

NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST (NPL)

Final Site

September 2011

HORTON IRON AND METAL | Wilmington, North Carolina
*New Hanover County*** Site Location:**

The Horton Iron and Metal property occupies a total of 38 acres and is currently operated as a metal recycling facility. The eastern border of the site is adjacent to the Northeast Cape Fear River. There is contamination at a portion of the Horton property, which was historically operated as a phosphate fertilizer manufacturing facility, along with sediments in two boat slips located on the Northeast Cape Fear River.

 Site History:

From 1911 to 1949, American Agricultural Chemical Company operated a phosphate fertilizer manufacturer with a lead-acid chamber fertilizer plant. Naco Fertilizer Company continued the fertilizer operations from 1949 to 1954. W.R. Grace owned the property from 1954-1959, but operations are unknown during this period. During the 1960s and 1970s, Horton conducted ship-breaking operations and metal salvage of World War II Liberty Ships in the two boat slips.

 Site Contamination/Contaminants:

Fertilizer manufacturing operations contaminated the soil, ground water and boat slip sediments with high levels of arsenic and lead. As a result of ship-breaking operations, petroleum products, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), heavy metals and asbestos have been detected in soil and slip sediments.

 Potential Impacts on Surrounding Community/Environment:

The Northeast Cape Fear River is a commercial and recreational fishery and is also home to two federally endangered species. There is significant wetland frontage along the 15-mile surface water migration route via the Northeast Cape Fear River and Cape Fear River. PCBs, lead, arsenic, cadmium, and mercury in boat slip sediments are above EPA ecological sediment screening values. Ground water is contaminated with lead and arsenic above EPA's Safe Drinking Water Act Maximum Contaminant Levels and poses a threat of discharge to the river.

 Response Activities (to date):

In 1988, the U.S. Coast Guard found extensive oil staining around metal crushing equipment on the Horton property. A notice of violation was issued to Horton in 1989, ordering clean up of the contaminated soils and a determination of whether ground water at the facility was contaminated. The oil-stained soils were removed and an underground storage tank removal was conducted in 1996. In 2009, EPA requested that the owner take immediate action necessary to reduce worker exposure and prevent contaminants from migrating off-site during storm events. In response, Horton installed a gate to prevent unauthorized entry into the contaminated area. Horton also installed a silt fence around the boat slips to prevent further migration of contaminated soils into the boat slips and the Northeast Cape Fear River.

 Need for NPL Listing:

The State of North Carolina referred the site to EPA because of the extent of soil and ground water contamination and the sediment contamination in the boat slips. EPA received a letter of support for placing this site on the NPL from the State.

[The description of the site (release) is based on information available at the time the site was evaluated with the HRS. The description may change as additional information is gathered on the sources and extent of contamination.]

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 <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq.html> or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.