

NPL Site Narrative for New Hanover County Airport Burn Pit

NEW HANOVER COUNTY AIRPORT BURN PIT Wilmington, North Carolina

Conditions at proposal (June 24, 1988): The New Hanover County Airport Burn Pit is on Gardner Drive west of the New Hanover County Airport in Wilmington, North Carolina. The burn pit is of earthen construction, 30 by 50 feet, and roughly 2 feet above ground level. It does not extend below the land surface.

The county constructed the burn pit around 1968. During approximately 1968-79, the Cape Fear Technical Institute used the pit for fire-training purposes, burning jet fuel and gasoline in the burn pit and extinguishing the fires with water. The Wilmington Fire Department also used the burn pit for fire-training purposes during 1968-76. Jet fuel and drainage from petroleum fuel storage tanks in the area were burned and the fires extinguished with water, carbon dioxide, and dry chemicals. Sometime prior to 1982, sorbent material used in river spill cleanups was dumped into the pit. In addition, fuel oil, kerosene, and oil from oil spill cleanups were burned in the pit.

The pit holds approximately 22,500 gallons, of which 85 percent is water. In January 1985, the New Hanover County Department of Engineering detected lead and halogenated organic chemicals in waste from the pit. The nearest well was not contaminated at that time.

During an inspection in May 1986, the North Carolina Division of Health Services found barium in the bottom sludge layer of the pit and arsenic, barium, cadmium, chromium, lead, and mercury in soil around the pit. Trichloroethylene and numerous other organics, including fluoranthene, pyrene, methylene chloride, naphthalene, fluorene, anthracene, 2-methyl naphthalene, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, 2-butanone, and o-xylene, were detected in other on-site soil samples.

New Hanover County is currently seeking to close out the pit by tilling the waste into the soil. However, this has created concern about ground water contamination due to the organic and inorganic constituents in the pit, the sandy soil, and the shallow water table (5 feet). An estimated 6,300 people obtain drinking water from public and private wells within 3 miles of the site. A private well is approximately 1,500 feet northwest of the site.

Surface water within 3 miles downstream of the site is used for recreational activities. Estuary wetlands are approximately 1 mile south of the site on South Creek at the probable point of run-off from the site.

Status (March 31, 1989): EPA's preliminary plan for fiscal year 1989 includes 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) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.