United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Additional Trenches, Treatment Gate Part of Cleanup Changes

Envirochem Site
Boone County, Indiana June 2006

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency along with state partner Indiana Department of Environmental Management are proposing another change to the cleanup plan for the Envirochem site near Zionsville. The original cleanup plan for contaminated soil and underground water supplies (called ground water) was approved in 1987 and modified in 1991 and again in 1997. The latest changes include installing additional soil vapor extraction trenches, adding a barrier wall to further contain the underground water and building a system to route any remaining polluted ground water through a treatment gate.

The changes are detailed in an EPA document called explanation of significant differences. To view the complete ESD and other site-related information, please visit one of the information repositories noted in the sidebar.

The 1997 cleanup plan provided for installing and operating a soil vapor extraction system to clean soil contaminated by volatile organic compounds before the chemicals could contaminate ground water and surface water. VOCs are dangerous chemicals that evaporate easily. The system operated from November 1998 until early 2001 when officials decided it was not working well enough. Because of the failure of the SVE system, it is possible for contaminated ground water to pollute a nearby unnamed ditch that feeds into Finley Creek. So far, however, monitoring results from the ditch have not found much contamination.

The proposed cleanup plan changes include the installation of additional soil vapor extraction trenches. The new trenches will be connected to the existing SVE system. This strategy should capture and treat the most mobile contaminants. The trench system will be reinforced with a barrier wall, and any polluted underground water that makes it to the barrier wall when the SVE system is not running will be routed through a special gate that will treat remaining contamination. The barrier wall and permeable gate will collect and treat slower-moving pollutants. EPA expects the additional cleanup work will effectively protect surface water in the unnamed ditch and Finley Creek. Officials said these changes do not increase the cost of the cleanup.

Past cleanup plans

In 1987 EPA selected installation of a permanent cap over the site and a system to pump and treat contaminated ground water as the preferred cleanup strategy. In 1991 EPA amended the selected plan to include soil vapor extraction rather than ground-water collection and treatment, and the SVE system was approved by EPA in 1997. This 1997 cleanup plan was constructed in 1998 by the parties responsible for the pollution under a court order negotiated with EPA and IDEM. The responsible parties predicted the SVE system would need to operate for about two years before cleanup standards were met, but the 1997 SVE system was never able to meet those standards. In 2003 EPA completed a review of the cleanup at the site and concluded additional work was needed to collect and treat VOC-contaminated ground water by use of a collection trench at the site perimeter.

We welcome your comments

EPA will consider comments received during the public comment period from June 28 to July 27 before choosing a final cleanup plan. To make a comment, please e-mail Joe Munoz or Matthew Ohl, or use the enclosed comment form. Comments must be postmarked prior to midnight July 27, 2006.

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For information about the Envirochem site you may also contact:
Bruce Hamilton
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(317) 234-3809
bhamilto@idem.in.gov

Site-related documents may be reviewed at:

EPA Region 5 Records Center
77 W. Jackson Blvd., 7th Floor
Chicago
weekdays 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.
(312) 886-0900

Zionsville Town Hall
1100 W. Oak St.

Hussey-Mayfield Memorial Public Library
250 N. Fifth St.
Zionsville

Instead of the collection trenches, the responsible parties proposed the additional soil vapor extraction trenches, barrier wall and treatment gate. Those modifications to EPA's proposal triggered the need for the official explanation of significant differences document.

Health risks

The Envirochem site is contaminated with VOCs, heavy metals, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), phenols, and phthalates. The mobile contaminants such as VOCs are currently found in the ground water and soil and if nothing is done are moving toward the unnamed ditch and Finley Creek that lead to potential drinking water supplies. People could be exposed to contaminants by coming into direct contact with or accidentally swallowing contaminated ground water or soil.

Site history

Envirochem is a 6.5 acre EPA Superfund site located on the east side of Highway 421 west of the Northside Sanitary Landfill and about five miles north of Zionsville in Boone County. Envirochem Corp. owned and operated a waste storage and recycling business there from 1977 until 1982, when it was closed under a court order obtained by the state. While in operation, waste such as resins, paint sludge, waste oils and flammable solvents were received in drums and tanks and stored on the site. Poor operations and maintenance practices along with several chemical spills led IDEM and EPA to investigate the site. More than 20,000 drums and 400,000 gallons of waste remained on the location when Envirochem Corp. went into bankruptcy in 1982.

EPA has been working on and studying the site since 1983 when it removed storage tanks, treated waste and installed a fence around the property. But the site is so polluted that it remained a threat. The location was added to the National Priorities List in 1983. The NPL is a roster of the nation's most polluted areas eligible for cleanup under EPA's Superfund program.

Comment Sheet

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is interested in your comments on the proposed changes to the Envirochem cleanup plan. EPA will consider public comments before finalizing the changes. Please use the space below to write your comments, then fold and mail this form. Comments must be postmarked by the last day of the comment period, July 27. If you have any questions, please contact Joe Munoz at (312) 886-7935 or through EPA's toll-free number at (800) 621-8431. Those with Internet access may submit their comments to EPA via e-mail: munoz.joe@epa.gov or http://epa.gov/region5/publiccomment.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____

Fold on Dashed Lines, Tape, Stamp, and Mail

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____

Place Stamp Here

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