

NPL Site Narrative for Matthiessen and Hegeler Zinc Company

MATTHIESSEN AND HEGELER ZINC COMPANY La Salle, Illinois

Conditions at Proposal (June 14, 2001): The Matthiessen and Hegeler Zinc Company is an inactive primary zinc smelter and rolling facility located on the east side of the city of La Salle, Illinois. The facility began operations in 1858 and operated until 1978 and during its years of operation covered an area of approximately 160 acres. The portion of the former Matthiessen and Hegeler property that is proposed for listing on the National Priorities List (NPL) consists of two slag waste disposal areas that were created while the smelter was in operation and are located on a vacant portion of the property. Slag is a waste material that is generated from the smelting process that occurred at the facility. Samples collected from these waste piles indicated that they contain elevated concentrations of several metals including cadmium, copper, chromium, lead, nickel and zinc.

Currently, the portion of the former Matthiessen and Hegeler property which was scored for the NPL (the slag waste disposal areas) is not utilized for any specific purpose as it consists of vacant land which is covered by slag material. The Little Vermilion River borders one of the slag piles' eastern boundary with residential properties located to the north and west of the former smelter property. To the south of the waste disposal areas are two facilities: a recently closed down zinc-rolling mill and a currently active manufacturer of specialty chemicals. The entire former Matthiessen and Hegeler property is surrounded by a chain-link fence.

Runoff from the waste piles runs directly into the adjacent Little Vermilion River. Samples that were collected in the sediment of the river were found to contain elevated levels of the same metals as were found in the waste piles, indicating that the river has been impacted by the former activities at the site. The State of Illinois identifies the Little Vermilion River as a fishery populated with small mouth bass, bluegill, sunfish, crappie, channel catfish, bullhead, carp and drum fish. The surface water pathway was the primary pathway used to score the Matthiessen and Hegeler Zinc Company site.

Status (September 2003): 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.