

NPL Site Narrative for Peter Cooper Corporation (Markhams)

PETER COOPER CORPORATION (MARKHAMS) Dayton, New York

Conditions at Proposal (April 23, 1999): The Peter Cooper Corporation (PCC) site consists of an inactive waste disposal area and several acres of contaminated soil adjacent to a forested wetland. The site is situated within a 106-acre, wooded property in a flat-lying, rural area. The site is bounded by railroad tracks to the southeast, the forested wetland to the northwest and the remainder of the wooded property to the northeast and southwest. The surrounding vicinity consists mostly of farmland and meadows, with scattered palustrine wetland areas. The original corporation, including its name, assets, and liabilities, was purchased in August 1976 by Rousselot Gelatin Corporation and its parent, Rousselot, S.A. of Paris, France. The Rousselot Gelatin Corporation was renamed the Peter Cooper Corporation, which still owns the Markhams property.

PCC used the Markhams site for disposal of manufacturing residues from 1955 until 1972, when animal glue production ceased at the Gowanda plant. In 1971, PCC reported that the Markhams site was receiving vacuum filter sludge and cookhouse sludge directly from the Gowanda operation; they would receive those materials until the plant shut down in February 1972. In September 1971, a 15-acre disposal area was almost completely covered with waste. It was reported that approximately 9,600 tons of manufacturing residues had been placed at the site.

In addition to the manufacturing residues, PCC transferred approximately 38,600 tons of previously accumulated wastes from the Gowanda site to the Markhams site between August 1971 and late 1972. The action was conducted in compliance with New York State Supreme Court Order and Judgement, Index No. 30356, June 1971, which required PCC to remove all or part of waste residue piles from the Gowanda site. At the Markhams site, PCC arranged the material into several waste piles approximately 20 feet high and covering a total of approximately 7 acres, mostly in the original disposal area. No disposal occurred at the Markhams site after 1972, and the disposal area has since revegetated.

The waste material has been shown to contain elevated levels of chromium, arsenic, zinc, and some organic compounds. Waste characterization samples collected from the piles in 1988 during a Remedial Investigation (RI) showed total chromium concentrations as high as 46,000 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg) and zinc up to 900 mg/kg. Soil samples containing waste collected in 1993 contained chromium, zinc, and several other metals and organic compounds.

The results of soil sampling conducted during the RI indicated a large area of contaminated soil outside the boundaries of the waste piles. The analytical data indicated that 33 separate locations contained one or more of the following parameters at concentrations significantly above background: chromium, hexavalent chromium, arsenic, calcium, manganese, and zinc. Sampling conducted in June 1993 confirmed the presence of chromium, calcium, and manganese in soils outside the boundaries of the waste piles.

In September 1992, PCC proposed a remedial alternative for the site that would include consolidation and covering of the waste pile material. NYSDEC could not pursue this remedial action under Environmental

Conservation Law (ECL) Title 13, and removed the site from its registry of inactive hazardous waste disposal sites. NYSDEC remained concerned, stating that a remedial program was needed at the site. Surface water and sediment samples collected from the on-site wetland during the RI in 1986 indicated arsenic and chromium in two surface water samples and chromium and hexavalent chromium in three sediment samples were detected at concentrations significantly above background.

Although there are some indications that the on-site wetland is connected to one of two nearby streams, Slab City Creek or Johnson Creek, there is not a well-defined runoff pathway. The soils in the area are conducive to infiltration. Therefore, the wetland is evaluated as an isolated wetland and constitutes the entire surface water pathway evaluated. The wetland areas on site provide feeding, nesting, and resting habitat for migratory waterfowl. The site is known to be used for the hunting of numerous animals, including mallards, wood ducks, and Canada geese that frequent the wetland. The observed release described above constitutes Level I contamination of the wetland.

Monitoring well installation and ground water sampling conducted during the RI also indicated that shallow ground water has been contaminated as a result of the disposal activities at the site. Area residents use private ground water wells for drinking water, and there are public supply wells located approximately 2.5 miles southwest of the site, in the Village of South Dayton.

Status (February 2000): EPA is considering various alternatives for this site.

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) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.