

Blackburn & Union Privileges Site

U.S. EPA | HAZARDOUS WASTE PROGRAM AT EPA NEW ENGLAND



THE SUPERFUND PROGRAM protects human health and the environment by investigating and cleaning up often-abandoned hazardous waste sites and engaging communities throughout the process. Many of these sites are complex and need long-term cleanup actions. Those responsible for contamination are held liable for cleanup costs. EPA strives to return previously contaminated land and groundwater to productive use.

SITE BACKGROUND

The Blackburn & Union Privileges Site located in Walpole, MA was added to the Superfund National Priority List in 1994 and includes industrial properties and undeveloped or residential properties and other areas where contamination has come to be located. Industrial and commercial processes on the site date back to the 1600s. Between 1891 and 1915, the site was used for manufacture of tires, rubber goods, and insulating materials. The crushing of raw asbestos in the manufacture of brake and clutch linings occurred at the site between 1915 and 1937. Various cotton and fabric production processes were conducted at the site from 1937 until 1985.

As a result of these industrial operations, soil, sediment and groundwater are contaminated with inorganic chemicals (including asbestos and metals), volatile organic compounds, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and highly alkaline compounds.

The site cleanup is being addressed in two stages: short term actions and a long-term remedial phase focusing on cleanup of the entire site. The Record of Decision (ROD), that details the cleanup goals and the comprehensive cleanup plan developed by EPA, was issued by EPA on September 30, 2008 and is available for review at the Walpole Town Library. Implementation of the cleanup work defined in the ROD is being performed under a Consent Decree reached by EPA and private parties under the Superfund law.

NEXT STEPS IN CLEANUP

The next step in the process is the remedial design phase which includes sampling of the sediment in Lewis Pond for contamination that originated at the Blackburn & Union Privileges Superfund Site. This sampling will be performed this summer/fall with approval and oversight by EPA.

The sediment sampling effort will focus on Site-related contaminants that EPA believes were carried downstream and settled to the bottom of Lewis Pond. This sampling was

outlined in the comprehensive cleanup plan that was in the Record of Decision. The sampling is a first step in designing the cleanup of Lewis Pond and will identify sediment that will be removed and disposed at a permitted off-site facility. The removal and disposal methods will be detailed in EPA approved plans that will be developed following the remedial design. After cleanup, restoration of disturbed areas of Lewis Pond will occur, also consistent with the approved plans.

The exact timing of the sampling is unknown because EPA is continuing its efforts to gain property access to all the properties needed for the work. EPA expects the sampling to take several weeks once initiated. Contractors doing the sampling will be wearing protective equipment and clothing while in and around Lewis Pond. EPA expects workers to be sampling between the hours of 8 am to 6 pm, Monday to Saturday.

Once the sampling is completed, the design engineers will have more refined estimates of the quantities and locations of sediment to be taken from the Pond. The design of the cleanup plans for Lewis Pond is anticipated to be complete in 2013. It is hoped that cleanup and restoration of the Pond can be accomplished within one to two years after that.

In the meantime, residents should continue to avoid wading or otherwise coming in contact with sediment in Lewis Pond.

KEY CONTACTS:

EMILY ZIMMERMAN

EPA New England
Community Involvement
Coordinator
(617) 918-1037
zimmerman.emily@epa.gov

DAVID LEDERER

EPA New England
Project Manager
(617) 918-1325
lederer.dave@epa.gov

GENERAL INFO:

EPA NEW ENGLAND

5 Post Office Square
Suite 100
Boston, MA 02109-3912
(617) 918-1111
www.epa.gov/region1/

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