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# Environmental News

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Superfund Records Center

SITE: \_\_\_\_\_

BREAK: \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER: 460545

RHODE ISLAND SOLID WASTE  
CORP. ORDERED TO STUDY TOXIC  
WASTE AT JOHNSTON LANDFILL

BOSTON -- The Rhode Island Solid Waste Management Corporation (RISWMC) has been ordered to conduct an extensive study of the Central Landfill in Johnston to determine the sources and extent of contamination by hazardous waste.

Regional Administrator Michael R. Deland of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued an administrative order calling for a study proposal to be submitted by the corporation to EPA within 30 days.

"Although hazardous wastes are no longer accepted and the hazardous waste area has been closed and capped, samples from monitoring wells both on and off the site indicate the presence of hazardous wastes in groundwater, in private wells and in a nearby stream," Deland said.

"Not enough information exists, however, to assess adequately the nature and extent of the hazardous wastes on the site and perhaps emanating from it," he added.

"Under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, EPA may require such a study when wastes may pose a substantial hazard to human health or the environment," Deland said.

The order by EPA calls for the study to identify and evaluate all possible sources of contamination at the site, to evaluate the site's subsurface hydrology and geology and to assess the effects of waste disposal practices on surface waters and groundwater.

Deland said EPA was re-ranking the Johnston site for possible inclusion on the Superfund priority list. A notice proposing additions to the list is expected next fall. In case the site qualifies for the list, the study by RISWMC will constitute at least part of the remedial investigation required under Superfund.

(more)

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The 133-acre landfill, purchased in December 1980 by RISWMC, includes a one-third-acre portion where 2.5 million gallons of hazardous waste from Rhode Island and Massachusetts was disposed between 1976 and 1979, according to documents on file at the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM).

It was then used for disposal of sewage sludge until July 1982 when it was capped with four feet of fly ash enclosing a liner of polyvinylchloride,

Hazardous waste manifests on file at RIDEM indicate that the wastes disposed of at the site include latex waste, acid waste, corrosive waste, water soluble oils and waste solvents, including methylene chloride, toluene, 1,1,1-trichloroethane and tetrachloroethylene.

Monitoring wells tested in 1981 and 1982 indicate the presence of organic chemical waste in concentrations ranging from trace amounts up to 34,000 parts per billion, a January 1983 reading for chlorobenzene from a monitoring well near the former hazardous waste disposal area.

Besides chlorobenzene, the tests to date reveal the presence of benzene, and the following organic chemicals: toluene, 1,1,1-trichloroethane, tetrachloroethylene, 1,1-dichloroethane, 1,2-dichloroethene, xylene, and methylene chloride. All are hazardous substances as defined in the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act known as Superfund.

Data on file at RIDEM also indicate that trace amounts of 1,1,1-trichloroethane, 1,1-dichloroethane, tetrachloroethylene, toluene and methylene chloride have been detected in private well samples taken from homes located in the area surrounding the site. These wells are being closely monitored by the Rhode Island Department of Health.

The presence of 1,1,1-trichloroethane, chlorobenzene and benzene has been detected in surface water samples taken from Cedar Swamp Brook downstream of the site. The brook flows southeasterly along the south perimeter and feed Simmons Reservoir.