

NPL Site Narrative for West Site/Hows Corners

WEST SITE/HOWS CORNERS Plymouth, Maine

Conditions at Proposal (February 13, 1995): The West Site/Hows Corners site encompasses 2 acres of a 17-acre wooded lot on Campbell Road in Plymouth, Penobscot County, Maine (near Hows Corners). The site consists of a partially grassy clearing, approximately 150 by 200 feet, with occasional bedrock outcroppings that trend north-south. The site is situated on a moderate geographic high in an area that is otherwise of low relief. The site is currently inactive and there are no buildings or other structures.

The Town of Plymouth assumed title to the West Site/Hows Corners property in 1992 as a result of delinquent taxes. The former owner-operator, George R. West, Jr., operated the site as a waste oil storage and transfer facility from 1965 to 1980 in affiliation with the Portland/Bangor Waste Oil Company (PBWO). Waste oil, delivered by PBWO tank trucks, was stored onsite in approximately eight 1,000 to 20,000 gallon storage tanks.

PBWO collected, transported, and deposited on the West Site/Hows Corners site unknown quantities of waste oil from military bases, auto dealerships, municipalities, local garages, bulk transportation companies, industries, and utility companies. Oil was stored in tanks and separated by density, the light oils rising to the top and the heavier oils and sludges settling to the bottom. The company then decanted the lighter oil, which was sold for fuel; the heavier oils were sold for dust control on dirt roads.

PBWO company records indicate that the waste stored on the site was predominantly composed of used motor oils and industrial lubricating oil; however, because of the varied types of facilities contributing waste, the exact constituents of the oils are unknown. In 1980, PBWO ceased operations at the site. Subsequently PBWO cut up the tanks onsite and sold them to a scrap metal dealer. No waste oil activities are known to have taken place after the tanks were removed.

The only waste source on the site in 1988, when EPA performed a site inspection, was contaminated soil because the aboveground storage tanks were removed in 1980. In 1990-1991, EPA removed 847.37 tons of contaminated soil from the center of the site, approximately 100 feet by 50 feet, and disposed of it at a licensed TSCA facility. The soil was primarily contaminated with PCBs and chlorinated organic compounds.

The source of the PCBs on the site is unknown; however, it is assumed that they were deposited on the site as a constituent of the waste oil. PBWO clients included electric utilities and Department of Defense installations that used transformers containing dielectric oils, which are possible sources of PCBs.

Thirteen residential well water supplies serving 43 people have been contaminated with chlorinated compounds above a health-based benchmark. Contaminants attributable to releases from the West Site/Hows Corners site include tetrachloroethene, 1,1,1-trichloroethane, trichloroethene, 1,1,2-trichloroethane, 1,1-dichloroethene, and 1,2-dichloroethene. These contaminants have been detected in private supply

wells near the site and in monitoring wells on the site. In addition, ground water samples collected from onsite monitoring wells contain elevated concentrations of other volatile compounds and PCBs.

The site is surrounded by a chain link fence that was partially installed by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MEDEP) in 1988 and completed by EPA in 1990.

Status (September 1995): Since proposal in February 1995, EPA has worked with MEDEP to build upon the database of potential responsible parties begun by the State. ATSDR has conducted an initial site visit in support of the health assessment for the site.

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.