



Region 7

Iowa
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Fact Sheet

January 2005

Five-Year Review To Begin Peoples Natural Gas Superfund Site, Dubuque, Iowa

Introduction

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) conducts regular five-year reviews on Superfund sites where cleanups have been conducted. These reviews are required by the Superfund law [42 U.S.C. § 9621(c)]. EPA Region 7 has started the second five-year review of the Peoples Natural Gas site in Dubuque, Dubuque County, Iowa.

Site Background

The site is the location of a former coal gasification plant which manufactured gas from approximately the 1930s to 1954. Production ceased when natural gas was introduced to the community. During the operation of the plant, waste products, such as coal tar were generated and disposed at the site. The coal tar contained several hazardous substances that contaminated the soil and groundwater at the site. Volatile organic compounds, such as benzene, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) were present in the soil and groundwater at levels that could harm people if they were to come into contact with them.

The site occupies approximately five acres and is located between East 11th Street and Kerper Boulevard, approximately one-fourth mile east of downtown Dubuque in an industrial area near the Mississippi River. The city of Dubuque owns the eastern portion of the site and operates a public works garage on the property. Highway 61 was

constructed on the western portion of the site after contaminated soil was removed and treated off site.

Following the completion of a remedial investigation and feasibility study, and an opportunity for public comment on the proposed remedy for the site, the EPA presented the selected remedy in a Record of Decision (ROD). The selected remedy included the following actions:

- excavation and treatment of contaminated soil and coal tar;
- extraction and treatment of contaminated groundwater in the silty sand and alluvial aquifers; and
- in-situ bioremediation of contaminated soil and groundwater;

During the design of the groundwater extraction and treatment system, it was determined that extracting water from the deeper of the two aquifers (the alluvial aquifer) would result in contamination being pulled down from the more heavily contaminated silty sand aquifer. The ROD was modified, through an Explanation of Significant Differences, to provide for monitoring, rather than extraction, of groundwater from the alluvial aquifer.

In December 1992, a Consent Decree was finalized with Midwest Gas (currently known as MidAmerican Energy Company), Enron Corporation, the city of Dubuque, and the Iowa Department of Transportation. They agreed to design and perform the site cleanup.

MidAmerican Energy has conducted the work at the site. Excavation and treatment of contaminated soil and coal tar was completed in 1998. Extraction and treatment of groundwater began in 1996. The system was shut down in 2003 due to problems with the operation of the system. Studies are underway to determine the best approach for dealing with the contaminated groundwater. The in-situ bioremediation system operated from October 2000 through October 2002. Periodic monitoring of groundwater in the silty sand and alluvial aquifers continues.

Five-Year Review

The first five-year review was conducted in 2000. The site was found to be protective of human health and the environment.

During this five-year review, the EPA will inspect the site and study site information to determine whether the remedy continues to be protective. We encourage the community to tell us about site conditions or any concerns.

At the end of the review, a final report will be prepared and will be available in the site information repositories. The goal is to complete the review and report by March 2005.

Additional Information

Detailed site information is available at the following locations:

EPA Records Center
901 N. 5th Street
Kansas City, Kansas

Carnegie-Stout Public Library
11th and Bluff
Dubuque, Iowa

If you have questions or need more information on the Peoples Natural Gas Superfund site or the five-year review process, please contact:

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