Consent Decree was scheduled to be published on January 23, 2012, and will be available for public comment for 30 days.

RECENT WORK

Much of the necessary site work has been completed, including removal of equipment remaining from MMC's former operations, significant clearing of vegetation and trees on site, demolition of the warehouse building on site, installation of erosion control measures, and geophysical investigations to identify underground utilities. The wetlands area at the rear of the MMC parcels has been fully excavated, back-filled with organic soil, replanted and reseeded.

Soil excavation and off-site disposal did not begin until late October, due to various unexpected issues. Sampling in the warehouse building discovered asbestos-containing materials which required removal prior to demolition. Excavation on certain abutting residential properties requires the design of a replacement septic system. Facilities receiving contaminated soil, as well as state agencies regulating these facilities, required significant additional analytical data to fully characterize the soil before the facilities were approved to receive the soil.

In addition, a structural assessment of the residential house on site at 275 Main Street revealed that a one-story addition at the rear of the house was unstable and required demolition prior to soil excavation near the foundation. Because the house is located within Durham's Main Street Historic District, EPA consulted with the State Historic Preservation Office. Historical/architectural documentation of the house was required prior to any demolition work, and EPA worked with the State Historic Preservation Office and Durham's Historic District Commission to finalize this report.

Underground storage tanks were also unexpectedly discovered during the soil excavation, which requires additional sampling of tank contents and surrounding soil.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Over half of the soil excavation is complete, and work is expected to last approximately two more months if weather cooperates. Work is highly weather-dependant. Significant snowfall or other adverse weather conditions may require all site

work to stop until next spring. In the meantime, EPA's contractors are working between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m every weekday except on legal holidays, as well as on Saturdays in an effort to complete site cleanup as soon as possible.

EPA expects the work to be as noisy as a standard construction site. Various trucks and other large vehicles will be traveling in and out of the MMC Study Area throughout the cleanup. EPA expects that during the busiest days, approximately 30-60 trucks per day may be traveling in and out of the MMC Study Area (significantly less on Saturdays). A uniformed officer will be present to direct traffic on Main Street and ensure pedestrian safety any time that trucks are entering and exiting the site.

Contractors are required to ensure that contaminated soil is not carried onto Main Street by the trucks, and trucks leaving the site will be covered. Contaminated soil will be transported off site for disposal to various locations depending on the levels of contaminants in the soil. All disposal facilities have been pre-approved by EPA.

The contractor will provide dust suppression for the duration of the project, as well as air monitoring for VOCs and dust.

Excavated areas will be backfilled to grade. After excavation is complete, the site will be reseeded and other areas landscaped as necessary in the spring.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR COST RECOVERY SETTLEMENT

EPA, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Justice, has entered into a proposed Consent Decree (CD) with MMC, Aztec Industries, L.L.C., and the Estate of Allan Adams. This CD resolves the United States' enforcement efforts with respect to Settling Defendants' liability at the site under Sections 106 and 107(a) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA, the Superfund law). Under the CD, the Settling Defendants agree to make cash payments to the United States from the proceeds of insurance claims and the conveyance of real property at the MMC portion of the site. Settling Defendants are also required to provide access and

impose institutional controls on their properties, which will facilitate redevelopment of the properties and ensure protectiveness of human health and the environment. This CD is based upon the Settling Defendant's ability-to-pay, EPA's ability-to-pay policy, and is based on extensive financial analysis by EPA and DOJ.

The proposed Consent Decree was scheduled to be published on January 23, 2012, and will be available for public comment for 30 days. Interested parties can find the proposed CD on DOJ's website at: www.justice.gov/enrd/Consent_Decrees.html

OTHER ACTIVITIES

EPA and CT DEEP continue to work with the Durham Manufacturing Company on pre-design work for the remedy at its facility. The Durham Manufacturing Company has completed a fourth round of soil sampling on its property and expects to report on the results early this year.

The Town of Durham worked with state and federal agencies, as well as local officials, regarding the design of an alternate water supply to the area. The Town held a public meeting regarding the water extension studies in March 2011, and the group continues to work towards a plan to design and implement an alternate water supply.

Filtering and monitoring of affected residential drinking water wells in the area continues under State order. Durham Manufacturing Company continues to perform this work at homes in its area. CT DEEP performs this work for the homes in the Merriam Manufacturing Company area.

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS:

Connecticut: State Contact:

Gilbert Richards
Project Manager, CT DEEP
(860) 424-3523
gilbert.richards@ct.gov

Public Information Repository:

Durham Public Library
7 Maple Avenue
Durham, CT 06422-2112
(860) 349-9544