

COMMUNITY UPDATE



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

AUGUST 2024 American Thermostat, South Cairo, NY

The New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Health (DOH) are working to protect public health and the environment in the South Cairo area. This Community Update provides information about upcoming project actions consisting of on-site source investigations, private drinking water supply well sampling (the off-site area of interest map is on page 4), possible extension of the existing public water supply, and public outreach.

EPA On-Site Investigations Planned for 2024-2026

Beginning this winter, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will initiate an on-site investigation of remaining volatile organic compound (VOC) contamination at the American Thermostat Co. Superfund site. For more information about the investigation, visit:

www.epa.gov/superfund/american-thermostat

In July 2024, EPA held a community meeting in the Village of Catskill to outline plans to undertake on-site investigation work at the American Thermostat Co. Federal Superfund site and discuss the five-year review process. The purpose of a five-year review is to ensure that implemented cleanup plans at federal Superfund sites function as intended and continue to protect people's health and the environment. A five-year review was completed for this site. A summary of cleanup activities completed to date and an evaluation of the protectiveness of the implemented cleanup plan was included in the January 2024 five-year review report.

Based upon recommendations outlined within that report, this winter EPA will collect soil and groundwater samples to identify the nature and extent of any remaining VOC contamination sources. If a source of VOC contamination is found, the study will also evaluate various cleanup options to address it. Investigations and

cleanup option evaluation are expected to take several years to complete.

During the meeting, representatives from EPA, DEC, and DOH received community feedback with inquiries regarding an extension of public water lines and testing for site-related contamination in private drinking water supply wells. In response, private drinking water supply well testing in the area of interest (refer to map on page 4) is now being offered to property owners at no cost. Additionally, the federal and state agencies are discussing funding, design, and implementation of a possible water line extension.

If you did not receive a letter offering sampling but your property is in the area of interest, please contact the DOH contact listed below.

Background

American Thermostat Co. produced thermostats from 1954 to 1985. Chemicals used in its manufacturing were disposed on the property, leading to VOC contamination in soil and groundwater. In 1981, DEC and DOH sampled nearby residential wells and detected VOCs, particularly tetrachloroethene (PCE) and trichloroethene (TCE), at concentrations exceeding the federal maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) of 5 parts per billion (ppb). In response, American Thermostat Co. initially supplied bottled water to affected local residents in 1981, and later installed drinking water treatment systems on five affected residential wells in 1982.

In 1988, EPA signed a Record of Decision (ROD) calling for the extension of the existing Catskill Water District pipeline to provide clean water to areas affected and potentially affected by site contamination. Construction was completed in 1992. Additional information about the pipeline extension is provided on page 2.

In 1998, VOCs were detected in two drinking water supply wells at the Country Estates Mobile Home Park and in three private drinking water supply wells along Scotch Rock Road. Drinking water treatment systems were installed on all of the affected wells, monitored and maintained by the EPA (until 2008) and subsequently by DEC..

Background (continued)

In 2012, Country Estates' drinking water treatment system operation and maintenance (O&M) was transferred to the owner. In 2022, treatment system O&M of the three Scotch Rock Road private wells was transferred to the residents after concentrations of contaminants of concern were non-detect or below the MCL of 5 ppb since at least January 2013.

Country Estates currently provides treated water to its residents from one of two wells on the property equipped with a Point of Entry (POET) system that removes contaminants from the drinking water. Since March 2024, DEC has been maintaining the system because VOCs from the site are present in the untreated water above the state's stringent guidelines.

In 1990, a Record of Decision (ROD) was issued by EPA to address remaining contaminated media at the site. Site cleanup efforts to date include decontamination of the former manufacturing building, thermal treatment of contaminated soil on the property, and construction of a groundwater extraction and treatment system to treat contaminated groundwater until federal and state standards for VOCs are achieved.

In 2012, an investigation concluded that groundwater cleanup goals would not be achieved in a reasonable period of time. The cleanup objective was therefore redefined in 2013 to focus on hydraulic containment of the on-site source area by the treatment system. Per the five-year review, it has been determined that VOC contamination remains in groundwater in the vicinity of the site after more than 25 years of extraction and treatment. As a result, EPA will investigate remaining VOC contamination and evaluate additional cleanup options.

Village of Catskill Water Line

In 1988, EPA issued a ROD calling for extension of the existing Catskill Water District pipeline to areas affected or potentially affected by the American Thermostat Co. site. The pipeline was extended approximately 3.5 miles in the Town of Catskill near its boundary with the Town of Cairo in 1992. At that time, EPA considered connecting the Country Estates Mobile Home Park water distribution system to the extended public water supply line but was unsuccessful at the time in obtaining the mobile home park owner's consent.

Currently, there is a renewed interest in extending the existing public water supply line to the Country Estates Mobile Home Park. EPA, New York State, Greene County, local village and town representatives, and Country Estates are now cooperatively working together to develop a plan to fund and implement the work in a timely manner.

What are VOCs?

VOCs, including PCE and TCE, are a group of chemical compounds used in many industries, including dry cleaning, degreasing of manufactured metal parts, and manufacturing of other chemicals. They have a low water solubility and a high vapor pressure and volatilize rapidly when exposed to air. These compounds are used in a range of products, including cleaning supplies, paints, fragrances, adhesives, and motor vehicle cleaners.

How do VOCs get in water?

VOCs may be detected in groundwater near sites and facilities where these chemicals were manufactured, used, or disposed. VOCs can travel through soil into groundwater and into sources of drinking water. EPA is conducting an investigation to identify potential remaining sources of VOC contamination at the American Thermostat Co. Superfund site. The investigation will include collection of soil and groundwater samples near potential sources. DEC and DOH are conducting a private well investigation to determine if actions are needed to address potential exposure to VOCs.

Private Well Sampling

If your property is located in the area of interest and you would like your well sampled for VOCs, please call or email the contact provided in the letter you received in the mail. Sampling will be coordinated with you and based on your schedule. Typically, drinking water samples will be collected from your kitchen tap or outdoor spigot and submitted to a certified laboratory for VOC analysis. You will receive the results of testing approximately one month from sample collection. If needed based on results, alternate water supplies are available at no cost to property owners within the currently defined 'area of interest.'



How are VOCs Removed from drinking water?

Filtration is a common process used to treat and remove contaminants from drinking water. Use of activated carbon, which is commonly referred to as GAC (granular activated carbon), is a well-established approach for purifying water and removing VOCs. VOCs are trapped in tiny holes or pores within activated carbon particles by a process called adsorption. For more information about POET systems, visit:

https://extapps.dec.ny.gov/docs/remediation_hudson_pdf/poetsystguide.pdf

Project Contacts

Department of Environmental Conservation

For questions related to the site:

Charlie Gregory, Project Manager
(518) 402-8246 | Charles.Gregory@dec.ny.gov

For questions related to the provision of an alternate water supply (i.e., bottled water, POET systems, or public water supply connections):

Mike Haggerty, Project Manager
(518) 461-1401 | Michael.Haggerty@dec.ny.gov

Department of Health

For site-specific health-related questions or to determine if your property is in the area of interest and eligible for sampling:

Angela Martin, Project Manager
(518) 473-4671 | BEEI@health.ny.gov

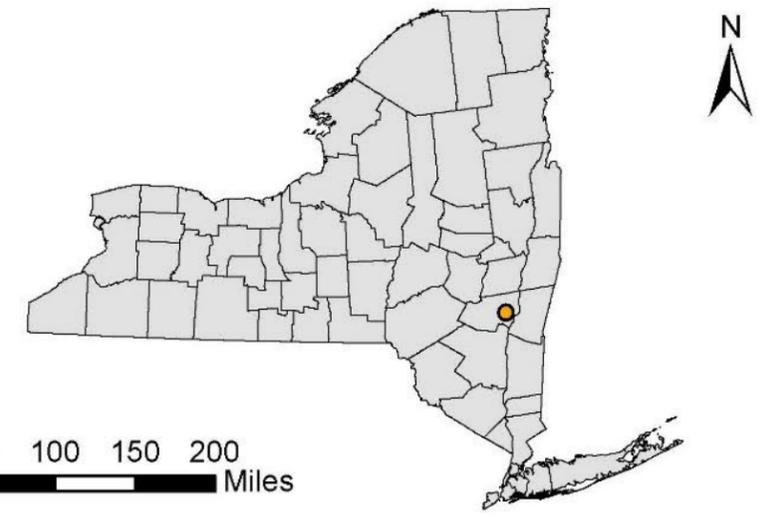
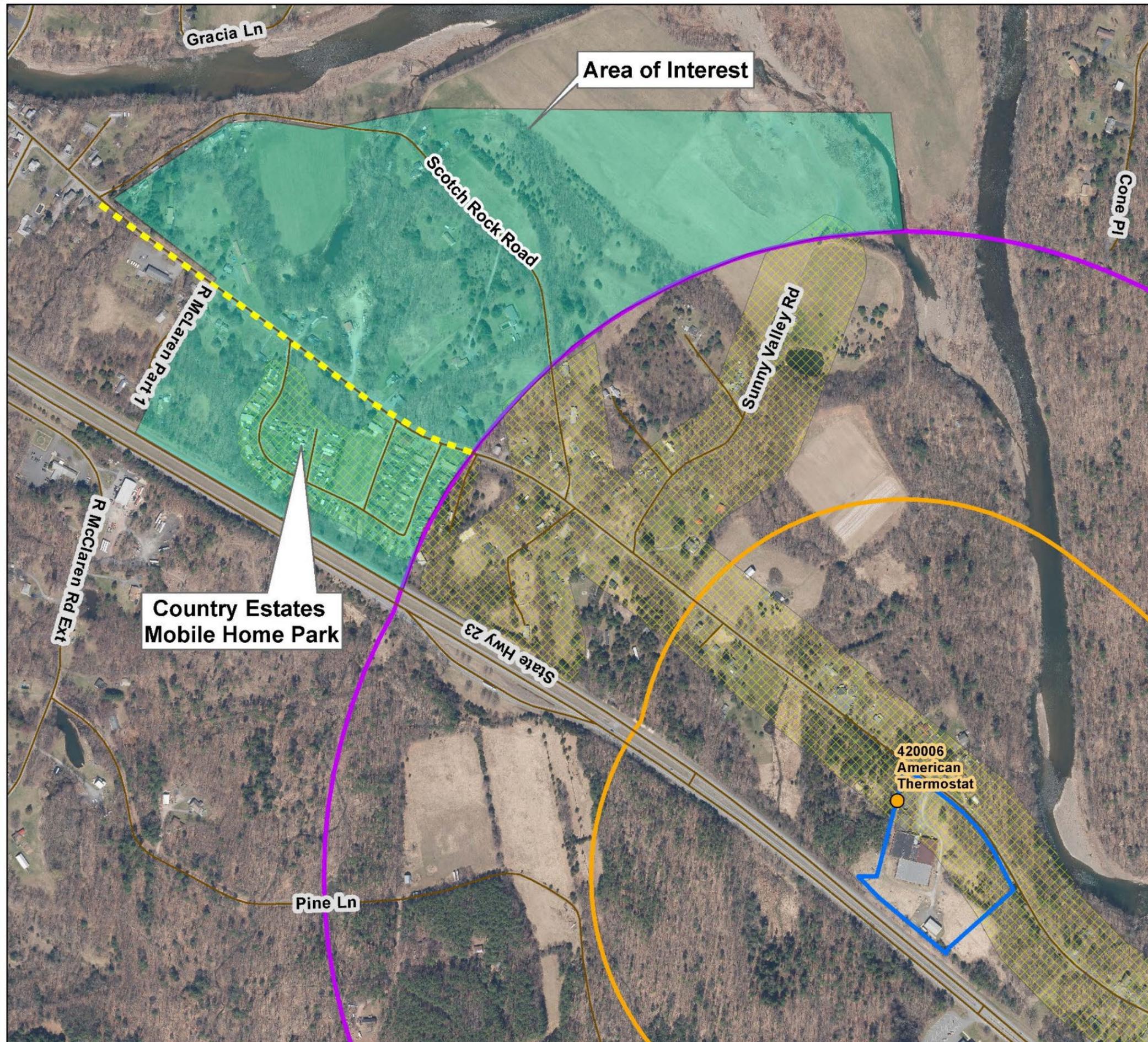
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

For questions related to the site investigation:

Claudia Shuman, Remedial Project Manager
(212) 637-4279 | Shuman.Claudia@epa.gov

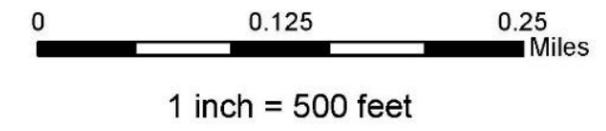
Resources:

- www.epa.gov/superfund/american-thermostat
- <https://extapps.dec.ny.gov/cfm/extapps/derexternal/index.cfm?pageid=3> (Enter site code 420006)
- https://extapps.dec.ny.gov/docs/remediation_hudson_pdf/poetsystguide.pdf



Legend

- Remediation Sites
- Site Border
- 1/4 Mile Buffer
- 1/2 Mile Buffer
- Area of Interest
- Possible Extension of the Existing Public Water Supply
- Public Water Supply Service Areas



Private Water Supply Well Survey Area

Region 4 Greene County
Town of Catskill

American Thermostat #420006
2037 Route 23B
South Cairo, NY

