

NPL Site Narrative for Cannelton Industries, Inc.

CANNELTON INDUSTRIES, INC. Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan

Conditions at proposal (June 24, 1988): The Cannelton Industries, Inc., Site covers 75 acres along the south bank of the St. Mary's River about 1.5 miles west of the downtown area of Sault Sainte Marie, Chippewa County, Michigan. Starting early in the 19th century, Northwestern Leather Co. manufactured leather products on the site, dumping tannery wastes on 5 acres located in the 100-year floodplain of the St. Mary's River. The waste was disposed of to a depth of 6 to 8 feet and left uncovered. An estimated 10,000 cubic yards were disposed of, as observed from the depth of wastes along the bank and the area void of vegetation. Marshland borders the site on two sides.

In 1954-55, Fibron Limestone Co. (a subsidiary of Algoma Steel Corp., Ltd., of Canada) purchased the 75 acres. Subsequently, the property was transferred to Cannelton Industries, Inc., another Algoma subsidiary. The property was intended for construction of a manufacturing plant that was never built. Algoma dismantled various structures that were considered hazardous. No manufacturing has been carried out on the site since 1958 and hence no industrial waste has been generated, according to Algoma. The site is not now in use.

On-site soils and adjacent river sediments contain extremely high levels of chromium, lead, copper, cyanide, and mercury, according to tests conducted in 1979 by Sault Sainte Marie State College and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Chromium, lead, manganese, arsenic, and iron well in excess of drinking water standards were also found in ground water in the middle of the disposal area. An estimated 1,200 people obtain drinking water from private wells within 3 miles of the site, the nearest about 1 mile from the site.

Sault Sainte Marie, Ontario, withdraws water from the St. Mary's River approximately 2 miles downstream of the old tannery disposal site.

The dump area is unfenced, making it possible for people and animals to come into direct contact with hazardous substances at the site. Bald eagles, designated an endangered species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, feed and nest within 2 miles of the site.

In 1986, Algoma Steel agreed informally with the State to construct (1) a wall along the shore of the St. Mary's River to prevent wave and ice action from removing solid material from the site and (2) an impermeable clay cap to prevent erosion and prohibit rainwater from infiltrating the site. To date, the company has taken no action.

Status (December 1988): EPA is conducting a remedial investigation/feasibility study (RI/FS) to determine the type and extent of contamination at the site and identify alternatives for remedial action.

Status (August 30, 1990): In the spring of 1989, under a Consent Order with EPA, Algoma Steel installed a sprinkler system as a temporary measure in a 2-acre barren zone with a history of fires. In

November 1989, Algoma Steel completed a wall to control erosion along the shoreline of the barren zone. Discussions are underway concerning what further actions should be taken in the zone.

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.