
Sampling Activities Set to Resume in Spring

South Minneapolis Neighborhood Soil Contamination Site
Minneapolis, Minnesota April 2006

Answering your questions

Federal and state representatives will be available to meet with residents on a one-to-one basis or in small groups during the sampling activities. Several sessions will be scheduled throughout the neighborhood in the near future. A postcard and newspaper ads will announce the dates and locations of these sessions when the information is confirmed.

About the site

The CMC Heartland Lite Yard site is at the northwest intersection of Hiawatha Avenue and 28th Street in Minneapolis, Minn. The off-site residential properties are referred to as the South Minneapolis Neighborhood Soil Contamination site, located within and bordering the area known as the Phillips Neighborhood.

From 1938 to 1963 a pesticide containing arsenic was produced at the Heartland site. Parties legally responsible for the pollution are cleaning up the site under Minnesota Department of Agriculture supervision. After discovering arsenic contamination had spread to residential yards in the area, MDA asked for EPA's help.



U. S. Environmental Protection Agency and its contractors have been working over the winter planning the next phase of soil sampling and removal activities. Sampling activities should resume May 15. EPA is planning on sampling the yards of more than 3,000 properties. The plan is to have five teams working through the neighborhood. During this time, staff from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture will be knocking on doors and giving residents notification and information about what the sampling team will be doing. The team will then take soil samples from the yards. Residents do not need to be home when sampling occurs, and there is no cost to residents for this soil sampling.

Monday through Friday the teams plan on working from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. If teams work on Saturdays and Sundays, they will begin at 10 a.m. and work until 5 p.m. It is anticipated the sampling process should take about 40 days, weather permitting.

Inside is a map of the blocks EPA is planning on sampling during this phase. EPA is continuing to finalize the sampling plans. Residents will be informed if significant changes to the plan take place.

Removal activities will continue

As reported in the last update, sampling results identified 61 properties with arsenic contamination in the soil above 95 parts per million. EPA has been removing soil contaminated above that level. Thirty of these properties were cleaned up in 2004 and spring 2005 and 27 were cleaned up last fall. The remaining four properties will be cleaned up this spring.

Community outreach

EPA continues to keep the community informed and aware of what is happening in the South Minneapolis neighborhood regarding the arsenic contamination cleanup. A public meeting was held last November and another is planned for May. During the sampling activities, EPA employees will hold information sessions and be available to answer questions residents might have.

EPA will also continue to keep you informed through additional updates like this one. A language preference sheet was included in the last mailing and is again in this one. Please complete this form and return it to Cheryl Allen at the address listed on the last page.

Frequently asked questions

EPA continues to hear many of the same questions from residents so we will address some of them here.

Are you first going to sample the properties where children live?

We are still developing the sampling plans for the next phase of work at the site. During the previous sampling phase, all samples taken at the daycare locations were below the action level. As part of that process we are taking into consideration the request that homes with children be sampled first. If sampling were to take several seasons to complete then we would consider setting sampling priorities as we've already done with the daycares in the area. However, based on preliminary projections we may be able to complete the surface soil sampling in every yard in the area of concern within one to two months, making a priority list unnecessary. If sampling takes longer than expected, we may consider setting sampling priorities. Moving sampling crews around an area to test only homes with children rather than sampling lots in order may slow down the whole effort. Also, children may move during the course of the sampling program or they may come into contact with soil at other homes, reducing any benefits gained from a priority list. We will carefully weigh these issues before making any final decision on sampling order.

You talked about the levels of arsenic contamination. What do the numbers mean and who decides what is safe?

At Superfund sites such as the South Minneapolis neighborhood, EPA is responsible for developing site specific cleanup standards. The Agency considers the available scientific information on a contaminant and the site specific conditions to determine what a "safe" level is. As part of this analysis the Agency consults with other state and federal agencies. All soil in the heavily industrialized United States contains chemicals of varying amounts. At this site, natural arsenic levels in the soil are expected to be in the range of 10 to 17 parts per million. EPA has had discussions with the Minnesota Department of Health, MDA, and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

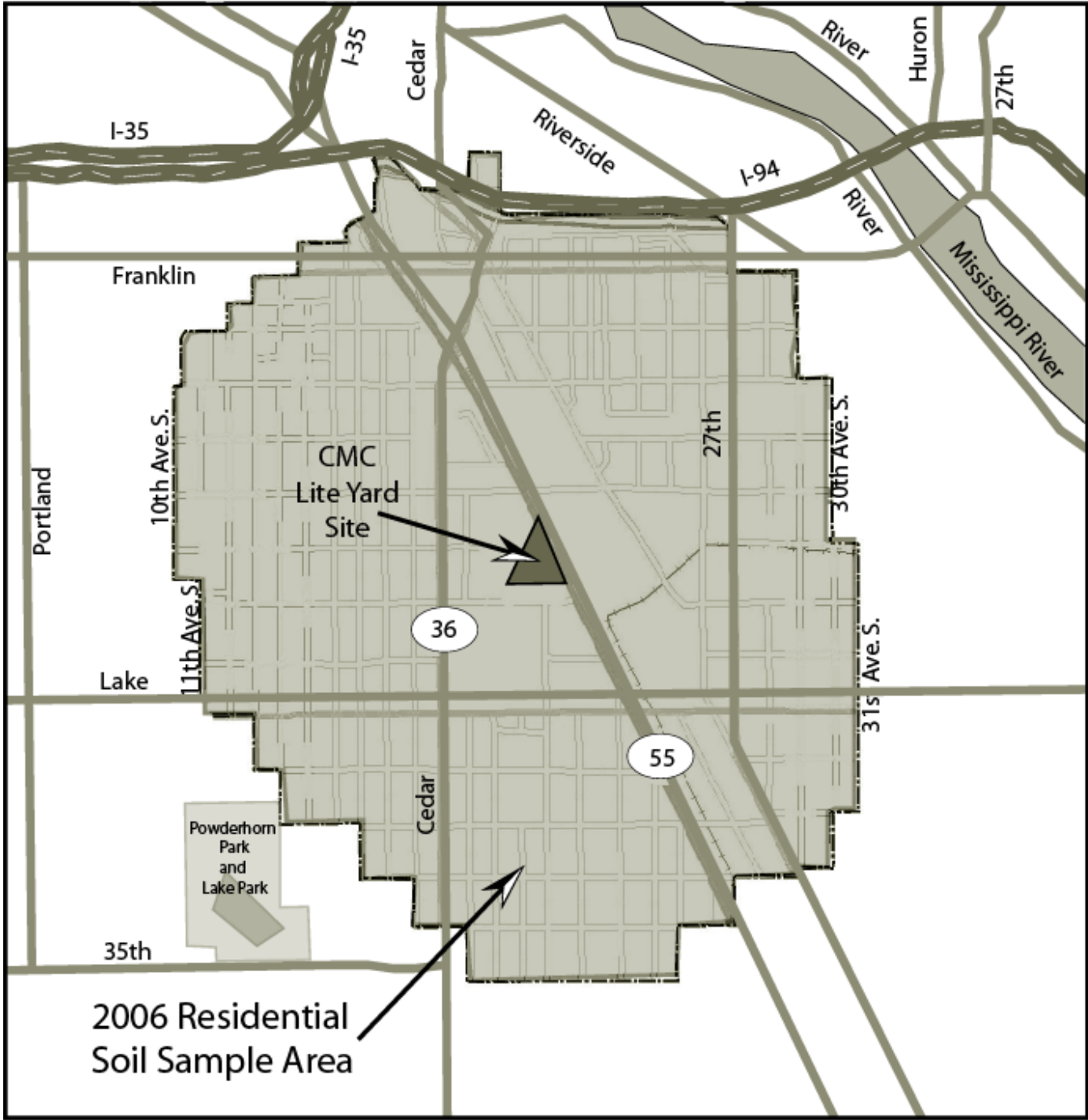
about the arsenic contamination. Based on these discussions, other available information about arsenic contamination and cleanups performed at other sites, EPA has determined that exposure to arsenic concentrations above 100 parts per million may pose an immediate health risk to people. EPA lowered that threshold even more to 95 parts per million to further ensure the standard protects people. In yards that showed arsenic levels above 95 parts per million, EPA has removed or will be removing the contaminated soil. The next phase of testing and study at this site is called the remedial investigation. The Agency will be gathering information on the long-term health risks from exposure to arsenic. That information will be published in a risk assessment report and used to develop a final arsenic cleanup standard for the site.

Why am I not getting information?

EPA continually updates the mailing list to get the information out to residents. The original mailing list concentrated on properties very close to the CMC Heartland Lite Yard site. Based on comments from residents, EPA expanded its mailing list to a one-mile radius from the site, which includes more than 10,000 properties. If you are not on the mailing list, contact Cheryl Allen.

Interested people can also learn about the situation by reading official documents that can be reviewed at the repositories listed on the back page or visit the Web site at: www.epa.gov/region5/sites/cmcheartland/.

Another option available to people seeking more information would be to form a Community Advisory Group. A CAG provides a setting in which community members can get up-to-date information about the status of cleanup activities as well as discuss their views and concerns about the cleanup progress with EPA, state regulatory agencies and other involved parties. A CAG is also a public forum in which all affected and interested can have a voice and actively participate in the process. If a group of residents is interested in forming a CAG, contact Cheryl Allen for more information. You can also visit EPA's CAG Web site at: www.epa.gov/superfund/tools/cag/index.htm.



For more information

For general and community-related information about the site, contact Cheryl Allen, EPA community involvement coordinator. For technical information about sampling and cleanup work, contact Tim Prendiville, EPA remedial project manager.

Cheryl Allen

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EPA Region 5
77 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604
toll-free (800) 621-8431, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays

Additional site-specific documents as well as general information about the EPA Superfund program are available at these information repositories:

Green Institute
2801 21st Ave. S., Suite 100
Minneapolis

Minneapolis Public Library
East Lake Branch
2727 E. Lake St.
Minneapolis

Sustainable Resources Association
1916 Second Ave. S.
Minneapolis

Web: www.epa.gov/region5/sites/cmcheartland/



Region 5
Office of Public Affairs (P-19J)
77 W. Jackson Blvd.
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RETURN ADDRESS REQUESTED

**SOUTH MINNEAPOLIS NEIGHBORHOOD SITE:
Sampling Activities Begin Again in Spring**