

August 2006



U.S. EPA REGION 3
DELAWARE, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, MARYLAND,
PENNSYLVANIA, VIRGINIA, WEST VIRGINIA

McAdoo Associates Superfund Site, McAdoo, PA

Seven Facts You Should Know about the McAdoo Associates Superfund Site

What work did the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) perform at the site to protect human health and the environment?

In 1985, EPA chose a remedy to clean up the site, which included removing all surface tanks and drums; excavating contaminated soil; backfilling the excavated area with clean topsoil; and constructing ditches to prevent off-site surface water from draining into the site. The site was covered with a clay cap in the spring of 1992. Soil sampling and a mine subsidence study were also conducted. After determining that the site did not pose a threat to the community or the environment, the site was deleted from the National Priorities List (NPL) in December 2001.

What is being done to protect human health in the long term?

EPA is continuing a series of five-year reviews at the site to confirm that the site is safe and continues to protect human health. Groundwater at the site is monitored annually to ensure that there are no impacts to groundwater that could cause an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment.

Can contaminants at the site leak into groundwater?

Groundwater beneath the site is contaminated. The source of this contamination as well as contaminated site soil was removed during the remedial action. Infiltration of rain water into the groundwater at the site was limited by the diversion ditches and the clay cap. Consequently, EPA's most recent five-year review indicates that contaminant concentrations have decreased to low levels and remain only in a limited area. The site groundwater is not used for drinking, as it is impacted by acid mine drainage. Drinking water, including residential and public water supplies, is not impacted by any site-related contaminants.

Are private wells on Still Creek and Silver Brook Roads safe?

YES. The private wells are safe for drinking. Site-related contaminants have not been found in private wells. All monitoring results indicate that the well water meets federal drinking water standards. The source of

water for the private wells has not been impacted by the McAdoo Associates Superfund Site.

Is drinking water from the Still Creek Reservoir safe to drink?

Yes. All monitoring results for the "finished" (treated) drinking water from the Still Creek Reservoir that is delivered to your home meets standards established under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Additional environmental sampling has been completed. Only a single sample of untreated surface water from the reservoir in 2004 detected an elevated level of lead (76 parts per billion, or ppb). This result has not been replicated in subsequent rounds of sampling in 2006. No levels of health concern were detected. **The treated public water being delivered to community members is safe to drink.**

Water companies are required to provide their monitoring information on "tap" (drinking) water quality to the public in an annual Consumer Confidence Report. If you would like a copy of the most recent version of this report, please call the Tamaqua Area Water Authority at 570-668-6254.

What causes the disease polycythemia vera?

Unfortunately, we don't know what causes polycythemia vera. No one has yet been able to establish any links between this disease and exposure to any particular chemical or chemicals. We know that it occurs more often in older people and is slightly more common in men. Polycythemia vera is a rare disorder of the stem cells, which are responsible for the production of red blood cells, platelets, and other myeloid cells.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) are working together to learn as much as possible about the identified polycythemia vera cases in Carbon, Luzerne, and Schuylkill Counties.

Are cancer rates, particularly the rate of the disease polycythemia vera, elevated in this area?

Cancer is a common disease. One in three Pennsylvanians is expected to develop some form of cancer in his or her lifetime. Every different type of cancer has its own risk factors or causes. Risk factors include things



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like smoking, diet, occupation, certain chemical or radiological exposures, and heredity .

Between 1996 and 2002, a total of 24,867 new cancer cases were diagnosed among residents of the 80 zip codes in Carbon, Luzerne, and Schuylkill counties.

The most common cancer types in the area near the Still Creek Reservoir were prostate, breast, colon-rectum, and lung. The rates of some newly diagnosed cancers in this study area, including polycythemia vera specifically in Luzerne County, were higher than expected compared to the rest of the state.

In contrast, the rates of some newly diagnosed cancers in this study area were lower than expected compared to the rest of the state. During the 1996-2002 period, the rates for the majority of cancer types in this tri-county area were generally similar to the state's rates.

The public health agencies would like to let community members know that, even with additional information about the people who have this disease in the study area, it will be very difficult for health agencies to make any statements about the cause(s) of this illness, given the following limitations:

- We don't know what chemical exposures to examine for this illness.
- Cancer usually takes years (10+) to develop after an exposure to a risk factor, and it is hard to know or measure past exposures.

ATSDR and PADOH will be meeting with local health professionals in the area to learn more about polycythemia vera and other health concerns in this area and to obtain physician-verified records of the reports of additional polycythemia vera cases in the area.

Contact us for information:

Rom Roman

EPA Remedial Project Manager, 215-814-3212 or roman.romuald@epa.gov



Larry C. Johnson

EPA Community Involvement Coordinator, 215-814-3239 or johnson.larry-c@epa.gov



Department of Health and Human Services
Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry

Lora Werner, ATSDR Senior Regional Representative, 215-814-3141, or visit ATSDR on the Web at:

www.atsdr.cdc.gov



Department of
Environmental Protection

Joseph Iannuzzo, PADEP Project Officer, or **Mark Carmon**, PADEP Community Relations Coordinator at PADEP Northeast Regional Office, 2 Public Square, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711, 570-826-2511.



Visit the PADOH website at:

www.health.state.pa.us

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Larry C. Johnson
U.S. EPA Region 3
1650 Arch Street (3HS52)
Philadelphia, PA 19103