

# Lower Darby Creek Area Superfund Site



Community Update on Clearview Landfill Flooding

August 2020

## Key Information

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) continues to evaluate damage from Tropical Storm Isaias to the Clearview Landfill (or Site), part of the Lower Darby Creek Area (LDCA) Superfund Site. Water samples were collected from flood waters and Cobbs Creek to test for contaminants during and after the storm. Preliminary results show little to no site-related contaminants in the flood waters. EPA is further evaluating the data and will share more information in early to mid-September.
- EPA is assessing damage to yards that were previously cleaned up and making repairs where needed. EPA is also re-sampling a number of properties to determine if there are any potential impacts from flood waters. Results from the yard sampling are expected in mid to late-September.
- Areas of the Site where construction was completed were not damaged during the storm. The log crib wall that was built to stabilize the banks of Darby and Cobbs Creeks was also not damaged and performed as expected. Areas that were in the process of being cleaned up did experience some erosion and repairs were required. All flood damage on-site has been repaired.
- The design for the Clearview Landfill cleanup was thoroughly evaluated to make sure that EPA's work would not make any flood event worse. EPA is working with a team of engineers and stormwater modelers to see what can be learned from this flood and determine if there are any changes that can be made within the work area to better handle stormwater during future storm events.
- The cleanup of the Clearview Landfill is not designed to fix flooding in the Eastwick neighborhood. Issues associated with pre-existing flooding are outside the legal authority of the EPA Superfund Program.

### Was your yard previously cleaned up by EPA?

If so, and if you have concerns about damage to your yard after the flooding, please contact us to have your property fully evaluated.

## Did contamination from the Clearview Landfill get into the creeks and neighborhood as a result of the flood?

- EPA is assessing the Site to determine if site-related contaminants were spread as a result of the flood. Preliminary sampling results from the flood waters show that little to no contaminants from the Site were detected. EPA is conducting further evaluation of the data and will share additional information in early to mid-September.
- Previously, EPA had cleaned up most of the City Park and nearly 200 residential properties by removing contaminated waste and soil and replacing it with clean soil. Since most of the soil was clean, EPA does not believe there will be high levels of site contaminants in flood waters.
- The volume of flood waters originating from Darby and Cobbs Creek was far greater than what fell and ran down the hillside of the landfill.
- EPA has met individually with some Eastwick residents whose yards were previously cleaned up. EPA will re-sample these properties. EPA will also re-sample some residential yards that had previous "clean" sampling results and did not need to be cleaned up to determine if there have been any impacts from flood waters.

## How was the stormwater from this event handled on the Site?

- The Eastwick City Park, located between the Clearview Landfill and the residential neighborhood, was the main part of the Site that was flooded. EPA had previously cleaned up most of this area by removing contaminated waste and soil and replacing it with clean soil.
- Some areas of the landfill had been planted with trees and grass while other areas were about to be planted and contained bare topsoil.
- A large basin is also being constructed to hold stormwater from the Site. It was partially completed when the flooding occurred.
- Managing stormwater runoff at the Site is challenging. Rain that falls on the landfill goes directly to Darby or Cobbs Creek or into one of two large constructed collection points on-site. These collection points then drain to the creeks.
- During large storm events, EPA can contain stormwater on-site until the creek water goes down. However, if the creeks overflow the two collection points constructed on-site, there is nothing that can be done to contain the water.
- When the Site cleanup was designed, stormwater studies including modeling were performed to ensure future storm events and flooding would not be made worse during or after construction was completed.
- EPA is following all state, federal, and local laws and regulations related to stormwater management and the floodplain.

EPA contractor taking water samples from flood waters on August 4, 2020.



## Is EPA working with the Army Corps of Engineers on their flood study?

- EPA regularly shares Site information with the Corps for the purpose of their study. Corps representatives have been onsite to understand the work that is taking place. EPA worked closely with the Corps the day after the flooding to share information on flood high-water marks and impacts to the Site and surrounding neighborhood.

## Flooding Background

Much of the Eastwick community near the Clearview Landfill lies within the 100-year floodplain, at the intersection of two watersheds that drain significant portions of Delaware County and west Philadelphia. However, for some low-lying areas, it does not take a 100-year storm to submerge the portion of the Site located in the Eastwick City Park or portions of the neighborhood. Depending on several factors including the tide cycle, recent precipitation and the duration and severity of rain events and any associated storm surge, a 10-year or 50-year storm event has the potential to cause Darby and Cobbs Creeks to overrun the park and flood the neighborhood.

Additionally, the landfill sits on a former wetland which historically would absorb stormwater similar to the wetlands in the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge downstream. The loss of these wetlands has reduced the capacity to absorb water from large storm events.



The Northern City Park portion of the landfill (located by the Recreation Center) saw significant flooding from Darby and Cobbs Creeks. The tree plantings (surrounded by plastic tubing) fared well once the flood waters receded. As the trees and plantings grow larger, they should be able to absorb more stormwater in future rain events. (Photo from August 4, 2020)



View of Apollo Place from top of landfill after flooding. The floodwaters were approximately four feet higher at their peak on August 4, 2020. (Photo from August 5, 2020)



Close-up showing erosion of clean soil from Eastwick City Park near Apollo Place after flooding. (Photo from August 5, 2020)



Repairs made to fill in the damage caused to Eastwick City Park near Apollo Place. (Photo from August 24, 2020)

## What are the next steps for the Site cleanup?

- Regular cleanup activities at the Clearview Landfill have restarted and are ongoing.
- EPA continues to assess residential properties that were previously cleaned up to determine if repairs or additional cleanup are needed as a result of the flooding.
- EPA will evaluate sampling results from yards to determine if additional actions should be taken.
- A number of residential yards still requiring clean up are on schedule to be addressed in Spring 2021.
- EPA will continue to share information on sampling results and lessons learned on its website and via the [Eastwick Lower Darby Community Advisory Group \(ELDCA CAG\)](#).
- EPA is also assessing the Folcroft Landfill, another part of the Lower Darby Creek Area Site, to determine if there are any flood impacts.

## EPA Contacts

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## How can I stay informed?



To receive regular updates about the work taking place at the Clearview Landfill and Eastwick City Park, please sign up at:

<http://join.redflaghub.com/lowerdarby>



For more info, check out:  
[www.epa.gov/superfund/lowerdarby](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/lowerdarby)

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