

NPL Site Narrative for Sutton Brook Disposal Area

SUTTON BROOK DISPOSAL AREA Tewksbury, Massachusetts

Conditions at Proposal (July 27, 2000): The Sutton Brook Disposal Area ("the site"), which is roughly synonymous with the Rocco's Disposal Area site, is located off South Street on the eastern boundary of Tewksbury, Middlesex County, Massachusetts. The site is in excess of 50 acres. A small portion of the site also extends into the Town of Wilmington, Massachusetts. The Sutton Brook Disposal Area is bounded by a former railroad grade along the northern boundary, beyond which is a former piggery and a forested area; residential properties to the west; undeveloped woodland and wetlands to the south; and the Tewksbury/Wilmington Town Line and agricultural land to the east. The site comprises three source areas; a 50-acre landfill, an area of buried drums, and contaminated soils associated with the drum disposal area. These three source areas are located on what is known as the Rocco's Disposal Area. Several additional drum burial areas and suspected disposal areas have recently been identified in the vicinity of the site and are currently being investigated by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MADEP). As additional information becomes available, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will determine whether these other source areas should be included in the Sutton Brook Disposal Area site.

Waste disposal activities at the Sutton Brook Disposal Area can be traced back to at least 1957, when an area of the site was used as a "burning dump." This area was originally designated by the Tewksbury Board of Health as a temporary disposal area (landfill). In 1961, the temporary assignment was modified to require that the landfill on the site be operated as a sanitary landfill, accepting municipal refuse generated only in the Town of Tewksbury, Massachusetts. The assignment was not complied with, as the landfill accepted municipal, commercial, and industrial wastes from both inside and outside the Town of Tewksbury. The owners of the landfill received numerous violation citations from state and local officials for violating Massachusetts Sanitary Landfill Regulations.

In 1966, the Town of Tewksbury was ordered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (the Commonwealth) Commissioner of Public Health to operate the landfill using the sanitary landfill method. However, after 1966, there were documented occurrences of landfill burning, uncovered waste areas, the filling in of on-site wetlands, wastes disposed below the water table, and landfill slopes which exceeded operation plans. Due to these violations, the Commonwealth ordered the closure of the landfill in 1979. At the time of its closure in 1979, the landfill was accepting in excess of 250 tons of waste per day. Despite the closure order, landfill operations continued until 1982, when official landfill operations were suspended, but waste acceptance continued through 1988.

The area of the landfill is approximately 50 acres. The landfill volume is estimated at approximately 1.9 million cubic yards. During the 1999 EPA Superfund Technical Assistance and Response Team (START) on-site reconnaissance, a number of erosional cuts, leachate seeps, and collapsed areas were observed in the cover material of the landfill. Sutton Brook (and associated wetlands) flows east to west through the property, dividing the landfill into northern and southern lobes. Additional wetlands areas are located south of the landfill and along the eastern and western portions of the property. Approximately 300 yards south of the landfill is an unnamed pond, used seasonally for ice skating.

In 1983, a loam screening business began operation on the property. On August 11, 1983, during an inspection by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Quality Engineering (MADEQE) (currently MADEP), underground burning was observed through fissures in the ground in the southern landfill lobe. During a subsequent inspection conducted by MA DEQE personnel on August 12, 1983, flames and smoke were no longer visible after heavy machinery had covered the fissures with soil. Subsequent investigations by Tewksbury Health Inspectors and MADEQE documented piles of demolition debris and soil on areas of the property, in some cases adjacent to and/or encroaching upon on-site wetland areas.

Numerous investigations of the site by local, state, and federal organizations have revealed the presence of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semivolatile organic compounds (SVOCs), pesticides, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and inorganic elements in on-site and off-site ground water, surface water, sediment, soil, and VOCs and SVOCs in air samples.

Status (June 2001): 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.