Threemile Run Tar Site

Kinzua Creek Watershed

Community Involvement Plan

Mount Alton, McKean County, Pennsylvania

U.S. EPA Region 3

August 2020

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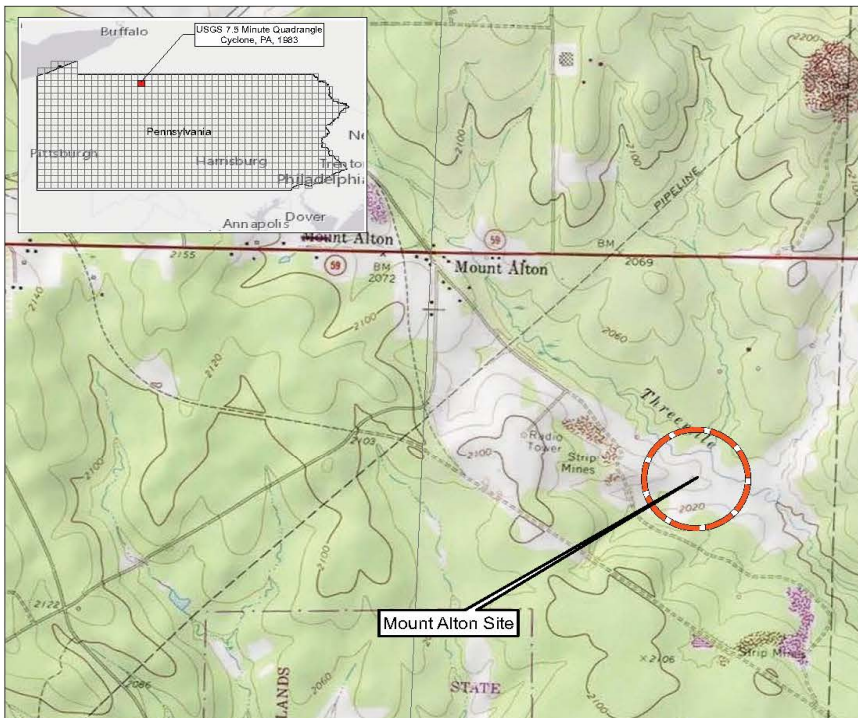
1. Introduction

Under the federal Superfund program, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is overseeing an environmental investigation and cleanup at the Threemile Run Tar Site.

The Threemile Run Tar Site located near Mount Alton, McKean County, Pennsylvania, is in a mostly rural area that touches parts of the Allegheny National Forest, Kinzua Bridge State Park, Kinzua Valley Trail, and State Game Lands. The area in and around the site is used for recreational activities, such as fishing, hiking, hunting, and camping.

EPA completed an **Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA)** report in 2020 to identify cleanup objectives, to compare the cost, effectiveness, and feasibility of cleanup options, and to determine the appropriate cleanup action. The EE/CA focuses on a chemical wood manufacturing plant that operated near Mount Alton in the Kinzua Creek Watershed during the late 1800s and early 1900s. The chemical wood manufacturing plant produced charcoal, methanol, acetate lime, and wood tar, a waste byproduct of the manufacturing process. The wood tar waste was disposed of into ground surfaces, pits, and lagoons near the plant and sometimes directly into streams.

EPA has determined that the site poses a potential risk for fish and other aquatic life found in the area and compiled four main objectives for the proposed cleanup plan: remove and properly dispose of wood tar deposits, restore and stabilize stream banks, and restore a vegetative cover of native plant species to stabilize the land.



Throughout the cleanup process, EPA is committed to involving the public and keeping the community informed about cleanup activities and how these activities may impact them. The **Community Involvement Plan (CIP)** has been developed to facilitate two-way dialogue between EPA and the community affected by the Threemile Run Tar Site and to identify tools that encourage participation throughout the investigation and cleanup. The foundation of this plan has been developed based on input from local government representatives, residents, community organizations, businesses, and other stakeholders.

1.1 Community Involvement at Superfund Sites

The goal of Superfund community involvement is to advocate and strengthen early and meaningful community participation during Superfund cleanups. The CIP is EPA's site-specific roadmap that describes the needs and concerns of the community and identifies the most appropriate tools and methods to inform and engage them in the cleanup process.

Furthermore, the CIP serves as a resource for EPA staff and partners at the state and local level as they plan for public meetings and communicating with residents, elected officials, and the media. The CIP is a "living" document that will evolve and be modified as the investigation, design, and cleanup process continue and as input is received from the community.

Community Involvement Goals:

- Provide the community with accurate, timely, and understandable information about the cleanup in a manner that is considerate of their preference and culture;
- Facilitate opportunities for public input and ensure community needs and concerns are considered; and
- Respect and consider community input and feedback on EPA's process as it is being carried out.

This Community Involvement Plan:

1. Adopts community involvement tools and practices to be used at the Threemile Run Tar Site;
2. Incorporates recommendations from interviews regarding ways to further improve community involvement; and
3. Identifies existing networks in the area to ensure culturally/linguistically appropriate, effective, and efficient outreach methods are implemented.

2. Superfund Overview

2.1 What is the Superfund Program?

To participate in or follow the Superfund process as it unfolds in your community, it is important to know what Superfund is and how it works. EPA's Superfund Program, enacted in 1980 under the **Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)** and amended in 1986 by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA), is responsible for cleaning up some of the nation's most contaminated land and responding to environmental emergencies, oil spills, and natural disasters. To protect public health and the environment, the Superfund Program focuses on making a visible and lasting difference in communities, ensuring that people can live and work in healthy, vibrant places.

The CERCLA law gives EPA the authority to require those parties responsible for contaminating sites to clean up those sites or to reimburse the government if EPA cleans up the site.

EPA compels responsible parties to clean up hazardous waste sites through administrative orders, consent decrees and other legal settlements. Superfund site identification, monitoring and response activities are coordinated with state, tribal and territorial environmental protection or waste management agencies.

There are several steps involved in cleaning up a contaminated site. Once EPA has been made aware of a contaminated site from individual citizens, local or state agencies or others, EPA follows a step-by-step process to determine the best way to clean up the site and protect human health and the environment. If the site poses an immediate threat to public health or the environment, EPA can intervene with an emergency response or removal action.

For more information about EPA's cleanup programs, please visit:

Basic Information about Cleanups:

https://www.epa.gov/cleanups/basic-information-about-cleanups

EPA's Role in Emergency Response:

https://www.epa.gov/emergency-response/epas-role-emergency-response

Additional web resources are provided in Appendix I.

2.2 What are Removal Actions?

Removal actions are responses to releases that threaten the public health, welfare or the environment of the United States. These actions tend to be swift to address immediate threats from hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants.

Removal actions are initiated when an "Action Memorandum" (action memo) is signed. The action memo designates the type of removal action to be conducted. Alternatively, EPA can use a Special Bulletin to quickly begin removal actions in emergency situations.

There are three categories of removal actions:

1. **Emergency Removals** require an immediate response to releases or threatened releases to the environment.
2. **Time-Critical Removals** are situations for which EPA determines that a removal is appropriate and on-site removal activities must begin within six months.
3. **Non-Time-Critical Removals** are undertaken when EPA determines, based on a site evaluation, that a removal action is appropriate and there is a planning period of at least six months before on-site activities must begin.

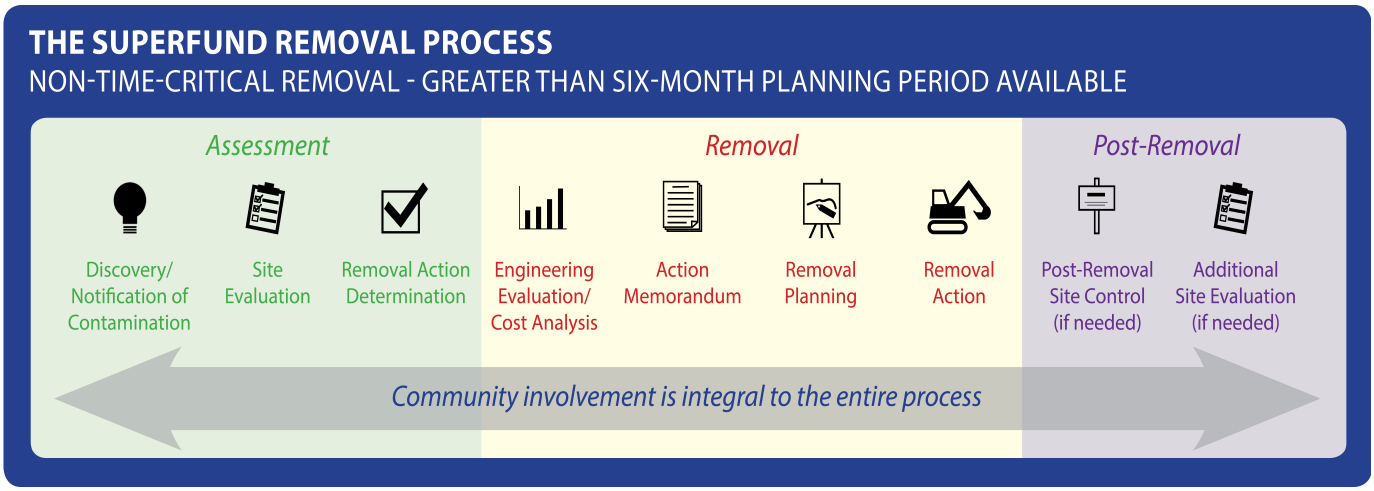
Wood tar deposits at site

3. About the Site

3.1 Site Investigation and Cleanup

The Threemile Run Tar Site has been designated as a **non-time-critical removal action**. Based on the site evaluation, EPA determined that a removal action is appropriate, and a planning period of at least six months is available before on-site activities must begin.

All non-time-critical removal actions require an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA). The EE/CA satisfies environmental review requirements for removal actions, completes administrative record requirements for removal action selection, and provides a framework for evaluating and selecting alternative cleanup strategies.



Wood tar deposits at edge of Threemile Run

4. About the Community

4.1 Community Overview

The Threemile Run Tar Site is located in a mostly rural area in McKean County, near the Allegheny National Forest, Kinzua Bridge State Park, Kinzua Valley Trail, and PA State Game Lands #62. The site is located in Mt. Alton, within Lafayette Township, Pennsylvania.

The surrounding areas are primarily used for recreational activities, such as fishing, hiking, hunting, and camping. The local community is comprised of few residences, including some seasonal hunting or fishing cabins.

Threemile Run

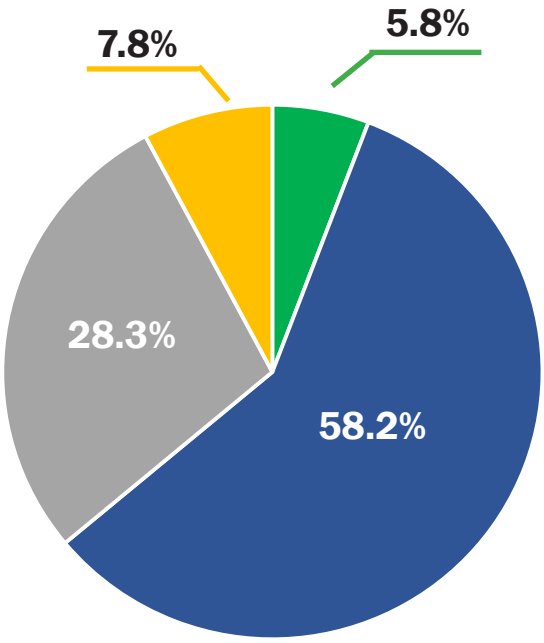
What is Environmental Justice?

The EPA defines Environmental Justice as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment means no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental, and commercial operations or policies. Meaningful involvement means:

- People have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health;
- The public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision;
- The public's concern will be considered in the decision-making process; and
- The decision makers seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.

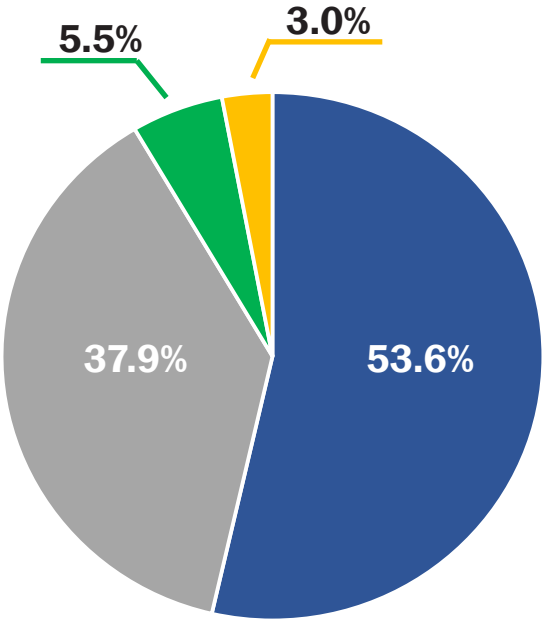
4.2 Community Demographics

All demographic information pertaining to Lafayette township, McKean County, Pennsylvania, has been obtained from the 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.



Population by Age Range

- 19 years and younger
- 20 to 44 years
- 45 to 64 years
- 65 years and older



Population by Race

- White alone
- Black or African American alone
- Other race alone
- 2+ races

Population

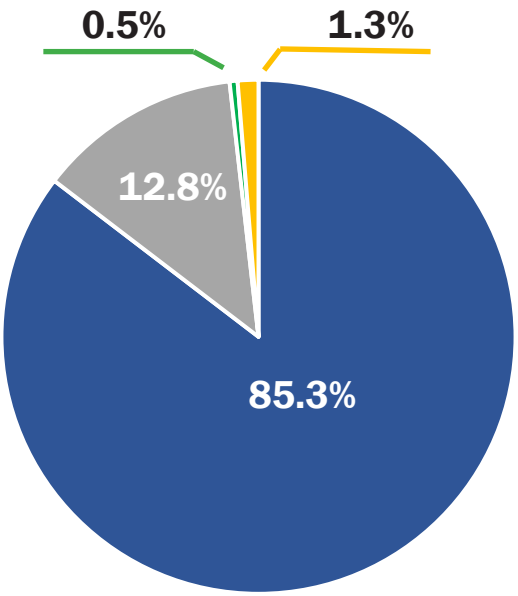
2,209

Median Household Income

$58,333

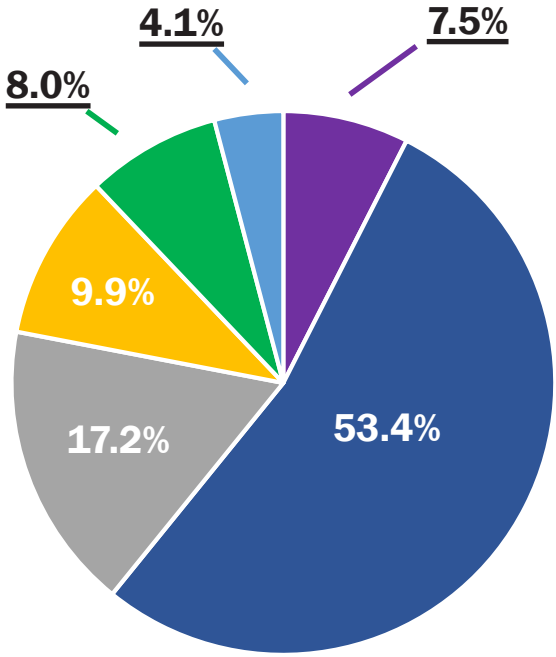
Employment Rate

23.7%



Types of Languages Spoken at Home

- English only
- Spanish
- Other Indo-European languages
- Other languages



Education Attainment

- No high school diploma
- High School or equivalent degree
- Some college, no degree
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate or professional degree

For the following section on Community Feedback, the community is defined as the homes and businesses on and near the site that have participated in, or been informed about, EPA's activities at the Threemile Run Tar Site. Concerning this community, stakeholders are government agencies with a professional interest in the site. Residents live within the community surrounding the affected site.

4.3 Community Feedback

In September 2020, the **Community Involvement Coordinators (CICs)** conducted five community interviews regarding the Threemile Run Tar site. These interviews were designed to discuss the site and its cleanup progress, and to identify the community's needs, concerns, and recommendations to aid in future community engagement throughout the cleanup process. The following is a summary of responses.

All interviewees voiced a strong awareness of the site, four having visited before. At the same time, one stakeholder only recently became aware of the site. Though non-residents, stakeholders had strong connections to the site through their work with various government agencies. The one resident interviewee had lived in the area for 10 years and viewed EPA as a key source of site information.

Many interviewees raised concerns about the negative environmental impact surrounding the site and the community. Some interviewees said that old oil and gas wells were seen as another source of contamination for the Kinzua Creek area. With regards to the creek itself, interviewees felt that waste runoff and pollutants could cause overall water quality deterioration for the area. Stakeholders indicated that this type of contamination could harm the area's ecosystem, wetlands, aquatic organisms, drinking water, and overall human health. In addition, two interviewees expressed concerns that ATVs or four wheelers driving on closed roads could interfere with site clean-up actions.

Of those stakeholders who worked for a government agency, most reported that no agency actions had been taken concerning the site. However, one stakeholder previously worked with the Kinzua Branch on similar issues and could be considered as an additional source of information regarding the site.

Debris on streambank at site

Stakeholders advised that EPA should communicate its actions often with the community. In addition, stakeholders advised that the Game and Fish Commission and the Boat Commission should be kept informed. On a community level, Mt. Jewett Sportsmen's Club, the Ruffed Grouse Society, Trout Unlimited, and Western Pennsylvania Conservatory were suggested as appropriate special interest clubs to contact regarding site issues. Some stakeholders said their agency communicated this type of important information to the community through news releases and Facebook, while others mentioned radio and online resources as well. Overall, communication with the community and government agencies will be an important focus throughout EPA's clean-up process.

5. Community Involvement Tools and Techniques

The foundation of Superfund's Community Involvement Program is the belief that members of the community affected by a removal site have the right to be informed and involved in EPA's decision-making process. EPA recognizes the benefits that an engaged public brings to the cleanup process and is committed to providing and encouraging public participation so that the people whose lives have been impacted by removal sites, and EPA's actions to clean them up, have a say in what happens in their community. EPA's Community Involvement Program strives to maintain a consistent community presence and build relationships with the community and local stakeholders, as well as local, state, and other federal government agencies.

This Community Involvement Action Plan highlights EPA's key objectives, methods and timeline for conducting site-specific activities to keep residents, community stakeholders, and local officials informed and involved throughout the cleanup process. The level of interest from the community along with the stage in the removal process reflect which community engagement activity is used at the site. To establish this plan, EPA considered several factors, including community needs, concerns and recommendations.

For more information on available community resources, please visit:

EPA's Superfund Community Involvement Website:

https://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-community-involvement

Debris on streambank at site

5.1 Community Involvement Action Plan

Community Involvement Objectives	Tools & Methods	Status
Maintain points of contact	Points of contact (see Appendix C)	Completed
Establish a location for the community to access key site information	Information repository located at the Mt. Jewett Memorial Library (see Appendix G)	Completed
Maintain a consistent community presence to build relationships, especially among those most directly affected by contamination and cleanup	Door-to-door outreach, direct mailings (fact sheets, postcards) with site updates, e-mail notifications, public notices, and telephone conversations	Ongoing
Conduct early, frequent, and meaningful community involvement activities using a wide variety of tools and strategies to engage and communicate ongoing and planned site activities with the community		
Explain technical site activities and findings in a format that all can understand		Public notice in the Bradford Era in August 2020; EE/CA Fact Sheet delivered August 2020; other activities ongoing as needed
Write and distribute news releases and public notices		
Evaluate community involvement and outreach efforts and adjust as necessary	Update Community Involvement Plan	Periodically throughout the cleanup process, on an as-needed basis

Appendix A — Glossary with Acronyms

CAG ..... Community Advisory Group

CERCLA ..... Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act

CIP ..... Community Involvement Plan

EE/CA ..... Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis

EPA ..... Environmental Protection Agency

SARA ..... Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act

TASC ..... Technical Assistance Services for Communities

Last Updated: September 15, 2020

Appendix B — Resources for the Community

EPA offers many opportunities and resources to facilitate the community's involvement in EPA's activities and decisions. The specific type and number of activities depends on the level of interest expressed by the community. For a comprehensive description of available resources and opportunities, visit:

https://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-community-involvement

Get Involved and Get Support

Community Advisory Group (CAG):

(https://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-community-advisory-groups)

Self-governing stakeholder group that meets regularly to learn about EPA's cleanup process, discuss issues and concerns, and provide feedback to EPA. EPA can provide support to the CAG by attending meetings, making presentations, procuring meeting rooms, advertising the meetings, and providing copies of site-related documents.

Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC)

https://www.epa.gov/superfund/technical-assistance-services-communities-tasc-program

Program that provides independent educational and technical assistance to communities affected by a site. Such assistance helps communities to better understand the hazardous waste issues confronting them and make them well-informed while participating in the decision-making process.

For questions, please contact:
Gina Soscia, EPA Region III's CAG/TAG/TASC Coordinator
(215) 814-5538; soscia.gina@epa.gov

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Appendix C — EPA and Other Agency Contacts

EPA

Ann DiDonato
On Scene Coordinator
U.S. EPA Region III
1650 Arch Street – 3SD31
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Phone: (215) 814-3311
Email: didonato.ann@epa.gov

Meg Broughton
Community Involvement Coordinator
U.S. EPA Region III
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Philadelphia, PA 19103
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Katie Page
Community Involvement Coordinator
U.S. EPA Region III
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Philadelphia, PA 19103
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Gina Soscia
CAG/TAG/TASC Coordinator
U.S. EPA Region III
1650 Arch Street - 3RA22
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Phone: (215) 814-5538
Email: soscia.gina@epa.gov

Kyle Zieba
State and Congressional Liaison
U.S. EPA Region III
1650 Arch Street – 3RA21
Philadelphia, PA19103
Phone: (215) 814-5420
Email: zieba.kyle@epa.gov

ATSDR

Karl Markiewicz
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Phone: (215) 814-3149
Email: markiewicz.karl@epa.gov
www.atsdr.cdc.gov

USFWS

Larry K. Brannaka
Hydrologist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
110 Radnor Road, Suite 101
State College, PA 16801
Phone (Cell): (814) 876-0055
Fax: (814) 234-0748

PADEP

Richard Weber
Environmental Protection Specialist
Environmental Cleanup and Brownfields
PA Dept. of Environmental Protection
230 Chestnut Street
Meadville, PA 16335
Phone: (814) 332-6302
Fax: (814) 332-6121

McKean County Conservation District

17137 US-6
Smethport, PA 16749
Phone: (814) 887-4001

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Appendix D — Elected Officials

Federal

Robert Casey Jr.
Senator
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone: (202) 224-6324
https://www.casey.senate.gov/

Patrick Toomey
Senator
248 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone: (202) 224-4254
https://www.toomey.senate.gov/

Glenn Thompson, 15th District
Representative
400 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-5121
https://thompson.house.gov/

State

Tom Wolf
Governor
Office of the Governor
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120
Phone: (717) 787-2500
https://www.governor.pa.gov/

Joseph B. Scarnati III, 25th District
State Senator
292 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120
Phone: (717) 787-7084
https://www.senatorscarnati.com/

Martin Causer, 67th District
State Representative
150 Main Capitol
PO Box 202067
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2067
Phone: (717) 787-5075
http://www.repcauser.com/

Local

McKean County
500 West Main Street
Smethport, PA 16749
Phone: (814) 887-5571
https://www.mckeancountypa.org/

Lafayette Township
7534 Route 59
Lewis Run, PA 16738
Phone: (814) 368-5030
Email: lafaytwp@verison.net

Board of Directors: Lafayette Township
John Ryan
John Knox
Michael Angello

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Appendix E — Media Outlets

Newspapers

Bradford Journal
69 Garlock Hollow
Bradford, PA 16701
Phone: (814) 465-3468
https://www.bradfordjournal.com/

The Bradford Era
43 Main Street
Bradford, PA 16701
Phone: (814) 368-3173
https://www.bradfordera.com/

Television Stations

WHP CBS 21
3300 North 6th Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110
Phone: (717) 238-2100
https://local21news.com/

WTAE- Pittsburgh Action News 4
400 Ardmore Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15221
Phone: (412) 242-4300
https://www.wtae.com/

WJAC-TV (NBC)
801 East DuBois Avenue
DuBois, PA 15801
Phone: (814) 255-7600
https://wjactv.com/

Radio Stations

WHKS Studios
94.9 fm/600 am
9 South Main Street
Coudersport, PA 16915
Phone: (814) 203-7069
http://www.whkswfrm.com/

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Appendix F — Potential Meeting Locations

Mt. Jewett Library
7 East Main Street
Mt Jewett, PA 16740
Phone: (814) 778-5588

Last Updated: September 15, 2020

Appendix G — Information Repositories

When EPA formally proposes a cleanup plan, it collects every document that was used or relied upon to develop and analyze the proposed action. This collection of technical documents is called the Administrative Record (AR) and is available online or at an information repository. The following information repositories have been established for the Threemile Tar Site:

Local Repository

Mt. Jewett Library
7 East Main Street
Mt Jewett, PA 16740
Phone: (814) 778-5588

EPA Office

U.S. EPA Region 3
Administrative Records Room
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Phone: (215) 814-3157, by appointment

Online

https://semspub.epa.gov/src/collection/03/AR66489

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Appendix H — Sample Interview Questions

General Information:

1. Are you aware of the Site?
2. (For residents) How long have you lived in this community?
3. (For officials) Do you live in the area affected by the site?
4. When/how did you first learn about the site?
5. What have you heard about the site?
6. What/who is the source of this information?
7. Do you think this information is credible?
8. Who do you consider reliable sources of information about local environmental issues?
9. Are there environmental concerns in the community, other than this site?
10. Who are the major employers in this area?
11. Did you or others in the community take any actions to focus attention on conditions at the site? If so, what were your concerns or goals?
12. Did you or anyone you know work at the site when it was operating or play at the site after it closed?
13. Since the site ceased operations, do you know if it is used for recreational purposes or if trespassing is an issue?
14. What are your current concerns about the site?

Community Involvement Information:

1. Do you think community members would be interested in forming a community panel to follow the work at the site and help keep the community-at-large informed?
2. Would you be interested in forming such a group?
3. Do you know others who might be interested in such a group?
4. Do you know of any environmental or special interest groups, such as sportsmen's groups, that may be interested in participating in a group or being kept informed of site-related activities?

Keeping Residents Informed:

1. What are the best ways for us to communicate with you? (Mailings, Email, Meetings/Information Sessions, Public Notices, etc.)
2. What kinds of information do you want?
3. How do you usually get information about the community or local environmental concerns?
4. Does your municipality have a cable station, website, or newsletter to keep community members informed?
5. What newspapers are most popular in this area? (Are they daily, weekly, online, or hard copies?)
6. What TV stations cover local news?
7. What radio stations, if any, do you listen to most often?
8. Do you use the internet or other social media, such as Twitter or Facebook?
9. Do you know of any residents in the site vicinity who have communications differences, such as hearing or visual impairments?
10. Do you know of residents in the site vicinity who may require translation services?
11. Are there residents or areas in the site vicinity that could be characterized as disadvantaged (or environmental justice communities)?

Planning Community Events:

1. If EPA wanted to hold a meeting or an open house, can you suggest any locations that are convenient for residents?
2. Are there any nights of the week that we should avoid when scheduling meetings?
3. Are there seasonal community activities that are important and widely attended?

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Appendix I — Additional Websites & Resources

EPA's Superfund Program
https://www.epa.gov/superfund

Superfund Community Involvement
https://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-community-involvement

This is Superfund: A Community Guide to EPA's Superfund Program
http://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/HQ/175197

ATSDR ToxFAQS page
http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp

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Community Involvement Plan

EPA