United States Environmental Protection Agency

OLEM/OSRTI
Washington, DC 20460

NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST (NPL)

****Proposed NPL Site****

November 2019

BLADES GROUNDWATER | Blades, Delaware

Sussex County

Site Location:

The Blades Groundwater site is located in a residential area within the town of Blades in Southern Delaware.

Site History:

The site consists of a groundwater plume containing hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants. There are two electroplating facilities, one closed and one still in operation, where historical and current practices appear to have contributed to the groundwater contamination.

Site Contamination/Contaminants:

In February 2018, the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), in coordination with the EPA, collected samples of area municipal, residential, and monitoring wells as part of an investigation of the electroplating facilities. Groundwater was found to be contaminated with metals such as chromium, cobalt, nickel, zinc, and hexavalent chromium in addition to per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). PFAS are a group of man-made compounds that are used in a wide variety of industrial and commercial processes such as metal plating and have been found at the site above EPA's provisional health advisory levels (HAL).

Potential Impacts on Surrounding Community/Environment:

There are three municipal and seven domestic wells that are contaminated above EPA's provisional HAL for PFAS. Groundwater is the main source for drinking water in the Blades area and the municipal authority serves approximately 1,600 people, and another 150 people rely on private wells.

Response Activities (to date):

In February 2018, the town of Blades installed a carbon filtration system on the water treatment system when it was discovered that three municipal wells were contaminated. The town also provided residences whose wells showed PFAS contamination above the provisional HAL with small carbon filters.

Need for NPL Listing:

The state of Delaware referred the site to the EPA to assist in fully characterizing the extent and impact of the groundwater contamination. Other federal and state cleanup programs were evaluated but are not viable at this time. The EPA received a letter of support for placing this site on the NPL from the state of Delaware. The town of Blades also supports the listing.

[The description of the site (release) is based on information available at the time the site was evaluated with the HRS. The description may change as additional information is gathered on the sources and extent of contamination. See 56 FR 5600, February 11, 1991, or subsequent FR notices.]

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 https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp or by telephone at 1-800-CDC-INFO or 1-800-232-4636.