

NPL Site Narrative for McCormick & Baxter Creosoting Co. (Portland Plant)

MCCORMICK & BAXTER CREOSOTING CO. (PORTLAND PLANT) Portland, Oregon

The McCormick & Baxter Creosoting Company site covers approximately 58 acres and is located at 6900 Edgewater Street, approximately 7 miles south of the city of Portland, Oregon. McCormick & Baxter is situated on the west bank of the Willamette River in an area zoned for heavy industrial use. The site is bordered by railroad tracks on the northeast and northwest, a barge maintenance and dredging facility on the southeast, and an empty lot where a shipyard and cooperage was once located on the northwest. A residential area is located on the northwest side of the site on top of a bluff approximately 120 feet high.

McCormick & Baxter was founded in 1944 to produce treated wood products during World War II. Wood treating products used at the site include creosote/diesel oil mixtures, pentachlorophenol/diesel oil mixtures, and a variety of water- and ammonia-based solutions containing arsenic, chromium, copper, and zinc. Between 1945 and 1969, waste water and non-contact cooling water were directed into onsite catch basins that discharged directly into the Willamette River via storm water outfalls. Prior to 1971, boiler water, storm water, and oily wastes were disposed of in the former waste disposal area located in the southern portion of the site. McCormick & Baxter operated an aboveground tank farm at the facility consisting of six tanks ranging in size from 70,000 gallons to 173,000 gallons. These tanks held mixtures consisting of creosote, pentachlorophenol, oil, and oily-waste water. In addition to the tank farm, McCormick & Baxter used a 750,000-gallon creosote tank. McCormick & Baxter filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 1988. In 1989, with certain remedial measures only partially completed, responsibility for the site was transferred to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ORDEQ). McCormick & Baxter's lending institution took control of their accounts in 1991 and the facility ceased operations.

During an investigation conducted by ORDEQ in 1990, heavy metals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and pentachlorophenol were detected at elevated levels in soils, sediments, and water at the facility. Soils beneath the site are contaminated from the ground surface to as deep as 80 feet in some areas. The soil contamination has migrated to sediments in the Willamette River. Sediments near the site are contaminated to depths of up to 35 feet below the sediment surface.

The Willamette River is used for recreational activities downstream of the McCormick & Baxter site. ORDEQ and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife have posted warning signs to alert people of the potential hazards associated with the site. The site is also fenced and 24-hour security restricts public access. EPA and ORDEQ will investigate various cleanup alternatives appropriate for the 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.