

NPL Partial Site Deletion Narrative

Lake Sandy Jo (M&M Landfill) Gary, Indiana

On May 14, 2021, the EPA deleted the soil media of Landfill Property and identified adjacent parcels of land in Operable Unit 1 (OU1) of the Lake Sandy Jo (M&M Landfill) site from the National Priorities List (NPL). The remaining portions of the site will remain on the NPL.

The Lake Sandy Jo site covers approximately 50 acres in Gary, Lake County, Indiana. The site includes a former 40-acre borrow pit that had been dug in the 1960s to obtain material used in the construction of Interstate-80/94. The pit filled with groundwater and was used as a recreational lake by local residents. Beginning in 1971, the pit/lake was used as a landfill for the disposal of primarily construction and demolition debris. It is suspected that industrial, municipal, and drummed wastes were also dumped at the site. It is estimated that most of the waste and debris is located below the water table in the shallow Calumet aquifer, a local source of drinking water. The site was closed by the state and added to the NPL in 1983.

The EPA completed a Remedial Investigation (RI) in 1986, which demonstrated elevated levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and heavy metals in surface soil and in the sediment in drainage ditches. The RI also found low levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semi-VOCs and metals in the groundwater. The EPA conducted an immediate removal action to construct a fence around the landfill in order to prevent contact with contaminated surface soil and sediment at the site. A Record of Decision (ROD) was signed in 1986 to document the selected remedy at the site.

The site was divided into two OUs. The OU1 remedy addressed the contamination of soil, sediment, and groundwater. The OU2 remedial action provided an alternate water supply to about 60 area addresses by providing an extension of the municipal water supply. The OU1 remedial action was completed in 1990 and included construction of a 2-foot soil cover over the landfill, excavation of contaminated sediment with consolidation under the landfill cover, and installation of groundwater monitoring wells.

In October 2008, the EPA issued an Explanation of Significant Differences (ESD) to the 1986 ROD. The ESD modified the future use of the site to allow for limited future recreational or commercial use of the Landfill Property and adjacent parcels with prior notification and approval from the EPA and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). Any potential developer would be required to pay for any technical evaluations and engineering costs to allow for future use and ensure that the integrity of the landfill cover is maintained in accordance with the ROD.

Institutional Controls (ICs) in the form of Declarations of Restrictive Covenants (DRCs) and Environmental Restrictive Covenant (ERC) restricting land and groundwater use have been recorded for the parcels of land comprising the Landfill Property and the adjacent parcels included in this partial deletion. These DRCs and ERCs prohibit future use of the property that is incompatible with the site remedy; allow for recreational use or commercial use on the property (with approval from the EPA and IDEM); prevent the installation of wells into the aquifer (except for monitoring wells); prohibit interference with the remedy; and ensure maintenance of the landfill cover and fencing. The city of Gary Redevelopment Commission (GRC) is seeking redevelopment opportunities that are consistent with the ICs. The city of Gary signed the July 3, 2006, Amended Groundwater Ordinance Restricting Usage No. 7930 into law to provide a governmental control restricting groundwater use at the site.

The EPA and the state of Indiana, through the IDEM, have determined that all appropriate remedial actions under CERCLA have been completed for the land/soil portion of the Landfill Property and the identified parcels portion of OU1. Therefore, the EPA is deleting these portions of the Lake Sandy Jo (M&M Landfill) site from the NPL. The remaining portions of the site will remain on the NPL and will not be considered for deletion as part of this action.