NPL Site Narrative for Tutu Wellfield

TUTU WELLFIELD
Tutu, Virgin Islands

Conditions at Proposal (February 7, 1992): The Tutu Wellfield site involves a plume of contaminated ground water covering approximately 108 acres in Tutu in a mountainous semi-rural area of eastern central St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. In July 1987, a strong petroleum odor was detected in the Tillet Well, a public supply well in the area. At the request of the Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources (VIDPNR), EPA sampled over 100 wells in the area. Volatile organic compounds such as benzene, toluene, trans-1,2-dichloroethene, trichloroethene (TCE), and tetrachloroethene (PCE) were detected in several public supply, institutional, commercial, and private wells. Water from several commercial wells in this area was hauled to other parts of the island. The Tillet Well, 3 private wells, and 13 commercial wells subsequently closed down, and alternative sources of water, including trucking water to the area, were made available.

In July and September 1987, VIDPNR issued administrative orders on consent to Tutu Texaco Service Station and Tutu Esso Car Care Center to investigate the release of petroleum from their underground storage tanks. EPA identified six more potentially responsible parties (PRPs): two vehicle maintenance repair stations (Ramsay Motor Co., and Antille Autos), two Territorial government agencies (Virgin Islands Housing Authority and Department of Education, formerly the Laga Building), a dry cleaner (O'Henry Cleaners), and a silk screening operation (Jim Tillet, Inc./Tillet Gardens). Potential sources of hazardous substances at these locations include petroleum and waste oil underground storage tanks, drum storage areas, contaminated catch basins, oil separators, floor drains, a sump holding tank, a leaching pit, above-ground tanks, and an evaporation pit. Wastes that may have been disposed of include solvent-based auto flushes, treatments, degreasers, cleaners, and lubricants; antifreeze; kerosene; hydraulic fluid; waste oils; spent PCE waste and filters; dry cleaning fluids such as 2-butoxyethanol, hexylene glycol, and dye stripper; ammonium hydroxide; and mineral spirits. In September 1987, EPA used CERCLA emergency removal funds to decontaminate five residential cisterns, provide alternative water supplies, and monitor local wells.

Since 1987, EPA has detected many of the same chemicals found in drinking water wells in the soils on the properties of several of the PRPs. Semivolatiles such as phenols and polyaromatic hydrocarbons were also detected at a few of these properties, as was cadmium and PCBs. An estimated 1,600 people formerly obtained drinking water from public and private wells within 4 miles of the site.

In March 1990, EPA issued a unilateral administrative order to O'Henry Cleaners, Esso Standard Oil Co., and Texaco Caribbean, Inc., to take over EPA's removal action. In September 1990, the three companies began the monitoring program.

Tutu is located in the Upper Turpentine Run Basin. An intermittent stream leading to Turpentine Run is within a few hundred feet to the southwest. Turpentine Run flows southward approximately 2.8 miles to Mangrove Lagoon, which is hydraulically connected to the Caribbean Sea. The Atlantic Ocean lies approximately 1 mile to the north.

Status (September 1995): An escrow account was set up in 1993 to provide trucked-in water to the affected residents until their wells are potable again. In June 1993, EPA identified an additional PRP:

a vehicle maintenance station (Western Auto). In March 1995, approximately 700 cubic feet of PCE-contaminated soil was excavated from the O'Henry Cleaners property. A proposed plan for ground water and soil remediation was published on July 23, 1995.

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at ATSDR - ToxFAQs (http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.