



Region 7

Iowa  
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# Fact Sheet

June 2004

## Proposed Plan Available for Comment

### Waterloo Coal Gasification Plant, Waterloo, Iowa

#### INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is releasing a Proposed Plan to address groundwater and soil contamination at the Waterloo Coal Gasification Plant Site, the location of a former manufactured gas plant (FMGP) in Waterloo, Iowa. The action would be taken under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), also known as the Superfund law.

The preferred alternative:

- prevents the use of contaminated groundwater as a drinking water source; and
- prevents residential exposure to site soil.

EPA is asking for public comments on its Proposed Plan. The comment period opens June 10, 2004. A public meeting will be held at the Waterloo Public Library, 415 Commercial Street, Waterloo, Iowa, on Wednesday, June 16, 2004, from 7:00p.m. until 9:00p.m..

Although EPA and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) are recommending an action to address the contamination, a final decision will not be made until EPA reviews comments from the public. After the comment period closes, EPA will make a decision, which will be published in a Record of Decision

#### PUBLIC MEETING AND COMMENT PERIOD

EPA will hold a public meeting to provide information on the Proposed Plan for the Waterloo Coal Gasification Plant Site. The public meeting will be held:

**Wednesday, June 16, 2004  
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.  
Waterloo Public Library  
Meeting Room B  
415 Commercial Streets  
Waterloo, Iowa**

**EPA will take comments on the Waterloo Coal Gasification Plant Site Proposed Plan through July 10, 2004.** Comments may be made at the public meeting, or sent to EPA at the address listed below:

Beckie Himes  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of External Programs  
901 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Kansas City, Kansas 66101  
Fax: 913-551-7066  
himes.beckie@epa.gov

(ROD). The ROD will also include a summary of EPA's responses to the comments received during the public comment period.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The Waterloo Coal Gasification Plant Site is a former manufactured gas plant (FMGP). The Site is next to the Cedar River, about 3/4 of a mile downriver of downtown Waterloo, Iowa. The entire Site occupies approximately five acres and is located north and south of Sycamore Street between Union and Elm. The Site is bounded by Lafayette Street on the north; the former Rath Packing facility on the east; a railroad track on the west; and railroad tracks, a floodwall, and the Cedar River on the south.

## **THE CONTAMINANTS**

The contaminants usually associated with the production of manufactured gas include a group of semivolatile organic compounds referred to as polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). There are sixteen PAH compounds which were analyzed for throughout the course of the investigations at this Site. Seven of these compounds are considered by EPA to be probable human carcinogens. Other contaminants usually found at manufactured gas plant sites include benzene, ethylbenzene, toluene, and xylene, which are sometimes collectively referred to as BETX. Some forms of cyanide, arsenic, phenolic compounds, and metals may also be found. Samples collected at the Site were analyzed for each of these contaminants as well.

## **SITE HISTORY AND ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES**

From 1901 until 1956, the Site was the location of a manufactured gas plant that utilized a succession of coal carbonization, carbureted water gas, and butane/water gas processes to supply gas for lighting and heating purposes. Production was discontinued in 1956 and the plant was dismantled from 1965 to 1967. Much of the residue from the gas manufacturing processes, or coal tar, was dehydrated and sold. Some coal tar wastes were left on

site, resulting in soil and groundwater contamination.

In November 1988, a Preliminary Assessment and Screening Site Inspection was performed at the Site. In October 1992, the Site was proposed to the National Priorities List (NPL). The Site has not been placed on the final NPL.

In 1993, MidAmerican entered into an Administrative Order on Consent (AOC) with EPA to do a Removal Action (RA) at the Site. The purpose of the RA was to decrease the potential impact to groundwater and soil by contaminants, including coal tar and coal tar-impacted materials. Nearly 10,000 tons of coal tar, visibly coal tar-impacted soils, and other coal tar-impacted materials were excavated in 1994 through 1996, during Phase I of the RA. This excavated material was transported to the George Neal Power Generation Station in Sioux City and thermally treated.

In 1997 and 1998, during Phase II of the RA, an on-site thermal desorption unit thermally treated an additional 14,000 tons of contaminated soil. The treated soil was put back into the excavation. In July 2003, Phase III of the RA involved excavation of about 400 tons of surface soil. This material was thermally treated off-site.

Some contaminated soil remains in place because it was below the water table or inaccessible beneath the railroad tracks located next to the Cedar River.

In 1995, MidAmerican entered into a second AOC with EPA to do a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS). The RI for the Site was carried out from 1996 through 1998. The RI activities consisted of collecting surface and subsurface soil samples, groundwater samples, and sediment

and surface water samples from the Cedar River. The results of this investigation are reported in the August 2000 RI Report. Additional sediment sampling was done in 2002, and groundwater sampling continues on a quarterly basis.

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

Major components of the preferred alternative include:

- Implementation of institutional controls in the form of environmental easements and/or deed restrictions on the site prohibiting residential development and installation of any water supply wells for municipal, industrial, or domestic uses;
- Establishment of Alternate Concentration Limits (ACLs) for groundwater;
- Sampling of groundwater and surface water to monitor compliance with ACLs; and
- Continued listing of the site on the Registry of Hazardous Waste or Hazardous Substance Disposal Sites pursuant to Iowa Administrative Code 455B.426.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

The Proposed Plan and other site-related documents provide details of the nature and extent of contamination and the work that has been completed at the site. These documents are part of the Administrative Record File, available during regular business hours at the following locations:

Waterloo Public Library  
415 Commercial Street  
Waterloo, Iowa

EPA Region 7  
Records Center  
901 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Kansas City, Kansas

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact:

Beckie Himes  
Community Involvement Coordinator  
EPA Region 7  
Office of External Programs  
901 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Kansas City, Kansas 66101  
913-551-7003, Toll-free 800-223-0425  
E-mail: [himes.beckie@epa.gov](mailto:himes.beckie@epa.gov)