NPL Site Narrative for Novak Sanitary Landfill

NOVAK SANITARY LANDFILL
South Whitehall Township, Pennsylvania

Conditions at proposal (January 22, 1987): Novak Sanitary Landfill covers approximately 60 acres in South Whitehall Township, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania. The area is primarily rural with several farms and quarries near the landfill. The privately owned landfill started operating in the mid-1950s. Initially, wastes were disposed in an abandoned quarry on the site. Later, the landfill began accepting municipal and industrial wastes using surface and trench fill methods.

In 1980, a new phase began when the first of five trenches was excavated. Disposal in these trenches was under a solid waste permit from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (PA DER). PA DER closed the landfill in December 1984. General Electric Co. notified EPA, as required by CERCLA Section 103(c), that its Allentown, Pennsylvania, plant had sent electroplating wastes containing heavy metals and organic wastes, including spent solvents, to the landfill. According to PA DER, other industrial clients of the landfill include Tyler Pipe Co., Tarkett Corp., Western Electric, and Caloric Corp.

Monitoring wells on the site are contaminated with a variety of organic and inorganic chemicals, including tetrachloroethylene, toluene, 1,1-dichloroethane, and barium, according to EPA tests conducted in 1985. A private well 1,200 feet southwest of the landfill boundary is similarly contaminated, according to EPA and PA DER. The landfill is in a limestone region that is very susceptible to ground water contamination and migration of contaminants. An estimated 17,300 people draw drinking water from public and private wells within 3 miles of the site. In January 1985, South Whitehall Township extended its water line to two residences near the landfill because a well sampled by EPA contained organic and inorganic contaminants attributable to the landfill.

According to an EPA inspection in June 1985, a ditch encircling the site diverts run-off and leachate into an on-site pond. The diversion ditch and pond are not properly engineered, and the landfill is not adequately covered. Hence, surface water in the area is threatened. Jordan Creek within 3 miles downstream of the site is used for recreational activities.

Status (October 4, 1989): Under a CERCLA Section 106 Administrative Order on Consent dated December 31, 1988, 16 parties associated with wastes at the site agreed to conduct a remedial investigation/feasibility study to determine the type and extent of contamination at the site and identify alternatives for remedial action.

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.