Chem-Fab

Doylestown, Pennsylvania
EPA Facility ID: PAD002323848
Basin: Crosswicks-Neshaminy
HUC: 02040201

The Chem-Fab site is a former electroplating and metal processing facility in Doylestown, Bucks County, Pennsylvania. The facility is just east of the headwaters of Cooks Run. The facility operated from 1965 to 1994. Templates for circuit-boards were manufactured at the site. The manufacturing process included electroplating and metal etching. Wastes generated during operations included ferric chloride, mineral spirits, chromic acid rinse water and sludge, chromic acid, sulfuric acid, sodium bisulfate, sodium hydroxide, and lime. Trichloroethene vapor was also used to degrease materials. Some of the possible sources of contamination at the site include a dike system, which surrounded numerous above ground storage tanks, an underground catch basin, and an underground storage tank all of which stored chromic acid rinse waste water. While the site was active, drums containing acid products were improperly stored throughout the site and numerous spills and overflows occurred at the facility. Untreated contaminated waste was released into the Doylestown sewer system.

During investigations conducted at the site, heavy metals including trivalent chromium and hexavalent chromium and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) including TCE and PCE were detected at concentrations greater than screening levels in soil and groundwater samples taken from the site. Additionally, TCE was detected in groundwater samples taken from drinking water wells in the vicinity of the site.

Groundwater underlying the site is encountered approximately 1.1 m (3.5 ft) below ground surface and flows to the west towards Cooks Run. Surface water runoff from the southern portion of the property flowed into a drainage ditch which emptied to Cooks Run. Several spills and overflows occurred at the site which resulted in contaminated water being released to Cooks Run, via the drainage ditch.

The site is adjacent to Cooks Run, a tributary of Neshaminy Creek. Neshaminy Creek, which is a tributary to the Delaware River, is tidally influenced to the base of the Hulmeville Dam which is approximately 40 km (25 mi) downstream of the town of Doylestown. The portion of the creek below the dam provides estuarine habitat to numerous anadromous fish species which enter the area from the Delaware River. American shad, alewife, river herring, and striped bass have been collected by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) at the base of the dam. American eel are also found at the base of the dam (M. Kaufmann, personal communication November, 14, 2007).

The Hulmeville Dam blocks all anadromous fish passage to the rest of Neshaminy Creek and its tributaries. The dam is owned by a water company that does not indicate that the dam will be retrofitted to provide fish passage in the future. American eel have been collected by the PFBC throughout Neshaminy Creek and its branches. American eel have also been collected in Cooks Run. The PFBC has not conducted fish survey studies in all of

the Neshaminy Creek tributaries, but there is no reason that American eel would not be found in them (M. Kaufmann, personal communication November, 14, 2007).

This screening-level site review is based on resource and contaminant information available in the USEPA site narrative and the hazard ranking score documentation record at the time the site was proposed for placement on the USEPA National Priorities List. It does not represent a review of all the information available for the site. At this time, NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration, Assessment and Restoration Division, Northeast Branch is investigating this site. Should new information become available to this office that indicates there is potential harm to NOAA Trust resources associated with this site, this office will activate its role as Trustee.

September 2007