

Community Update

Superfund Program

OCT 28 1999



Region 2

Mohonk Road Industrial Plant Site

High Falls, New York

October 1999

This fact sheet provides an update on the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Removal Action activities at the Mohonk Road Industrial Plant (MRIP) Superfund Site. Based on the results of an environmental impact assessment and an evaluation of all feasible alternatives, EPA has selected the Coxing Kill Creek as the preferred location for discharge of the clean, treated groundwater from the MRIP Site. The investigation reports supporting this selection are available for public review at the Site information repositories. What follows is a brief description of the Site and answers to anticipated questions from the public.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Public Availability Session

EPA representatives will be available to answer questions about the removal action.

November 3, 1999

2:00 to 4:00; 5:30 to 7:30 PM

High Falls Firehouse

What is the Mohonk Road Industrial Plant (MRIP) Superfund Site?

The MRIP property is located at 186 Mohonk Road, in High Falls, Ulster County, New York. From the early 1960s to the early 1990s, various industrial businesses operated at the Site, some of which used solvents and hazardous chemicals in their operations. Sampling has indicated that a groundwater plume containing elevated levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) extends approximately 1 mile from the Site and covers an area of roughly 170 acres. The principal contaminant found in the groundwater is 1,1,1-trichloroethane (TCA).

EPA's Removal Action

Under the Superfund Removal Program, EPA is taking an early action to contain the most contaminated portion of the groundwater to prevent it from spreading and further impacting the local drinking water resource. In March 1999, EPA met with the community to present three Removal Action alternatives and to propose its preferred option. EPA proposed to pump the groundwater and treat it with an air stripping unit on the MRIP property. Treated water would be discharged to either the Rondout Creek or the Coxing Kill Creek, pending an evaluation of both options.

Over the last several months, EPA has evaluated alternatives for discharge of the clean, treated water from the treatment plant, which is being built on the MRIP property. Based on a preliminary evaluation of five discharge routes, EPA chose to further evaluate the two most feasible routes. They were as follows: 1) discharge via underground pipe to an existing natural drainage channel approximately 500 feet west of the MRIP property. This drainage channel runs northwest through a piece of undeveloped private property, property owned by the Town of Marbletown and New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) property, before reaching the Rondout Creek; 2) discharge to the Coxing Kill Creek via an underground pipe installed southeast along Mohonk Road to the Creek at a point just west of the bridge on Mohonk Road. Based on EPA's detailed evaluation, the discharge route to the Coxing Kill Creek has been selected.

Why was the Coxing Kill Creek selected for discharge from the Removal Action groundwater treatment plant?

The discharge route to the Coxing Kill Creek was selected over other options for several reasons:

1) It is not feasible to dispose of the treated water on the MRIP property, because the clay-rich soil and bedrock aquifer will not readily absorb the discharged water creating the potential for the water to flow uncontrollably on the surface.

2) It would be difficult to implement the discharge to the Roundout Creek in a timely fashion due to: the presence of wetlands, which would require wetland assessments, mitigation and reestablishment; potential cultural resources (e.g. the D&H Canal), which would require archeological assessments and mitigative efforts in these areas; a former landfill, which may require an impact assessment and engineering controls to minimize contact with this area; and private lands between the Site and the Roundout Creek, which would require access.

3) The discharge would not have a negative impact on the quality of the Coxing Kill watershed. The extracted groundwater will be treated to meet standards set by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) for discharge to the Coxing Kill. The treated water will be routinely monitored to ensure that these standards are achieved and maintained. These monitoring results will be made available for public review.

4) The discharge would not have an adverse impact on the Coxing Kill Creek ecosystem. EPA performed tests to determine the levels of chemicals expected in the discharge, the effects of the discharge on organisms in the Coxing Kill Creek, and analysis of the Coxing Kill water quality. The results of these studies indicate that the treatment plant on the MRIP property will reduce any organic chemicals in the extracted groundwater to levels below the NYSDEC standards prior to discharge. Furthermore, the levels of VOCs in the treated groundwater are expected to be reduced to below detectable limits prior to discharge to the Creek. The levels of naturally occurring metals in the groundwater will also be reduced through treatment, resulting in no impact to existing Creek conditions. In addition, there were no adverse effects to organisms exposed to nondiluted treated water during bioassay studies. These data are summarized in an interim document entitled Environmental Impact Assessment for Proposed Effluent Discharge to the Coxing Kill Creek From the Mohonk Road Industrial Plant Site, which is available for public review at the information repositories.

5) Based on flow data for the Coxing Kill Creek collected by EPA and historic flow measurements, the discharge would not have a measurable impact on the Coxing Kill Creek's flow rate and would not cause flooding during any creek flow conditions. In addition, EPA will construct a riprap channel at the point of discharge to reduce the velocity of discharge flow and prevent any significant erosion of the creek bed. These data are summarized in a document entitled Engineering Evaluation of the Physical Effects of the Proposed Effluent Discharge to the Coxing Kill Creek From the Mohonk Road Industrial Plant Site, which is available for public review at the information repositories.

Will the groundwater extraction and treatment system, installed as a part of the Removal Action, affect the levels of water in my well?

EPA has performed detailed groundwater modeling to simulate and predict aquifer conditions during pumping. Based on this modeling, EPA does not anticipate that water table levels will significantly decrease beyond the area immediately surrounding the MRIP property (residences on Mohonk Road south of the MRIP property, within approximately 1,800 feet). EPA has performed a well survey to ensure adequate depth of wells and well pumps for the residential wells that may be impacted by the water table drawdown. The potentially impacted wells will be monitored after the groundwater extraction starts to ensure that these water supplies are not being adversely affected. EPA will also be monitoring the water levels in wells on the perimeter of the MRIP property to closely track water table drawdown. If monitoring results show that the water levels are lowered to a point where water supplies are threatened, EPA can reduce pumping rates in the extraction wells, or take other appropriate measures.

Construction Progress

The building to house the treatment plant on the MRIP property has been constructed, and installation of the discharge line to the Coxing Kill is expected to be completed in November 1999. Aesthetic concerns expressed by the community about the treatment system were considered during design of the treatment plant. A low profile air stripper will be used, which will not require a tower or stack, and the treatment building was constructed to the west of the existing plant on the MRIP property (away from Mohonk Road). It is anticipated that construction of the treatment plant will be completed and the system will be operational by next February.

Contacts

Overview of Site Cleanup Activities

NYSDEC took early actions to temporarily eliminate threats to public health and the environment posed by the Site. These actions included installing filtration systems in homes and businesses where well water was contaminated at levels exceeding the State's drinking water standards, and removing an underground tank on the MRIP property that contained highly contaminated sludge. To date, filtration systems have been installed in 70 homes and/or businesses that have been found to contain VOCs above State and/or Federal standards.

In March 1997, NYSDEC began a remedial investigation (RI) to define the nature and extent of soil and groundwater contamination at the Site. Based on the results of the RI, NYSDEC prepared a feasibility study (FS) to assess alternatives for a long-term, permanent cleanup of the site. NYSDEC, in coordination with EPA, is preparing a Proposed Plan, which will describe the Agencies' recommended plan for the long-term cleanup. Following the release of the Proposed Plan, there will be a public meeting to discuss the alternatives and a public comment period to solicit the public's input. After the comment period, a Record of Decision (ROD) will be issued by EPA, which will document the selected cleanup plan for this site. It is anticipated that the Proposed Plan will be issued next month and the ROD issued later this year.

EPA

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Information Repositories

Additional information on the MRIP Site may be found in EPA and NYSDEC's information repositories at the Rosendale and Stone Ridge public libraries.

