

NPL Site Narrative for Waterloo Coal Gasification Plant

WATERLOO COAL GASIFICATION PLANT

Waterloo, Iowa

The Waterloo Coal Gasification Plant manufactured gas for lighting and heating purposes during 1901-56 in Waterloo, Blackhawk County, Iowa. The site is approximately 30 feet north of the Cedar River in an area that is primarily active and abandoned light industry to the east and west with a residential area located to the north.

The site was owned in succession by Waterloo Gas and Electric Co., Citizens Gas and Electric Co., Central Iowa Power and Light Co., and Iowa Public Service Co. When operational, the plant encompassed 4.5 acres. The plant was dismantled during 1965-67. The site is located north and south of Sycamore Street between Union and Elm Streets and has a railroad right-of-way running through it.

An EPA inspection in December 1988 and June 1989 revealed that surface and subsurface soils from portions of the site are contaminated with cyanide generated from plant purifier wastes and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), including naphthalene and 2-methylnaphthalene, from plant coal tar and oils. PAHs and cyanide have also been documented in on-site monitoring wells drawing from the shallow alluvial aquifer. This aquifer is hydrologically connected to the deeper Silurian-Devonian aquifer system. Both supply drinking water to area residents.

An estimated 74,800 people obtain drinking water from public and private wells within 4 miles of the site, the nearest a Waterloo municipal well 1.75 miles south of the site. These wells serve Elk Run Heights, Raymond, and Hudson. Waterloo municipal water is also used for commercial food preparation.

The Cedar River is used for recreational activities and may be receiving hazardous substances from the site due to the site's nearness to the river and the known subsurface contamination potentially migrating from ground water to surface water. However, no sampling has been conducted to support this speculation.

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.