

**Site Fact Sheet**  
**Little Elk Creek**  
**Area-Wide One Cleanup Program Pilot Project**  
**Crouse Brothers Excavating**  
415 West Pulaski Highway  
Elkton, MD 21921

## Property Description

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The Crouse Brothers Excavating site is located at 415 West Pulaski Highway in Elkton, Cecil County, Maryland. The site is 1,000 feet west of the U.S. Route 40 intersection with Maryland Route 279. An abandoned railroad track lies north of the site and U.S. Route 40 is to the south.

*An underutilized industrial park located along the Little Elk Creek in Cecil County, Maryland has been selected as an Area-Wide Pilot Project under U.S. EPA's One Cleanup Program and Land Revitalization initiatives. The goals of the Little Elk Creek Pilot Project is to address a widespread groundwater contamination problem stemming from multiple industrial sources within a geographic area and support development and reuse needs of the surrounding community.*

The Crouse site is approximately 11 acres and contained two office buildings 80 feet from U.S. Route 40, with a parking area immediately behind them. A privately owned rubble landfill extended approximately 2,000 feet towards the north from behind the buildings. Marsh lands and ponds occupy the area north of the buildings and east of the landfill. The general area is residential, commercial and light industrial. The Morton Thiokol property surrounded the site and nearby residences and businesses.

## Property History

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The Crouse site was acquired as two separate parcels. The Crouse family purchased the southern parcel in 1972 from John and Ruth Prial. The buildings along U.S. Route 40 were used for several decades as a maintenance shop for excavation vehicles and for repair and maintenance of heating/ventilation/air conditioning units. In October 1981, R. and H. Crouse purchased the northern parcel from Gilpin Manor Development Corporation. It is not known how Gilpin Manor used the property.

## Environmental Investigations

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The rubble dump at the Crouse site was discovered in early to mid 1986 during an investigation of residential wells related to groundwater contamination originating on the adjacent Morton Thiokol, Inc. site. [An aerial photograph taken in February 1970 showed the dump area to be wooded land, so dumping began some time after 1970.] Site inspections and an aerial survey by

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) in 1986 found numerous regulated wastes in the Crouse landfill. DHMH issued a Site Complaint (SC\_0\_86\_097) to cease and desist all landfilling other than tree stumps, brush, concrete, and clean fill dirt since the site was unpermitted. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) made three additional site inspections between July and September 1987. In November 1987, Crouse Brothers submitted the information requested by DHMH. By December 1987, the unacceptable materials found in the landfill were removed.

The investigation of groundwater contamination at Morton Thiokol, Inc. in 1988 identified a trichloroethene (TCE) plume along U.S. Route 40. The domestic wells down gradient of the Crouse landfill and monitoring wells at the toe of the landfill, installed in 1989 by MDE's Hazardous and Solid Waste Management Administration (HSWMA), were found to have the highest concentrations of TCE.

HSWMA completed a Preliminary Assessment (PA) of the Crouse site in March 1989 and a Screening Site Inspection report in September 1990. During field activities for the Site Inspection, HSWMA sampled six monitoring wells and three residential wells for organic and inorganic pollutants. The sampling results demonstrated that groundwater in the vicinity of the Crouse landfill was contaminated with compounds in concentrations that exceeded the established or recommended Maximum Contaminant Level. The most notable contaminant was TCE. The four wells installed by HSWMA demonstrated that the lateral extent of the contaminant plume was larger than previously believed, but a sole source responsible for the contamination could not be established.

In May 1988, MDE notified Morton Thiokol, Inc., Crouse Brothers Excavation, and the U.S. Navy of its intent to design and install a water line to extend community water to approximately 20 residences with contaminated water-supply wells. In February 1990, Morton Thiokol, Inc. and Crouse Brothers signed a Consent Order agreeing to install the water line. Installation began in March 1990 and was completed in August 1990. Except for several wells retained by MDE for groundwater-monitoring purposes, all residential wells were abandoned once the houses were hooked up to the water line.

In January 1992, EPA gave the site a designation of No Further Remedial Action Planned (NFRAP). Although there is groundwater contamination present at the site, the plume is currently being investigated as part of the ATK site. This site is also on the State Master List that identifies potential hazardous waste sites in Maryland. The designation of NFRAP by EPA does not mean that MDE has reached the same conclusion concerning further investigation at the site.

## **Contaminants**

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VOCs, most notably trichloroethene (TCE), have been detected in the groundwater.

## Cleanup and Next Steps

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## Lead Agency and Contacts

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There are currently no plans to conduct further investigation at this property.

### **EPA Contact**

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