
Environmental Fact Sheet



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY REGION 10

July 2000

SOUTHEAST IDAHO UPDATE

This newsletter provides you with information about the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's activities in Southeast Idaho.

EPA, the Idaho Division of Environmental Quality, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, and local governments all share the responsibility to protect the quality of the soil, water, and air. In some cases, EPA retains the primary responsibility to enforce the federal environmental laws. This newsletter highlights EPA's environmental activities.

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Who is Astaris?

On April 17, 2000, the FMC Corporation's elemental phosphorus facility on the Fort Hall Reservation outside of Pocatello became part of a joint venture that combines the phosphorus businesses of FMC Corporation and Solutia, Inc. The resulting company, called Astaris, is headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. Although Astaris will operate the facility, FMC Corporation will retain financial responsibility for developing and constructing environmental improvements required by EPA relating to historical operations at the facility. For purposes of this newsletter, we will refer to the facility as FMC/Astaris to reflect the overlapping responsibilities of each company for design, building, and operation of various pollution control improvements.

Proposed Waste Treatment System Design Plans Available For Public Review

Proposed design plans and supporting information for a new waste treatment system at the FMC/Astaris elemental phosphorus facility on the Fort Hall Reservation are available for public review. The design plans are available in advance of the formal EPA comment period to allow more time for interested citizens to review the large amount of technical information. Please be aware that due to the complexity of the design, some changes are likely to be made as FMC/Astaris works with EPA to help ensure the plans meet the requirements of the RCRA Consent Decree. You may contact EPA at the number on the back of this newsletter to determine when the most recent updates have been provided by FMC/Astaris.

Copies of the proposed waste treatment system design and operating plans are available for your review at the following Information Repository locations:

Idaho State University Library
Government Documents Department
850 South 9th Avenue (9th and Terry)
Pocatello, Idaho 83209
(208) 236-2940

Shoshone-Bannock Library
Pima and Bannock (PO Box 306)
Fort Hall, Idaho 83203
(208) 238-3700 or contact Susan Hanson,
Sho-Ban RCRA Program, at (208) 478-3903

The information has been organized into the following 9 sections:

- Section 1 - Purpose and Scope
- Section 2 - General Information
- Section 3 - Process Engineering
- Section 4 - Performance
- Section 5 - RCRA Process Systems
- Section 6 - Non-RCRA Process Systems
- Section 7 - Direct Inhalation Risk Assessment
- Section 8 - RCRA Interim Status Plans
- Section 9 - Appendices

Background

In July 1999, FMC entered into a legally enforceable Court Order known as a *Consent Decree* with EPA and the Department of Justice which, among other things, required FMC to design and build a waste treatment system for its wastes regulated under the federal hazardous waste management law known as the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). Under RCRA, certain wastes must meet specific requirements before they can be placed in a landfill or surface impoundment. These requirements are known as *Land Disposal Restrictions* (LDR). As such, the Consent Decree refers to the new waste treatment system as the *LDR Treatment System*.

The Consent Decree requires both FMC and EPA to meet a strict schedule that ensures a new treatment system will be in place no later than May 26, 2002. On March 31, 2000, in accordance with the Consent Decree, FMC

submitted a preliminary design plan to EPA for the LDR Treatment System. EPA began its review early in the process when the design was about 20% complete to help ensure the proposed system meets the requirements of the Consent Decree and RCRA as it is being designed. On June 19, EPA provided extensive comments to FMC on the design and operating plan. In response to EPA's comments, FMC expects to complete revisions to the documents in early August. All information and updates are available to the public at the locations listed above.

Beginning on August 21, 2000, when the design will be 50% complete or more, EPA will provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the proposed design and operating plans. However, because of the size and complexity of the document, reviewers should consider beginning their review before the start of the comment period. EPA may not be able to allow extensions of the public comment period due to the Consent Decree requirement that EPA must approve or disapprove of the proposed system by December 1, 2000. Public comments will be considered in EPA's final decision, and Astaris cannot begin operations of the treatment system without EPA approval.

How will the LDR Treatment System Treat the Waste?

The Consent Decree requires that the LDR Treatment System treat the waste so that, prior to the time it is placed in a landfill or surface impoundment, the resulting waste product:

- 1) does not emit more than 0.3 parts per million (ppm) of phosphine or 10.0 ppm of hydrogen cyanide; and
- 2) is non-ignitable (as confirmed by approved EPA test methods); and
- 3) will be stabilized in a permanent, non-reversible form that will not release heavy metals in excess of Land Disposal Restrictions.

To meet these requirements, the proposed LDR Treatment System will use a clarifying process to remove water from solids generated at the facility. The process water will be recycled back into the plant or treated before discharge. The remaining solid slurry will be treated in a high temperature, high pressure reactor system where lime is added to convert phosphorus to phosphine gas, and break down hydrogen cyanide in the waste. Once the waste meets the LDR criteria and is permanently and irreversibly stabilized, it will be transported to the land disposal site. FMC has proposed disposing of the treated waste off-site at its silica mine in Bannock County, and has submitted an application for a landfill permit to Bannock County.

What Happens to the Gases Generated During the Treatment Process?

As a byproduct of treating the wastes, the LDR Treatment System will produce phosphine, hydrogen cyanide, and other gases called *off-gases*. To treat these gases, an Off-Gas Treatment System will be installed that uses a thermal oxidizer, or incineration unit, followed by a particulate scrubber and polishing filter to destroy and remove at least 99.99% of phosphine, hydrogen cyanide, and other gases in accordance with applicable standards.

FMC/Astaris to Hold Public Workshops on Proposed Design Plan

FMC/Astaris will hold public workshops in Pocatello and Fort Hall in mid-August to answer questions about their proposal for the LDR Treatment System. You are encouraged to attend these sessions to hear more about the proposed waste treatment system and to discuss your questions directly with the company. For more information, contact Dave Buttleman, Astaris, at (208) 236-8635.

Will There Be a Public Comment Opportunity?

Yes. A formal 45-day public comment period will begin August 21, 2000 during which EPA will be soliciting your comments about the proposed waste treatment system. In addition, EPA is considering holding its own open houses in Pocatello and Fort Hall in September to provide you with an opportunity to discuss the proposal with EPA staff and get answers to your questions. Our decision to hold these sessions will be based on the level of interest, so please let us know if you are interested in attending separate EPA open houses by contacting us at the number listed on the back of this newsletter before August 25, 2000.

The Consent Decree also requires FMC/Astaris to obtain a RCRA "Part B" permit for the LDR Treatment System. A permit application must be submitted to EPA before March 31, 2001. At that time, the public will be given an opportunity to comment on design and operating requirements in the draft permit.

Note: If EPA approves of design and operating plans by December 1, 2000, FMC will be allowed to operate the system under what is known as *interim status*. FMC has already satisfied the RCRA criteria for interim status that allows facilities to build and operate waste treatment facilities until a final permit decision is made.

Next Steps...

Schedule of Key Milestones

- . Design and operating plans now available for review at Information Repositories.
- . FMC-sponsored public workshops to be held in Pocatello and Fort Hall in August 2000.
- . EPA 45-day public comment period to begin August 21, 2000.
- . EPA may hold public open house sessions

in Pocatello and Fort Hall during the 45-day comment period if there is sufficient level of public interest.

- . EPA must approve or disapprove the design and operating plans by 12/1/2000.
- . If approved, FMC/Astaris will be allowed to operate waste treatment system under interim status rules.
- . FMC/Astaris RCRA "Part B" Permit Application due to EPA on March 31, 2001.

EPA to Revisit Cleanup Plan for Eastern Michaud Flats

EPA recently announced plans to revisit specific technical areas of the cleanup plan for contaminated soil and groundwater at the Eastern Michaud Flats Superfund Site. The decision was made after careful consideration of several factors, including comments received during the public comment period held last summer on the proposed Superfund Consent Decree.

EPA will be reevaluating several specific areas of the cleanup plan, including four important technical areas as follows: (1) the design of the protective caps that will be constructed over the Superfund pond sites; (2) the ground water monitoring program for the site; (3) the fluoride monitoring program for the site; and (4) the institutional controls for off-plant areas.

EPA will meet with the State of Idaho and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes over the next several months to establish a schedule for review of all existing data on these areas. If EPA decides to amend the 1998 Record of Decision, the public would be given an opportunity to comment on the proposed changes. Following EPA's announcement to reevaluate portions of the cleanup plan, the FMC Corporation and J.R. Simplot Company filed a joint motion in federal court to require EPA to enter the existing Consent Decree and cleanup plan as is. The status of this motion is pending.

Updates...

EPA Set to Issue Final Air Rule

EPA has been considering comments received during the public comment period that ended March 13, 2000, on the supplemental proposal to create air pollution emissions limits for the FMC/Astaris elemental phosphorus facility. This air pollution rule, called a Federal Implementation Plan (FIP), will require FMC/Astaris to install, operate, and maintain approximately \$65 million in air pollution control technology and meet emission limits that will significantly reduce air pollution from the facility. EPA expects to sign the rule by July 31, 2000, with publication in the Federal Register in August 2000.

Status of Supplemental Environmental Projects at FMC/Astaris

As part of the RCRA Consent Decree, FMC committed to completing thirteen projects, known as Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPs), designed to reduce air pollution from the facility. The SEPs were developed to accelerate compliance with the new air pollution limits EPA has been developing. FMC/Astaris is on schedule to complete the SEPs in accordance with the timelines established in the RCRA Consent Decree. Projects that have already been completed include improvements to collect fumes from the phosphorus dock loading area, controls to minimize off-gases to the furnace flares, and a process for handling molten slag from furnaces #2 and #3.

Wastewater Discharge Permit for Astaris

EPA is currently reviewing comments received during the public comment period that closed April 3, 2000, for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for Astaris. All comments received during the comment period will be responded to in writing by EPA and made available to the public along with the final permit decision to be issued later this year.

EDB Release at Fort Hall Water and Sewer District

On June 26, 2000, the Fort Hall Water and Sewer District reported that ethylene dibromide (EDB) had passed through its drinking water filter system at levels that exceeded health protection standards in follow up sampling. EPA directed the District to immediately issue a public notice to users of the drinking water system, and bottled water was provided until a new carbon filter medium was installed and tested to ensure it was working properly. This type of release has occurred several times since 1993 when EDB contamination was first discovered in the District's drinking water source. EPA believes the contamination is the result of legal farming applications of the pesticide that occurred in the area up until 1986 when the use of EDB was banned from farming practices. Currently, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes are seeking to have the Fort Hall Water and Sewer District dissolved by the County chartering authority. A vote has been scheduled for August 1, 2000. The Tribes have developed new water sources outside of the contaminated area and are in the process of developing a new, reservation-wide, water district.

EPA WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU!

EPA strives to provide you with useful environmental information about our activities in your area. Please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed survey and let us know how we can improve this newsletter to suit your needs.

Questions? For information regarding any of the information contained in this update, contact:

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Other Pocatello/Fort Hall Environmental Agency Contacts:

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Pocatello Regional Office
224 South Arthur
Pocatello, Idaho 83204
(208) 236-6160

Shoshone-Bannock Tribes
Land Use Commission
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Fort Hall, Idaho 83203
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United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

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Seattle, Washington 98101-1128

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