



Department of Environmental Conservation

Frequently Asked Questions

Former Sperry Remington Site

Site #808043

Acronyms

Order – Order on Consent and Administrative Settlement
AOC – Area of Concern
CAMP – Community Air Monitoring Plan
COC – Contaminant of Concern
ECLP – Enhanced Community Liaison Plan
EHS – Elmira High School
ERA – Ecological Risk Assessment
FS – Feasibility Study
IEC – Institutional and Engineering Control
IRM – Interim Remedial Measure
NYSDEC – New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (Agency)
NYSDOH – New York State Department of Health
PCB – Polychlorinated Biphenyls
PDI – Predesign Investigation
RI – Remedial Investigation
RIWP – RI Work Plan
SCO – Soil Cleanup Objective
STCC – Southern Tier Commerce Center
STI – Scott Technologies, Inc.
STRA – Short Term Remedial Action
SVOC – Semi Volatile Organic Compound

Overview

1. What is the Site history?

The Site is located at 1051 South Main Street in Elmira, Chemung County, New York. The Site is a 185-foot x 65-foot rectangular area (0.28 acres) that includes an eight- to 12-foot diameter covered concrete culvert (Site culvert) and former oil water separator (OS2). These structures collected and discharged industrial wastes from the adjacent former Sperry Remington Sites. The Site culvert extends from a former holding pond (immediately to the west and adjacent of the Site) to an off-site discharge point to the east northeast. Off-site discharges subsequently drain into a 3.5-acre Wetlands Area and then Coldbrook Creek. The Site culvert is approximately 275 feet long and extends beneath a railroad line owned by Norfolk Southern. OS2 is a concrete rectangular structure measuring approximately 16 feet wide and 42 feet long and aligned parallel to the Site culvert with a shared wall. The Site and Off-Site Areas are currently owned by multiple parties. The 0.28-acre Site is currently owned by the Southern Tier Commerce Center (STCC). Elmira High School (EHS) is the adjacent property to the north.



Past uses at and near the Site, and upstream of Coldbrook Creek include:

- 1887 – 1909: B. W. Payne & Sons, manufacturer of high-speed steam engines
- 1909 – 1935: Morrow Manufacturing, manufacturer of drill chucks, machine parts and tools
- 1935 – 1937: Elmira Precision Tool Company, manufacturer of typewriter parts for Remington Rand
- 1936 – 1972: Remington Rand, manufacturer of typewriters and adding machines
- 1973 – 2006: American LaFrance / Figgie International, manufacturer of fire engines
- 2007 – present: Southern Tier Commerce Center, warehousing and light industry multi-use

2. What is being done to investigate and clean up the Site?

Unisys Corporation agreed to investigate and clean up the Site and impacted off-site areas in March 2010. Initial site data were collected and reported in a 2011 Phase 1 Data Report. The Phase 1 Report identified the Site Culvert, the OS2 structure, and their respective subsurface connections as potential sources of contaminants in off-Site wetland sediments. Unisys completed interim remedial measure (IRM) Pre-Design Investigations (PDI) from 2012 until 2019 to investigate soils and identify active drainage connections and other potential upstream sources connecting to OS2 and the site culvert. Based on those findings, an IRM work plan for the remediation of OS2 and new storm drainage bypass was approved by NYSDEC in 2019 and implemented in 2020.

3. What is being done to investigate Coldbrook Creek?

Samples collected by NYSDEC in 2006 indicated the presence of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and inorganic constituents (metals) in sediments in the Drainage Swale, Wetlands Area, and Coldbrook Creek.

Unisys completed investigations of Coldbrook Creek sediments between 2010 and 2018 and since then have initiated overbank floodplain soil sampling in addition to Fish and Wildlife impact investigations. This included sediment, fish, and macroinvertebrate sampling. The sample data are being used to assess the potential effects of contaminants in sediment on the ecological health of the creek.

4. What is Unisys's role?

Unisys is the corporate successor to Remington Rand and therefore a responsible party having liability to complete the investigation and cleanup of the Site.

In accordance with the Order on Consent and Administrative Settlement with NYSDEC in March 2010, Unisys is conducting a Remedial Investigation (RI) to determine the nature and extent of contaminants that may have discharged from the Site, determining if residual sources of contaminants still exist, and identifying both current and potential routes of human exposure, if any, to contamination.

COCs – Contaminants of Concern

5. What are heavy metals and why are they contaminants of concern?

Heavy metals are inorganic compounds considered hazardous at elevated concentrations because of their toxicity. Heavy metals include arsenic, barium, cadmium, chromium, lead, mercury, selenium, and silver. These along with metals such as copper, nickel and others were used in former industrial operations, have been detected in soil/sediment at the Site above state standards that are protective of public health and the environment.



6. What are SVOCs and why are they contaminants of potential concern (COPCs)?

Semi Volatile Organic Compounds (SVOCs) are a diverse group of organic chemicals that can be found in pesticides, ingredients in cleaning agents and personal care products, additives to vinyl flooring, furniture, clothing, cookware, food packaging, and electronics. Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) are a class of SVOCs that occur naturally in coal, crude oil, and gasoline. SVOCs were used in many former site industrial operations and have been detected in soil at the Site above state standards that are protective of public health and the environment.

7. What is a PCB and why is it a contaminant of concern?

PCBs belong to a broad family of man-made organic chemicals known as chlorinated hydrocarbons. PCBs were domestically manufactured from 1929 until manufacturing was banned in 1979. They have a range of toxicity and vary in consistency from thin, light-colored liquids to yellow or black waxy solids. Due to their non-flammability, chemical stability, high boiling point, and electrical insulating properties, PCBs were used in hundreds of industrial and commercial applications including:

- Electrical, heat transfer and hydraulic equipment
- Plasticizers in paints, plastics and rubber products
- Pigments, dyes and carbonless copy paper
- Other industrial applications

PCBs are a contaminant of concern because they have been detected in soil at the Site above state standards that are protective of public health and the environment. Additional information about PCBs can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/pcbs/learn-about-polychlorinated-biphenyls-pcbs>.

Remedial Investigation / Feasibility Study (RI/FS)

8. What is a Remedial Investigation (RI)/ Feasibility Study (FS) RI/FS?

The overall objectives of the RI/FS are to: (i) determine the nature and extent of contamination at a site and delineate the extent of COPCs formerly discharged or potentially migrating from the Site; (ii) determine the presence and extent of sources of contaminants; (iii) identify both current and potential routes of human exposure, if any, to contaminants; (iv) evaluate the need for remediation and effectiveness of remedial alternatives.

The RI/FS also includes an approach to characterize the extent of potential ecological risks and human exposures. The ecological risk assessment (ERA) approach begins with a comparison of sediment and soil concentrations to ecological screening values and, for sediment, proceeds to a more site-specific analysis that includes sediment toxicity testing, benthic community analysis, and food chain modeling. In support of this, the RI/FS work along Coldbrook Creek includes an approach to characterize the extent of potential ecological risks and human exposures.

9. What is the schedule for completing the RI/FS?

The current schedule anticipates completing RI field sampling in 2021 and a Feasibility Study (FS) thereafter. A Fish and Wildlife Resource Impact Assessment is currently underway and is planned to be completed in early 2021. A soil sampling program along the Creek also is currently underway. Phase 1 of the soil sampling was completed in November/December 2019, and Phase 2 was initiated in July 2020 and will be completed in Fall 2020. Some Phase 3 sampling is anticipated to occur in early 2021.



The work described above is anticipated to complete the RI for the Site. The RI sampling is anticipated to conclude by the end of 2021. Thereafter, Unisys will conduct a Feasibility Study (FS) to evaluate the need for remediation, effectiveness of remedial alternatives, and propose a remedy to NYSDEC.

10. Is it safe to fish and to walk along the banks of Coldbrook Creek during the RI/FS work?

Unisys and NYSDEC, in consultation with the NYSDOH, are conducting additional sampling of Coldbrook Creek, including the collection of fish samples for chemical analysis. There is a potential for PCBs and some metals that have been detected in Coldbrook Creek sediment to accumulate in fish tissue. Until the need for remediation is determined and remedial actions are completed, it is advised that individuals limit or avoid eating fish from Coldbrook Creek. Additional advice from the NYSDOH on eating sportfish caught from freshwater bodies in New York is available on its website:

https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/fish/health_advisories/

Analytical results for the soil samples are being compared to New York State soil cleanup objectives (SCOs). The SCOs are levels at which health effects are unlikely to occur. The SCOs are not bright lines that separate contaminant concentrations that cause health effects from those that do not. The SCOs are used as a tool to make decisions on the need to take measures to reduce exposure. Therefore, exceedance of an SCO does not necessarily indicate an immediate health hazard but does indicate a need for further evaluation of the contamination.

NYSDEC/NYSDOH recommend that you consider taking the following measures to limit exposure to soil or sediment in the areas that were sampled and in areas routinely flooded by the creek ("the area"):

- Minimize direct and repeated contact with bare soils and sediments in the area. This is especially important for young children, who tend to ingest more soil than adults through hand to mouth activity.
- Wash hands after outdoor activities in the area.
- Wipe shoes on doormats or remove shoes before entering the home.
- Apply general good housekeeping practices by periodically damp mopping floors, vacuuming, and cleaning furniture to help reduce exposure to soil from the area that might be tracked indoors.
- Wash children's toys regularly, particularly if they have been used in the area.
- Clean any soil-covered tools.
- Maintain a grass or mulch cover wherever possible to help prevent direct contact with the soil in the area.
- If you choose to garden in the area, we recommend that you consider growing crops in soils in raised bed gardens and containers with clean soil imported from a non-contaminated area or bagged soil bought commercially instead of the existing soil. We also recommend that resident consider wearing gloves when gardening and dispose of or wash gloves thoroughly after each use.
- Limit or refrain from landscaping and other activities that increase exposure to soil in the area and create areas of bare soil.
- Avoid eating food or smoking when working in the area.
- Keep livestock and pets from the area. Regularly bathe pets that have gone outdoors and may have contacted sediments or soils from the area.



11. What is known about Miller Pond?

In 1994, oil seeps were reported to the NYSDEC Spill Responders. NYSDEC's investigation traced petroleum contamination in groundwater back to the EHS property as the source of the oil seeps. Multiple rounds of sampling for PCBs resulted in no detections and it was concluded that the primary contaminant was petroleum consistent with fuel oil. Former / removed fuel oil tanks were assumed to have been the source of the petroleum-impacted groundwater. Below-ground bioremediation techniques were implemented to address petroleum-impacted groundwater until 2010. At that time, groundwater sampling did not detect petroleum. The current scope of the remedial investigation includes verifying the effectiveness of past remediation efforts on- and off-site.

For More Information

12. Where can I find more information?

The NYSDEC maintains a webpage with additional information including a "Project Hotline" for questions: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/102390.html>

NYSDEC and NYSDOH staff are available to provide updates or answer any questions community members, faculty, or other stakeholders may have.

For cleanup- related questions, please contact:

Tim Schneider, P.E. NYSDEC 6274 East Avon-Lima Road Avon, NY 14414 Phone: 585-226-5480
<mailto:timothy.schneider@dec.ny.gov>

For health-related project questions, please contact:

Sara Bogardus NYSDOH Empire State Plaza, Corning Tower Room #1787 Albany, NY 12237 Phone: 518-402-7860 beei@health.ny.gov

13. How do I stay informed?

NYSDEC and NYSDOH will continue to keep the public informed as this work progresses and as development of cleanup plans are finalized.

Sign up for NYSDEC's contaminated sites county-specific email listserv to receive Site-related information and announcements for all contaminated sites in the county here: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/61092.html>