

**NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF**



**ENVIRONMENTAL
CONSERVATION**

**Remedial Investigation
Progress Report**

The purpose of this fact sheet is to present the status of the ongoing investigation of the Ithaca Court Street MGP Site

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Tompkins County Public Library
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Ithaca Court Street MGP Site

Site No. 7-55-008

February 2002

FACT SHEET

Remedial Investigation Progress Report

for the
NYSEG Ithaca Court Street MGP Site

INTRODUCTION

New York State Electric & Gas (NYSEG) under the oversight of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) is currently investigating the Ithaca Court Street Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP) site, a Class 2 Inactive Hazardous Waste Disposal site. Field work is nearing completion, and we wish to inform neighbors and other interested parties of the preliminary findings and future plans.

BACKGROUND

The MGP made a combustible gas from coal. This coal gas was used much the same way that natural gas is used today. It is believed that this plant operated from 1852 to 1927. NYSEG never operated the plant, but acquired responsibility for it through acquisition of the predecessor companies. The property is currently owned by the Ithaca School District.

NYSEG conducted preliminary investigations of the site in the mid to late 1980's. The subsurface soil in the area of the former MGP structures was contaminated with coal tar and other MGP-related chemicals. This contamination has impacted the groundwater, which appears to be moving off-site in a generally west to northwest direction. No water supply wells are located in or near the area of impacted groundwater. A layer of clay and silt underlies the contaminated groundwater, and appears to separate it from clean groundwater below. Indoor air sampling was also completed, with no MGP-related impacts found.

In 1994, NYSEG entered into an agreement with the NYSDEC to address contamination at 33 MGP sites across the state, including the Ithaca Court Street Site. In March, 2000, NYSEG removed coal tar and contaminated subsurface soil and water from inside and around two tar wells.

REMEDIAL INVESTIGATION

Currently, NYSEG is undertaking a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS). The RI will delineate the nature and extent of contamination associated with the site. Field work for the RI is largely completed at this time, and the laboratory analysis of the samples is ongoing. The findings will be documented in a Remedial Investigation Report, which will be presented at a public meeting and will be available for review at the document repositories. It is anticipated that the meeting to present this report will take place by mid-June of this year. The following work has been completed as part of the remedial investigation:

1. **Source investigation:** Soil borings were used to delineate where coal tar is present on and adjacent to the site. A rough sketch of the area where coal tar was visually identified is provided in the figure below.
2. **Intermediate Aquifer:** Samples collected and analyzed from existing monitoring wells confirmed that contamination has not impacted the deeper groundwater.
3. **Shallow groundwater contamination:** Groundwater samples were collected from temporary borings down-gradient from the site to establish a “clean line” beyond which the groundwater does not appear to be impacted by this site. This line is shown on the figure below. Permanent monitoring wells are currently being installed along this clean line and elsewhere to allow continued monitoring of groundwater quality.
4. **Wooden Duct:** This duct was historically used to transport coal tar from the Court Street MGP to Cayuga Inlet. Coal tar was visually identified in borings along the wooden duct at Washington Street during this investigation. This area of contamination (shown on the figure below) appears to be very narrow, following the path of a storm sewer. Borings at other intersections and utility crossings did not detect any coal tar.
5. **Indoor air:** Indoor air was tested in the on-site buildings, and no contaminants were detected in those samples. Residents who live adjacent to the off-site coal tar are currently being contacted, and the air in their basements will be analyzed to confirm that it has not been impacted by the site-related contamination.

REMEDIATION PLANS

1. **Wooden Duct IRM:** NYSEG is planning to remove the wooden duct this year, and at the same time look for any other places this duct may have leaked. Before beginning work, NYSEG will need to coordinate the work with the City, obtain access to an area to stage equipment and materials, and decide how to address contaminated material. NYSEG will also need to do this work when the groundwater is low enough not to interfere with the work. Difficulty with any of these items could delay this work until Summer 2003.
2. **Feasibility Study:** The next step in addressing the coal tar on and adjacent to the former plant site is to seek access to this site to allow for removal or treatment of contaminated materials and other remedial activities. Simultaneously, work will begin on a Feasibility Study which will evaluate different remedial alternatives and, with public input, select the best way to remediate the on-site and the off-site areas.



Note: All locations shown are approximate.