

NPL Site Narrative for Aqua-Tech Environmental Inc. (Groce Laboratories)

AQUA-TECH ENVIRONMENTAL INC. (GROCE LABORATORIES) Greer, South Carolina

Conditions at Proposal (August 23, 1994): Aqua-Tech Environmental Inc. (Groce Laboratories) is located on Highway 290 at Robinson Road in Greer, Spartanburg County, South Carolina. The site is a closed RCRA treatment, storage, and disposal facility (TSDF) which recently completed emergency response and removal activities under an EPA Unilateral Administrative Order (UAO). Upon closing Aqua-Tech, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) and EPA emergency response personnel discovered approximately 7,000 drums and lab packs, 97 above-ground tanks, 1,200 gas cylinders (some containing phosgene and other toxic gases), unexploded ordnance material, and small amounts of low-level radioactive material and biohazard material at the site. Many of the drums, tanks, and cylinders were deteriorated, leaking, and improperly stored. Containers and debris were located throughout the 35-acre facility. Over 41,000,000 pounds of hazardous waste have been sent to the Aqua-Tech (Groce Labs) site, as documented by RCRA Hazardous Waste Manifests.

From approximately 1940 until 1968, the property was used as a municipal solid waste landfill. The City of Greer purchased the property in 1968, then sold it to Groce Laboratories in 1974. Groce Laboratories operated a hazardous waste treatment, storage, and reclamation facility over the former landfill site. Aqua-Tech Environmental, Inc. purchased the operations in April 1987 and continued to accept, store, and treat most hazardous wastes as well as a variety of other solid wastes. Most wastes were accepted in drum containers; however, bulk wastes, gas cylinders, and lab packs were also accepted. Both Groce Laboratories and Aqua-Tech Environmental, Inc. operated under RCRA Interim status.

On September 4, 1991, after several complaints, RCRA inspection violations, and on-site accidents, Aqua-Tech Environmental, Inc. was ordered closed by SCDHEC due to the large volume of improperly stored hazardous waste and the imminent threat to public health. Several days later, Aqua-Tech's RCRA TSDF Part B application was officially denied. From September 1991 to January 1992, SCDHEC conducted emergency stabilization activities. In January 1992, EPA assumed emergency response and stabilization activities. EPA issued UAOs to more than 90 potentially responsible parties to continue emergency response activities. Site stabilization and removal/treatment of containerized wastes were conducted from September 1991 to January 1994.

Four sources of hazardous materials were considered in the evaluation of this site. These include drums, above-ground tanks, contaminated soil, and manifested wastes.

Sampling investigations have been conducted by EPA, SCDHEC, and Aqua-Tech (Groce Labs). These investigations indicate significant contamination throughout the site including soils, drainage pathways, surface water, and ground water. Primary contaminants include metals, volatile organic compounds, and other contaminants. All of the surface water runoff from the property drains south into Maple Creek, a perennial water body which borders the site. Contaminants found in both this creek and the sources include cadmium, chromium, cobalt, lead, mercury, nickel, and zinc. Maple Creek flows eastward until it

drains into the South Tyger River, which is used for fishing, and may also be used as a municipal drinking water source in the future.

Status (December 1994): Negotiations are underway with PRPs to conduct an early enforcement lead Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS). Negotiations are also underway to determine de minimis settlement with appropriate PRPs.

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.