

NPL Site Narrative for Riverbank Army Ammunition Plant

RIVERBANK ARMY AMMUNITION PLANT Riverbank, California

Conditions at proposal (June 24, 1988): The Riverbank Army Ammunition Plant (RBAAP) covers approximately 173 acres about 10 miles northeast of Modesto, California, on the northern border of Stanislaus County. The main facility comprises 145 acres. Four unlined industrial waste treatment ponds in the floodplain of the Stanislaus River approximately 1.5 miles north of the main facility account for the remaining 28 acres.

In 1942, the Aluminum Co. of America constructed RBAAP as an aluminum reduction plant to supply the military. It closed in 1944. Since reopening in 1951, the facility, with Norris Industries, Inc., as the operating contractor, has manufactured materials such as cartridge cases, grenades, and projectiles. As a result of industrial activities, RBAAP has generated varying quantities of corrosive wastes (phosphoric acid, sulfuric acid, and caustic cleaners), solvents, spent pickle liquids, and waste water containing metals.

According to tests conducted by the Army, significant levels of contaminants, including chromium, cyanide, and 1,1-dichloroethylene, have migrated into ground water close to or beyond the installation boundary. About 13,700 people obtain drinking water from public and private wells within 3 miles of the site, and at least 3,500 acres of nut and fruit orchards are partially irrigated by ground water. The Army has also found that sediments in the waste treatment ponds contain chromium, lead, and zinc. Overflows from the ponds have dumped into the Stanislaus River, and the river has occasionally overflowed into the ponds during periods of flooding. The river is used for irrigation and recreational activities.

RBAAP is participating in the Installation Restoration Program, established in 1978. Under this program, the Department of Defense seeks to identify, investigate, and clean up contamination from hazardous materials. The Army has completed a preliminary assessment and is now conducting a remedial investigation/feasibility study to determine the type and extent of contamination and identify alternatives for remedial action.

Status (February 21, 1990): RBAAP is starting cleanup actions involving treatment of contaminated ground water and pond sediments.

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.