

Site Fact Sheet
Little Elk Creek
Area-Wide One Cleanup Program Pilot Project
Route 7 Dump Site
Route 7 - 1.9 m. west of Route 40
Elkton, MD 21921

Property Description

The Route 7 Dump site is located along Maryland Route 7 in Cecil County, Maryland, approximately 2.4 miles west of Elkton and 2.5 miles east of the town of North East. The site size is about 2 acres. The site is located at the confluence of Mill Creek and one of its unnamed tributaries to the south and east, respectively.

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 area surrounding the site consists of rural wooded lots. A number of quarrying operations and three Class C fireworks companies were once located within a 3-mile radius of the site.

Property History

In the early 1900s, the site was utilized as a clay quarry that supplied clay to a brick manufacturer. During the World War II period, by-products of munitions production, as well as scrap rubber from the Bayshore Rubber Plant, were disposed of on site.

In 1956, the New Jersey Fireworks Company purchased the property for use as a disposal area for class C fireworks. The dump site was not permitted. The disposal area consisted of a burn pad and a water-filled pit that was used to dispose of the ash material. By 1980, wastes were burned at the site, and the ash was transported to the county landfill.

Between 1983 and 1986, the State Highway Administration used the on-site pond to dispose of fill dirt from road construction. Most of the fill dirt consisted of clays.

Environmental Investigations

The State of Maryland investigated the site in 1980, at which time sample results indicated contamination of an on-site ponded area, but no evidence of off-site contamination.

In December 1983, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) conducted a Site Inspection that included collecting samples from on-site surface waters and an adjacent stream. Lead detected in upstream and downstream aqueous samples was determined to be unrelated to the site. Only butyl benzyl phthalate (15 micrograms per liter, ug/l) was detected in aqueous samples, and it was determined to pose no evident hazard. A high concentration of barium (19,300 ug/l) was detected in the on-site pond aqueous sample, but no barium was detected off site.

In September 1992, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) transmitted a Level I Site Investigation Prioritization (SIP) to EPA, and reported that New Jersey Fireworks Company still owned the site, and that the State Highway Administration disposed of fill dirt from road construction in the on-site pond from 1983 to 1986. MDE recommended considering the site for No Further Remedial Action Planned (NFRAP) under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA).

Contaminants

This site may be a potential source of perchlorate, which has been found in groundwater in the area. Barium has been detected in onsite surface water.

Cleanup and Next Steps

In May 2002, MDE became involved with a developing perchlorate problem in the groundwater impacting the Elkton well field. Perchlorates are used in the manufacture of fireworks. Since this dump was used for the disposal of wastes from New Jersey Fireworks, MDE determined that both the Route 7 Dump and the New Jersey Fireworks facility, which is adjacent to the dump, should be reassessed to determine if either may be the possible source of groundwater contamination in the Elkton well field. In August 2004, MDE performed an Expanded Site Investigation (ESI) at both areas under the PA/SI Cooperative Agreement with EPA. Results show perchlorate and barium in the groundwater, surface water and soils. MDE is currently drafting the ESI report.

Lead Agency and Contacts

MDE is the lead agency and is conducting further investigation of this site under the PA/SI Cooperative Agreement with EPA.

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