

NPL Site Narrative for Pownal Tannery

POWNALE TANNERY Pownal, Vermont

Conditions at Proposal (September 29, 1998): The Pownal Tannery facility property is located between Route 346 and the Hoosic River in the Village of North Pownal, Vermont. The property is about 987 acres and is located in a rural area. Pownal Tanning operated between 1935 and 1988 at a building complex which currently encompasses approximately 169,915 square feet. A lagoon system, used to treat effluent tannery process water, is located northwest of the former tannery building. A sludge landfill, used for the disposal of accumulated lagoon sludge, is located southeast of the former tannery building. The three areas of concern encompass approximately 28 acres. The Pownal Tanning Company ceased operations on the property in 1988 and filed for bankruptcy.

A variety of materials, many of which are hazardous, were used and stored in the former tannery building. In April 1993, 12,830 pounds of materials from throughout the former tannery building were collected, sorted for compatibility, and combined and consolidated for removal during an EPA Removal Program emergency removal action. A brief summary of these substances includes chrome residue, chrome powder, alum, solvents, asbestos, and acids.

From circa 1940 until 1963, effluent tanning process water was released directly to the Hoosic River. Between 1963 and 1988, a series of five lagoons were constructed and utilized in the northwest end of the property to allow the settling of solids from the wastewater sludges before ultimate discharge to the Hoosic River. Treatment of effluent tanning process water consisted of screening the wastewater, settling of suspended solids, chemical coagulation and settling of additional suspended solids in the clarifier, biological oxidation of dissolved materials, algae stabilization, and aerated polishing. The lagoons stopped receiving treated effluent wastewater when the company ceased production circa 1988.

The sludge landfill was established on a parcel southeast of the Pownal Tanning Company in 1982. The sludge landfill is located adjacent to wetlands along the southern bank of the Hoosic River, upstream of the Pownal Tanning Company. The sludge landfill is approximately 400 feet long and varies from 80 to 200 feet wide. It consists of three separate cells, constructed from 1982 to 1990, which are underlain by a Hypalon liner. The three cells received sludge from the clarifier filter press and sludge removed from Lagoons #2 and #4. Cells #1 and #2 were capped with silty sand in 1983 and 1987, respectively; Cell #3 was partially capped circa 1990. The open area of Cell #3 has ponded leachate and rainwater above the liner. Based on observations and containment volume calculations by the VTDEC, there is a strong possibility that the integrity of the sludge landfill liner has been compromised.

Hydrogeologic investigations were performed at the property in 1988. A Preliminary Assessment of the property was performed by an EPA contractor on March 31, 1987. A Screening Site Inspection was performed by the contractor on December 21, 1989. A Site Inspection Prioritization was completed in December 1993. A Remedial Investigation Summary Report was completed in March 1997.

Investigations at the property included the collection of surface water, lagoon water, sludge landfill leachate, sludge landfill and lagoon sludge, and soil samples from the property. The results of this work indicate that hazardous substances have been released to surface water from the on-site lagoons.

Substances detected in sources on the property include solvents, preservative chemicals associated with the tanning industry, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), inorganic elements, and dioxins.

The population residing within four radial miles of the potential source areas on the Pownal Tannery property obtain drinking water primarily from private drinking water wells. No drinking water intakes have been identified along the 15-mile surface water pathway. Also along the surface water pathway, the Hoosic River, is a trout fishery, and there are numerous areas of wetlands along its banks downstream of the Pownal Tannery property.

Status (January 1999): EPA is considering various alternatives for this 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.