

NPL Site Narrative for Atlantic Wood Industries, Inc.

ATLANTIC WOOD INDUSTRIES, INC. Portsmouth, Virginia

Conditions at proposal (June 24, 1988): The Atlantic Wood Industries, Inc., Site consists of a 47-acre wood-treating facility and adjacent river water and sediment in the City of Portsmouth, Virginia. The site is on the South Branch of the Elizabeth River, approximately 7 miles upstream from Chesapeake Bay. The facility has been in operation since 1926.

Contaminants of concern are two wood preservatives used by the facility -- creosote and pentachlorophenol (used until December 1985). Wastes present on-site include: creosote stored in aboveground tanks, an unknown quantity of creosote-contaminated sediment and soils, and 20,000 cubic feet of landfilled wood chips contaminated with creosote and pentachlorophenol.

According to sampling conducted by EPA, Atlantic Wood, and the Virginia State Water Control Board, wastes on-site have contaminated ground water, which is infiltrating a storm sewer owned by the City of Portsmouth. The storm sewer outfall discharges into an intertidal drainage ditch that is part of the South Branch of the Elizabeth River. EPA has detected high concentrations of creosote in the ditch, and benzene and naphthalene, both constituents of creosote, in air above the ditch. Approximately 14,000 people work within 0.5 mile of the ditch.

The South Branch of the Elizabeth River is an estuarine, tidal water body. Tides would be expected to carry contaminants upstream to waters used for crabbing and to estuarine wetlands. Oyster beds are located within 3 miles downstream of the site. Studies by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science have shown that oysters within this reach have accumulated significant levels of creosote constituents.

Status (February 21, 1990): On July 23, 1987, EPA and the company entered into an Administrative Order on Consent under CERCLA Section 106. Under the order, the company is analyzing various alternatives for addressing the problems with the storm sewer system discharging to the Elizabeth River.

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.