



## UPDATE FOR BoRiT ASBESTOS SUPERFUND SITE

AMBLER, UPPER DUBLIN, WHITPAIN TWP, PENNSYLVANIA

DECEMBER 2009

### SHORT-TERM CLEANUP CONTINUES

The **United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3 (EPA)** continues to address the short-term, *potential* risk at the site.

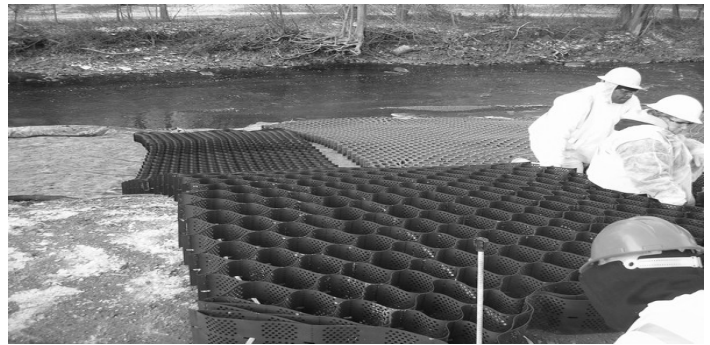
We are stabilizing the stream banks because past erosion has caused **asbestos-containing materials (ACM)** to be exposed along the stream banks of the Wissahickon Creek, Rose Valley Creek, and Tannery Run. The ACM could pose a short-term, potential risk to the community if left in an unstable environment.

EPA completed stabilizing the Wissahickon Creek stream bank next to the former park in spring 2009. The stabilization has been tested several times by the storms the area has seen during the summer, and has held up very well. Stabilizing work included:

- Removing and properly disposing of large pieces of ACM (pipes, shingles, etc.) found on the stream bank.
- Placing clean fill to level the stream bank and create a relatively even surface.
- Placing Geocells on the stream bank and filling them with soil.
- Placing topsoil on the stream bank.
- Seeding the stream bank.

EPA is doing similar work on the stream banks of Rose Valley Creek, which runs between Whitpain Park and the reservoir. In order to provide a stable stream bank with minimal excavation, EPA will place **cable-concrete mats (CCM)** on the streambed and stream banks in place of the Geocells. These mats will help keep the water from eroding the soil and exposing ACM. In addition to the

CCM, a 100 foot retaining wall was built near the Rose Valley headwall. The retaining wall will provide further support to the reservoir berm, as Rose Valley is being widened during the stabilization process.



*The photo above shows the geocells being used. Geocells are honeycomb-like structures made of plastic which can be filled with soil, stone, or concrete.*



*The photo above shows the retention wall being constructed (along the left) and the CCM placed on the stream bed.*

### SAMPLING FOR LONG-TERM CLEANUP

As part of EPA's **Remedial Investigation (RI)** for the long term cleanup, we began taking samples at the site in November 2009. [Continues on pg. 2]

## **SAMPLING...CONTINUED**

Samples will be taken for a variety of contaminants, including asbestos. Samples will be taken from water, waste, soil, and sediment. The results of our sampling efforts will help us choose the best final cleanup option for the site.

Once EPA has all the data we need, we will develop a **Feasibility Study (FS)** to determine the range of different cleanup options we can use. Before a final option is selected, EPA will seek public comments on our options, including the option that we think is the most appropriate for the final cleanup of the site.

In total, the **RI/FS** process may take **three to five years** to complete because of the amount of sampling and analysis that we need to do. The sampling will not affect the work already being done at the site. Likewise, the work being done at the site will not hinder the sampling process. EPA will send updated fact sheets to the community reporting on our progress.

## **ENJOY HIKING THE WISSAHICKON?**

There are many beautiful trails along the Wissahickon Creek that boast beautiful wildlife and serene landscapes. Some of the most enjoyable parts of the Wissahickon Creek run alongside the BoRit Asbestos Superfund Site, as well as the Ambler Asbestos Superfund Site. **You may still use these areas for recreation.**

Unfortunately, prior manufacturing activities have left ACM both in the creek and on the stream banks closest to the site. Public health officials do not see a public health threat from asbestos exposure to people using the unrestricted areas of the Wissahickon Creek for occasional recreational purposes (e.g., fishing and swimming). However, people are encouraged to avoid contact with pipes or tiles in the creek areas.

If a person were to take these pipes out of the creek and break them, the material could dry and cause

asbestos to go in the air. A few other safety tips people should keep in mind include:

- Do not bring pieces of pipe or tile home from near the site. The pipes or tiles may contain asbestos.
- If you are in the area and come in contact with suspected asbestos pipes or tiles, clean your shoes or boots outside.
- If you touch a pipe or tile, wash your hands. If you are wearing gloves, dispose of them outside.
- If you think you may have come in contact with asbestos, wash your clothes separately from your regular laundry.

The photo below is an example of what may be found in the creek. If you have any questions regarding health risks along the Wissahickon Creek, please contact the following individuals:

Lora Werner, ATSDR  
215-814-3141  
lkw9@cdc.gov

Barbara Allerton, PADOH  
717-346-3285  
ballerton@state.pa.us



## CAG CORNER

The BoRit **Community Advisory Group (CAG)** was formed to represent the community's concerns, provide input to EPA, and communicate information to the public about EPA's work. Some of the CAG's work to date includes:

- Reviewing and commenting on the Rose Valley Creek stabilization project.
- Looking at options for reusing the site after the cleanup is completed.
- Participating in weekly conference calls with EPA's project managers to get technical updates and ask questions about EPA's progress and plans.
- Participating in training provided by EPA's **Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC)** contract.
  - A TASC Assessment of the CAG showed that the CAG would greatly benefit from professional training in areas including communication and facilitation.

### *CAG MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO PUBLIC*

The CAG meets the first Wednesday of every month, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., at the Upper Dublin Township Building, located at 801 Loch Alsh Avenue, Fort Washington, Pennsylvania 19034.

For more information regarding the CAG, please contact Francisco J. Cruz, EPA's **Community Involvement Coordinator (CIC)**, at 215-814-5528 or [cruz.franciscoj@epa.gov](mailto:cruz.franciscoj@epa.gov).

## FACT CHECK

EPA staff work hard to ensure that the community has all the facts about our work. Correcting misinformation is a priority and helps us maintain positive relationships with the communities we serve. Here are a few statements that need clarification:



- **Rumor:** You see all that dirt on the site? EPA already knows it is going to cover the site with dirt and leave the site.
  - **Reality:** The soil was offered to EPA for free by PennDOT. Soil will be needed for the short-term cleanup. If there is any soil left, it may be needed for the long-term cleanup, whether the site is excavated or covered.
- EPA has not made any decisions about the final cleanup for the site. We must complete the RI/FS process and seek public comment before a final cleanup is chosen. The options for a final cleanup will be presented to the community in a document called the Proposed Plan. The Proposed Plan is several years away from being completed.
- **Rumor:** They are building a supermarket/pharmacy/apartments on the site.
  - **Reality:** EPA is conducting a cleanup of the site due to asbestos contamination. *The property owners and local zoning authorities are responsible for redevelopment, not EPA.*
- **Rumor:** People are getting sick from the BoRit Asbestos Superfund Site.
  - **Reality:** EPA has conducted extensive air sampling and monitoring at the site, and there is no indication that people are currently being exposed to asbestos. However, it is possible that people may have been exposed to asbestos when the manufacturing plant was in operation. The current work is being done proactively to address any *potential* risks the site may pose in the future.

Did you hear something about the site and aren't sure if it is true? Contact Francisco J. Cruz, EPA's CIC, at 215-814-5528 or [cruz.franciscoj@epa.gov](mailto:cruz.franciscoj@epa.gov)



**FOR MORE INFORMATION  
ABOUT THE BORIT ASBESTOS  
SUPERFUND SITE**

**VISIT EPA'S COMMAND POST AT:**

324 West Maple Avenue  
Ambler, Pennsylvania

**OR CONTACT EPA, REGION 3:**

Stacie Peterson  
Remedial Project Manager  
215-814-5173  
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Eduardo Rovira  
On-Scene Coordinator  
215-654-5190  
rovira.eduardo@epa.gov

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

**EPA's BoRit Website:**  
<http://www.epaosc.org/borit>

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE  
GRANTS AVAILABLE**

In addition to the TASC services mentioned on page 3, EPA's Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) Program provides funds of up to \$50,000 to qualified citizens' groups affected by a Superfund Site to hire independent technical advisors to help interpret and comment on site-related information. Since only one TAG may be awarded for a site, EPA encourages groups to consolidate to apply. For TAG information, please contact Amelia Libertz, TAG Coordinator, at 1-800-553-2509.



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