U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3

BoRit Asbestos Superfund site Community Update

Ambler Borough, Upper Dublin Township, Whitpain Township November 2010

EPA is cleaning up the BoRit Site using sound science and with the health and safety of the community as a priority. We are committed to providing the community with accurate information and opportunities to be involved throughout the cleanup process.

Regular updates will be sent to the community about our activities. For more information, please visit our website often at: **http://www.epa.gov/reg3hwmd/npl/PAD981034887.htm**

The Site Today

BoRit Site Aerial View from October 2010 (Photo Courtesy of Mr. Salvatore A. Boccuti)

YOU'RE INVITED

EPA Open House @ the Daniel W. Dowling VFW Lodge #729
351 Maple Street
Ambler, PA 19002-2494
November 16, 2010
6:00pm - 9:00pm

Drop by anytime during the informal open house to meet the EPA BoRit Asbestos Superfund Site team, ask questions and see pictures and maps of the work.

Work Underway At Tannery Run

EPA started working on Tannery Run in October 2010 to stabilize the stream banks to prevent possible asbestos-containing materials (ACM) from entering the creeks through erosion. Tannery Run marks the third stream to be addressed by the EPA's **Removal Program**. The Removal Program is designed to address short-term or immediate problems. EPA completed stream bank stabilization work at Rose Valley in May 2010 and the Wissahickon Creek stream bank adjacent to the park parcel in June 2009.

At Tannery Run, one half of the stream bank (beginning at Maple Street) will be stabilized by placing concrete-cabled mats (CCM) on the stream banks and stream bed, similar to what was done on Rose Valley. The second half of the stream bank, from behind the auto body shop and to where it meets with the Wissahickon Creek, will be stabilized using an eight-foot diameter corrugated pipe. Water from Tannery Run will flow through the pipe and into the Wissahickon Creek. Soil will be placed on top of the corrugated pipe to keep it from being visible.

The stream bank stabilization process includes:

- Creating an access road to get heavy equipment near the stream bank;
- Using clean soil to create a level surface throughout the stream bank;
- Placing geotextile fabric in the areas where the CCM and corrugated pipe will be placed;
- Backfilling the CCM on the stream banks and the top portion of the corrugated pipe with soil; and
- Hydroseeding (a watery mix of seeds and mulch sprayed onto a location through a hose) the soil with a mix of seeds, recommended by EPA's biologists, that would best suit these areas.

EPA expects the work to continue through January 2011 and will continue to keep the community informed about our progress in future updates.

The photo above shows contractors placing concrete-cabled mats in Tannery in order to stabilize the stream bank.

What is a Remedial Investigation and Feasability Study?

In addition to the short-term stream bank stabilization work being done by EPA's Removal Program, we also began a long-term investigation in September 2009 called a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study **(RI/FS).** The purpose of the RI/FS is to complete a thorough investigation of the source and extent of contamination at the site and to evaluate appropriate cleanup options. During the RI/FS, we will:

- Characterize site conditions (Where is the waste? What is contaminated?);
- Determine the nature of the waste (Is there anything other than asbestos posing a risk at this site?);
- Assess the risk to human health and the environment (Under what conditions would human health and the environment be at risk?);
- If necessary, conduct treatability testing to evaluate the potential performance and cost of the treatment technologies that are being considered; and
- Develop different long-term cleanup alternatives and conduct a detailed analysis of the viability of each alternative.

What is the Status of the RI/FS at BoRit?

EPA has completed Phase I of the Remedial Investigation. Phase II work began in October 2010 and we expect to complete this phase in December 2010.

In Phase I, EPA took a number of samples to get a better idea of where the contamination is located and determine if there are contaminants other than asbestos that may need to be addressed at the site. **(See Page #4 for Phase I results).**

<u>In Phase II of the investigation, EPA will:</u>

- Conduct activity-based sampling (ABS) both on-site and off-site **(See Page #5 for information about ABS)**;
- Determine if there are any impacts on groundwater from site-related contaminants;
- Sample soil for contamination near the old fire training location near the pile parcel;
- Further investigate the reservoir (Is it connected to the creek? Are there any outlets/inlets?); and
- Begin determining ecological and human health exposure risks in the creeks.

<u>Next Steps:</u>

- EPA expects to complete the RI/FS in *approximately* three years, depending on the needs of the investigation. It is important to note that EPA has NOT chosen a long-term cleanup option for the site. As part of the Feasibility Study, EPA will evaluate several options to clean up the site.
- EPA plans to work with the BoRit Community Advisory Group (CAG) and the community to keep them informed of our progress and of the options we're considering for the final cleanup.
- Once the RI/FS is completed, EPA will propose a final cleanup option and ask the community to comment on our proposed plan. Once all of your comments are reviewed and considered, EPA will choose the final cleanup for the site.

You can stay informed of EPA's progress through these updates, by attending the monthly CAG meetings (more information on page 7), or by visiting us at: "http://www.epaosc.org/borit"

Results of Phase I

Phase I of the Remedial Investigation was EPA's first step into conducting a full investigation of the contamination at the BoRit site. For this phase, EPA focused on gathering more information by:

- Determining the depth of the reservoir;
- Gathering sediment and surface water samples from the reservoir, Tannery Run, Rose Valley, and the Wissahickon Creek;
- Taking soil borings at all three parcels to see how deep the contamination is located;
- Sampling some of the borings for contamination;
- Installing well points to measure groundwater levels and taking groundwater samples for asbestos and other chemical contaminants; and
- Gathering surface soil samples on all three parcels and the floodplains adjacent to the site.

What did we find?

- The majority of soil borings in the park, reservoir, and pile parcels show some level of asbestos contamination
- The average thickness of asbestos contamination on the park parcel below the surface is 13 feet, with the greatest thickness of contamination being approximately 23 feet. Asbestos contamination appears to get thicker closer to the Wissahickon Creek.
- The average thickness of asbestos contamination on the pile parcel below the surface is 17 feet, with the greatest thickness of contamination being approximately 40 feet.
- The average thickness of asbestos contamination in the reservoir berm below the surface is 1 foot, with the greatest thickness of contamination being 3 feet.
- Several soil and groundwater samples exceeded ***screening levels*** for various chemical contaminants and asbestos.
    - Chemical contaminants found include benzene and naphthalene.
    - Heavy metals were also found including lead, arsenic, and mercury.

It is important to note that the screening level is used to determine if there is a potential for risk. If samples exceed the screening level, then a Baseline Risk Assessment is completed to determine if the levels pose a risk based on site-specific circumstances.

- Surface water samples in the creeks exceeded screening levels for chemical contamination, but not for asbestos.

We invite the community to view all of EPA's data from the Phase I testing at:

http://www.epaosc.org/borit (Click on "Documents", then click "Remedial" to find the link for the Phase I Remedial Investigation Report).

What is Activity Based Sampling?

During the Phase II portion of the RI/FS, EPA plans to use a sampling method called activity-based sampling (ABS). The purpose of ABS is to determine if activities that would normally occur on a property could produce dust with unacceptable levels of asbestos in the air. A sampling team wearing the proper protective clothing will create dust in the areas they want to sample. Workers need to wear protective clothing in situations where they may encounter asbestos due to federal health and safety regulations. You do not need to wear such clothing. Team members wear personal air pumps at breathing level to sample the air which a person may be breathing while the activity is occurring. Activities performed during ABS may include:

- Raking
- Mowing
- Running/Walking
- Digging
- Playing sports (sliding, diving, bike riding, etc.)

ABS sampling is important because it helps us to understand if people's day-to-day activities could expose them to unhealthy levels of asbestos. It is important to remember that asbestos can pose a hazard when it is disturbed and becomes airborne.

EPA and PADEP at Work in Ambler

Ambler Asbestos Superfund Site: Routine maintenance work at the site was completed in September to help control erosion around a concrete structure called a revetment. The revetment is designed to reduce erosion by absorbing the impact of water flowing in the creek. The site was successfully cleaned up in August 1993 and deleted from the EPA's National Priorities List in 1996. In addition to the routine maintenance work, EPA evaluates the effectiveness of the cleanup every five years. EPA's most recent evaluation determined that the cleanup continues to be protective of public health and the environment and that the concrete revetment is in excellent condition. EPA will conduct another Five-Year Review for the site in 2012. For more information, contact David Polish, Community Involvement Coordinator, at 215-814-3327 or visit: http://www.epa.gov/reg3hwmd/super/sites/PAD000436436/index.htm

Ambler Boilerhouse Property: EPA approved Montgomery County's Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund request for $847,000 as of September 30, 2010. Cleanup is expected to begin November 2010. The cleanup is expected to last through the Spring 2011. The property will eventually become a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certified office space, making it an environmentally friendly building. For more information, contact Ms. Glen Sweet, Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority, at 610-275-5300.

Former K&M Manufacturing Buildings: The former manufacturing building is currently being demolished and abated by the property owner's contractors. Work is being conducted in accordance with the National Emission Standard for Hazardous Air Pollutants Regulations. For more information, contact PADEP's Complaint Service Representative at 484-250-5991.

FACT CHECK

EPA is committed to providing the community with accurate information about our work and using our "Fact Check" section to clarify misinformation.

False: The Ambler Asbestos Superfund Site's remedy has failed.

Fact: The remedy at the Ambler Asbestos Superfund Site has not failed, and continues to be protective of human health and the environment as documented in the last three Five-Year Reviews. EPA recently completed routine maintenance work at the site ensuring that it will continue to be protective. For more information about the site, go to: http://www.epa.gov/reg3hwmd/super/sites/PAD000436436/index.htm

False: The BoRit Asbestos Superfund Site is the largest asbestos dump in the United States.

Fact: EPA has addressed, and is currently addressing, several asbestos sites across the country that are larger than the BoRit site in Ambler. Examples include the Libby Asbestos site in Libby, Montana, and the recently deleted Asbestos Dump Superfund Site in Long Hill Township, New Jersey.

False: The house on 324 West Maple Street is a front for law enforcement activity.

Fact: The house is not a front for law enforcement activities. EPA leased the house to use as a field office because it's close to the BoRit site and located in the community that we serve. The public is invited to visit the field office during regular business hours to meet with EPA employees, ask questions and look at site maps and pictures.

Did you hear something about the site and you aren't sure if it is true? Contact EPA's Community Involvement Coordinators for the facts.

Vance Evans
215-814-5526
evans.vance@epa.gov

Francisco J. Cruz
215-814-5528
cruz.franciscoj@epa.gov

For More Information or To Get Involved

Visit EPA's Field Office:

EPA Field Office
324 West Maple Avenue
Ambler, PA
(215) 654-5190

Contact EPA

Vance Evans
Community Involvement Coordinator
evans.vance@epa.gov
(215) 814-5526

Go To BoRit Websites:

http://www.epaosc.org/borit

http://www.epa.gov/reg3hwmd/npl/PAD981034887.htm

www.BoRitCAG.org — Community Advisory Group's website

Meet With Your Community:

The Community Advisory Group for the BoRit Site meets on the first Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Upper Dublin Township Building, 801 Loch Ash Avenue, Fort Washington, Pa. All meetings are open to the public. We invite all citizens to get involved and stay informed about the cleanup and the future of the site.

Apply For A Technical Assistance Grant (TAG)

A TAG provides money for activities that help your community participate in decision making at eligible Superfund sites. An initial grant of up to $50,000 is available to qualified community groups so they can contract with independent technical advisors to interpret and help the community understand technical information about their site. For more information, contact:

Amelia Libertz, TAG Coordinator

(215) 814-5522

libertz.amelia@epa.gov

In the upcoming issue…

-Update on the Tannery Run work

-Update on Phase II of the RI/FS, including any available sample results

-A photo history of EPA's work at BoRit since 2007

Tell us what you'd like to see in an upcoming issue of the Community Updates. Send all suggestions to Vance Evans, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator at evans.vance@epa.gov

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Attn: Vance Evans
Mailcode 3HS52
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
